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Bilgis

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Since childhood, I heard stories about a creature named "Rannamaari". A strange creature comes once a year in search of a virgin's blood. It was said to be banished by a brave man many years ago. The strangest part of this story was giving your young female daughters a sacrifice for that creature just to get rid of it for another year. Well, it was just a folklore story right, At least that's what I thought.

Prologue

"Number 12, it's your turn now" a man called out loud in a dark room. I looked away in hopes of not getting recognized, I knew he was talking to me. I have nowhere to go or hide from him. I knew what would happen to me if I went in that room, I also knew what would happen to me if I refused to go in there. I had no choice left, I stood up and dragged myself into that room as slowly as possible, praying for a miracle.

I could see him waiting for me before entering the room. So far this is the seventeenth time today and it is still midday.

I entered the room and closed the door. removing my clothes, I laid down on the dirty mattress. A man at the age of my father was on top of me forcing himself on me, raping me. I closed my eyes and bit my lips as hard as I could, trying my best not to give the satisfaction of my screams. I had to go through this with different men every day, sometimes it lasted the whole night. Now I had lost count of it, I felt disgusted and exhausted.

"Not today, I am done" I mumbled before stabbing him with the hidden in my hair, and ran toward the little window at the side of the room. I still could not believe how I got that much courage to do something like that. I did not look back. Not even once as I ran with all my will. It was exactly two weeks ago.

CHAPTER 1

The sky was shining with the moonlight and glittering with stars. It was a mesmerizing view especially when surrounded by the peaceful silence of the night. I was standing on the most beautiful white sand beach looking out at the dark ocean thinking to myself how lucky I was.

"Happy birthday Bilqis" the voice of my father distracted me from this scenery. He hugged me tightly staring at me with a huge smile. " My little girl is not so little anymore". He said kissing my forehead.

It was my 15th birthday and everyone was gathered at the beach near my home to celebrate the day. My little sister Haya dragged me to the table where everyone was. Haya shouted with excitement "Blow the candle in 3... 2... 1...". "Bang" That was the first gunshot we heard. "Bang" "Bang" "Bang" I could hear people's screams from where I was standing. Could see flashes of light as the gun fired. People were panicking and running. I knew running and hiding would be the best course of action at the moment yet my body refused to move even one step. I could feel the cold dread wash over me as the screams got louder. my body was not acting in sync with my mind. I was frozen.

It felt like forever before I felt my father's hand wrap around me. He dragged me by hand took me and my sister to our home and stepped out before locking both of us in the room. We were all alone in that eerily silent house. I could hear my own heart beating with fear as I tried to grasp the situation.

Not long after, the silence was shattered with, yelling, knocking, and people walking just outside our door. We did not dare to open it, we were just sitting on our bed and crying.

"Are we going to die tonight, Bilqis?" Haya's trembling voice came out like a whisper. That was the moment I came to my senses. I had a sister I had to protect now. I can't be scared in front of her.

I took a glance at Haya's face, I could see the fear in her eyes searching for comfort as she looked at me. "Not tonight," I said trying to gather all the courage I could as I took the baseball bat from under the couch.

It took less than 2 minutes for them to break down our door and come in. It was three men, all the age of our father. They wore uniforms that we had never seen before holding guns. I stood up trying my best to hide my sister behind me as I clenched the bat tightly in hand.

"Who are you?" I asked trying to sound strong. They looked at me with a weird gaze before moving forward. "I asked, who you are!" I screamed swinging the bat at them. This time they looked at each other before lunging at me. The first man smacked me across the face. Before dragging me by my hair. I could hear my sisters crying behind me as we both were mercilessly dragged out of our house.

I fought against the person holding me. I clawed at the hand so hard that there was blood and flesh under my nails. I screamed and begged them to let my sister go. She was nothing more than a child.

They dragged us for 15 minutes. Making a show of us like we were trophies. Before throwing us to the ground with a surprising force I almost lost my consciousness. raising my head and looking around I noticed there were 10 more girls like me. Some had already lost consciousness while others were crying, covered in their vomit. All below the age of 16. Not even one adult.

I was terrified to death when trying to make sense of what must have happened to our parents. "Haya" I started calling for my sister trying to find her. "I couldn't find Daddy" I heard a whimper behind me. "Don't worry, We are going to find Daddy and we are going home". I hugged my sister and tried my best to console her.

I had successfully got Haya to calm down when the men came back again. "follow us" they ordered. They made us stand in a line before giving each of us a number. I was twelfth in the line. That is how I got the number 12. My name, my fate, and my whole life were changed while I was standing in that line.

CHAPTER 2

A man with a huge mustache came up to us and tried to separate us. He dragged Haya's hand forcefully trying to take her away from me. I held onto her hand as tight as I could trying my best to not let them win. "Let's take them together," said another man. They both agreed and ordered us to follow them.

I took my sister's hand into mine, holding it tight trying to reassure her as I looked for any possible escape route. They took us into a hall located in the middle of the island. We stood there for almost an hour until they brought more people inside. Within the crowd, I noticed the familiar face of our father.

"Dad" I screamed and tried to run to him.

This was the first time I had peace in my mind, knowing that we were safe. He was going to save us, he was our hero. Yet he just stood there while those men dragged us back to where we were before.

"They are yours. I want my land back as I was promised" That was the last I heard from my father.

We were baffled. refusing to believe our ears. How can a father do that to his children, did we mean nothing to him? Did he just trade us for a piece of land without even a blink?

The two men started dragging us again, But I was just standing there looking into the eyes of the man once I called my father, hoping for him to do something.

That day I lost hope in humanity. I had nothing left in this world other than my sister. I had to be brave for her, I had to protect her from whatever was coming. I do not know what was going through her mind as she was standing there, motionless, she was just a 9-year-old little girl. " I will always be there for you, no matter what. Don't worry everything will be fine". I tried to console her.

Time passed by, night turned to day, and they threw us into a small boat as luggage. They started their journey in the ocean, I looked at the island where I grew up, getting smaller and smaller until it vanished from my sight.

The boat stopped near another little island not far away. They ordered us to get out onto the small island that looked like a military base. There were hundreds of men wearing uniforms and carrying guns. It was a foreign military base located in our country with the permission of our government.

They brought us all into a hut and gave us instructions, that's when we knew our parents had given us as sex slaves in return for their safety and land.

They separated us into two groups which were called day and night. I was in a group of day and Haya was in night.

I begged them not to separate us as I saw Haya scream and bite down the man's hand who was holding her.

He got furious and slapped her so hard that she lost consciousness right there. I somehow managed to get out of the grip of the one holding me taking her head into my lap. I called her name trying and failing to wake her up.

One of the men dragged me away as I watched them bring her right into the middle of the room. I helplessly begged them to stop. I covered my ears trying my best to prevent her screams. They were raping her. One man after another. It was more than ten of them taking turns on her. A helpless child. They were raping a helpless child just because they could. And I was as helpless as she was. I watched them destroy my sister's body and soul. I watched her cry and beg for me to save her. And I watched her soul leave her body. They tortured and raped my sister to death just to show us what would happen if we refused to do anything they asked, just to scare the rest of us.

They tied us all there to see and closed the door behind us. I cried, and screamed out of pain for hours, trying to free myself and reach my sister's now cold dead body. She died in front of my eyes and I could not do anything to save her.

CHAPTER 3

To this day I have no clue where they buried my sister or whether she was even buried. No one even dared to talk about her. We obeyed their every command like robots. They treated us as slaves, whenever wherever or however they wanted they rape, beat, and torture us. If we refuse we would be punished by stripping us for hours under the scorching hot sun or freezing in the cold wind of the night. They fed us only enough so that we wouldn't starve to death. Gave us two pieces of worn-out clothes enough to cover our privates.

That was when I started making my escape plan. I have to escape for my sister, I did not want anyone to go through what we went through in that hell. I wanted to expose them to the world so badly. I wanted justice for my sister and everyone that had to go through what we did. Most importantly, I wanted revenge on the people who sold us to these horrifying monsters.

I knew where I needed to go, I knew what to do. I have been planning this in my mind for a long time. Everyone was busy with their training and duties. I ran directly into the Northern side of the island and jumped into the sea. I swam as hard as I could. Even when I felt my body giving in and freezing from the cold. Even after hours, there was nothing visible yet. I knew a cruise would cross this side of the island every Monday. Today is Monday, exactly 14 days since my sister was killed.

I swam trying my best to escape I could hear the sounds of the engines already. They had found out and they were coming for me. Yet I still held on to the glimmer of hope I felt earlier. I was not going to give up this easily, not now.

"Toot toot" the sound of the horn I was eagerly praying to hear is here. I slowed, looking for the source of the noise. The cruise was not far from me.

I took the red cloth from my pocket and raised as high as I could and started shouting. They stopped the ship and threw a ring towards me.

I was saved. I was finally saved from that hell. I felt relief wash over me as they helped me climb the cruise I shouted what was happening in that military base and begged them for help.

It took a few hours for the police and army to arrive. This news shocked the world. It was all over the media.

CHAPTER 4

"Are you ready Bilqis?" my lawyer asked.

“ Yes.. yes” I tried to convince myself. I am more than ready to face those criminals. I have already given my statement in court several times and I will repeat it again and again until I get justice for my sister. I will not let this go away so easily.

My name is Bilqis. And I will never let those monsters responsible for that hell roam free. I will be the one to expose and banish ‘Rannamaari’ this time. I need no man to be my savior.

TO BE CONTINUED