

*Hail To Thee of Valor and Honor,*

*In the Hantu Valley at the foot of the Gray Mountain, my village of Veraithimil thrives. Our elders work daily to tend to the forest and many of our young men and women study and worship in the Temple on the Mountain. We lived our lives in peace but peace is no more.*

*It was three weeks ago when a stranger who called himself the "Rahib" first came. He was a handsome man with broad shoulders with eyes that held a piercing glint that looked uncomfortably into one's soul. His voice was soft and persuasive and anyone hearing it was lulled into agreement. It became apparent that he sought only one thing, my hand.*

*He came to me and dropped to one knee proclaiming his desire to me. "Rahasia," he said. "Your beauty is fabled throughout the land, almost as much as your father's wealth. To possess you I have traveled far and braved many dangers. Surely you will not deny me."*

*I politely refused him as I was already betrothed to another. Then, as I turned to leave, he grabbed my arm with an unbearable grip. I cried out. My father and my betrothed heard me and bound from our home in a rage. Together they drove Rahib from our home and cast him to ground.*

*On his knees, like a common beggar, he pleaded to me not to refuse him. I did. He then began to utter a dark curse in a language we could not understand and the sky blackened at his words. Before my father could reach him he disappeared and with his departure so too did the darkening sky. Peace soon returned to our lives and the stranger and his dark curse were forgotten.*

*Then one day, the young men and women who study at the temple did not return home. Their families became worried and went to the temple but were driven away by their kin. My father, who sometimes taught at the temple, went there to discover what had happened. He did not return. Haanes, my betrothed, fearing for my father's safety also went to the temple. He too did not return.*

*Then two days ago, the village council received a message. It was from the Rahib. He boasted that all the Siswa were now devoted to him, bewitched by magic that could not be undone. He demanded that three of the fairest maidens, myself included, be delivered to him or he would never release the Siswa.*

*The Council refused and that night the Siswa attacked and kidnapped the two other maidens. I barely escaped. Now the entire village dwells in misery, for many of their sons and daughters are Siswa. Some have even begged me to surrender myself to the Rahib, but I dare not. There are no guarantees that he would break his curse over the Siswa should I relent. I fear that unless we are helped I will not see Haanes or my father and my friends Sylavia and Myelis.*

*Someone must rescue them and the Rahib must be forced to remove his curse upon the Siswa. Anyone who helps us will be well rewarded, if they succeed. Without help, I will have no choice but to give myself to the Rahib and hope and pray that he keeps his word to release the others.*

*Rahasia*