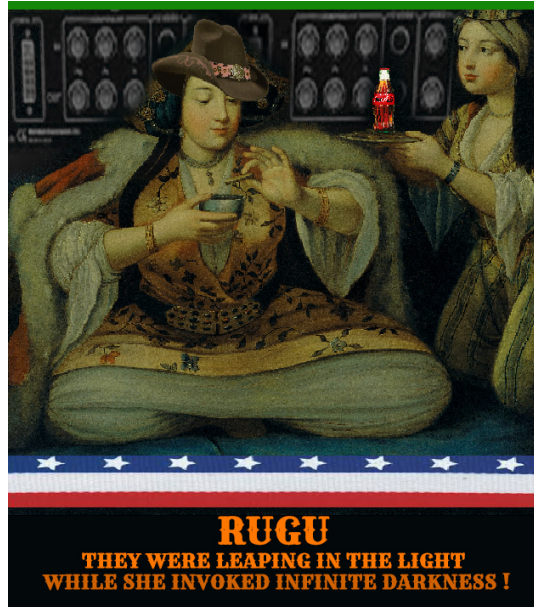


# RUGU

By Johnny Blue Star

-A NOVEL WRITING WRITING SAMPLE-

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The following **WRITER'S SAMPLE** was meant to be a portion of a projected three-part novel series called "Rugu!" riginally constructed as a preliminary effort to concommitantly plan and develop three major film scripts, based on the novel series. The first novel was to be called "Leaping in the Light!"

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## CHAPTER 1 THE LINE OF CONTROL

"In Sanskrit, a guru is someone who takes a chosen follower from darkness (gu) to light (ru). But this is not the only type of teacher. Unfortunately, there is a kind of Teacher who does exactly the opposite- one who leads his disciples from whatever light they have (ru) to an ocean of infinite darkness (gu). I call that Teacher a Rugu- and there are a lot of them."

Anderson Clemmons, Investigative Reporter (Testifying at a Senate Intelligence Hearing on Cult Behavior and its Implications for the International Intelligence **Community**).

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Gandhi's ghost wept as India and Pakistan once again donned their ancient masks of war and danced around their grisly nuclear bonfires, whose sparks now could ignite other smaller fires throughout the world. The ghost knew the dangers of partition, but had never dreamed such rogue ideas of war would infect India or its demanding stepchild, Pakistan.

How many times had these two nations crossed over the line of peace? Kashmir was the catalyst for three wars so far, most recently fueling the Kargil confrontation of 1999. But war occurred in 1965 and also in 1947. Yet, in one more year of turmoil, the nations had almost cracked open Pandora's box. And, now years after the last engagement, when many hoped for the end of hostilities, the possibility of war seemed almost inevitable as militant processions, the so-called Big Marches, rolled down the streets of India and Pakistan. Sated on their military feast at the trough of military might, the two nations fiercely, but stupidly, paraded their nuclear missiles, their Agnis and M11's, as though they were some trophies for conquest, instead of portents of self-annihilation.

Gandhi's ghost could remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the sinking helplessness he felt. But when the great nation chose those self-same implements, he could feel the very kingdom of Hades quake with the anticipation of millions of tortured souls.

Not far from the border and a handful of miles from a small town called Chakoti, the soldiers lay tense in the ground behind their barbed wire barricades. Aerial surveillance from American satellites showed dozens of such conclaves of antagonists clustering around either side of the Line of Control, that so-called magic line of peaceful co-existence that separated the Pakistani and Indian soldiers. The antagonists perched on either side of the LoC, eyes squinting into each other's, index fingers frozen on their AK triggers. Some slouched over their rocket launchers, recalibrated their targeting, while other meticulously combed mortars and machine gun depots, cleaning, loading and repairing thousands of weapons. Thousands of men faced each other, knowing that the real devastation was not from their playful little small arms interactions or their mortars and rockets, but rather a more deadly umbrella of death that masqueraded itself as a legitimate method of war.

The Pakistani soldiers nodded at each other grimly as a small contingent of Indian infantry and six jeeps accompanied by a crudely disguised SS150 missile launcher made its way to the very front of the lines. The missile, if

indeed it was that, was a strange shaped, painted jet black, bristling with needle-like structures. It was cradled in the SS150, whose entire walls were laced with instrument gauges. Immediately, upon parking the vessel, three men in suits got out of the jeeps and began examining the gauges, yelling out to one another, while they made notations on their clipboards.

“What do you think?” the Pakistani Colonel said to Major Ali. He thought the Major was a snotty, arrogant sort. But he was the only one around him who knew anything.

“I think it is a modified Prithvi, which they have equipped with a nuclear warhead. A small one, I think,” the Major said, tentatively.

“Is that really likely? I thought that the Agnis had-“ The Colonel began, stopping his comment midstream. The Major wasn’t any fool. He followed weapons development closely.

“Yes, yes- for conventional nuclear weapons the Agnis had undoubtedly surpassed the Prithvis, the Major went on. “But there were tests in 1998 with miniaturized nuclear warheads and they were successful. Then, the Indian scientists tried to block out speculation about further developments of the Prithvi by focusing on the Agnis, but they apparently kept developing them.”

“It looks very weird. All those needles. The black surface. It doesn’t look real.”

“Maybe they want us to try and figure out what they are. Speculation takes time. And they need time to set everything up. But it’s a Prithvi all right. I’m sure of it now. It’s hard to see its shape under all that sculpture. You are seeing a tactical nuclear weapon deployed in the field, with a bunch of ridiculous needle sculptures.”

“How could they be so stupid? Why would they escalate things now?” the Colonel said boldly. “I rather doubt it.”

“Tell me your doubts later when you’re spitting out blood and your hair falls out, Colonel. That is if anything is left of you after the attack. I think they could actually hit Islamabad from here. It would take out a quarter of the city and irradiate another quarter. But I think their main point is to threaten our soldiers.”

“Thanks for the pleasant conversation, Ali,” the Colonel said, happy to leave this unpleasantness. But as he turned around to walk off, he was rudely interrupted. Turning back to the Major, he said, ““Hold it!” The Colonel was monitoring his radio. “They want us to take it out.”

“Good-bye, Colonel.” Ali said, thinking it was turn now to leave.

“You’re not going anywhere, my friend,” the Colonel said.

“I’m hitching a ride to Karachi.”

“You were the one who said, ‘tactical,’ Major. You might be a thimble full of ashes by before you get two miles from here. Get four of your best sharpshooters- fast!” he ordered. His hands moved down to his holster.

The Major weighed his chances for jumping into a jeep. At this point, he didn’t care about the orders. He didn’t care about desertion. In his heart, he actually believed that the Indians were pulling the last Mexican standoff. Tactical was real. Tactical was about to happen. But he also believed that the Colonel would shoot him and, with a little twinge of a conscience he even didn’t realize he had, he felt compelled to round up those sharpshooters.

In the background, on both sides, there was a kind of muffled roar of trucks, cars and vans- an army of them on both sides of the Line of Control, racing towards what might be a climactic confrontation. CNN was the first to arrive on the scene, but its van, piloted by an exceedingly nervous driver, kicked into overdrive at the wrong moment. As it sped insanely forward amidst battle-hardened and pissed off infantry, a large tank intentionally diverted its trajectory, forcing the van off the road, where it crashed into dozens of sandbags and crude, wooden, barricades, made it only about thirty-five seconds before the other mostly Indian news wagons. But the CNN crew was also significantly faster than any other production crew on the Indian continent and they made their live broadcast at least three minutes before anyone else.

Like everyone else, I watched from the Ashram in New Orleans, my eyes sullenly focused on the unfolding events. Tony had been gone for six weeks now, one week longer than the so-called his vacation camp in India had projected. I was tense with worry. Although there had been a rush to get

Americans out of India, the Ashram had claimed there had been some kind of logistic problem in the airport and five of our children had been stranded there for days. For all I knew, Anderson could have been manning one of those cameras, although I believed he still was in New Delhi.

If I had been very observant, I should have seen a Pakistani major running from one end of the line to the other, interrogating his troops- trying to find four of his best sharpshooters, pulling them out of line and rushing them over towards a barricade, no more than fifty feet from the jet black missile launcher. In the far distance, on the Pakistani side, there was another tremendous sound. It was a gigantic vehicle, a missile launcher that far out-stripped the Indian missile launcher. The Major turned his head. At his right, he saw his Colonel's mouth drop open. Suddenly, the Colonel was slamming his radio with his fist. It started to crackle. He raised his palm, as if to say- "Stop!" He whispered to Ali, "Have them lower their weapons. The big guns are here."

"You're fucking right, Colonel. That's an M11 missile, our finest. They are dragging it into the midst of day. That's not tactical. That's not even a normal nuke. It's some kind of multiple warhead. And look over there--"

The Colonel looked behind them. Four more M11 missile launchers were advancing.

The Major shook his head. "Right there is the end of the world."

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE CHILDREN**

It took an hour before the Agnis, missiles with large-scale "conventional" nuclear weapons arrived. Like the M11 missiles, they mustn't have been too far away. The Big Marches, a product of this new era of war, had been getting closer and closer to the borders. If one could take a term like "world tension" literally, then perhaps Planet Earth must have been choking on the edge of a gigantic muscle spasm. As for myself, considering where the children were, I could barely breathe.

With some kind of apparently perversely negative prescience, Nana had put little Azi, along with my son, Tony, and the other children, right in the middle of Chakoti. I knew my son's life was in jeopardy and my young ex-husband,

whose true mettle I was beginning to know now he was somewhere in India, was certainly close enough to face annihilation as well. And millions and millions of people in the countries of Pakistan and India began to wonder if they would see even a few more hours of life.

Suddenly, firing broke out in the night near the SS150. Who knows? - a young Pakistani officer, who fell briefly asleep and whose trigger finger flinched; an angry Kashmiri who wanted to provoke some kind of impossible concession from the Indian military; an Indian private who went mad? It could have been anyone and anything. In any event, someone fired and all hell broke loose. A full-scale shooting war broke out.

Infantry from both sides ran to protect the missile launchers. Some of maintenance crew of the Agnis and M11 missiles already there. But confusion interrupted their journey. Someone had used some kind of chemical gas in the fray and men were choking and crying in the midst of the shooting.

Suddenly, there was a strange sort of quiet. The firing hadn't stopped, but it had suddenly become more sporadic. It was a notable change.

Somewhere, out of a strange line of assorted vehicles, a line of about thirty children appeared. They were garbed in recognizable Levee garments, sannyasin-style, long white robes trailing over the brittle stony ground, marching, faces down and silent, between the enemy lines. From my standpoint, huddled around a TV monitor thousands of miles away, I squinted to make out the little faces, until the camera obliged and began to close in. When there were only about fifteen faces in view, I began to think the center one was my son. When the camera closed in further, I knew it was him.

“Tony,” I screamed hysterically.

Suddenly, as far as I can remember, this was the moment the firing completely stopped. Two opposing forces froze in silence. The children now formed two lines, one facing the Pakistanis, the other facing the Indians. They fell on their knees, raising their hands in supplications. The camera now enveloped three faces. Tony was one of them. He appeared quite strange. Notably, his pupils were all the way up in his sockets. He wasn't looking at anything. He looked drugged or hypnotized or locked in some fervent prayer. As the children's mouths moved silently, a single shot rang out of the silence. Blood oozed out

of a hole in Tony's head. He slumped and fell, blood running into the stony ground.

I started to scream, to cry unrestrained. I moved towards the TV, my arms flailing with hysteria. Several vases and a lamp loudly crashed to the floor. My sobbing and screaming was so loud that people were running to close the doors. Meanwhile, three Mentors in the room jumped on me, holding my arms and legs down for my own protection. I pushed them away with awesome power.

“Your son saved the whole world, Symphony.”

“Fuck you. I never gave Nana permission to put his life- in such danger! He should be here with me.” I wept hysterically, but still kept an eye on the flickering television images.

I was watching when the first Pakistani soldier walked up to the children and dropped his gun in the middle of the LoC. Then came another and another, until the first Indian soldier surrendered his AKA and his grenades. In an hour or two, there were thousands and thousands of armaments across the Line of Control- machine guns, AKAs, grenades, peasant rifles, rocket launchers- and two lines of men, dressed in their khakis and fatigues, but seeming somehow naked and defenseless, looking across this river of armaments at each other. Hatred and anger no longer smoldered in their eyes, just some kind of unexpected but welcome infinity of relief.

It was only after this had happened that the first missile crew actually stepped down, throwing their suitcases and their keys, their binoculars and their manuals right on top of the heap. And, then, one after another, the Indian and Pakistani crews stepped forward- until the giant missile launchers and their awesome rockets stood, unattended and abandoned- baking in the hot sun of armistice.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE PEACE PRIZE**

It was no secret who those children were. The Ashram was besieged with reporters and Nana was summoned to India by both governments, who each awarded her a prize for the non-violent road to peace she forged with her

children. I am sure, during this time, that I was heavily sedated by the Ashram's doctors, but I know I was never informed of any funeral plans for Tony or any discussion whatsoever of his death or the disposition of his body.

Then, the moment came when Nana was offered the greatest prize of all- the Nobel Peace Prize. They insisted I go. After all, wasn't I the mother of the martyred child who saved two countries from nuclear holocaust? By this time, I was so sedated that I barely knew who I was. The Mentors did all the packing for me and went with me to the Airport. But the French Quarter was filled with midnight partygoers, even though it was weeks before Midnight. And, so, when a taxi driver decided to take a shortcut, I nearly missed the plane to France and hence the connection to Stockholm.

When I got on the plane, I didn't sit with anyone else. But I felt someone watching me. Maybe it was the drugs, but during this trip I never felt alone. It was almost like I woke up in the auditorium in Stockholm.

And there she was!- dressed better than I had ever seen her! She had on this huge sari. It was black, but it was painted with moons and stars. The whole universe was on that sari.

The man who introduced her was more than eloquent. "It is my great honor to present this price to Jane Noland of the Levee Foundation. Jane is known to her friends as Nana and she is the head of a spiritual organization, which is headquartered in New Orleans and India. Despite her enormous wide-ranging charitable activities and, particularly, her tireless hospice work with the children of AIDS, Jane is being awarded this Prize for an entirely different reason.

In one of the most amazing five minutes of history, in the presence of all the major news agencies, Nana and her children averted an immanent potential nuclear collision between India and Pakistan, near the small town of Chakoti. Here, between two great armies facing each other in a nuclear stalemate, Nana had placed one of her two Levee Foundation ashrams. All these children were allegedly physically or mentally disabled and were there for medical reasons. They were considered to be patients.

Encouraged by Jane Noland, the young patients, some of which were barely ambulatory, risked their lives to bring the danger and chaos of this confrontation to a happy conclusion." I smirked at the lie. Tony wasn't a



patient. He was a hostage. The speaker droned on, “This is an incredible woman, who can commandeer mortal enemies for the sake of her precious gift- of healing and peace for the dying- and now, for the sake of world peace.”

And when she held that prize in her hand and thanked the Committee, with all those flashbulbs exploding in her face- she almost looked beautiful. And I had never seen her look anything remotely approaching beautiful. She, of course, ignored the sentimentality of the speaker, who was, incidentally, the President of Norway- and barged ahead with her own little speech.

“I guess I’m the first witch to get the peace prize. And, of course, I’m from New Orleans, so that makes it even better,” she said, laughing, knowing there would be headlines from that humorously-intended pronouncement, quoted out of context without the benefit of her very next statements, which was. “Well, at least the first female guru to get one. But, even if my good friends in the press don’t know exactly what I am, they at least know that my little ashram and me did good. And, a lot of people in Pakistan and India are safe now and alive because of my kids.”

In terms of out-of-context quote of her being a “witch,” I believed she knew very well she would be quoted as saying that without any modification. She liked controversy- and she liked that the whole world was confused as to who she really was.

She smiled at the audience and then she smiled at me. I think someone in the committee who actually knew her nearly threw up after her speech. As to me, little shivers went up and down my spine. If she lacked all the divine virtues, save one, it was omnipresence. Nana was everywhere.

“You all saw little Tony Anderson get it in the head.” I felt a surge of pure rage ripple through my body. How could this woman speak so crudely in this august ceremony? And about my son! “I brought his mother with me from Louisiana so you could meet her. Stand up, Symphony. Let the people see you.”

I got up. I was now gripped with blind fury. “Where-?” I kind of chortled, scared and angry as I was. “Where is my son’s body, you dumb bitch!” I continued, but probably totally incoherently, as I ran down the aisle towards her. Before I got two feet, the Mentors and State Security were all over me and darkness descended quickly.

