

**Rashluta Discovers His Light**

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Once upon a time, in the far away magical land of Nizhoni where peace, gratitude and abundance all intermingle with love, hanging light in the air, there lived a humble and spiritual carpenter known as Rashluta.

On this day, Rashluta was just returning to Nizhoni after being gone on a two-month spiritual quest, where he met a magical and wise sage, Wascar. Feeling blessed and full of gratitude Rashluta decided to rest at his favorite place in the whole world, a high tree lined peak overlooking the ocean with Nizhoni below on his right.

The hike to this spot is treacherous in places yet the beauty, and sounds beckon him to regularly make this trip. Today the scents of the ocean breeze drifting upward along the face of the cliff and intermingle with the scents from the town below making a veritable cornucopia of delectable aromas. Rashluta pauses giving extra thanks for this place and how it speaks to his spirit.

Here he communes with the energy of the land and the loving energy of the town allowing it to replenish his constitution, while bringing humility and thanks for all he does for the town. In this place he needs nothing else, yet today there's a different energy present, something heavier, almost dark.

Entering the town square Rashluta is enthusiastically welcomed home and told of the events that happened during his absence, especially of the dealings coming from deep in the low-lying woods, and the heavy energy. A lone wanderer, Jarvicious, recently came

to live on the southern most edge of town. He speaks ill of Rashluta and some town's folk have said he wants to cause him harm. Jarvicious claims to be an unknown and outcast twin brother of Rashluta. Abandoned at birth by his parents, he has come to seek revenge for his misfortune.

Jarvicious, being a loner likes to venture into the low-lying deeper forest surrounding Nizhoni. Here the swampy depths of the land give him sense of comfort and where he's discovered a cave that contains many dark secrets from long ago times.

Among other things Jarvicious has discovered a talent for manifesting the most deceitful and darkest of energies. Yet here in these surroundings Jarvicious is not completely alone, here he has found a decrepit hermit, a teacher of the dark, Monakai an exiled menehune. Together they study ancient texts manifesting dark energy that has begun spreading like an unstoppable sickness.

The cavern is cool and poorly lit; everything is damp or completely wet from the swampy land seeping through the pores of the surrounding rock walls. The stench of death lingers and it is eerily silent, except for the chanting of the dark incantations that the Jarvicious and Monakai monotonously recite a sickening droning rising from the depths of this place.

When Rashluta returns home he finds a rather large present sitting below his front windowsill. Wondering who would have left such a large gift, Rashluta quickly opens

the box, to find a breast plate and a note that reads: “For our spiritual counselor, our peaceful warrior, we give you the plate of Harthkin, a mythical instrument of good that originally helped bring peace and beauty to the land of Nizhoni.

While Rashluta was away studying, Wascar had first told him about the legend of Harthkin and to be aware that it was only legend. Yet, now seeing the magnificence in front of him coupled with the fact that the townspeople had so graciously gifted such an instrument, Rashluta felt obliged to at least see. Besides what harm could come from simply trying on the breastplate? Picking up Harthkin it began to vibrate, resonating with his own energy. Rashluta had never felt such power and harmony. Without another thought he quickly put the plate against his chest and fastened the straps tightly.

The plate began to glow, as energy coursed through Rashluta’s body, instantly he began to shrink, shriveling into a shadow of what he once was. Suddenly frail and appearing ancient, even worse he was unable to remove Harthkin. Trapped Rashluta suddenly felt physically exhausted, completely alone and scared. In his isolation he passed out drifting off into deep slumber.

The droning awoke Rashluta instantly, before he could recall his predicament. After a brief struggle feeling completely awake, he once again realized the severity of his situation and his despair began to settle once more, when he realized his teacher Wascar was sitting on his couch enjoying a cup of tea. At once Rashluta pleaded for help

screaming, “get this thing off of me!” Wascar simply smiled standing and turning his back on the scene. After Rashluta calmed down Wascar spoke.

“You my son, are on a marvelous journey why would you be tempted by such material extravagances? Your impetuous ego has you trapped and the only way to gain freedom is to successfully complete three tasks.”

The first task it to look into the mirror of self and embrace what you see. Suddenly Rashluta was standing in front of a large mirror looking at ghastly images of murders committing unspeakable crimes. At first Rashluta was appalled feeling the need for revenge especially for the children horrifically dying before his eyes. When suddenly from somewhere deep inside overwhelming compassion consumed his entire being and he wept uncontrollably for what seemed like hours. After the wave of emotion ebbed the scene became engulfed in flames.

Everything fell away and Rashluta found himself standing, balanced on the tip of a sheer precipice. Suddenly a loud voice commanded, “walk.” Carefully, and meticulously Rashluta began moving forward into a sea of nothingness, everything falling away all around him no way back, only forward. Winds began to bellow, making any movement perilous. Faced with impending death he started to move faster and faster then when it seemed that the emptiness would go on forever, on the horizon lay the other side.

Fighting the urge to begin running, Rashluta continued forward, closer and closer.

Suddenly it began to hail large stones of ice pelting him, stinging his face, first causing

him to teeter then regaining his balance he leapt to the cliff and using his last bit of strength pulled himself onto a ledge.

At first he didn't see the small passage, but when it became obvious that there was no way off the ledge he noticed the opening and crawling pulled himself into a large cave. Wascar was there sitting at a small wooden table with his tea. Kneel was all Rashluta heard. Wascar repeated his request and Rashluta did as asked. "What have you learned from these two experiences?" In the mirror I was first struck by the horror and brutality of the scene then I realized that the person committing the horrific acts was a reflection of me, that I have that potential and with that realization I became overwhelmed with compassion. Then when I was facing certain death I let go of my ego and put my faith in trusting my spirit self. It was only then that I knew nothing could dissuade me from reaching the other side.

With that Wascar said reach to your side, your final task is to remove Harthkin. Suddenly Rashluta felt weak, opening his eyes his surroundings were blurry then he realized he was lying on the floor of his cottage. Mustering the last bit of strength he had left, he pulled on the first leather strap, nothing. Grasping the flap more firmly, and summoning every bit of his essence the first strap gave way and then on the second. Instantly the plate vanished and Rashluta felt like his old self, full of vigor and ready for any physical challenge. It was in that moment he knew he had to find Jarvicious and Monakai and vanquish them from Nizhoni.

At first the venture into the deep southerly woods was pleasant, but soon with each step the air became cold heavy, bird song disappeared and the day's sunlight all but disappeared. Rashluta couldn't remember the lands surrounding Nizhoni ever feeling such despair. After hours of searching Rashluta came upon a rather large opening, peering inside he couldn't see anything but complete darkness and a suffocating stench. Then slowly the droning began soft, hardly noticeable, and then louder and louder with each step deeper and deeper into the darkness.

After stumbling for what seemed like a good hour, light, faint yet Rashluta was sure that with the brightening of yellowish glow, he would certainly confront Jarvisious.

Rounding a corner, Rashluta froze it was as if he was once again looking into a mirror, Jarvisious looked unmistakably like him. With a screech more like that of an animal than a human Jarvisious leapt backward grabbing a staff and lunging forward screaming, "why aren't you dead?" All Rashluta could think was to spin sideways allowing Jarvisious to crumble into a heap on the floor of the cavern.

The staff protruded out the back of his cloak just about where Rashluta would have imagined Jarvisious's heart would be. Instinctively Rashluta spun back towards Monakai, the old hermit was standing saying fill your heart with anger my apprentice. Rashluta lowered Harthkin from his back kneeling he said yes my master. As quickly as he knelt he flipped Harthkin covering Monakai and landing directly on top of him his weight momentarily pinning Monakai. The brief moment was all Rashluta needed to attach the first strap. With the fastening of the strap Harthkins power flashed a brilliant light and all that was left was a pile of dust.

A loud rumbling from somewhere deep within Mother Earth was all Rashluta remembered at first. Coming too with the sun shining in his eyes and exquisite birdsong all around, he slowly stood, facing Wascar. In a soft and humble voice Wascar said, "you have now embraced your light, there is no turning back my son, and you are the essence of Nizhoni, the protector and healer."

After wandering in the forest, Rashluta found himself sitting on his parchment, feeling a great sense of connection, peace, gratitude and humility in the knowing that his journey is just beginning...