

The Ashed Curses

DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN



Fabiha Hyder

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By

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About The Author



Fabiha Hyder is still a student studying in Bangalore. Currently pursuing a career in interior designing, she lives with her family.

Being a fan of mystery, drama and suspense herself, The Ashed Curses found its place. The Ashed Curses Darkness before dawn is her first book. The goal is to start its series. It will return soon with many more chills and mysteries!



About The Book



Welcome to Redford!

A town of mystery and magic. Ghosts and ghouls. Witches and warlocks. Deaths and demons.

Reyna Phillip just moved to Redford. Little does she know how real the history of the town is. All her instincts say, she must go back! Can all the accidents just be a coincidence? Is she hallucinating the things she sees?

The doubts remained that way until she met Danny who makes her believe, it's all true. Dead witches?

Reyna must figure out a way to stop the dead witch before she hurts her friends one by one before it's too late. Or is it?



Dedication



Sincerely, I dedicate this book to my brother and sisters especially for not making fun of me. Mum, your appreciation for the story is the happiest thing to happen.

And Dad, I know it's a surprise for You, isn't it?

To Wafa who has been with me in all the ebbs and bays of the roll-a-coaster adventurous life especially the venture of writing this book.

Last but not the least, I dedicate it to everyone whom I love and all who love me, even if it might not get appreciation.

To my readers, take this book, turn off the lights, light a candle or many candles..Read the book while watching the shadows. You'll know what it means. Also, watch out!!

Shhhh.....Read and Enjoy!





Prologue

THE DARKE FOREST IN REDFORD



A harsh history in a small town ... middle of nowhere.

People who stayed there never left, but those who left never returned. It's hard to understand it if you don't live in Redford; if you grew up in Redford you'd know all the stories about the Darke family. They were the founders of the town. They built a huge mansion in the forest named after them – The Darke Forest.

People claimed they were evil. They practised the dark arts and evil sorcery to get their way and to entertain themselves. Weird howls and screams of horror were heard coming from the Darke mansion day and night. They were feared by the living and the dead. Every generation of the Darke witches had their own agenda and were always powerful than the previous ones.

Rhonin and Irina Darke were the most evil of them all. Irina was a powerful witch and had an unquenchable thirst for more power; she wore a jewelled amulet that she said gave her power and immortality. She used it to cast spells and put curses on the townspeople. But, when one day the mansion burnt down mysteriously with the Darke family in it, people

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thought the evil curses finally ended; “The Ashed Curses” they called it.

The curses became legends.... Legends became myths...

But even after more than 100 years, people disappeared into thin air; the howls of the Darke Forest continued; and unexplained mysteries and murders followed.

Was history repeating itself or was the evil never really gone...?



Chapter 1

“GO BACK”



“Well, here we are! What do you think?”

What did I think? I just wanted to go back the way we came.

I hated change.

Especially going to a spooky town with a population of 2475, not my kind of scene! But I wasn't going to tell Mum that; she would start about the great opportunity for my dad, we should be supportive etc. Lastly, she would say, “We're the Phillips, we overcome everything.” That was like our family slogan. But how could I be supportive? I was leaving behind my whole life in Bangalore – my friends, my school, everything! I didn't adjust well in new surroundings. Especially around new people.

“Yeah ... Seems cosy,” I replied to her. I wasn't going to compliment this town more.

“I know this is hard for you Reyna honey, but think how exciting it's going to be! Everyone's going to love you, you're pretty, you're talented, you've got a nice record. It would be hard not to notice you!” Mum said.

I gave her an excited smile. Easy for her to say. She didn't have school.

I got out of the car and looked around. It was a cold Saturday morning. There was a park nearby and a few kids were running around; other than that it was deserted. Weird, I thought.

This town looked old, gray and sad. The architecture I noticed was mostly British.

I entered the house grumbling how we were going backwards instead of forwards.

It was almost evening when I finished unpacking. All I did was transfer stuff from the boxes and spread it out in my small room, without any interest in sorting or anything. It would be easier to put it all back in case we decided to move back. Yup! I was secretly still hoping that.

"I'm going out," I called out, carefully shutting my room door so that Mum wouldn't see the mess. She would freak out and throw things at me. It had happened before. She was helping my dad with his medical things. Yes. My dad, the doctor. The reason we are here.

I made my way through the driveway and looked around wondering which way to go. Still couldn't find anyone in sight.

I turned left and kept wandering lost in thought until I stumbled on a signboard.

I looked up, "The Darke Forest" it read. Whoa! How far had I walked? I looked around; a car passed by with loud music. It was gone in a blur of motion. I stared at the forest staring back at me daring me to enter.

I manoeuvred that way, now peering into the dark depths.

So this is the great **Darke Forest**. I bet people just made up stories to scare kids. I mean it looks a little

creepy, that's all. All forests do. I had never really been in a real forest before; it looked like any other typical forest you see in movies – tall trees, a leaf-covered path, sounds of birds and all. Like I said, a typical forest. But there was this strange tension in the air that made me feel uneasy.

I kept going further and further into the woods thinking about the stuff the travel agent had said about this place. I passed by a pillar which read 'In Memory' and showed a picture of the Britisher who founded this town, the Darkes. I remembered him telling they were evil and all such things about ghosts of the dead being seen and unexplained murders.

It wasn't even very dark but fog had started to set in. I stopped in my tracks and looked around confused. I've already been this way before. I turned around and realized the path I came through was gone. I walked back the way I came, couldn't find anything familiar. I staggered forward, still couldn't find my way. I was going around in circles. Everything looked familiar yet different. Tall trees loomed over me.

"Great," I thought to myself. It's getting dark and I am lost in this dark Darke Forest.

"Ha-ha," I said out aloud sarcastically.

OK, no need to panic; I fished out my cell phone from my pocket to call my dad.

"Hmm ... no signal," I kept walking in random directions trying to get a signal when suddenly I felt someone watching me. I slowly turned around; there was nothing but darkness. I heard howling at a distance.

OK, that's it!

I started running in one direction, determined to get out of there. Suddenly, I tripped on something and fell. I turned around and found a dead animal. Gosh,

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