# Chapter 2: Echoes from the Past

Delhi, Present Day

Rain lashed against the windows of Aanya's flat, a steady drumming that filled the normally cozy

space with an unsettling tension. Maya, her roommate, the free spirit who was never home, was

still missing. The quiet, which Aanya usually welcomed, felt suffocating under the storm's fury.

She needed to think about the crazy discoveries of the day, but the wind howling outside kept

distracting her.

Spreading the old manuscript on the coffee table, its brittle pages seemed to whisper secrets of

forgotten times. The faded ink spoke of a hidden chamber in Jodhpur's Mehrangarh Fort, where

a legendary amulet might be hidden. A shiver, not just from the rain, ran down Aanya's spine.

This wasn't just a story anymore; it was a clue, a map to a treasure trove of history!

As darkness crept in, shadows danced menacingly on the walls. A sudden creak from the

balcony sent a jolt through Aanya. Delhi nights were known for strays and petty thieves, and a

worry she didn't usually have gnawed at her. She tiptoed towards the sound, her heart

hammering a frantic rhythm against her ribs.

The balcony door was ajar, swaying precariously in the wind. Aanya peeked through the gap,

her breath catching in her throat. On the small, cluttered balcony, bathed in the occasional flash

of lightning, lay a single object. It was a weathered leather satchel, unlatched and partly open.

Aanya's mind raced. The balcony could only be reached from her apartment. Whoever left the

satchel had to have been inside. But Maya wouldn't leave something like this behind, and Aanya

didn't recall any visitors that day. A cold dread settled in her stomach.

Hesitantly, Aanya grabbed a nearby poker, its weight offering a sliver of comfort in her trembling

hand. With a deep breath, she nudged the balcony door open a fraction wider. The floorboards

creaked ominously under her weight as she inched closer to the satchel.

The only sound, apart from the rain's relentless drumming, was the frantic thump of her own

heart. Aanya knelt down, peering into the satchel's contents. Inside, nestled amongst crumpled

cloth, lay a glint of gold. It was a small amulet, intricately carved with symbols that mirrored the

illustrations in the ancient manuscript.

A wave of exhilaration washed over Aanya, quickly replaced by a surge of fear. Finding the

amulet here, in her own apartment, felt like a sinister omen. Who had placed it there, and why?

Were they watching her now, waiting for her next move?

Suddenly, a shadow flickered at the corner of her eye. Aanya spun around, the poker held high,

but the balcony was empty. The wind howled, whipping rain against the windowpanes, sending

shivers down her spine. Had she imagined it?

Panic clawed at her throat. The thrill of discovery had morphed into a chilling sense of danger.

Clutching the amulet tightly in her hand, Aanya retreated back inside, slamming the balcony

door shut and bolting it with a shaking hand.

The silence that followed the storm's fury felt even more suffocating. Aanya's eyes darted

around the room, searching for any sign of intrusion. The manuscript lay forgotten on the table,

its secrets suddenly overshadowed by a more immediate threat.

With a trembling hand, Aanya dialed Maya's number, her heart pounding in her chest. It rang

and rang, but Maya didn't pick up. Aanya slumped onto the couch, the weight of the amulet

pressing heavy in her palm. The whispers of history had turned into a chilling premonition, and

Aanya knew her journey had just taken a dangerous turn.