

Kurdish Author Shad Raouf Qazaz Releases Debut Novel Rooted in Kurdish Mythology

Written first in Dutch, the novel brings Kurdish mythology to English-language readers for the first time.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, May 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Children of the Zagros](#) is the debut novel from Kurdish author Shad Raouf Qazaz, based in the Netherlands and now available in English. Drawing on the legends of Simurgh, Shahmaran and Zahhak, the novel follows Princess Runak on an epic quest through a mythical kingdom in the Zagros Mountains, where political intrigue, ancient creatures and unresolved history collide.



Cover of Children of the Zagros

When the young princess is unexpectedly named heir over her three older brothers, she vanishes behind a sealed palace door. What follows is an adventure shaped by Kurdish oral tradition, complete with nested folktales, sentient animals and moral turns passed down through generations. But the novel refuses simple binaries of hero and villain. "Our protagonist is not just a victim," Qazaz says. "She comes to see her own role in what unfolds." That perspective was partly inspired by his father, Azad Qazaz, whose writing on Kurdish politics and identity informed the novel's refusal to frame its characters as purely victims of outside forces.

Qazaz, who grew up in the Netherlands, began exploring Kurdish origins and mythology around 2019. Writing in Dutch gave him creative freedom, but came at a cost. "Kurdish dialogue is structured very differently from Dutch or English dialogue, and I think this is noticeable," he says. "It also cost me access to many works that exist only in Kurdish."

The novel was written to work on two levels. For any reader, it is a self-contained mythic adventure. For Kurdish readers, the characters, creatures and moral dilemmas carry a second layer of cultural recognition. There is a scene early in the book that confused his non-Kurdish proofreaders regarding why the characters reacted that way. The Kurdish proofreaders, though, completely understood. "That was precisely the intention," Qazaz says. "I wanted this to resonate

with anybody, but if you are a Kurd, you find something more."

One of the novel's most distinctive elements is its portrayal of women who shape events through quiet, decisive force. A warrior's wife shifts the entire plot with a single wordless look at the princess across a palace courtyard. "Women are not always granted a spot at the forefront in Kurdish culture," Qazaz says, "but they often set the direction from the background."

Children of the Zagros is now available on [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#) and other major retailers.

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