

# Chapter Eighteen

## The Demon Lord

Depressed and falling into despair. There was no other way I could describe how I was feeling at the moment. My best friend Bonnie had been frozen to death by some mysterious shadowy figure that was shrouded by clouds. I saw it and I still could not believe it. I was not sure why I survived, and she did not though I suspected that the poison that was in Bonnie was effecting her too and that might have helped speeded up her death. I mean without the poison effecting her body she still might have been killed but I had my doubts on that. I survived so she might have as well.

I turned again and saw how close we had been to finishing. It was so close I said to myself. One room was all that was left between us and the back of the temple that led to another area of the unknown. At this point I did not care if I made it or not. All I care about was my friend who had been killed.

Why did she have to die and why could it not have been me? Was there anything I could have different. Perhaps if I had better leadership skills and was a better warrior than Bonnie would not have been killed. How could I have been so foolish to not see what was ahead? I had been so focused on watching out tails that I did not see what was coming until it was too late. I did not want to move and while I had nearly given up in despair as these questions raced through my mind I heard a voice quietly speak to me.

“Please,” the gentle voice said. “Don’t give up. Keep trucking.”

Keep trucking I said to myself. Easier said than done. I was the leader of our group despite being the youngest so all that has happened for good or bad was on me. True, the Jungle

Master doppelganger had been defeated but that had been because of Bonnie and not because of something I did although Bonnie if she saw me now would tell me to quit pouting and keep moving on.

“Go,” the gentle voice said again. “Move forward. Your destiny awaits.”

Destiny I said to myself. What destiny? Destiny to lead. Destiny to watch friends disappear or get killed. If this was my destiny, I did not want it. Still, though the voice had a gentle aura the push it was giving me could not be resisted. I stood up then for a moment before again kneeling and picking up Bonnie’s body. I was not going to leave it for whatever creatures there were in the deeper portions of the temple. No, she may have been killed but I was sure going to make sure she would get out of the temple.

For the most part carrying Bonnie would not have been as hard for me as you might have thought. Again, Bonnie and I had exercised and lifted weights for a while so lifting heavy objects and even lifting each other up at times was a rather easy task or I should say it was easy under normal circumstances. However, this was not normal circumstances and I had a difficult time carrying her. It was difficult not because she was heavy, in reality she was not, but it was difficult because of the sadness and grief I was feeling.

As soon as I entered the room my sadness I had been feeling turned into slight curiosity and anger. I was curious and angry at the same time as I looked and saw a mysterious man standing in the middle of the room. He was mysterious I said to myself, yet he did not have the same mysterious and shadowy aura that the other figure I saw moments earlier. Rather, he appeared to be dressed a lot more-well let’s just say it was dressed a lot more flamboyantly. He had the appearance of being someone of royalty or of a noble lineage though I suspected this

individual was not a noble person or a king. No, this person was just a fancied up schmuck that I knew was responsible for everything that had occurred.

The man, or thing, as I really could not tell if it was man or woman or if it was even human though it did give off the appearance it was. It was a little taller than the Jungle Master doppelganger but not so much so that one would have thought it as being a giant. It was also average build. It also had a few muscles I saw and plus I saw on its hip a huge rapier. It was only when it turned around could I tell if it was a man or woman.

The figure turned and I saw that it had dark white and red hair which covered part of its face. It's face although it was white on the surface, I sensed was covering a different layer of skin. I also saw on its face a small cut underneath its right eye which I assumed it must have gotten in an earlier battle. I also saw that its chest was covered by red and black painted tattoos. It said nothing but just watched. I did not want for it to take pleasure of seeing my dead friend so I walked to one of the nearby columns and laid her down before turning and walking to the figure. As soon as I got close enough the figure finally spoke.

“Ωεχλομε, Πρινχε Χεμιλ. Μψ μαστερ ανδ Ι ηαπε βεεν εξπεχτινγ ψου,” the figure. It was then I finally figured out this figure was a male though I could not understand what it was saying.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“Παρδον τηε ρυδε ιντροδυχτιον Πρινχε Χεμιλ. Ι αμ Λορδ Ζυβερι, τηε Δεμον Λορδ οφ ζεριτψ τηουγη ψου μαψ φυστ χαλλ με Λορδ Ζυβερι,” the figure replied.

“I don't understand what you are saying,” I said.

“Pardon me but I thought you were someone else though my master and I may have been mistaken,” the figure said. “But I will gladly tell you a second time. I am Lord Zuberi, the Demon Lord of Verity though you may just call me Lord Zuberi.”

“Zuberi,” I began.

“I said LORD ZUBERI,” shouted the figure as his eyes widened and the wider they got the more yellow they became.

“You’re the demon lord who has been causing trouble for these people,” I shot back.

“My master and I thought it was best to separate the people. To make them afraid and not wanting anything to do with the others,” the figure said before disappearing. He only stayed disappeared for a second as he quickly reappeared right beside me.

“Ahhhh,” I shrieked.

“I know. I can be like that at times,” Zuberi said as he walked away from me. “And it’s quite funny too when I do. I always get a kick of scaring people to death.”

“So that was you back there who scared us and froze my friend to death,” I shouted.

“Qui?” Zuberi asked.

“Don’t play dumb with me Zuberi,” I said.

The demon lord disappeared yet again for a second and when he reappeared right beside me again he grabbed me by the neck and lifted me into the air. I was frightened by how easily he lifted me with just one and I thought I was strong. But even more frightening than that was his scream. “I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME LORD ZUBERI.”

He dropped me after that. I stood up again a moment later as he turned back to me and gave me one of the most wicked, the most vile, and the most frightening smiles I had ever seen on a person. His smile I knew masked the raging anger that was in him.

“But to answer your question you foolish lad,” Zuberi began. “No, that was not me. I would prefer not to freeze my victims but rather incinerate them or tear them apart limb for limb. Also, if I am feeling particularly merciful I might beat my victim to an inch of death then let them heal up then I would beat them again. I like hearing my victims cry. I like to hear them beg. Beg like a dog. Only after they cry and scream enough will I put them out of their misery.”

“I bet you are real proud of yourself,” I shot back angrily.

“Oh, but I am,” Zuberi said as he disappeared again. He reappeared a moment later at the end of the room next to the exit only to disappear again. He finally reappeared yet again beside me as he spoke. “And so is my master.”

“You mean the witch doctor,” I said.

“Witch Doctor,” Zuberi said. “So you have met him?”

“No,” I said.

“Ah, that is a shame,” Zuberi said with a taunting laugh. It appeared to me what I said amused him. “You’re right young man. He is my master but he will also be your king and destroyer.”

“I don’t think so,” I said.

“How can you be so sure?” Zuberi said mockingly. “I mean you don’t even know who you are really.”

“I know who I am,” I replied. “My name is Alex. Alex Winters.”

“Oh, really Alex. Is that what you have been told?” Zuberi again laughed but this time more hysterically. “Oh, you’re so gullible. Even more so than master and I thought. And you know the sad thing is you met the Witch Doctor and don’t even know it.”

“Enough of the talk,” I said.

“Oh, but I am not talking,” Zuberi, said as I could tell by his voice that he was becoming more serious and less flamblyant and less playful. “You met him earlier just a little bit ago.”

“You mean,” I said as I got a sickening feeling of what Zuberi was talking about.

“Yes. I was not the one who killed your friend Princess Emel,” Zuberi said.

“Her name is Bonnie. Not Princess Emel,” I shouted.

“So much you don’t know. So much you don’t understand,” Zuberi said as he disappeared and reappeared in front of me causing me to fall backwards on to ground. “You humans and Veritians are so predictable. You seem to accept what you have been told as truth without much thought. My friend you should know better. Not all is what it seems.”

“You’re lying,” I shouted though I could feel some truth to what he was saying.

“Am I?” Zuberi said as he again disappeared and reappeared but this on my right side. “You still don’t get it. That cold shadowy figure you saw in the room before here. The one that came in the clouds and froze your friend to death. Oh, yeah. That was the spirit of my master. The Witch Doctor. You should know everywhere he goes fear always follows. No one can stand up to him.”

“You’re wrong on that mister,” I said.

“LORD ZUBERI,” he again shouted.

“I stood up to him. Just like I am going to stand up to you,” I said as I took out my sword.

“Boy,” Zuberi said with slight disbelief. “I know you did not just draw your sword on me.”

“I will fight you to the death if need be,” I said.

“Very well,” Zuberi said as he took out his rapier and turned to me. “Because I will now tear you apart limb for limb before I finally put you out of your existence. And by the way do not even think about seeing your other friend again.”

“Kasey,” I angrily replied.

“Is that what you call her? Kasey. Well, yes. You will never see Kasey again. Like you and your fallen comrade she will be killed by me,” Zuberi said.

“Alright buster. Let’s dance,” I said.

With that Zuberi quickly swung his rapier which I was easily able to reflect back to him. I could not help but feel that he was toying with me. He was moving rather slowly like it was an intention move to taunt me even more . I swung my sword at him which he was easily blocked. He disappeared for a second before reappearing behind me. I would have been killed at that moment had I not acted impossibly fast and reflected his swing with my shield. He again, disappeared and came back a second later a few feet away from me. He threw his rapier at me which I easily blocked with my shield. As soon as he saw he missed he again disappeared and came back a second later directly in front of me as he held a spear.

“I should let you know upfront that I am playing with you. You have no chance against me,” Zuberi said as he took his spear and tried to stab me with it. I was able to dodge his attack and as he attacked I took my sword and sliced off his arm. He stopped and screamed for a moment with disbelief and as he turned to me I saw the yellow in his eyes was only becoming more filled with hate. His anger subsided a second later as I saw he was able to regenerate another arm.

“What the-?” I asked.

“Foolish lad, I am Demon Lord Zuberi. You should realize that you cannot defeat me. You cannot slow me down. You cannot even harm me even when you think you can,” Zuberi said as he caused a sword that was much larger than mine to appear. “I confess you have more skill than I expected but it ends now.”

Zuberi began swinging far more aggressively than he had been previously and was disappearing far less. Now, I felt he was giving more of his effort and that I had his full attention. Although I was able to block most of his attacks early on I knew with his strength and aggressiveness that I would not be able to hold on forever. We continued to exchange blows until he got me into a corner a few moments later and as he did he took his sword and stabbed me in the thigh.

“Owwwww,” I shouted as I fell onto the ground.

“Round one goes to Lord Zuberi and perhaps young man that will teach you to respect me,” Zuberi said as he lifted me by my hair. “Did you really believe you could stop me? I think you should have realized you could not.”

I lost I said to myself. Zuberi was right. I was no match for him strength for strength but perhaps I did not need to me. As he lifted me high into the air I saw that the dead vines suddenly come back to life. The grass that had been dark brown was now becoming lush green. Like it was in the forest. The temple was becoming more lit up and warmer. I do not think Zuberi paid any attention. But I also noticed something I did not see before. Jungle People. On the other side of the room. These people were not the skeleton warriors we saw earlier but were actually people. One of the jungle people took a spear and with a an accurate hit Zuberi in his left shoulder.

“What?” Zuberi shouted with disbelief as he turned and saw the jungle people. He immediately dropped me onto the ground as he made another spear appear. He took the spear

and threw it at the jungle people. I was becoming happier by the moment. I turned and looked at the side we are on and even more jungle people were coming to help. "No. It cannot be."

"Zuberi," I said happily though I was in pain from being stabbed. More and more jungle people began to appear and although I could not understand what they were saying I knew they were looking at the Demon Lord with anger and contempt.

"LORD ZUBERI to you," Zuberi shouted.

"Lord Zuberi, it looks like you and your master have lost your hold on the people. It looks like they are finally standing up to you," I said.

"NO. NO," Zuberi shouted.

"It is over. The jungle people are taking their temple and jungle back from you. They have just told you Lord Zuberi that you are welcome here nevermore," I said as I pointed my sword at Zuberi.

"You think this is over," Zuberi said as he began to point his sword at me but just as he was about to swing one of the jungle people threw another spear which knocked the skin off the right side of his cheek. Finally I saw underneath his white complexion really dark black and yellow skin. The Demon Lord turned to the jungle people as another one threw a spear and knocked his left shoulder off.

"I would stop while you are ahead," I taunted though I immediately regretted it.

"You think this is over boy," Zuberi said as he turned back to me and began recollecting himself as she did his face became white again and his shoulder reattached itself. "No. Not by a long shot. Consider this your day but should you ever cross me again let's just say you will be my guinea pig for eternal punishment."

With that Zuberi, the Demon Lord of Verity vanished. The jungle people began to cheer loudly and at once another earthquake hit. While I was happy the jungle people had finally recaptured their jungle and home I was still sad. I was still sad at the loss of my friend. The one person who helped me through the temple and despite the good feeling I had for helping them I knew that I would be sad knowing I would never see Bonnie again. That sweet smile of hers, that calm and soothing voice, the energy she brought to the table and just the good nature she had I knew was no more. Tears fell down my face continuously until a moment later I heard a voice speak to me.

“Young man,” the voice calmly said. “Bring your friend to the table.”