





SECRETS <sup>OF</sup> THE  
TWILIGHT DJINN

MAX AND THE SPICE THIEVES

JOHN PERAGINE



## CHAPTER

# 1



I woke to predawn darkness. It was unusual for me to rise so early, but something in the deepening shadows of my room had disturbed me anticipation hovered like a thick fog in the cool morning air.

“Max,” said my mom as she entered, “Come on, my little bear, it is time to get up.”

“So soon, Mom? The sun isn’t even up. Besides, what’s the point?”

I burrowed deep under my blankets. My father’s disappearance laid like a black shroud over my heart and drained the color out of my life.

Every day was the same. Once the chores were completed, I returned to my room, a prison cell without bars.

“I’m staying in bed and reading today.”

“Max, you’ve got to get up!”

My hand searched the small bedside table and landed on the book my father had brought me from the Summer Isle two years ago.

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I snatched it under my blanket. Even though I had read the book dozens of times, it made me feel close to my dad.

I could hear Mom going through my trunk at the end of the bed. "I know it's very early, but today we have a long journey."

I sat up quickly. "Journey? What journey?"

"It's a surprise. I've already packed all our things and prepared food. We might get hungry on the ship," she winked. "Hurry up. We must make it to the docks before daybreak."

I leaped from the bed and put on the clothes my mom had placed out for me. The smell of eggs, a rasher of bacon, and cut root vegetables invaded my nostrils. This was a breakfast for a king, surely. I sat at the table as Mom scooped food onto my plate.

"It's not my birthday..." I pondered, "That's not for two more months. Is this an early present?"

"No, no, it's not for your birthday. But this trip is quite special." Candlelight illuminated Mom's face, and her lopsided smile told me she was hiding something.

"Are we going on a ship? Are we going to Summer Isle? I always wanted to go there, but you always said it was too dangerous to leave Paradisi. Is that where we're going, Mom? Are we going to see the ruined palace and the fire springs?"

I shoveled the food into my mouth as fast as I could.

"We are going on a long trip, son...but not to the Summer Isle." She looked at the floor a moment and then lifted her eyes to mine. "We are sailing to Sanctus."

"Sanctus!"

My friend Sammy had told me stories about Sanctus, but they weren't the happy bedtime sort.

"Sanctus is where the midnight men live. They hunt and eat children. Am I being punished? Did I do something wrong?" While Paradisi was boring and predictable, I would far rather stay hidden

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deep under my quilts than venture into a place where we could be on the menu for lunch.

“No, no, no, little bear. Of course not,” my mother said in a soothing voice. “Sanctus is a magnificent and special island. You will love it there.” The corners of her mouth tightened with stress. There was something more she still was not telling me.

“I’m sure I’d love the Summer Isle more. Why are we going to Sanctus?” My breakfast was a whirlpool of excitement and dread in my stomach.

“You’ve always wanted a trip outside the harbor, and with everything that has happened lately, I realized that maybe it was time to grant your wish. Did I ever tell you why people call it Sanctus?” my mom asked.

I shook my head.

“They call it Sanctus because it is a sanctuary—a place where people go to be safe. The scary stories that surround the island are part of what makes it safe. Those stories were created to keep bad people away and protect the good people who live there. I would never take you somewhere where you could end up as a snack for some hairy monster.”

I giggled, hunching my shoulders up by my ears.

“I know I’ve told you that the world is not safe, but I’ll never let anything happen to you. Now finish your breakfast. We must be off.”

I scraped food scraps into a bucket, splashed some water on my plate, and placed it in the window basin. That earlier feeling of anticipation was now a pressure below my ribcage. Yes, I wanted to escape my daily prison, but now I had the sense it might be the last time I would see my home.

“What about my...uh...condition?” I asked.

“We will keep your skin covered whenever you’re on deck. I believe we can keep you healthy, as long as you follow the rules.”

The rules. I hated the rules. I couldn't let my skin get cold—even a little bit—or a red rash formed all over my body. If I didn't warm up right away, my skin itched and swelled. Without relief, breathing became difficult, and healers had warned me that I could die.

Even though I hated the rules, I hated the itchy skin worse.

“Yes, mom, I'll follow the stupid rules.”

Mom frowned. “The ship we are going on won't have healers, so that's why the stupid rules are important.”

“What kind of ship is it?”

The corner of my mom's mouth twisted into a grin.

“Aha,” she exclaimed, “that's the best part. We'll be sailing on a pirate ship!”



Darkness blanketed the Paradisi docks. Ships were being prepared for early fishing crews, and other merchant vessels were loaded for travel to faraway exotic ports. Our old horse Tully pulled our small cart in front of the blacksmith's shop. Red coals glowed inside the forge, but the blacksmith was missing.

“Wait here with Tully, Max. I'll be back as soon as I speak with the captain. No talking to strangers, okay?”

“But I want to go with you.” I started to climb out of the cart.

“It's not safe where I'm going, and you'll be fine here,” she replied. “No one's up and your uncle's shop is down the lane. Promise me you'll stay put.”

“Yes, Mom.” I slumped back into the space behind the bench.

Mom had been unusually quiet on the ride, and that worried me. Why the sudden trip? What if dad returned while we were gone? Everyone said he had died at sea, but I didn't believe them. He was trying to find his way home. I was sure of it. Boy, he will be shocked when he finds out we were sailing with pirates.



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Shivering, I snuggled under the blankets in my makeshift bed below the driver's bench of the cart. Mom kissed me on the head, reached into the back of the cart, and pulled out a small bag.

"Remember—don't move and don't talk to anyone."

"Yes... I get it." She grabbed the lantern hanging on the hook next to the bench and melted from view. I quickly fell asleep in my warm, comfy nest of blankets.



Tully's neighing shocked me from slumber.

"Come on, ye old nag," said a voice near the front of the cart. "Ye be a good girl and come with me."

The cart lurched, and I banged my head on top of the bench. I wanted to shout at the voice, but I remembered what I had promised my mom. I wasn't to move or talk to strangers.

"Come on, ye old nag. Let me release this buckle, and then ye can come home with me."

Someone was stealing Tully.

"No," I shouted screamed as I burst from my hidden bed in the cart. "You get away from Tully. She's my horse."

Two men in dirty, tattered clothing stood next to Tully. The taller of the two held her reins as the smaller portly man unhooked her from the cart.

"Look at what we have here," said the taller man. "It's a young cub."

Both men laughed, showing their rotten black teeth.

"You get away from her right now. My mom and...and... my dad will be back any minute. They left me here to protect the cart while they got our ship ready. You'd better leave before they get back, or you'll get such a whipping."

Standing tall with my arms crossed, I glared down at the men.

"Is that so?" said the portly man as he loosened the buckle on

Tully's yoke. "Well, I very much doubt that, cub. Your mum's not comin' back."

Tully bucked in an attempt to try to get away from the men, and the movement made me plop down hard on the bench.

"What do you mean, my mom's not coming back? How do you know my mom?"

The portly man grinned with his broken, black teeth. Something was wrong—very wrong. Seagulls cawed high above in the blue sky, signaling morning was well underway. I had slept for too long. My heart was pounding hard in my chest. Where was Mom? She should have been back already.

Tully was loose from her yoke, and the tall man pulled her rein hard. Tully tried to rear back, but she was too old and weak to make too much of a fuss.

"Ah, ye old nag," the tall man said. "Ye won't be worth much at market, but maybe a butcher will take ye and sell ye fer dog food."

Both men cackled.

"Listen, cub, be a good lad and hand us yer bags from the cart there," said the portly man. "Yer coming with us. We may make some coin, after all."

Mom was gone, and I was alone. Truly alone. Something welled up within me from a place below my ribs. I clenched my fists and stomped.

"No!" I shouted.

"No?" repeated the portly man. "Listen here, whelp, ye don't understand what I'm sayin'. Either ye come down here with yer bags, or I'll come up there...and then we'll see how well ye swim."

The tall man laughed as he led Tully away, heading in the same direction my mom had gone hours before. The portly man grunted as he pulled himself onto the bench. I was like a wild animal on fire. I ran at the portly man, swinging punches at him, catching him by

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surprise. He toppled but regained his balance. He drew back his hand to hit me, but there was a loud *crack*, and the man slumped over the bench.

Standing before the cart was a man dressed in all black. His beard had a braid in the center with a gold ring pushed up to his chin, and he wore a gold and red sash as a belt tied around his long coat, trimmed with silver buttons. On his head was a tricornered hat with a single white plume. He clutched the handle of a busted oar.

“Ye must be Master Max. Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Captain Cornelius Sin, commander of the *Saucy Pig*, at your service.” Sin took off his hat briefly and bowed deeply.

I stood paralyzed. Everything was happening so fast.

“Yer Max... Max Daybreaker, right?” asked Sin again as he took a step closer.

“Uh, yes, sir. It’s my mom...she told me not to talk to strangers.”

“Yes, yes. Sage advice. Yer mom is a very sharp woman, Master Max. By the way, might ye know where she be?”

Before I could answer, the tallest and most powerful-looking man I had ever seen, approached with Tully in tow. He wore a thick leather tunic, and his britches looked to be made from waxed sailcloth. His head was bald and his skin was the color of moonless midnight. He stood a good foot taller than Captain Sin and was covered in thick muscles that look like taut rope.

“Oh, good show, Piers, good show. Any problems?”

“No, captain,” Piers replied in a deep, rich baritone.

“Well, we have the boy, and ye have their horse? Now, where be ye mother?” Sin asked.

“You know my mom?”

“Yes, I do, Master Max. She was supposed to meet me at the Grog Blossom hours ago. A dreadful place that be. Their food is

bland, and it makes me wonder if they cut old potatoes to look like fish. It's awful, don't you think?"

"I don't know. I've never eaten there," I replied.

"Of course, ye haven't. That's no place for a young boy. It's full of all kinds of rogues... even pirates." Sin showed me his pearly white teeth with the top left tooth capped in gold.

"Pirates, yes... my mom mentioned pirates. She said we were going sail on a pirate ship."

"She'd be correct. The *Saucy Pig* is the terror of the high seas, lad."

I backed deeper into the wagon. I had been excited to sail on a pirate ship, but that was when I thought my mom was going to be with me. "Are you a spice pirate?"

"Yes, but don't say that so loud," whispered Captain Sin. "I've a reputation to keep in these parts. I can't be seen helping little boys and their ponies. Why I'd be a laughingstock."

I giggled and felt my shoulders relax a bit. "I don't know where my mom is. She told me to wait for her. She was meeting with a... well I guess she was meeting you. But that was hours ago. I woke up, and those men were trying to steal Tully, and..."

"Slow down there, lad. It will be all right," Sin said in a soothing voice.

"It's not all right. My dad is somewhere lost at sea, and now my mom is missing. Will you please help me?"

I felt a tear roll down my cheek. I closed my eyes. I didn't want to show these pirates any sign of weakness, but I couldn't help being frightened. I felt a strange sensation rising quickly through the center of my body and chest. It was like I'd stepped out of the shade into direct sunlight. Waves of energy pulsed through my arms and legs, as fear became desperate anger.

I opened my eyes to see Captain Sin gripping his throat. His eyes were red and bulging, and his skin turned to a muddy purple.

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“What...what is happening?” he gasped. Piers slipped an arm around the captain and supported his sagging weight.

“Are you all right?” I asked. As fast as it had risen, the heat drained from my body “Are you all right?” I asked Captain Sin. I suddenly felt cold and sick to my stomach. Sin took in a deep breath, and his color returned to a pale pink.

“Captain, are you okay?” Piers asked in a concerned tone.

The captain held up his hand and brushed his jacket. “I’m fine. Just fine. I haven’t eaten a proper meal is all. Ye know how I get when I haven’t eaten—all lightheaded and cranky.”

The thief who had been knocked out by Sin’s oar began to moan and move.

“Where is the other one?” Sin asked.

“I secured him in an alley near the Grog Blossom,” replied Piers.

“Aye, these two know something about what has happened, and I intend to find out what it is. We have too much to lose if anything happens to the boy’s mother,” replied Sin.

“Does that mean you are going to help me?” I jumped down from the cart.

“Let me be clear, Master Max. Your mom promised me something very, very valuable for providing you both with safe passage, and I intend to collect that payment. First, we need to find her, and so, yes, I suppose that means I will be helping you. But you must do exactly as I say without question.”

“I will. I promise.” What choice did I have? I had to agree to his crazy proposal. The only other family I had was Uncle Einion and he lived faraway on Shark Tooth Island in a small shack...and was anything but friendly. A terrible that scar stretched across his cheek only added to his unpleasantness. A pirate ship seemed the better choice.

My dad told me some tales of pirates who sold their stolen spices

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at the floating market for gold and riches. They lived their life on the three seas but had no island to call home.

“Pirates live by a code, Max,” my dad had said. “Even though they are thieves, they don’t violate their code. If they give their word, they keep it, or risk being banished.”

None of those stories mentioned pirates helping children find their parents. If someone had kidnapped Mom, she needed me. I was all she had, and these pirates were my best chance of finding her.

## CHAPTER

# 2



Piers picked up the unconscious thief lying over the bench and threw him into the back of the wagon like a bag of grain. He hooked Tully to her yoke, and we traveled to a blind alleyway next to the Grog Blossom. In the early afternoon, there weren't many patrons in the streets.

Sin and Piers tied the thieves' hands and legs to the cart. Mom always avoided this part of the docks because of its reputation. Screams were as common as the caws of sea birds. Piers got down and stood with his arms crossed at the end of the alley, like a hulking statue.

"Master Max, ye have nothing to fear from Piers," said Captain Sin, as if reading my fear. "He's a pussy cat caught in a lion's body. He loves children, trust me. However, he is not fond of people who hurt children."

I wasn't reassured, so I only nodded.

"Well then, let's see what these hooligans have to say about yer mom, shall we?" said Sin with a devilish grin.

"What be yer names?"

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The portly man spat on Captain Sin's boot.

"That's disgusting. Why would you do that?" I asked.

The portly man grinned. Seeing his rotten teeth churned my stomach.

"Come on," prompted Sin. "Is that any way to greet a fellow thief?"

"Ha, yer nutin' but a lice-ridden spice pirate, stealing from the guild. Yer nutin' like us in yer fancy clothes. Ye know nutin' about life on the street like me and Slander does."

Slander frowned at the portly man.

"So yer silent partner here is Slander, and who might ye be?" asked Sin.

"None of yer business." The portly man spat again, this time on Sin's other boot.

"Please stop that. It's really gross," I remarked.

"The boy has a point," commented Sin. "We can do this all day, and eventually, you are going to run out of spit."

"Igo...his name is Igo," sputtered Slander.

"Now, why would ye do sumtin' like that?" asked Igo.

"You told him my, my name...I thought it only fair," said Slander in a high-pitched voice. He had a long neck and large throat apple. It jumped up and down when he talked.

"Did ye, now? He knows who we be," said Igo.

"Yer names mean little to me, other than ye had some cruel parents. Never mind. Where be the woman?" demanded Sin.

Even though it didn't seem safe, I stood only a few feet from the men. They were tied with what looked like well-made knots, but I wasn't sure they couldn't escape. I was drawn into this exchange, though I hoped there was no more spitting. I hadn't even had breakfast yet.

"What woman?" asked Igo.



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“You know what woman.” I protested. “You told me my mom wasn’t coming back.”

“I don’t know what yer talking about,” said Igo. Slander rolled his eyes but said nothing.

“Are ye calling this boy a liar? Tsk, tsk...that won’t do,” said Sin, and he put his hand under his coat.

“You aren’t going to hurt...or kill these men are you?” I scanned Sin’s coat for any bulges that could indicate he was hiding a weapon. Sin merely smiled, and Igo and Slander began pulling at their restraints.

“Ok, ok...we might know who yer talking about,” Igo said as he continued to try to wiggle his arms free. “We don’t know where she is, so let us go.”

“We never intended on hurting the lad,” added Slander. “He’s a good boy. We was playing a game—that’s all.”

“A game? Hmph...” said Piers without even turning back toward us.

“Ye told the boy his mom wasn’t returning. Where is she?” asked Sin.

Igo began looking around, and Slander’s eyes bulged from his face. Sin still had his hand in his coat pocket. I hoped the men would tell us where my mom was without anyone getting hurt.

“Ye seem like fine, upstanding gentlemen. I understand, times be hard with the guild locking down trade,” said Sin. “I mean, how can honest blokes like yerselves make a living? Ye saw the cart and the horse and determined that someone had abandoned them. Ye saw a way to make a few extra gold pieces. I, too, am an opportunist, and in a lot of ways, I’m like ye. I take things that belong to others, and I often lie about it. The problem is, since I’m a professional thief and liar, I can tell when other people are lying to me.”

The two thieves looked at one another nervously, but neither spoke.

“I’m a fair man. Ask anyone whom I’ve killed. I gave each of them the chance to be honest, and walk away,” Sin continued. The two men squirmed harder against their ropes.

“Please don’t kill them,” I blurted out. I had interrupted Sin twice, and he didn’t seem happy about it.

“Perhaps ye should take a walk with Piers while I finish with these men,” suggested Sin. Piers grunted in response.

“I can stay, don’t make me go,” I responded nervously. “I want to know where my mom is, but I don’t want you to kill these men.”

“Listen to the boy,” said Igo.

“This is your lucky day because I don’t intend on dispatching ye in front of this young lad,” Sin said with a hint of sarcasm. “Something like that could mark his very soul and become a burden to him in life. No, ye will tell me what I need to know without the need fer blood. Are ye ready to talk?”

I sighed a breath of relief, but Sin still had his hand inside his jacket. Slander nodded, but Igo growled at him and Slander immediately shook his head no.

“Pity.” Sin pulled a small bag from his inside his coat. He pulled a white linen from another pocket in his jacket, and tied it across his nose and face. He looked around in the back of the cart a few minutes and pulled out a bucket of water we always packed for Tully to drink.

“Take a few steps back, Master Max.”

I dutifully did as I was told, but didn’t look away. Sin pulled on a soft leather glove and poured some red powder from the small bag onto it. He stared at the thieves, unblinking, the pile of red powder held before him. He didn’t move a muscle.

“What...what is that you’ve got there?” asked Slander in a shaky voice.

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“Oh, this? I traded some blocks of blue salt for this down in Tyreen. Did ye know they grow the hottest peppers in the three seas? They are called Uko. Not even the guild does deals in Uko. It’s too hot, even for me. I assure ye, gentlemen, that is a significant statement, as I love spicy food.”

I had never heard of Uko, but it didn’t seem like anything I wanted to taste. I backed up even further so I wouldn’t accidentally breathe in any of the hot spice.

“What do you intend to do with that?” Slander’s voice hit its highest pitch yet.

“Nothing, if ye two tells me what ye did with this lad’s mother,” replied Sin.

“Ahh, yer bluffin’,” said Igo.

Sin blew the powder into the faces of the two thieves. When they tried to scream, they inhaled the powder, and it instantly made them gasp for air. Sin picked up the bucket and threw some of the water into their faces. Then he dipped a gourd into the bucket and allowed the men to drink and get their breath back.

“Again now, from the beginning,” Sin said.

Slander was sobbing and couldn’t get out a coherent sentence.

“Shut yer mouth, ye blubberin’ baby. I’ll talk for the both of us,” Igo said. “I don’t want any more of that fire powder in my face.” Igo’s eyes were red and puffy, and each breath he took sounded like agony.

Slander nodded and continued to sob quietly.

“Yer a real nasty piece of work, ye know?” Igo said.

“I do hear that more often than I’d like. I’m a friendly bloke if you get to know me better. Just ask Piers here.” Sin smiled with his perfect, pearly white teeth.

“You are an absolute angel, all the men say so,” said Piers in a dull tone.

“Now, Piers, ye don’t sound sincere,” Sin replied.

“Tell him,” I shouted. “By the mercy of the six sea gods, tell him where my mom is.”

“I will tell ye what ye want to know, but then ye must let us go,” pleaded Igo.

“Yer in no position to make demands, but...on the thieves’ code, if I feel ye have told me the truth, I will set ye free.” Sin gave Igo another sip of water and then nodded to him to begin. I could hardly watch the men take another dose of Uko. I had an impulse to run through the docks and yell for my mom. I couldn’t lose my head now. I had to stand firm and see this to the end, no matter how uncomfortable it was to watch.

“Last night we were meetin’ with some fellas at the Grog Blossom. Some men came in wearing uniforms of Harsu guard,” explained Igo. “Occasionally, they come in and throw around their coin when they be in town—always acting superior like. These men were ordering the tavern keeper and maids around all night. There was talkin’ ‘bout a woman, and how important she was. This caught our attention, so we sat a little closer.”

“Did they say it was my mom?” I asked.

“I don’t know. They were lookin’ for the woman and were having trouble finding her. They were asking around the tavern, but if anyone knew who she be, no one spoke a word.”

“Did they say her name?” Sin asked.

“I think they called her Bettina Daybreaker...” said Igo.

I gasped.

“Before too long, there was an argument betwixt the tavern keeper and the guards,” continued Igo. “The men refused to pay. Tables were kicked over, and the guards drew their swords. That’s when he came.” Igo’s eyes went wide.

“When who came in?” asked Sin in a calm voice.

“He was dressed in these white clothes with blue trim...” began Slander.

“Hush your mouth, I told ye, I’m tellin’ this story,” Igo said. “He had bright silver cloth wrapped ‘round his head, and in the middle was the biggest aquamarine I’ve ever seen. When the guards saw him, they immediately snapped to attention. ‘Get to the ship,’ he ordered, and the guards almost tripped tryin’ to get out of the door.”

“Was this man wearin’ a sword?” asked Sin.

“Yes, he had this big curved thing with a gold hilt. I suppose it was that sword that kept most of the men at the Blossom from slitting his throat and taking that jewel he was prancin’ ‘round with.”

“Abad,” Sin cursed. “What did he say? Come on, tell us...”

Sin dumped more pepper powder on his gloved hand and held it toward the thieves. I wondered if he was talking about Prince Abad, the Sultan’s son. Surely not. Why would the Prince of Harsu be involved with my mom?

“No need for any of that fire powder,” said Igo. “He didn’t say nutin’. He told the men to get back to the ship, that they needed to be ready to sail by mornin’. So me and Slander, we figured we’d find this woman first. Maybe get some ransom for her from the man with the aquamarine. We was sure he’d pay.”

“We was cheated.” Slander began coughing and gagging again.

“Don’t let me tell ye again. This is my tale,” said Igo. He took a big breath and repeated dramatically, “We was cheated. We were on the street and saw a lady walking toward the Grog Blossom. We were sure it be her. No decent folk be around the docks that early in the mornin’. She matched the description the guards had given in the tavern, so we knew she be the one.”

“Did you find her? What did you do with her?” I demanded. My fists were clenched and my temper was rising.

“Before we could reach her, a shadow grabbed her, and then she

was gone. Just like that.” Slander awkwardly snapped his finger under his restraint.

“A shadow? What kind of shadow?” Sin asked.

“I don’t know how else to describe it. The thing was man-shaped, but I couldn’t see any face.” Slander shivered visibly. “We barely saw it, and then the street was empty. We rushed to the spot she had been, but there was nutin’”

“What happened to her?” I asked. “That’s not possible. You’re lying. Tell the truth. Where is she?” I made my way toward the men, but Piers’s hand tightened on my shoulder.

“We be tellin’ the truth,” insisted Igo. “Slander and I figured that we had been double-twixted. We went down to docks to look for the ship from Harsu. We was going to demand our ransom. We deserved it, but the ship was already sailin’ away. Spittin’ mad, we was.”

“Spittin’,” Slander added. I hoped the spitting wouldn’t start again. I wasn’t sure my stomach could handle it.

“So, we went to look fer her belongings,” continued Igo. “We supposed she might have left something behind. Ye understand the thieves’ code. We keep what we find. We was cheated once, and now ye are tryin’ to cheat us again. If ye let us have the horse and wagon, we’ll be on our way. It is our right.” Igo’s smile was defiant and hideous. Sin began to laugh, and the two thieves laughed with him—nervously at first, then in earnest.

Sin stopped laughing abruptly. “Yer right. Ye do deserve something.” Sin drew back his arm as if to strike the man. Heat flared inside me.

“Stop,” I screamed. “Don’t hurt them anymore. They told you what you wanted. Please don’t hurt them.”

Sin’s balled fist froze in mid-air, ready to strike. His expression changed to one of confusion before he dropped it, looking at the ground as he took in a few big breaths.

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“Dump them,” Sin spat. Piers picked each man up and dropped them in the wet alleyway with a splash. Captain Sin reached back into his oversized coat and withdrew another cloth with two tentacle-like plants inside. “When you get yerself untied, chew some of that plant. It will stop the burning in your mouth and throat,” Sin instructed. “Wipe what’s left of the plant on your face and put some up your nose. We never met, and ye won’t repeat this story to anyone—savvy?”

Both men nodded quickly.

Sin, Piers, and I boarded the cart and turned Tully back into the street out of the alley. I wasn’t sure I understood everything that had just happened.

“You mentioned Abad...is that Prince Abad, the sultan’s son?” I asked as we made our way past the other shops that lined the street.

“Aye,” was all Sin replied.

“What about that shadow? Do you know anything about that?” I asked.

“I’m not sure what those men were talking about, but I believe they were telling the truth. At least, they believed they saw some shadow creature...”

“What do we do now?” I asked as we turned toward the harbor.

“We catch us a prince.” Sin winked.

