

## Chapter II

Dawn broke on a new day. The Farmer had little sleep. Lollipop started barking. The Farmer looked out his window. Coming up the drive was a very large black Cadillac Escalade. The license plate said "RAN ROLD". It was Ran Rold, the Ran Rold, owner of all that Is on Golden Mountain. Pimped up. Of course!

"Boss, we are here," said Sharma obsequiously.

Ran Rold sat there lost in a dream. He kept thinking of how Chutney came to his company's Christmas party years ago dressed in an oriental costume. Every woman at the party was dressed to impress Ran Rold, the Ran Rold, owner of all that Is on Golden Mountain, except her.

"Oh, sweet Chutney," Ran whimpered to himself. "The dynasty you would have been mother to."

Sharma came to the passenger's door. The mechanical step came out. Ran stepped on it, in all his majesty, wearing Giorgio Armani with reverse pleats. Wearing custom made Ferragamo suede loafers he stepped down. He looked spectacular in his iridescent Zegna shirt. Custom made. Of course!

Ran stood imperiously in front of the house as Sharma ran up to the door.

"Be careful, you lower order imbecile! Do not step on that infernal rug," yelled Ran to his minion.

Sharma knocked. The Farmer opened the door. Lollipop was asleep on the Magic Rug.

"Farmer, da Boss wants to talk wid you outside," said Sharma, careful not to awaken the sleeping dog. "Please come out to the Cadillac. Please," he whispered while keeping his eye on Lollipop, a very large boned Rhodesian Ridgeback.

The Farmer called out to Lollipop. The dog woke up. Sneezed ferociously. Farted. Farted again. Then he yawned as he stretched his front limbs. He shook his head swiftly and followed the Farmer out. Sharma quickly twisted his red stone pinky ring three times and looked up and said "Parvati" pleadingly into the heavens.

"Boss. Boss. I hear the car phone," Sharma looked at the dog and then looked at Ran Rold, smiled, and moseyed into the Escalade.

"Farmer, the Sheriff called me. He told me that you filed a missing person's report," Ran Rold said.

"Yes, Ran, I did," the Farmer answered

"Who is missing?" asked Ran.

"Chutney and Maya," replied the Farmer.

"Where are they?" demanded Ran Rold.

"They were going into Golden Mountain."

Ran asked the Farmer, "Where were they going?"

"They were going to buy some sheet music. That was yesterday," said an exasperated Farmer.

"You think they may have stopped somewhere else?" asked Ran Rold.

"No," said the Farmer softly. Chutney was a trained biophysicist. Deviation from the plan is extremely difficult for her.

"You think they picked up any gas or the truck broke down?" asked Ran Rold.

"I filled her up the day before. Even checked her out fully before they left. Tires, brakes, antifreeze, oil and even the steering fluid," replied the Farmer.

"Where could she have gone to?" the Farmer asked.

"I don't know Ran," the Farmer said.

"Well, we have to find her now, won't we?" Ran Rold answered.

"It's in the hands of the police, Ran," said the Farmer with no anger in his voice.

"Nonsense. I am the police in Golden Mountain," he exclaimed.

"Maybe we need more than the police."

He yelled at Sharma, "Get Dr. Muhammad on the phone"

"Yes, Boss," Sharma whimpered.

"Tell him to see if any hospitals have checked in Chutney and Maya," Ran Rold ordered.

"Yes, Boss," complied Sharma.

"What road did she take to Golden Mountain?" Ran Rold asked.

"899 East," answered the Farmer.

"899 is a long road, Farmer. Go to be sixty miles of road out there. It's faster but there are a lot of miles between Golden Mountain and Mojave County," Ran Rold indicated.

"Look, I'll ask the Sheriff to reconnoiter the route. Hop in, Farmer. We'll go to the police station," Ran Rold declared.

"Yes," said the Farmer.

The Farmer sat up front next to Sharma. Ran sat in the back of the spacious Cadillac Escalade with Delilah, his private car hostess, a ravishing buxom blonde. She reached between Ran Rold's legs and pulled out the custom made Gucci driving shoes from under his seat. Then she poured him a glass of Johnny Walker Green Label, discontinued in Golden Mountain but exclusively available for Ran Rold, distributor of all that IS on Golden Mountain.

She reached over to the Farmer. She rubbed her diamond covered nails through the Farmers thick, curly black hair. She gently scraped her nails through his scalp. "Farmer, your name should be Samson," she said. "As an intern for Buddy Airlines, I learned in Shanghai and Macau how to make the customer unwind after a hard day."

The Farmer looked out the window. Sharma stared ahead. His eyes focused on the road. Neither noticed the soft leather, the bright LED displays, the custom mahogany and walnut inlays and the massive navigation system. Awesome, compared to the Farmer's diesel pickup.

But the Farmer actually bought his truck. So did Ran Rold as long as you overlook the fact that he owned the Golden Mountain Cadillac dealership. The difference was cache flow.

The Farmer worked all year to get his corn to market. With an uptick in maize futures, the Farmer locked in his fall harvest's market price ninety days into the planting. That year they had Maya. And they also bought the truck. Through drought, recession, rains, depression and good times, the diesel block carried them through.

The car hostess sat closer to Ran. "Is there anything, you would like Mr. Rold. Anything."

"Not now, darling," Ran Rold smiled.

The Escalade rolled along the highway. Everyone stared. Everyone knew the black SUV from afar. There went Ran Rold, owner of all that Is on Golden Mountain. Three miles behind the Cadillac was Ran Rold's helicopter with Dr. Muhammad in it. And on speed dial was Wyeth I. Lai at Dewey, Cheatham & Soo to obfuscate any of the implications of any of Ran Rold's actions.

Back at the Farmer's house, Lollipop looked bewildered. The Farmer was gone. Karma was at school. Where did the alpha female and Maya go off too?

The dog pushed the front door open. He sniffed around the house. The blue mist from the Magic Rug came out of the Farmer's house. Lollipop came out to the front of the house. Suddenly, a blue cat appeared on the driveway. The dog snarled. He got into a stalking stance. He lunged toward the cat. It vanished.

A few yards down the road, the blue cat appeared again, taunting the dog. Lollipop gave chase. The mysterious blue cat disappeared again. His paw stepped onto a small drop of motor oil. The cat appeared again. It was now in the street.

"This time I am going to get you," the dog snarled. Lollipop jumped ferociously at the blue phantom. The blue cat sank into the road. The dog again ran into a spot of motor oil. Every twenty yards or so, the blue apparition would unexpectedly appear in front of Lollipop. And soon, completely unaware, Lollipop was running towards Golden Mountain following route 899.

Ran Rold's car drove up to the Ran Rold XXI Police Precinct, named after one of Ran Rold's ancestors. The Sheriff came out to greet him.

"Yes, Mr. Rold?" enquired the Sheriff in a toady manner.

"Let's go inside and try to find Chutney and Maya," said Ran Rold, the Ran Rold, commander of all that Is on Golden Mountain.

"Yes, sir," replied the Sheriff.

The sheriff's deputy came up and told him that they can get helicopters up in less than half an hour. But they would have to be fueled by Ran Rold Aviation Fuel, Inc. first.

"Do it," said the Sheriff.

"But, sir, we have to get the appropriation from City Hall," the Sheriff's Deputy stated.

"Sharma," bellowed Ran Rold.

"Yes, Boss."

"Tell, Dr. Muhammad to reroute to City Hall. Tell him to stay there and make sure to get a quorum. Pass all the laws needed to make sure the helicopters are fueled. We must find Chutney," demanded Ran Rold, the Ran Rold, commander of all that Is on Golden Mountain.

Sharma called Dr. Muhammad. Dr. Muhammad instinctively genuflected when he heard Ran Rold's command over the phone. Sharma advised. "Boss, the helicopter pilot is flying to City Hall right now."

The Mayor called Ran Rold and declared deferentially, "The entire resources of Golden Mountain are available to you, my Master." He advised Ran Rold that Wyeth I. Lai, Esq. was in his office. Whole retinues of lawyers were in his office, actually. Sharma could hear the Mayor's servile remarks. "Yes, Boss... Just tell me what to do... Boss ...OK ...OK ...Yeah ... OK...OK... Done."

The minutes of the day were changed. A quorum call was made. Bill 12-789 was brought up in Golden Mountain's City Council. All parties present for the quorum in the chamber, yelled in sync, "Yes, Boss!" Dr. Muhammad also chimed "Yes, Boss" from the massive white helicopter he was flying in.

"Yes, Boss," said Wyeth I. Lai.

"Yes, Boss," said the Sheriff.

"Yes, Boss," said the Deputy

"Yes, Boss," said Delilah, the private car hostess, from within the

Escalade.

The Farmer watched the remarkable spectacle presented by Ran Rold, the Ran Rold, commander of all that Is on Golden Mountain. Ran Rold was flexing his power for all to see!

No one heard the Farmer's prayer through the din in the precinct. The Farmer prayed that no one would get hurt during the search. He prayed that God would keep Maya and Chutney safe.

The Farmer was afraid that something bad had happened to his wife and his daughter. He hid his fears from others. He looked at the clock and realized that he left Lollipop back at the farm. "Great," he thought to himself.

A situation room was set up. Detectives called the Farmer's neighbors, their relatives and friends. The Sheriff called Ran Rold Surveying for aerial satellite arrays. It took an hour, but they were delivered. The police looked at the photographs from space of Route 899 with special glasses. No one saw anything.

A loud barking sound was heard outside the police precinct. "Sir," he said to Ran Rold. "There's a large Rhodesian Ridgeback in the parking lot."

The Farmer heard and yelled, "That's my dog Lollipop."

The Farmer ran out to find his dog barking at something on the road. When he got closer, Lollipop quieted down. The dog grabbed his pant leg with his teeth and pulled him to the road. When they got to the road, the Farmer saw it. The blue cat. Right away he knew it was the Magic Rug.



"Thank you, Jesus!" he yelled up into heaven.

The two ran along route 899. Lollipop ran into a ravine and then up a deserted access road. The Farmer followed. Both started going up a steep incline.

It was no ordinary hill. This was Ran Rold Mountain they were climbing. Rumor had it that it was made of solid gold. The Farmer laughed whenever he heard people say that. There was no gold in this mountain, just millions of tons of rock, clay and soil. "If you dig deep enough you may find China" he would say to Karma's friends.

Lollipop dragged the Farmer to a clearing. He walked to the edge of the cliff. Out there on the horizon were Golden Mountain's magnificent steel towers.

"What's wrong Lollipop?" The Farmer could not tell what was wrong.

"Out there, Farmer" the dog was barking. But the Farmer did not speak Ridgeback. Lollipop was looking east at some smaller hills. The Farmer was looking West, along the route of 899, going into Golden Mountain.

Lollipop kept barking, "Over there!" "Over there!" "Over there, Farmer!" Over and over again. Finally, in frustration, the dog tripped him up. The Farmer fell on his knees. His head was at Lollipop's height. He could now see along Lollipop's field of vision.

Lollipop looked over at the small hills. There was a shiny golden glimmer. It was barely visible. The Farmer looked toward the small hills. "What do you see, boy?" he asked his dog.

"Over there, Farmer. Your pup is over there. The alpha female is over there. Over there, between the hills," barked the dog. A blue rush of air came over the mountain. The Farmer could not tell what color it was. It was too dark.

The clouds above Ran Rold Mountain dispersed. The star light from the North Star bounced off the moon and into the small hills. There it was! He saw it! A shiny glint of golden metal.

"Eureka," the Farmer realized. Dog and master reversed their trek. They ran down the steep incline. They sprinted back towards the police precinct.

The Farmer tried to get people's attention, but everyone was focused on impressing the knower of all that Is on Golden Mountain, Ran Rold.

No one even noticed the Farmer heaving, trying to catch his breath. In the lobby, the Farmer called his buddy, Dr. Patel. The two had served in the Army together. Although Dr. Patel was an officer in the military, he would never deny friendship to the Farmer. Both knew how hard it was to have a friend in Golden Mountain. Dr. Patel was a combat helicopter pilot. He did three tours in Iraq with the Farmer. They both came back and went to school on the GI Bill. They both had taken IVY Verbal Review. Chutney gave the Farmer her copy while they were in school. Dr. Patel's father paid the \$30,000.

Dr. Patel told him he would meet him on Route 899. "OK, Dev. I'll look for your car"

"My car? Ha. Ha. Look up in the sky Farmer, for my new Bell

helicopter," Dr. Patel said.