

SOMAN CHAINANI

RISE  
OF THE  
SCHOOL  
FOR  
GOOD AND EVIL

*Illustrations by RaidesArt*



HarperCollins *Children's Books*

First published in the United Kingdom by  
HarperCollins *Children's Books* in 2022  
HarperCollins *Children's Books* is a division of  
HarperCollins *Publishers* Ltd  
1 London Bridge Street  
London SE1 9GF

[www.harpercollins.co.uk](http://www.harpercollins.co.uk)

HarperCollins *Publishers*  
1st Floor, Watermarque Building, Ringsend Road  
Dublin 4, Ireland

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ISBN 978-0-00-850802-9

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A CIP catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library

Typeset by Amy Ryan

Printed and bound in the UK using 100% renewable electricity at CPI Group (UK) Ltd

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The Pen writes the new School Master's name.  
But this time it doesn't write one name.

It writes two.

The Pen is called the Storian.

Long and steel, sharp at both ends.

It floats into the air over the two boys, its tip like  
an eye.

Then it speaks.

The voice warm and ageless. Neither male nor  
female.

*In exchange for immortality*

*In exchange for eternal youth*

*I choose you.*

*Two brothers.*

*One for Good.*

*One for Evil.*

*Your loyalty to your blood greater than the loyalty  
to your side.*

*As long as you love each other, the world stays in  
balance.*

*Good and Evil.*

*Brother and brother.*

*But every School Master faces a test.*

*Yours is love.*

*Betray that love and the test is failed.*

*You will wither and die.*

*You will be replaced.*

*Raise your hands to seal this oath.*

The boys do, twins who wear the same face.

Rhian, skin golden, hair wild, lifts his hand.

The Pen glows hot and slashes his palm, Rhian  
crying out.

Then Rafal, skin milky-white, hair like silver  
spikes.

It stabs his hand and Rafal doesn't flinch.

The Pen's glow fades, its steel growing cold.

The twins glance at each other, burning with  
questions.

But in the end, they ask only one.

“What happened to the last School Master?”

The Pen doesn't answer.

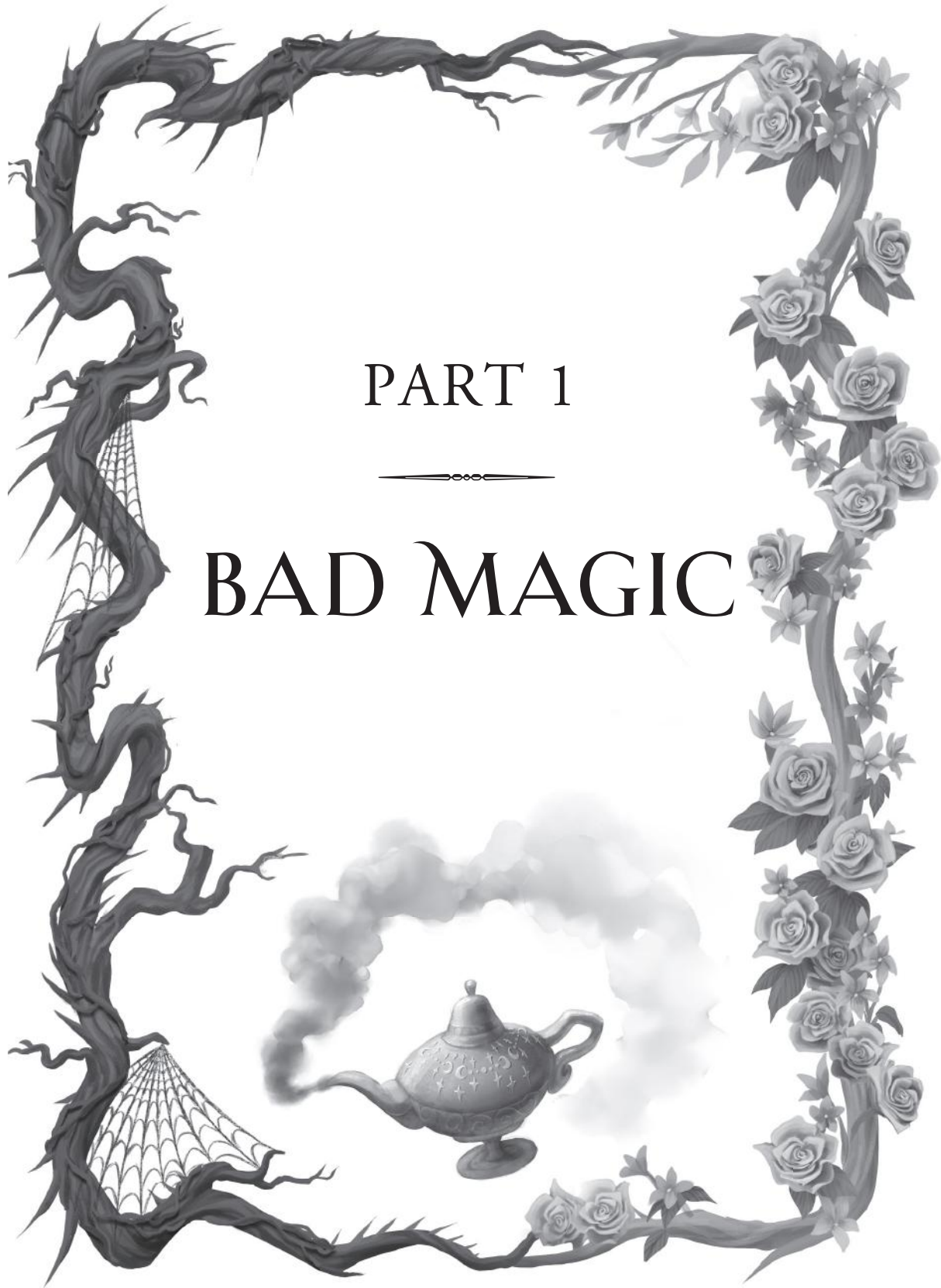
Instead, a trembling voice rises from the shadows.

A withered old man.

“I failed,” he says.







PART 1

BAD MAGIC



# ***1.***

If not for a boy named Aladdin, the School for Good and Evil might never have started kidnapping Readers like you.

You'd be safe in your beds instead of stolen to a world where fairy tales come true for some . . . and end in death for others.

But Aladdin is where the tale starts.

The tale of what happened between the School Masters.

Two brothers, Good and Evil, who ruled the legendary school.

But Aladdin hasn't the faintest clue he's part of a larger story.

He's too busy thinking about his magic lamp.

He should have been working at his family's tailoring shop, but like usual, he'd slipped away the moment his father turned his back, bounding off to Mahaba Market, on the hunt for good

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fortune. Mahaba sparked him to life—the smells, the sounds, the *girls*—and an hour there was worth a thousand days in his family’s shop. He knew he should work in the shop, of course, that a good boy would do as he’s told . . . but tailors don’t marry the Sultan’s daughter and that’s what he dreamed of, a princess and a crown and the respect of the people, the kind of respect that no one gave him.

“Good morning, Raja! Busier than usual today!” Aladdin greeted the fruit seller.

Raja gave him a dirty look.

“Lovely day, Shilpa! Look at all the crowds!” Aladdin said to the fish vendor.

Shilpa spat in his direction.

“Shall we play a game of dice, Bassu?” Aladdin asked a skinny man at the corner.

Bassu fled.

Aladdin sighed, his hands in the pockets of his ragged blue jacket. He had a reputation as a thief, cheat, and loiterer, but what choice did he have? He had no money, status, or name in this world, and to earn those things, sometimes you have to take shortcuts. And today was the perfect day for action, the market bustling like it was a holiday, full of kids with parents fussing over them, buying their favorite treats. Aladdin had never seen

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Mahaba like this, not even at New Year . . .

That's when he heard two men talking in an alley as he passed. Two men he knew well: Salim and Aseem.

"It's *the* magic lamp!" Salim was saying.

"How did you get it?" asked Aseem.

"The Sultan found the Cave of Wishes, but his caravan was robbed by thieves on the way back to the palace," Salim confided. "The thieves didn't know it was the treasured lamp and sold it right to me."

"Make your three wishes, then!" said Aseem.

Aladdin's ears perked up. The magic lamp had been the source of legend for thousands of years, but no one had ever found it. And now these two goons had it in their hands?

"A likely story," Aladdin said, turning into the alley.

Salim instantly put the lamp away—

"I already saw it. No doubt a fake," Aladdin scoffed, puffing at his mop of black hair. "But go ahead. Prove it's the magic lamp. Prove it has any value at all."

Salim and Aseem peeked at each other.

Then Salim held up the lamp and rubbed it with his palm . . .

Suddenly the lamp glowed and thick red smoke billowed from its tip, before Salim stoppered it with his finger and the lamp went dull once more.

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“Don’t want to set the genie loose here or we’ll all get put in the Sultan’s jail,” Salim warned.

Aladdin’s eyes flared. The lamp was . . . *real?*

He rushed forward. “Sell it to me!”

Salim laughed. “It’s not for sale, you fool.”

“Everything in this world is for sale,” Aladdin insisted.

“Not this,” Aseem scorned. “Not to a rat who cheats me and Salim out of our hard-earned money.”

“A rat who is a worthless stain on his family,” Salim added.

Aladdin smiled through his teeth. They could insult him all they wanted. In a negotiation, whoever wants something more wins and Aladdin didn’t just want the lamp. He *needed* it. Imagine the princess he could wish for . . . imagine the man he could be, finally worthy of respect . . .

“I’ll roll you my dice for it,” Aladdin insisted. “If I win, I keep the lamp. If you win, I’ll pay you back everything I’ve ever taken from you and I’ll never step foot in Mahaba Market again.”

He assumed the two men would mock this offer since he hardly had enough for lunch, let alone a chest of savings lying around . . . but to Aladdin’s surprise, Salim and Aseem flashed each other mysterious looks.

“Hmm,” said Salim. “He’s cheated enough from us that if he

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pays us back, we can each buy a house near Bahim Beach . . .”

“Plus the thought of never seeing his dirty, rotten face again . . . ,” said Aseem.

The two men turned to Aladdin. “We have a deal.”

“We do?” Aladdin said, stunned.

“Over six you win, under six we win,” said Aseem.

Aladdin knew better than to waste more words. In his left pocket, he had dice carved to land over six; in his right pocket, he had dice carved to land under. He drew the ones from his left pocket and threw them down in the grimy street.

“I win,” Aladdin gloated, holding out his palm. “Give me the lamp.”

“You cheated—” Salim protested.

“A deal’s a deal,” Aladdin said firmly.

The two men glanced at each other. With a heavy sigh, Salim handed over the lamp.

Aladdin whistled as he walked away, stuffing his treasure under his jacket.

He couldn’t see the grins spreading across the faces of the two men he’d just beaten.

