

The Parramatta Djinn

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Introduction: The Slumbering Artery of Western Sydney

Long before the concrete pylons of the M4 motorway cast their heavy, ribbed shadows over the suburbs, and long before the glass towers of the CBD began to reflect the harsh, blinding gold of the Australian sun, the Parramatta River was a vein of ancient, untamed magic. It is a slow, winding serpent of a waterway, dragging its heavy, turbid brown waters through the very heart of Western Sydney. To the casual observer waiting for the RiverCat ferry, it smells only of damp earth, diesel fumes, and the sharp, brackish tang of the encroaching tide. It sounds like the rhythmic slap of

muddy water against rusted retaining walls and the distant, chaotic roar of Victoria Road traffic. But beneath the silt, beneath the discarded shopping trolleys and the slick, iridescent sheen of urban runoff, something ancient and terrible has always been sleeping.

Just a few streets away from this slumbering artery stands 69 Cowper Street. It is a brutalist block of flats, a monolithic structure of weather-stained brick and peeling gray paint that looks less like a residence and more like an urban purgatory. In the humid height of summer, the building sweats, radiating trapped heat and the overwhelming, colliding scents of its inhabitants: the sharp bite of frying mustard seeds, the cloying sweetness of cheap floral room sprays, and the sour, pervasive stench of damp plaster and quiet despair.

This is not a realm of heroes or gods, but a theater of modern, domestic tragedy. Within these walls lived nine desi women, bound together not by blood, but by the shared, suffocating geography of their misery. They were a modern chorus of an unwritten epic, each trapped in the labyrinth of a marriage that had slowly decayed into a suffocating routine of neglect, cruelty, and profound isolation. Their lives were measured in the harsh, flickering yellow light of rangehood bulbs, the endless, droning hum of cricket commentary on neglected televisions, and the biting, icy silence of words left deliberately unspoken.

They were women pushed to the very edge of their emotional endurance, standing on the precipice of a silent madness. They did not know that the earth beneath Parramatta was shifting. They did not know that the dredging machines, biting blindly into the riverbed, were about to fracture a seal that predated the city itself.

When the Parramatta Djinn awoke, the air pressure across the suburb dropped so violently it shattered the fragile glass of cheap picture frames. The air suddenly smelled of crushed stone, ancient ozone, and the raw, electric promise of impossible bargains. The spirit brought with it a pact of literal, absolute mathematics—a divine algorithm that offered boundless wealth in exchange for physical sacrifice, with the unbreakable caveat that every boon would be doubled upon the husbands they so deeply loathed.

This is the chronicle of those nine women. It is a tale of hubris and desperate reclamation, a modern epic where the battlefields were not dusty plains, but cramped living rooms, intensive care units, and the muddy banks of a polluted river. It is the story of what happens when the absolute, terrifying power of ancient magic is placed into the hands of those who have nothing left to lose, and the devastating consequences of rewriting the ledger of fate.

Chapter 1: Sumitri's Surgical Strike

The Parramatta River did not simply flow; it dragged itself through the heart of the suburb like a wounded serpent, its surface shimmering with a sickly, iridescent slick of urban oil. The sky above was a bruised, heavy purple, bloated with rain that refused to fall. Sumitri stood on the muddy banks, her boots sinking into the soft, rotting earth. The damp wind, carrying the sharp, metallic tang of ozone and the sour stench of decaying eucalyptus leaves, tugged relentlessly at the edges of her crimson dupatta. It was a bleak, unforgiving landscape, yet to Sumitri, it felt like the threshold of paradise.

For fifteen years, the walls of Apartment 4B at 69 Cowper Street had been her prison. Her husband was a heavy, stagnant weight upon her existence, a man whose laziness was exceeded only by his

staggering entitlement. Sumitri's sensory memories of him were a sickening collage: the pungent, sour smell of unwashed cotton undershirts; the wet, rhythmic, infuriating sound of his open-mouthed chewing; the flicker of the harsh, blue-tinted fluorescent television screen casting shadows across his sleeping face at two in the afternoon. He was a parasite, draining her energy, her finances, and her youth, leaving her with nothing but the smell of stale cumin and the echo of his endless demands for hot tea and cold beer.

When the Djinn emerged from the river, the air pressure dropped violently, popping Sumitri's ears. He was a towering, terrifying figure of swirling, muddy water, tangled riverweed, and ancient, rusted debris, illuminated from within by a sickly, pulsing bioluminescent green light. The grinding of the halted dredging machines was replaced by the deafening roar of rushing water that made up the spirit's form. Sumitri did not flinch. She had calculated her move with the precision of a master assassin, her mind a cold, sharp blade.

"Mortal woman," the Djinn's voice boomed. It sounded like boulders grinding together at the bottom of a deep trench, vibrating through the soles of Sumitri's feet and rattling her teeth. "State your desire. But remember the pact bound in these waters: whatever boon you ask for, the husband you are tethered to shall receive exactly double."

Sumitri smiled, a cold, hard expression that cracked the weary lines of her face, revealing years of suppressed, simmering rage. She closed her eyes for a fraction of a second, envisioning the cramped apartment. She pictured her husband snoring loudly on the worn floral sofa, the air thick with the smell of old sweat and fried onions, utterly oblivious to the fact that his fate was currently being sealed in the mud of the riverbank. She thought about the endless nights