

Sneak Peek

Under the Cover of Darkness

Zabashi

Book Two

By

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Virticus—Twenty-Nine Years Ago

“I need that prophecy!” Virticus roared, hurling glowing orbs across his lair and shattering them against the stone wall.

“M-my lord,” his servant stuttered. “If I may, we have been searching for the *Books of Za*’ for—well, years. There may be no such books. Maybe they are just a-a myth.”

Virticus glared at the short, round man with pale skin and a large red bump on the side of his bald head. “Norman,” he hissed through gritted teeth. “The Books of *Za*’ are real. I know your little mind may not possess the aptitude for knowledge like mine, but that is no excuse to be this ignorant!”

Norman flinched.

Virticus looked upon his servant with distaste. “Long ago, a piece of scripture written in the *GruDir Prophecy* was revealed to me. It told of a time when a powerful being would be born who would be my downfall. Now, I need to find the Books of *Za*’ so I can have the entire prophecy. Do you understand?”

“Y-yes.” Norman bobbed his head. “Of course, my lord.”

“Now, go find me someone who can be of use to me, someone with the foresight to find my books!”

“Someone like me,” an unfamiliar voice said from the doorway.

Virticus’s eyes snapped to the intruder as a flame ignited in his hand. Leaning against the door was a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair. He did not know what was more mesmerizing: the tight royal-blue dress or her deep, intense grey eyes. The mystery woman strolled through his lair as if she owned the place.

Virticus’s eyes narrowed. “How did you get in here?”

“It was not hard, really.” She shrugged. “You should have better men watching the place.”

Usually, he would have killed anyone who came into his fortress the way she did. However, there was something about her, something intriguing.

“My name is Larissa, and I have something to share with you.” She ran her finger along the dragon-and-wolf heads of his large, dark throne, never taking her eyes off him.

“Norman, you are dismissed,” Virticus said, eyeing her closely. He wanted to see what she had to offer—alone.

Norman fled from the lair at once.

Virticus's lips curved wickedly. "You have one minute to tell me what you are doing here before I kill you."

Keeping her mystical gaze on him, Larissa slid onto his throne and crossed her long, toned legs, unintimidated. "The being you seek will be born in the year of the Red Moon."

"How do you know that?" he asked, taking her in with much more interest.

"I saw it." She leaned back into his chair, running her hands along the engraved, sculpted sides. "I have the power of foresight."

"Who—"

Her gaze lowered. "I cannot see who the person is. I am being blocked somehow. It could be that the child is not born yet, or someone immensely powerful is blocking me." She met his gaze once more. "You may want to kill me, but I see myself being of exceptional use to you—and your legacy."

He eyed her—he trusted no one. "Why do you want to help me?"

"You are the most commanding force Zabashi has had in centuries—not since Malice. I would like you to stay in power. In return—" She plucked a berry from a bowl on his side table. "I would like to be by your side when *we* make history."

His grin deepened. “We?”

“We.” She bit into the berry.

“How do I find the one chosen to stop me?”

“From what I can foresee, it is not during this moment in time. You will have a few years to prepare and build a better infrastructure. You have until the end of the Red Moon. That will be your chance to kill the child.”

“The end of the Red Moon? That is almost—”
He furrowed his brow. “Nine years away!”

Smiling, she rose from his throne. “Exactly,” she cooed, standing before him. “That is more than enough time to build a stronger demonic force.” She twirled a strand of his long, dark hair with her finger. “Among other things. So, do we have an agreement?”

He stared into her eyes. He had to admit she seemed like fun.

He clapped his hands, summoning his top lieutenant. “If you can take Lance, the position is yours.”

She winked and turned towards the towering demon.

Lance lunged.

Virticus watched her move effortlessly as she took on his lieutenant with precision. He raised an eyebrow, somewhat surprised. Lance was formidable and twice her size—yet the way she

flipped onto his shoulders and brought him to the ground proved size did not matter.

Larissa's moves were impeccable. It took her only a few minutes to defeat Lance. If she could beat his top lieutenant in five minutes without a scratch, he wanted her on his side. No, by his side.

Roaring, Lance got to his feet, charging towards her in rage.

She blew purple mist from her palm, immobilizing him.

Virticus's brow furrowed. Impressive and useful, he thought. He was powerful, but even he did not wield that ability—yet.

Keeping his cold eyes locked on hers, he hurled a fireball at Lance, who let out a painful scream as he exploded into ash.

“Welcome aboard.” He stepped closer. “Now, tell me, Rissa, where will the chosen one be born?”

She tilted her head slightly, a coy smile playing on her lips. “You will find the child near Rabicca.”

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