

Servant of the Avenger

MY MOTHER'S SON

I am known by many names. To the people of Ugaasa, my people, I am known as *Nidar*. To the people of the Khilafah, I am known as the Thronebreaker, the Binder of Kings, and the Shadow in White, but most of all, Servant of the Avenger. In some provinces, I am a myth, in others a legend. Some think me a hero that made two worlds collide. Others choose not to remember me at all, believing me nothing more than a cautionary tale for children. In a way, they are right, though I care little of their judgement. What I *can* say is that I am my mother's son. And though I am the son of a king, it is she who forged me.

I wish I could tell you I was marked for greatness from birth. That the poets sung my name as I popped from my mother's womb, and that I stood tall on my two feet. The truth is that I wailed and cried like any other child. My twin sister, though, did not. She came out walking, and was always dominant in her ways. Arrogant, even. Had I not been my father's son, she would have claimed my crown as her own. As it was, her actions turned the Academy against me. For this, Father never forgave her. He did not understand the ambition that drove a person to forgo family.

But I did.

It was my own.

Mother, on the contrary, was a ruler before all else. Bold as she was clever, her machinations built an empire out of our small city-state. Yet it was in her writings that she was truly herself. The woman was a master storyteller and not a day passed where she did not spin tales. Most were propaganda. Stories of the Prophets and messengers, of men and women on the Straight Path. But occasionally she spoke of magic. Of Talenti so powerful their spells parted waves, and of creatures so large their wings obstructed the moons. It was these tales that lit a fire in my mind.

And it was because of their contents that my family burned.

