

THE BLIND STRIPPER

CHAPTER 2

AMINA

The sun was slowly rising, casting a soft light across the sky, yet Amina had not slept. Sleep had evaded her after such a traumatic night. Not that she could tell when it was night or day, as her world was enveloped in eternal darkness. She was blind, yes, and she couldn't see what had happened to her parents, but she had heard their screams—the sound of her mother begging for mercy, pleading for her life to be spared. But the king's soldiers had been deaf to her cries, unmoved by her desperation. And now, Amina was left all alone in this harsh world. She had no one left to care for her.

Amina had never had many friends due to her blindness, the cruel disability that separated her from others. She was mocked and laughed at, and her parents had been so protective that they never let her out of their sight. Now, with them gone, she had no one to look after her. She had only herself to rely on.

Although she couldn't see, Amina could still perceive things. She could hear, touch, smell, and feel—her other senses were heightened to compensate for the absence of vision. Her father had taught her how to make use of these senses every day. "Listen carefully, feel everything around you, and smell the world with all your might," he would tell her. She had never been able to see the world as others did, but her father had always insisted that the world was still there for her to experience—just in a different way. God had denied her the sense of sight, but she still had the rest.

As she sat on the cold, lifeless ground, she could feel the absence of her parents all around her. Slowly, she rose from where her mother's body lay, gathering what little strength she had left. She began searching for her father, but as she moved, her foot caught on something, and she fell to the ground.

Amina's breath hitched as a tear fell down her cheek. She remembered how her parents would always warn her to watch her step when she walked. But they weren't here to warn her now. They were gone.

Wiping her tear away, she stood up, brushing off the dust from her dress. She took a deep breath, her fingers brushing against the cold, rough earth as she continued her search. But still, there was no sign of her father.

After another quiet moment of grief, Amina spoke aloud to herself. "I will avenge your death, Father. I will make sure that the King and everyone involved in this tragedy is punished." Her words, though spoken in solitude, carried the weight of a promise.

Determined to get away from this place of sorrow, Amina made her way towards her family's house. She touched the door and opened it, feeling the familiar creak of the

wooden frame. Behind the door, she found the wooden stick she used to assist her walking. It was the one item that helped her navigate the world, even though she was unfamiliar with the terrain outside.

The village road was gravelly, filled with small stones that made it difficult for Amina to walk without tripping. She had been kept inside the house for most of her life, away from the outside world. It wasn't a road she was used to

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but she had to keep moving.

"Ouch!" she exclaimed as her foot caught on a stone and she fell once again.

"Are you okay?" a deep, masculine voice asked, and Amina paused, listening to the tone of concern. She nodded, although the truth was, she was far from okay. Emotionally and mentally, she was shattered. Her parents were gone, and now she was truly alone.

"Where are you going?" the voice continued, and Amina felt a flicker of suspicion rise within her. She couldn't trust anyone now. What if he was in league with the King? What if he intended to kill her too?

"Home," she lied, her voice steady despite the turmoil inside.

The man didn't respond immediately; he just looked at her in silence. After a moment, Amina managed to push herself up from the ground, her hands searching for her wooden stick. That's when the man realised she was blind. He gently picked up the stick and, without a word, placed it in her hand.

"You're blind," he said quietly.

Amina remained silent, her heart heavy with sorrow. The man continued, "Where is home?"

She still didn't answer him. She couldn't bear the thought of explaining the truth.

"I'm not trying to hurt you," the man said gently, "I just want to help. It's not safe for a young girl to be here alone."

He was right. It wasn't safe. But could she trust him? Could she take a chance on this stranger who, for all she knew, could be another threat?

"I don't have a home," she admitted finally, her voice barely a whisper. She heard the man sigh in response, and then he took her hand, leading her forward, though Amina wasn't sure where they were going. Was she making a mistake? Could she trust him?

THE MAJOLA KINGDOM

Meanwhile, in the Majola Kingdom, soldiers marched into the throne room, where the King sat, brooding on his throne. The soldiers stopped in front of him, waiting for their report.

"It is done," Soldier Eric said, his voice cold and matter-of-fact.

The King leaned forward, his eyes narrowing. "And what about everyone else?"

"The bastard didn't have anyone else, My King," the soldier replied.

The King's expression hardened. "He truly had no child?"

"That could very well be the case, My King."

The King nodded, his face set in stone. "I want you to search for the girl. High and low. They may have hidden her somewhere. We can't afford any loose ends."

"And the husband?" Eric asked.

"Keep him locked in the dungeon. I'll deal with him once he regains consciousness."

Eric nodded and was about to leave when another soldier, Norman, rushed in, panting. He bowed before the King.

"Norman, what is it?" the King demanded, his patience wearing thin.

Norman's voice trembled as he spoke. "My King, forgive me for intruding, but it's about Sokalezwe..."

The King's grip tightened on the arms of his throne. "What has he done now?"

Norman's words spilled out quickly. "He was taken by the police van... He stabbed someone at the pub during the games."

The King's jaw clenched as he absorbed the news. His son had killed someone. The weight of it hit him like a thunderclap.

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