

the GREEN
LAMA

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the
**GREEN
LAMA**
in

**Shiva
Endangered**
by Kevin Noel Olsen

Chapter One

YETI IN THE MIST

Crawling down the mountain, the mists pressed slowly and lightly against the wall of jagged, glacier-deposited boulders surrounding the village. Ravikiran pointed his thirteen-year-old eyes toward the white peaks to the north as he stepped from his hut. Ravikiran wondered how many pairs of eyes he had in his transmigration through lifetimes; how many found wonder at the scene.

The sun waited on his right hand, peeling the layers of dawn away to display the majesty of the Hindustan countryside. Smiling, he walked to a grazing cow and patted it lightly on its dusty, tan back. He nodded at the blessed day Brahma provided and walked past the other huts. He considered the beautiful lessons of the Bhagvat Geeta he learned from the monks in the temple. He could not read the sacred scriptures himself yet hoped one day to join the monks in learning more wonders of the world.

He walked to the well and lowered the pail by rope. When it felt full, he pulled the rope to the top and untied the pail. His mother didn't feel well and she needed the water. Ravikiran did not mind performing the task as he had done it every day since he was too young to remember.

The low rumbling started down the road as a cloud of dust in the distance. It caught Ravikiran's attention. He saw a row of large trucks climbing down a hill. He increased his pace to return home. "Mother!" he shouted before reaching the door. "Mother, someone comes along the road!"

His mother, her illness only slightly diminishing her angular beauty, stood uneasily to her feet and wrapped a sari over her bed clothes. "Come, Ravi," she said to the boy as she walked out the door. She joined in staring at the Juggernautical row of trucks. Her eyes widened. She stifled a cough

before saying, "Let us take a walk up the mountain."

"Who are they, Mother?" the boy asked. "Is there trouble?"

A tear touched his mother's eyelid. Her lips pursed as she smacked him with her hand. "You will obey, Ravi!" She softened at seeing Ravikiran's face fall. "We must hurry, my beloved child." She strode quickly after him as he headed for the mountain range.

His mother directed him to a thin crevice leading up the formidable mountain next to their village. "We will remain out of sight if possible."

Ravikiran felt the gravity of the situation, though he did not fully understand. Looking back through the trees he watched the trucks pull into the village. One of the trucks towed a flat trailer carrying something large hidden by a brown tarp. Men wearing black coats and pants, pale in complexion with closely-cropped hair, alighted from the vehicles. Flat, round hats with short brims in the front decorated their heads. Red armbands with the Jain symbol of the Fylfot or Swastika decorated their arms, yet they didn't look at all like the gentle, white-robed Jain monks that came through on their travels.

Ravikiran saw the weapons the men carried; vicious-looking guns more frightening than those of the British hunters that came through in search of tiger pelts. Ravikiran's father, his mother told him, was a Sherpa. He fell prey to an attacking tiger while hired as a guide by hunters. That was a few months before the birth of Ravikiran.

He turned to continue walking, but his mother grabbed his shirt and pulled him to the ground. Her finger crossed her lip like the Jain symbol. Ravikiran remained silent and watched.

Three of the men walked to the small-yet-majestic village temple with elaborate statues of Hindu deities embedded in its walls. Ravi spent hours imagining them moving about, performing the business of gods.

An aged and balding monk appeared at the door and seemed to deny the men entry. Sitting behind him, Ravi's mother put her left hand over his mouth and her right arm around his chest. He did not understand until the rifle began spitting repetitive noises. The monk twisted and fell beneath a volley of bullets.

Ravikiran wanted to scream. His mother's hand precluded it. Only a clear drop streamed from his eye. He realized after all this time of listening to the wise monk he never knew his name.

"Tushar Das!" his mother whispered harshly. Tempered mourning fluttered in her voice. Ravi remembered hearing the name, yet was not certain it belonged to the monk. He sighed beneath his mother's hand as he reminisced about the monk saying to him one day, "The entire sky is yours my child, yet nothing is all you have. The world, our very life, is in our care; yet we cannot place it in a vault for protection. Life is held in the

tree, not the box made from the tree. The vault of our hearts,” the smiling monk pressed a finger gently into Ravi’s chest, “holds the sky, the tree, and the very earth. Hold it gently.”

Ravi’s mother retained her hold on him. They watched as the three soldiers walked into the Temple. The others soldiers remained outside. They leaned against the trucks, laughing and smoking cigarettes. The death of the monk lacked sacredness to them. A tall, imposing man dressed in a crimson monk’s robe stepped from the passenger’s side of the truck with trailer in tow. The man scanned the area with beady, piercing eyes. His gaze locked on Ravi and his mother. His lips twisted as he pointed. “Kill them!” he bellowed. “No one must know we were here!” Six of the soldiers obeyed the orders and headed up the mountain.

His mother pulled Ravi after her as she headed further up the mountain and into the dense mist. He could barely see his feet in the haze. He allowed his mother to pull him along as he made certain of his own footing. The soldiers followed them, yet failed to move quietly. Shouting in a strange tongue, stumbling and occasionally falling to the ground, the men persisted in their pursuit. Ravi heard the clatter of their boots against the dirt and pebbles. Despite their audible clumsiness, their voices grew louder and louder.

Ravikiran and his mother moved silently through the trees, searching for a means of escape or shelter. A scream split the air, followed by excited shouts from the soldiers and sporadic, staccato gunfire.

His mother moved faster. She pulled back as the figure of a soldier flew in front of them and smashed into a tree.

Ravi put his hand over his mouth. “Yeti!” he said.

“Silence beloved!” his mother whispered. Her eyes searched the misted trees. “Yeti do not travel so far from the mountain snow!”

Ravikiran fell silent. He did not find his mother’s words comforting. They climbed a steep section of the mountain when another scream filled the air, followed again by gunfire and strange exclamations. “It is Yeti, mother! Sachi told me they have come before!”

“Silence for the sake of the trees,” his mother said. “That was long ago. If it is Yeti, our travails only begin!”

A soldier appeared out of the mists and rushed toward them. His gun pointed steadily in their direction. Ravi’s mother pulled her son close and fell to her knees. “Mercy!” she said in English. “Mercy!”

The soldier, his eyes widened in terror, rushed blindly between Ravi and his kneeling mother. A large figure coated in white appeared from the mist, a low growl preceding its form. Ravi could not help himself. “Yeti!!!” he screamed.

The white mist fell off the fast-moving figure as it rushed past. Beneath

the vanishing mist moved a white man dressed in a green robe like those of the holy Lamas. With swift strides, he easily overtook the soldier and collared him with a red scarf. The soldier fell onto his back, eyes widened with terror. The green-robed man held his hand palm-out, still holding the ends of the scarf securely about the soldier's neck. "Peace and stillness," he said in a deep voice, young in years yet inflected with the wisdom of eons. "You will speak to your purpose and wish no violence."

As Ravi looked on the scarf glowed a barely-perceptible green hue, shimmering like ocean waves. The soldier dropped his gun to his side. It swayed gently from its straps. His eyes glazed over, turning the same color emanating from the scarf. He spoke in broken English, which Ravi knew a slight bit of from schooling with the monks. "My name is Gustav. I come in the name of the Fuhrer. We come to seek the Jade Tablet and the secrets of Soma."

The green-robed man clenched his jaw. "Sleep." Gustav fell into a deep sleep. The man removed the scarf from the soldier's neck and returned it to his own. "Fools," the man murmured. Looking into the mist, he took a grenade from the unconscious soldier's belt.

Another soldier rushed from the fog, his gun rattling bullets around the man in green. The tiny bits of metal sent splinters and sawdust through the air as they chewed at the trees. Unperturbed, the man threw the grenade and struck the soldier on the head. The gun and the soldier fell silent and to the ground, the unarmed grenade landing harmlessly beside.

Ravikiran and his mother looked at their rescuer. "Who are you?" the boy asked in rough English.

"I am The Green Lama," the man replied.

"The Green Lama?" Ravi repeated.

The man nodded. "It is an honored title bestowed upon me by my teachers." He looked toward the top of the obscured mountain and pointed. "I trained here to learn the ways of the Lama. I returned when I discovered a Nazi plot to retrieve the Jade Tablet. I hired a plane and flew directly from America to protect the area. I came as fast as I could." He closed his eyes and breathed deeply. "Not soon enough to save my old friend Tushar Das."

"A Lama uses no violence," Ravikiran said, more by rote memory than deep conviction. "How can you strike another?"

Green Lama smiled wisely. "A Lama understands justice." He flourished his hands to indicate their surroundings. "If a man falls against a rock travelling through the fog, is it not violence against him by the rock? Is the mist misused by nature as a tool for karma?" The Lama shook his head. "No, my son. To protect the innocent is merely nature using me as the rock and the fog."

“I have heard no monk speak as you,” Ravikiran said. “Is this a new teaching?”

The Green Lama laughed, his teeth bright. “I am not at a place where many monks are. It is to my shame I cannot see as they do.”

“Yet you are powerful,” Ravikiran’s mother said, “though you do not follow the teachings.”

The Lama nodded. “I have learned the hidden mysteries of the masters, yet my passions are a mist and a rock within. I must face them. I will not stand by to permit injustice.” Voices in the village met their ears. “I must go and teach those in the village before I can learn my lessons.”

“There are no more in the village but the men with guns,” Ravi replied. “They are lost to anger and ambition and will not listen to wisdom.”

The Green Lama smiled. “Who more needs instruction to leave the mist and avoid the rocks?” With this, the Green Lama moved swiftly. The mists coated and transformed his figure into the swift, clouded creature that first appeared to Ravi and his mother. “He becomes the mists!” Ravikiran exclaimed.

His mother shook her head as she embraced her son. “It coats and comforts him as a mother. We must remain quiet, Ravi.” They walked down to the edge of the mist to observe.

Walking to the village, the Green Lama left the mist behind. It fell off his shoulders to wander the ground. He approached the soldiers and the large man clad in a crimson robe. In the crisp, silent air their words wafted to Ravi and his mother.

“Be calm,” the Green Lama said in soothing tones. “Violence will fail to further your purpose.”

The tall man stepped forward, his smile remained cautious. “I am the mystic Aaulfo Kellen. Our cause here is in accord with the purpose of all. Who are you, monk?”

“I am The Green Lama. What do you desire to take by force that may not be freely given?”

The tall man’s face fell into a sneer. “We will have what is necessary to bring alive a greater world, and will have it by hook or crook! The Nazis do not answer to,” his lips curled, “an upstart American, as I discern from your accent. You are unwise to act superior to the Master Race of Areounus from Atlantis!”

Green Lama smiled. “One of a Master Race need not feel insulted by an inferior’s opinion. I am an American. There is no need to feel superior when the seeds of nature humble us all.”

Aaulfo gritted his teeth. “It is merely humbling to those who do not understand,” he returned. “For those open to the secrets of the leaves, the meaning is plain.”

The Green Lama simply nodded and smiled.

The German mystic twisted his neck. His head lowered to the side. His eyes peered at the Green Lama from beneath his brow. "Kill him."

"*Om mani padme hum,*" the Green Lama said quietly as he began to spin in a circle. The Nazis pulled their guns to bear. The bullets clattered through the air, tearing at the spinning Lama's robe.

Adaulfo Kellen's voice drowned beneath the din until the machine gun's halted. He waved his arms angrily. "Stop! Stop, you fools!" The soldiers let their guns rest at their sides.

Adaulfo walked to the still-spinning robe and yanked a sleeve. The robe fell like a tent, a metal pole clanking to the ground. "Imbeciles! Dummkopfs!" Adaulfo fumed at the soldiers. "It is a fakir's trick! Mere prestidigitation! The Lama left before you pulled a trigger!"

The confused soldiers stood open-mouthed. "How?" one asked.

To illustrate, the mystic held the robe in the air. "Sleight of hand! You concentrate on the top of a spinning robe while its erstwhile occupant escapes through the bottom!" Kellen threw the robe to the ground in disgust. "Hitler chooses the SS men from the very best! If this is the elite among the Nazis, the plans to restore the ancient race is doomed!" He stared down the captain standing there. "You are a disgrace, Adalbrecht!"

The door opened on one of the trucks and a Nazi general alighted. Stepping through the soldiers, he stepped to the mystic, his jaw set. "You will not speak to my men with such deprecation, Herr Kellen!" He pulled out his luger and pressed it into the mystic's neck. "You are not so invaluable as to abuse my men!"

Adaulfo calmed, his eyes widening. "I...I..." Kellen stammered, his eyes moving to the pistol at his neck. "I lost my serenity, Herr General Kannenberg. It will not happen again."

"See it does not," the General replied as he placed his pistol in its holster. "We are here on direct orders from the Fuehrer. Your free manner opposes our precision. You may serve at our leisure, Herr Kellen! It may go well for you should we find the artifact," General Kannenberg shrugged. "It may go ill for you if we feel dissatisfied."

"Herr General," Kellen ventured, "we must find this Green Lama and the boy. They may be the key we need!"

The general looked toward the mist. "Did no one see where he went?" The soldiers and Kellen all shrugged their agreement on the matter. "Go search the mountain," he ordered three of the soldiers and Kellen. "The rest of you," he indicated the four remaining, "come with me to the temple!"