



BOUND BY SPELL, FREED BY LOVE

THE VEIL SECRETS – BOOK ONE

Betrayal, Magic, and a Truth That Could Change Everything

MACLAD S.H

BOUND BY SPELL, FREED BY LOVE

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Some loves are born free. Others are born behind the veil... and
fight their whole lives to be seen."

— Maclad S. H

Some bonds are forged in daylight.

Others are bound in the hush where no light dares to follow.

In a land where whispers travel faster than truth, every glance carries meaning, and every kindness might carry a price.

Two hearts are caught in a web spun long before they met — a net of loyalty, secrecy, and quiet bargains that will not break easily.

They live under a spell no one dares name, inside a veil no one dares lift. Love stirs quietly here, disguised as something else entirely, waiting for a moment that may never come.

But veils fray. Shadows thin. And when the first threads begin to unravel, nothing will remain untouched. Every choice will carry a cost — some measured in loyalty, some in freedom, and some in the fragile heartbeat of love itself.

Step through The Veil Secrets into a world where love walks hand-in-hand with danger, truth hides in plain sight, and nothing is as it seems.

The Veil Secrets

Betrayal, Magic, and a Truth That
Could Change Everything

Book One

**Bound by Spell,
Freed by Love**

Maclad S.H

A Shanti Harmony offering

Dedication

For those who've walked beneath the weight of misunderstanding and still chose the quiet strength of love over the easy path of bitterness.

For the ones who kept their light hidden, waiting for the day the veil would lift.

May your truth rise like dawn, gentle but unstoppable, and may you be seen — truly seen — with new eyes.

This is for you.

A poetic quote that sets the tone for the journey ahead.

*“What is hidden is not always lost.
And what dies may be waiting to be seen—
not with old sight,
but with the new eyes of love.”*

— Shamus Tabriz

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This is a work of fiction. While it draws on cultural inspiration from the Bini people of Edo State, Nigeria — including traditional names — the story, characters, and events are products of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or to real events is entirely coincidental.

This novel is a work of creative storytelling, spiritual reflection, and cultural imagination. It is offered as inspiration and entertainment, not as professional advice. Readers are encouraged to bring their own discernment and lived experience to its pages.

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Author: Maclad S. H

Presented by: The Shanti Harmony Collective

ISBN: 9798296562531

ISBN: 9798296562531

Cover design by: Art Painter

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018675309

Printed in the United States of America

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How to Use This Book

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This story is not meant to be rushed.

Read it with an open heart, in a quiet space, and perhaps with a cup of something warm.

Let the pauses speak.

If something stirs, return to it.

This book is a mirror in motion — the more deeply you look into it, the more it may reveal about you.

Preface

This story did not begin with a plot. It began with a whisper. A question that lingered in the quiet:

What happens when the ones we love see us through the wrong eyes... and what happens when those eyes finally change? If they finally change.

In the world that shaped this tale, magic is not fantasy.

It moves in the air we breathe, in the hush between words, in the prayers we carry without speaking.

This is a story of love tested in silence, of bonds hidden from the world's gaze, of trust that must survive the long wait to be believed...

If it was finally believed.

Some truths arrive like thunder. Others arrive like dawn — soft, certain, and impossible to ignore.

May these pages meet you like the morning light, and may you, in your own time, see with new eyes.

— Maclad S. H

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INTRODUCTION

Long before the ships came to Bini shores, before gold tasted of betrayal and names were written on chains, there lived a people whose strength was not just of sword and shield—but of spirit.

This story takes place in such a time.

A time when warriors moved through forest and fire with grace, not just because they were trained, but because they knew **sorcery, herbology, magic, illusion, and ancient forms of knowing** passed down from those who spoke with wind and waited on stars.

A time when warriors could walk without food for days, not because they were not hungry, but because they understood how to feed from the **ether** and **herbal alchemy**.

These were no ordinary people. They could **bend nature, summon elements, vanish into mist**, and command forces the average man could not even imagine.

In that land, magic was not foreign. It was practical. Sacred. Sometimes feared. Often misunderstood.

This story is part love story, **part spiritual mystery, and part suspenseful unfolding of fate.**

It carries secrets kept behind veils, illusions woven with tenderness, and a love that outlived identity.

It's a story about what happens when power is mistaken for control...

And how destiny waits quietly until hearts are ready to see.

To those unfamiliar with this world, let this book be a gentle opening. Though fiction, it breathes with the real rhythms of a people whose lives were guided by more than what the eyes could see.

Where parents taught not only how to walk with dignity, but how to disappear into shadow if danger came.

Where names carried purpose—and meanings could shape destinies.

And in that world, there lived a girl named **Ehimwenma**, meaning *My Destiny is good*. We can simply call her **Ehi** meaning Destiny,

And a boy named **Osariemen**, meaning *God Gave Me* or *God's Gift*.

Many nicknamed him **Osas**, which he initially did not want. But after a while he got used to it. However, the elders and his dad often called him by his full name.

May their story show that even in the tangle of hatred and fear, destiny finds its rhythm.

And what is given by the Divine is never truly lost.

Let your heart lead the way.

— Maclad S. H.

Chapter 1

Whispers in the Red Earth

The land did not sleep.
Not even at night.

Not even when the moon had finished her rounds and retired behind the tall palms like a shy widow. Not even when the last cock had crowed and the smoke from the hearths had turned blue in the morning mist.

The land in Udo-Bini whispered.

It whispered through the *ughele* trees that lined the forest edge, through the thick red clay that clung to the soles of barefoot warriors, and through the rivers that curved like knowing serpents through the heart of the village.

To a stranger, Udo-Bini was peaceful. Serene. Perhaps too serene. It looked like a village untouched by time—its people well-fed, its children free, its gods unbothered. But anyone born on that soil knew the truth:

Peace in Udo-Bini was not a gift. It was a negotiation.

The Negotiation

And that negotiation was kept in check by **fear, respect**, and the **uncertain distance between two men** whose names hung like thunderclouds over the land.

The first was **Aisosa**, meaning *No one is greater than God*, a man whom birds avoided.

He was the keeper of illusions, master of the mirror wind—a rare spell that could bend reality like a reed in water. His compound, tucked into the eastern hills of Udo-Bini, was more fortress than home. Walls that were not walls, doors that opened only if you said the day's secret name, and silence that seemed to hum with voices from long ago.

Aisosa was not just feared. He was *respected*. He spoke little. Walked slowly. But when he raised his staff, even goats stopped chewing.

His greatest strength was not in raw magic, but in the **precision** of his silence.

He did not change form. And he did not play with appearances. Aisosa believed true power had no need for masks.

The second was **Ehigie**, meaning *Destiny's wish*, his equal in power but opposite in spirit.

Where Aisosa, was silent, Ehigie walks like thunder, but speaks like the breeze behind a mountain. He moved like fire in dry grass.

Where Aisosa cloaked, Ehigie revealed. His magic lay in the **shifting of form**—a man who could wear a tree like a garment or whisper himself into the skin of a bird. But he did not flaunt this gift. He shifted not to impress, but to understand. He taught his son that to wear many faces, one must first master their own. "Before the mask, know the face; before the storm, know the wind," he would say.

His compound on the western edge was known for its sacred fire, which never went out, not even in the rains. People said he walked with the spirits of animals. Others said he *was* one. But those who knew him best said he was kind, though distant—like a father who taught with silence and thunder equally.

The trees knew his true nature. When Ehigie passed through the forest, iroko leaves would shiver without wind, and spiderwebs glistened with dew even at noon - nature's acknowledgement of a man who walked in two worlds

The two men were **not enemies**, but they were not friends. They had not spoken in over a decade.

They did not curse each other. They simply... **excluded**.

And in a town where nearly everyone owed allegiance to one side or the other, this fragile balance was seen as a blessing.

Because if Aisosa and Ehigie ever clashed?

The red earth would drink more than rain.

But fate, mischievous spirit that it is, does not care for balance. It prefers cracks. It seeks the hidden fault line between loyalty and longing. And in Udo-Bini, that fault line lived between **Ehimwenma** and **Osariemen**. Or, let us say, **Ehi** and **Osas**.

She was Aisosa's only child—sharp-minded, calm-eyed, and as disciplined as any warrior. While everyone else called her by the short version of her name, Ehi, her father always called her Ehimwenma.

By age ten, she could recite complex chants backwards. By fifteen, she had mastered the *Veil of Reversal*, a spell only three people alive were said to know. Her mother had died young, and Ehi grew up not just as daughter, but as **disciple**.

Her beauty was quiet—more felt than seen. A presence that softened even hard men. But she was not to be

approached. Everyone knew that. Even greetings bowed twice before reaching her.

Osas, on the other hand, walked like thunder behind a smile and disguised as kindness.

The son of Ehigie, he carried charisma like a second skin. His laughter could settle quarreling elders, and his voice carried weight even when he spoke lightly. But there was no arrogance in him—only a lightness, as if he knew the burden of strength and had chosen not to wear it all at once.

But beneath the charm was **steel**. He trained with warriors by day and read his father's mystic scrolls by moonlight. He could wrestle three men and win, but his true gift was the **ability to see behind words**.

He once said to a friend, "People don't lie because they are bad. They lie because the truth is heavier than their tongues can carry."

At eighteen, he was already being whispered about in the shrines.

The problem was—**Ehi and Osas** were not supposed to speak. Let alone fall in love.

Let alone dream of leaving everything behind for each other.

But they had.

And they had been doing it in plain sight.

It started with a mistake. A festival. A drumbeat. A challenge.

Ehi had dropped her coral bracelet near the shrine. Osas had picked it up. Their hands touched—briefly. But in that one spark of contact, something passed between them that neither spell nor logic could explain.

That night, Ehi returned to the grove near the river with a **tears leaf herb**, known to expose hidden bonds. Without a word, she placed it in his palm.

He looked at her, his heart thudding in rhythms not taught in training.

They crushed the leaf between their palms. It bled **red**.

Red for fate.

Red for danger.

Red for a love that could not be erased by birthright.

From that day forward, the spell began.

Where the Veil Begins

By day: they scowled at each other, insulted one another across the square, and refused to share space at the same well.

By night: they met under the *ogbono* trees, behind the thin barrier of illusion Ehi conjured—a **place within the world, yet outside of it.**

Inside the Veil, their love had form, weight, freedom. Time slowed. Trees leaned in as if listening. Even the wind quieted.

They would talk for hours. About dreams, about fears, about the kind of peace that didn't require people to choose sides.

"I wonder what would happen if the two most powerful men in the village realized their children were breaking the law of legacy," Osas once said.

Ehi smiled, her head resting on his chest. "They would destroy each other."

"And we would be blamed for the rain that follows."

“Then,” she said, “let the rain come.”

They made a vow that night. If ever they were separated—by spell, by war, by even the gods themselves—they would find their way back.

Even if it meant entering fire.

Even if it meant diving into the sea.

*Even if death had to be courted like an old friend, they
would keep the vow.*

The Watcher in the Shadows

The village watched them, saw their performance, and believed it.

Except one.

Igie, son of Enoma the goat herder, was the kind of boy who watched quietly but remembered loudly. His jealousy was not loud, but it festered. He had once courted Ehi—badly. She had ignored him—completely.

Now he watched their act and saw through it.

Not fully. Not confidently. But enough to suspect.

He made it a mission.

A quiet one.

But dangerous all the same.

On a morning no different than the last, the sky clear, the villagers bustling in the square, Ehi walked past Osas.

Their eyes did not meet. Their expressions did not shift.

But their shadows—briefly—touched.

And the earth... whispered again.

Something was coming.

The kind of thing that doesn't ask for permission.

And the river... already knew.

The Story Begins

Far away, deep in the northern grove where few dared wander, a blind man sat beneath a tree that had outlived kings. His name was Uwasota. They called him Pa. Uwa.

He lifted his head slightly that morning.

And smiled.

"The story has begun," he said.

Then he returned to his silence.

CHAPTER 2

Love Wears a Mask

There is a hatred that dances in daylight,
and a love that hides beneath it like flame under wet
leaves.

In Udo-Bini, where words could cast spells and silence
could summon gods, **appearances were everything.**

The Performance of Hate

The way you walked, the way you greeted, how you looked
at a man's child in the market—these were not small things.
They were signs. Warnings. Oaths.

So when **Ehi**, daughter of Aisosa, hissed under her breath
as **Osas**, son of Ehigie, passed by with a basket of smoked fish,
it was not simply bad manners—it was theater.

A necessary deception.

And everyone clapped.

Metaphorically, of course. In Udo-Bini, gossip was a
drumbeat. And the village's favorite rhythm, at present, was
the **public feud between the children of the two most
powerful men in the land.**

“Did you see the way she looked at him at the shrine?”

“Like she wanted to turn him into a yam.”

“Maybe he deserves it. That boy is too full of himself.”

“Even goats fear her tongue.”

The whispers flitted like moths around lanterns.

No one suspected the truth: that **each insult was a message**, carefully planted.

That every glare, every scowl, every muttered curse was a page in a hidden love story, written in reverse.

Inside a thick grove near the edge of the sacred river—hidden behind a **Veil of Reversal**—the truth waited.

There, beneath the umbrella branches of four ancient *ogbono* trees, **Ehi and Osas** met in secret.

The spell was a living thing now, matured through repetition and refinement. It bent space, confused wind, and dimmed all senses of time. Even birds avoided flying over it. Even ants lost their path when they crossed in.

And when the lovers entered that space, the world outside ceased to matter.

Ehi stepped through the veil, her white wrap damp from the river’s mist. Her eyes immediately softened when they met his.

Osas sat on a low stool carved with two entwined leopards. He held a dried pod of atan—a seed said to help recall dreams—and a small calabash filled with shea oil.

"I brought this for your ankle," he said, not rising.

She smiled and sat beside him, stretching out her foot.

"Still limping from when I kicked you in public?" she teased.

"Mm," Osas replied, rubbing the balm gently. "The limp is mild. But the honor you gave me? That will last longer."

She laughed—freely, deeply, like someone who had carried silence all day and finally dropped it.

"Do you think they're convinced?" she asked, leaning her head back against the tree.

Beneath the Laughter

"They cheer when you insult me. That's enough proof," Osas said.

A pause.

"I hate this," she said. "Pretending."

"I know," he replied. "But if we don't..."

"They'll tear us apart."

She turned to face him. The smile was gone now. In its place, a quiet plea.

"Let's run away," she said.

"To where?" Osas asked.

"Anywhere the names Aisosa and Ehigie don't mean anything."

He hesitated.

She continued. "I'm tired of being a spell, a pawn, a strategy. I want to be a woman. Your woman."

He took her hand, kissed it, held it to his chest.

"I want that too. But I also want to protect you. And to do that, I must wait," Osas said.

"For what?"

"For the moment they're too distracted to notice our truth. Or too old to stop it."

She sighed. "So we play pretend."

"Yes," he said. "Until pretend becomes freedom."

They fell into a quiet rhythm. The veil pulsed softly around them like a heartbeat shared.

A Memory That Wasn't Lived

She closed her eyes. "Some nights," she whispered, "when I close my eyes beside you, I feel as though we've done this before."

Osas nodded. "Like we are really remembering, not discovering."

Her voice dropped even lower. "I don't just love you now. I feel like I've loved you before I had a name."

"Then perhaps we are only catching up to what the soul already knows," he replied.

The months passed. The veil deepened. The performance sharpened.

They would cross paths in the village square and spit words laced with venom and hidden laughter.

"Stay out of my way, goat son!" she would shout.

"I would, if your presence didn't stink up the air!" he would reply.

Villagers watched and nodded. Children mimicked them in games. Even Aisosa and Ehigie began to use the feud as a reference for good breeding.

“Learn from Ehimwenma,” Aisosa said to a cousin’s child. “She does not flirt with fools.”

But there was one who didn’t clap.

Igie.

The goat herder’s son.

He had always hated Osas. For his easy charm. For the way his words gathered listeners. For the way Ehi once ignored his clumsy attempts at courtship without so much as a nod.

Igie watched. And while most saw hatred, he saw... **a pattern.**

Why did they always arrive at the shrine one after the other?

Why did Ehi never insult anyone else so colorfully?

Why did Osas’s face only truly light up after she left?

Igie’s suspicion grew roots.

One evening, during a full moon celebration, he followed Osas.

He stayed low. Moved like a cat through cassava rows.

He saw the boy approach the grove... hesitate... then slip behind a tree and disappear.

Igie crept closer—only to find **nothing**.

Just four trees. No figures. No footprints.

Nothing but silence.

He felt dizzy. For a moment, he forgot why he was there. Forgot what he was thinking. Forgot everything.

Then the spell pushed him back. Literally. A wind rose. The air thickened. He stumbled and fell.

When he stood, he was angry—but confused.

“Something is wrong,” he muttered. “Very wrong.”

For days afterward, Igie couldn’t quite remember what he’d been chasing. He only remembered that something didn’t feel right.

Meanwhile, inside the veil, the lovers were tangled in one another’s arms.

“I want us to have a child,” Ehi whispered.

Osas’s eyes widened. “Now?”

“Not yet. But one day. Before the gods turn their heads.”

He kissed her forehead. “When we’re free. Our child will be the peace we could not have.”

They lay still for a moment.

Then she said, “If ever we are torn apart—by spell, war, or lie—promise me...”

“I’ll find you,” he said. “In this world or the next.”

They sealed the vow with a chant—an ancient lovers’ promise, forbidden to speak aloud in public.

*“If the earth swallows you, I will sink.
If the wind scatters you, I will ride it.
If death hides you, I will die to find you.”*

The wind outside the grove listened.

And far away, Pa. Uwa, the blind sage, turned his face toward the east.

“Ah,” he murmured, “the river is watching.”

And so, the spell deepened.

The lovers vowed.

The world watched them from outside a veil—
none the wiser.

And the river, old as memory, rippled.

It remembered.

Far beyond the forest, across great waters, foreign ships
prepared.

The wind carried unfamiliar smells—salt, sweat, and steel.

And Udo-Bini remained unaware that its **river would
soon carry away more than fish.**

It would carry lives.

It would carry truth.

It would carry a love... no longer pretending.

CHAPTER 3

The River Remembers

*Where the Body Breaks and the
Spirit Begins*

The river had always kept secrets.

It was where the first warriors bathed before battle.

Where widows whispered the names of husbands lost to the gods.

Where charms were thrown, vows were made, and newborns were welcomed into the world with cold splashes and saltless chants.

But most of all— The river remembered.

Keeper of Silent Screams

And on this day, it would remember the lovers. It would remember the scream of a girl it once called sacred.

The morning began like any other. It rose quietly.

Udo-Bini stretched awake in soft rhythms with the yawn of ancient villages: Roosters cried as if they had something urgent to report. Smoke curled from clay hearths, goats bleating, clay pots clinking, pestles hammering yam into paste.

The scent of woodsmoke and pepper leaf drifted into the corridors between huts.

