# Chapter 3: The Lost Manuscript

Jaipur, Present Day

The train ride from Delhi to Jaipur was amazing! The sunrise painted the fields orange, like a

beautiful picture. Women in colorful saris walked along dusty paths, balancing baskets on their

heads, their laughter carried on the warm breeze. Inside the train, the rhythmic clatter of the

wheels against the tracks provided a steady beat, punctuated by the lively chatter of fellow

passengers and the rhythmic calls of chai vendors. Aanya spent hours glued to the window,

mesmerized by the ever-changing panorama – a farmer guiding his bullock cart, a group of

children playing a spirited game of cricket, an ancient temple bathed in the golden light of dawn.

A vendor weaved through the carriages, his melodic cry of "Chai, garam chai!" (Hot tea!) a

constant reassurance of life's simple pleasures. The air buzzed with conversation, sprinkled with

the tinkling of bells from passing temples. As we neared Jaipur, the anticipation crackled in the

air, a shared excitement for the vibrant city that awaited

Jaipur, the Pink City, lived up to its name. Buildings in varying shades of rose, terracotta, and

salmon rose majestically against a clear blue sky. The iconic Hawa Mahal, its delicate façade

resembling a honeycomb, shimmered in the distance. Aanya felt a thrill course through her –

this was the heart of Maharaja Jai Singh II's legacy, a place where science and history

intertwined.

Following the map meticulously sketched from her research notes, Aanya navigated the bustling

streets. Rickshaws painted in vibrant colors zipped past, their drivers yelling greetings in a

language peppered with Hindi and Rajasthani. Stalls overflowing with colorful textiles, glittering

jewelry, and mounds of exotic spices lined the way. A vendor offered her a steaming cup of

creamy chai, its sweet aroma tempting her senses. Resisting for now, Aanya promised herself a

treat later – a reward for a productive day.

"A city painted in rose, a melody played in stone," she murmured, a quote she'd read that

perfectly captured the essence of Jaipur. She felt a surge of gratitude for her friend Maya, an

artist who'd first sparked her interest in the city with her vibrant paintings of Jaipur's bustling

bazaars and serene palaces.

Finally, she reached the imposing City Palace Complex, its grandeur echoing the power and

prestige of the Rajput dynasty. After presenting her credentials and navigating a series of

courtyards, Aanya found herself in the hushed atmosphere of the City Palace Library. The air

hung heavy with the scent of aged paper and leather bindings.

Here, amidst the towering shelves brimming with ancient texts, Aanya commenced her

research. She spent hours meticulously examining dusty tomes, their pages whispering tales of

a bygone era. Days turned into weeks, filled with the rhythmic scratching of her pen on paper

and the occasional clink of a teacup. Aanya felt a sense of kinship with the scholars who had

occupied this space before her, all united in their pursuit of knowledge.

One evening, as the setting sun cast long shadows across the library floor, Aanya's persistence

paid off. While examining a particularly intricate map, she noticed a faint outline concealed

beneath layers of dust. With a bated breath, she carefully removed decades of grime, revealing

a hidden compartment in an old cabinet. Her heart pounded with anticipation as she reached

inside and pulled out a bundle of yellowed pages bound together with a piece of frayed

twine.Her hands trembled with excitement as she carefully opened the manuscript.

To her astonishment, the pages were filled with intricate diagrams and annotations in Jai Singh’s

handwriting. Among the scientific notes were cryptic symbols and passages written in an

unfamiliar script. Some symbols included:

●​ ☉ (a circle with a dot in the center, representing the Sun)

●​ ⧫ (a black diamond, possibly indicating a specific astronomical event)

●​ ♄ (a stylized representation of Saturn)

●​ ⚕ (a symbol resembling a staff, possibly denoting healing or protection)

●​ (an eye-like symbol, suggesting observation or surveillance)

One passage stood out: "☉ shall align with ♄ and the guardians shall gather. The ⧫ will mark

the time when the ⚕ must be invoked to prevent the rupture."

Aanya’s pulse quickened as she realized that these symbols resembled those she had seen in

her previous research about the Guardians of Time.

The manuscript hinted at Jai Singh’s awareness of temporal anomalies and his efforts to

understand and document them. It also contained references to a mysterious artifact capable of

influencing time—an artifact that was now in Aanya's possession, the enchanted amulet.

As she delved deeper into the manuscript, Aanya felt an eerie chill run down her spine. The

cryptic symbols seemed to pulse with a life of their own, and the air around her grew thick with

an otherworldly energy. The room began to blur, the edges of reality dissolving into a warm,

golden light. Her heart pounded as the light intensified, enveloping her completely.

Just as her head started to spin from all the sights, the light around her vanished in a flash,

leaving her confused. She blinked hard, trying to see clearly again, but the library was nowhere

to be seen. Instead, she stood right in front of the giant gates leading to the grand city of Jaipur.

The air smelled different, filled with the hustle and bustle of an 18th-century marketplace, and

the distant sounds of a busy city filled her ears.