

Chapter I

"A Steinway. Ran you shouldn't have," Chutney remarked. Earlier in the day, at the Farmer's house, a piano was delivered by Ran Rold.

Ran looked squarely at the Farmer. "Don't worry. It's used. They last forever, Farmer. Enjoy it. I know Chutney can play. Maybe she can teach Maya and Karma to play."

"That's a great idea Ran," the Farmer responded.

The Farmer looked outside the delivery truck. Behind the vehicle was Ran Rold's Cadillac Escalade. He waved "hello" to Sharma, Ran's driver. Sharma waved back.

Ran Rold, owner of all that Is on Golden Mountain wouldn't be caught dead in a Mercedes. The Farmer knew all too well. Ran Rold, knower of all that IS wasn't too keen on German engineering. "They talk a good game, Farmer." Sharma knew why Ran Rold liked the Escalade. Superior American craftsmanship is what it is all about. Custom made. Of course! Real wood. Even had a satellite tracking system for Ran Rold's GPS satellite array.

After they all left, the Farmer sat there looking at the upright. He tickled a few of the keys. Chutney came by and looked at him.

"Farmer, you know he does not know how to say 'sorry' ," Chutney stated.

"It's all right. Ran Rold and I go back a long ways, Chutney. I try to stay away from his lucre," he said.

"I know you do. We all do. But he owns everything. No one can have anything without his say so," she said.

"What little we have is through God's grace," the Farmer stated.

"I know, darling. I know. Look, honey. Let me run out tomorrow and get some sheet music from Golden Mountain. I'll take Maya with me," she stated.

"Two country girls running wild in the big city, getting sheet music; sounds like a plan," the Farmer beamed.

"You are too funny." Chutney laughed. The Farmer started to laugh. They laughed so hard that Lollipop came in. He sneezed. Then he farted. Then he went onto the Magic Rug and fell asleep. Chutney and the Farmer laughed even harder.

The next day, Maya put on a red dress that the Farmer had bought her for Easter from the Ran Rold Department Store, the largest merchandiser located in the center of Golden Mountain. Her mother helped her put on her favorite bracelet on her right hand.

The Farmer came up to the house with the truck and gave the keys to Chutney. "Well, if it isn't the queen of Golden Mountain," he remarked to Maya. He gave his daughter a kiss on the cheek and helped her into the truck. Maya put on her seat belt and sat there looking at the horizon.

"We'll be back in a couple of hours, Farmer. Bye," said Chutney and Maya.

"Bye, honey. Bye, Maya," said the Farmer.

Chutney and Maya got on the highway. Thirty miles down the

road, a double-length semi-trailer truck rolled up next to them. The driver of the semi suddenly made a fast right turn and cut the pickup off. The rear bumper of the trailer hit the front bumper of the truck. Chutney lost control. The pickup spun into the guard rail. It bounced off and spun into the gully and then rolled down the hill into thick brush. It kept rolling until it hit bunch of old cherry trees.

The driver of the semi was high on cocaine and did not notice anything. He kept on driving to Golden Mountain. He had a schedule to meet. He had three rental properties and a million dollar home in Golden Mountain. One day he would be as rich as Ran Rold. Time is money.

Chutney lay there unconscious; her head having hit the driver's side window. Maya was hurt badly.

Two drifters wandering through the forest saw the wreck. They had to walk down the steep embankment and find the car in the thick brush. The occupants of the pickup were unconscious. The burly man told the skinny man to leave them where they lay.

They ransacked the car and its occupants, taking whatever they could carry and quickly sell. The bearded one took Chutney's purse. The long haired skinny man with multiple piercings looked through Maya's vinyl butterfly pocketbook and took a five dollar bill that was in there. He then noticed a shiny bracelet on her right wrist.

"Leave it," said the burly thief.

"Are you kidding? It's solid gold," remarked the skinny thief.

"Leave it. It's not real. That's a carnival trinket," the burly thief angrily stated

"It's gold, I tell you," remarked the skinny thief.

"It's fake. That's not worth anything."

"It's solid gold," said the skinny thief. "Maybe we can buy some cocaine with it."

"You could not even buy a bottle of water with that lead bracelet. It is made in China," he said and showed him the import mark. "Come on. Let's go," yelled the burly thief

The two highwaymen abandon the car and its occupants, Chutney and Maya. Hours passed.

The Farmer grew worried when Chutney did not call from the music store. There was no answer on her cell phone. Karma came home from school. After Karma came home, the Farmer decided to call the police station and tell him that Chutney was missing.

The desk sergeant was curt with the Farmer. "It takes twenty four hours before you can file a missing persons report in Mojave County," he advised and hung up the phone.

"Who was that?" asked another police officer.

"Just another cocaine addict from Mojave County. His wife and daughter are lost. Most likely they abandoned him. He wants us to go look for them," said the desk sergeant. "Twenty four hours is the rule here."

They both laughed because they realized how many missing persons reports were filed in Mojave County.