



WOLF WORSHIP

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Tan, the Indian Youth, Follows the Trail of the Son of the White Phantom!

A SAVAGE CACOPHONY of wolf sounds brought young Tan hurrying along the west gully. Tan, the Indian stripling, lived with his sister, Netan, and her husband, in the little cabin by the springs.

Quivering, Tan parted a wild fruit thicket, then came to a sharp halt, gasping at what he saw. It was enough to stir anyone.

Toe to toe, jaws locked, were Olak, the great White Phantom wolf king of Nahanni, and Sa, the son of

Olak, a handsome young wolf showing much of the color markings of his sire.

Tan was afraid for Sa—Sa, whose life Tan had saved in the young wolf's whelphood. It was Tan who had stitched up the wounds slashed in Sa's belly and flanks by Acheeta, the cougar chieftain. It was Tan who had fed and cared for Sa for many weeks, until Sa had learned to understand the ways of this young wilderness man-creature. Sa, now grown to magnificent maturity, was challenging the majesty of

the White Phantom.

Olak was wearing the young one down, and Tan fingered the trigger of his carbine. But he swallowed hard. Ayaie! He knew he must never shoot the White Phantom—and yet he could not stand by and see his friend killed.

As Olak jerked back, relinquishing the jaw hold, and leaped to strike for a throat hold, Tan hurtled on through the thicket, yelling and waving his carbine.

In a flash, the White Phantom flirted his handsome form in mid-air. In an instant he was deep in the cover of the farther thickets. Sa crouched, lips peeled back and hackles up, as the young man-creature talked softly to him.

But tonight Sa would not permit the boy to lay a hand on him. He backed off as Tan approached.

From the distance came the long, majestic howl of Olak. He declared his majesty anew. There was room on this range for only one wolf leader.

Tan realized this. Sa must move out, and Tan was sad to have to contemplate this.

FOR many days, Tan attended his duties in silence as he assisted Tuk Cramer, his brother-in-law, with the autumn work along the proposed trap-lines. Tan worked hard, but his heart was no longer in his work. He was thinking of Sa. Not in all his seventeen years had he known the companionship of a youth his age; nor had he owned any creature save Sa, and now Sa had left the range.

In the cabin, at nights, when Tan was roaming the range of Olak and hunting for sign of Sa, Netan and Tuk conversed softly.

“It would have been better had we let him keep the young wolf, Tuk,” Netan intoned.

“Ayaie. But dat is impossible, Netan. Sa is strong, almost as beeg as d’ great White Phantom. He will want to lead his own pack.”

Netan bowed her head. She realized the truth of Tuk’s words, and yet she knew how attached Sa had become to Tan. One night, she thought, Tan might not return.

Netan’s fears were not unfounded. One night Tan did not return. After a wide search in the moonlight, Tuk and Netan found not a trace of the boy.

Fear leaped to Netan’s big, sloe eyes.

“He will come back, Netan,” Tuk said softly.

But Netan shook her head. She recalled a time a couple of years ago when Tan had been missing. Tan had been kidnaped by the mad hermit of Nahanni. Many strange stories had emanated from the far hills.

Tan was well out to westward, nearing the far hills, for it was in that direction Sa had gone.

For some days. Tan had secreted food out to a cache in the alder thicket, building up a food supply in an old moosehide trail sack. Without Sa, this wilderness in all its autumn finery was drab.

The second night Tan killed a grouse with a stone and as he roasted it on a stick, he swelled out his chest. Ayaie! he was proud to be on his own. But when the shadows of deeper night began to flit about the thickets, Tan quivered. He had begun to recall the strange tales of Nahanni—tales his grandfather had told in the far lodges of the north country.

He quivered as he heard the eerie rustlings in the thicket. Although Tan had spent some time at the mission of the white people in his early boyhood, tonight those old Indian superstitions were purging his brain. Then he heard the long-drawn wail of a wolf.

“Sa!” Tan’s lips only framed the name. He was suddenly quivering with joy. His fear was gone. He would follow up in Sa’s trail and attempt to induce the young wolf to return with him. Ay-yah! There was no longer any need to fear, when Sa was within call.

Tan slipped into a sound sleep.

THREE days slipped by, and Tan found himself in the strange hills where the climbing was stiff in the welter of a hot sun.

By noon, he was almost at the peak of the highest hill. Sweat coursed down his face and neck and he breathed hard. But he was determined to carry on, for twice today he had glimpsed Sa and another wolf. Sa, the son of Olak, had picked up a running mate, a huge, gaunt, gray she-wolf.

Now Tan hesitated, speculating as to what lay beyond this wild mountain ridge. High overhead, a huge bald eagle planed idly, until with a suddenness that was awe-inspiring, he folded his wings and plummeted earthward like a stone. In another moment, he was zooming over the high crags, a limp young creature hanging in his talons.

Tan moved cautiously on to the skyline. His eyes widely dilated as he focused his glance on a small lake in the bowl of a valley below. It lay shimmering like a pool of gold. Ayaie! This was a marvelous country. He would lead Tuk and Netan here.

Off left, he was suddenly startled by the gouting steam of a geyser. Surely this was one of the valleys his grandfather had told about. But that lake to the right still fascinated Tan. He started down the slope. He would swim there.

But it was mid-afternoon before he reached the lake's edge. With a careful examination of the timber surrounding the lake, Tan satisfied himself that there was no one about. Nor could he find any tracks, save animal tracks.

Steamy with sweat, he took off his buckskin clothing and eased himself into the lake. He swam with the skill of a young otter. For upward of an hour he dived and rolled, or swam leisurely along, examining several small inlets.

Completely refreshed, he struck back to the point at which he'd entered the water. The sun warmed his slim, naked form as he strode toward the thicket edge where he had left his clothing and trail sack.

But a low gasp escaped him. His eyes widened in a frightened stare. His outfit was gone, and there in the soft ground were the tracks of some human creature.

Tan was momentarily overcome. But it was the size of the tracks which retrieved some of his courage. They were small—smaller even than Netan's.

But Tan moved along the moccasin trail with great caution. Fruit shrub thorns scratched his body, and his feet were cut on sharp rocks before at last he came to a sharp halt. A small voice sound reached him. It was a soft chuckle. Gently, with trembling fingers, he parted the heavy screening of a dogwood shrub. He came back with a start. There, seated on a slab of rock, handling strips of dried venison from his pack, was a slim girl. She was garbed in Tan's buckskins.

WHERE vagrant rays of sunlight reached it, the girl's dark hair gave off sharp hues of a coppery tint. Her skin was dark, but not as dark as Netan's. Her eyes were a deep blue.

By her side was a tattered suit of buckskin clothing. Now she stroked the ornate beadwork of Tan's garments.

He shivered with cold, and called to her. The girl whirled about, her face drawn with a look of terror.

Tan spoke softly in the Cree tongue. It seemed not to register. After trying several Indian dialects, he talked to her in English, and she seemed to brighten.

"'Ave no fear—I weel not 'urt you," Tan assured her. "But my clothes—I must 'ave them."

"Clothes . . . clothes?"

Understanding seemed to come. The girl snatched up her discarded, tattered trousers and tossed them over the dogwood. Tan caught them, a scowl on his face.

They were tight for him, but he squeezed into them

and stepped into the open. The girl sprang to her feet and started off. Tan caught up with her and seized her by a wrist.

"Ayaie, but you are the wild one," he said softly.

He drew her toward him, and her great, wide eyes looked frightenedly into his. Tan felt a strange emotion stir him as he pulled her gently down to the slab rock and pointed to the food. He lifted a strip of jerky and passed it to her.

"Eat—fair one," he breathed.

"Eat, yess." A faint smile returned to her drawn features.

Tan watched her covertly as she ravenously ate a long strip of the dried meat.

"I am your fren," he said. "Savvy fren?"

"Fren? You—you not keel Lai?"

Lai! So that was her name, and she was afraid of someone.

"No, I not keel," the boy reassured her. "I am Tan. Tell me why you are afraid."

And Tan listened to one of the strangest stories he had ever heard. Lai, the fair one, was of a tribe which lived in the next valley. A tribe of wolf-worshipers, these strange ones. The girl mentioned a name which brought a sharp gasp from Tan.

"Olak-Achak is their god," she breathed.

Tan started, for "Olak-Achak" was Cree for the "spirit of the White Phantom." So those strange ones worshiped Olak, the White Phantom.

In her halting way, Lai made Tan understand that she was to have been sacrificed to the wolf god, Olak, but had made her escape. She leaned over and touched Tan's chest with her finger.

"You not hurt Lai?" she said in a voice that did something to Tan inside.

"No, I protect Lai. We go together, back to Netan, my sister, and Tuk. But I must have my clothes, fair one."

LAI got to her feet and obediently began to divest herself of her stolen garments. The youth swallowed hard and turned away his head.

But Lai wore a short soft undergarment of cured elk fawn skin. She touched Tan on the shoulder and hesitantly he turned. He was quickly arrested by the glitter of a small gold object which hung from a buckskin thong about her throat. He pointed to it, and she snapped open a small locket.

"Pic-shur," she breathed.

Tan moved in close to inspect it. It was the likeness

of a handsome man, a man old enough to be Lai's father. Then quickly Lai snapped shut the locket, tears misting her eyes. Tan picked up his clothing. In the shadow of the dogwood scrub, he dressed himself, taking back the tight-fitting garb which belonged to the girl.

Night! Tan lay awake on a bed of spruce boughs. Beside him, sleeping peacefully, was the slim form of Lai. The night was cool, silent, and throbbing with misgiving. Tan was afraid. His responsibilities had been added to. His awareness of the nearness of those strange worshipers of the great White Phantom alarmed him. Ayaie! And he must get this girl to safety.

As the night deepened, Tan was more than once prompted to steal away, leaving Lai, but he stayed for two reasons. She was young and defenseless, and Tan had found love.

A sudden wolf howl startled Tan, and then a low cry escaped him. It was the call of Sa. Tan had followed the trail of his friend correctly. Sa was close.

All at once Tan was conscious of a stirring of some big wild creature nearby. He heard a snort, and roused up to glimpse a huge grizzly bear foraging at his trail sack.

The silver-tip heard and whirled, rearing to his full, ugly height, while he "woofed" his challenge to this man-creature. Tan tried to call out, but his voice seemed clogged deep in his throat. He moistened his lips and in vain tried to pour out his long, two-toned call to Sa.

When the silver-tip dropped to all fours and took a few ambling steps toward him, Tan shook the girl to wakefulness. Almost in the same instant he was able to get out his call to Sa.

The grizzly was momentarily frightened by the suddenness and sharpness of that long, two-toned whistle. Tan called again, and from close in came a short, half-snarled response from Sa.

Swiftly the great bear whirled. Two pairs of glaring green orbs flashed through the darkness. They were the eyes of Sa and his running mate. Tan called sharply to Sa, who leaped from cover.

The big bear lunged and struck, narrowly missing Sa's back, but the son of Olak flung his body out of range and, whimpering to his mate, he rushed and harassed the great one's hamstrings.

Snarling, lashing, mouthing his anger, the silver-tip was driven off.

Tan felt the girl's warm quivering body against his. She gasped with sheer awe. Tan held her closely a moment.

"Tan! Tan—thou art—the great one," Lai breathed.

"Ayaie! Tomorrow, mebbeso, we go back quickly to my country," he gasped. "Now, Lai, sleep. Sa will watch."

THE following day they moved about ten miles to eastward, but the going was extremely heavy for the girl. Her moccasins had almost given out and her feet were cut and blistered. Tan scowled about this. Alone, he could have traveled twenty miles.

A chill wind lashed them, but they dare not venture a fire. Tan had killed two fool hens in a small patch of scrub spruce. These were skinned and eaten raw.

Again Lai slept at Tan's side, but for Tan, there was no sleep. High overhead, the shuddering trains of the northern lights were cutting their weird, multi-tinted figures. He felt the girl stir against him, and pulled the rabbitskin robe up more tightly about her shoulders.

Tan lay back and tried to close his eyes. The girl's hair was against his face. He turned his back toward her and sought sleep. He was in a fitful doze when suddenly he came to with a start. There was a strange throbbing sound stirring the night.

Ayaie! It was akin to those sounds he had heard when first he struck the valley. But he knew that he now listened to the roll of skin drums—the Drums of Nahanni.

Then suddenly Lai awakened.

"Tan—hear them? Eet is drums of my people."

Tan's carbine lay athwart a stump some twenty-five feet off. He must get it. With a soft word to Lai, he stole away. He was nearing the stump when a sharp scream from Lai brought him whirling about. In that same instant there was a crash of underbrush.

Tan tried to spin again, but a club whirred through space. He was conscious only of a dull, smashing blow on the side of his head, and then—blackness.

Tan awakened to the thunder of drums, and the throb of a pain in his head. His eyes were half-blinded by flares. He discovered that his ankles and wrists were bound and he had been secured to a hard slab of flat rock.

He could turn his head, and slowly he moved it. He gasped as he glimpsed the bowl in which he was trapped. It was a bowl in a dry canyon bottom, at the foot of terraced rock cliffs which were pitted with cave mouths.

"Ayaie!" Tan gasped dryly. Here was the home of the cliff dwellers, of whom his grandfather had narrated weird tales.

Flames leaped from a number of fires, about which danced a circle of natives. Tan then glimpsed the prone form of Lai, who was secured to another slab of rock.

More than once in the farther north latitudes, Tan had seen Eskimos. These squat, broad-faced men dancing about the fires, were not unlike the Eskimo type.

A SUDDEN sharp roll of the skin drums brought a cold sweat over Tan's body. A guttural voice was intoning some unintelligible jargon. Tan caught only the words "Olak-Achak."

At once he realized that this was a dance to the White Phantom—a sacrificial dance. Once, in his boyhood, he had watched members of his grandfather's tribe go through a secret sun-dance, but it was nothing compared to this. Ayaie! Nobody was killed in the sun-dance.

A man, evidently the shaman, or chief medicine man, leaped from the firelight toward Tan. He brandished a long-bladed knife, and the young prisoner rolled his eyes in terror.

But suddenly Tan's body stiffened. Out of the deep shadows of night came the long-drawn wail of a wolf.

"Ou-u-u-u-u— Ah-h-h-h-h— Ou-u-u-u-u—"

"Sa!" Tan swallowed hard. In Sa lay Tan's and Lai's one hope.

At the wolf call, a great shout went up from the dancers and their hunkered squaws. Tonight was the night of their White Phantom worship, and the wolf call had come.

The wolf-worshippers were captured by the spirit of the white one. Drums were silenced, and in the grim hiatus, Tan moistened his lips. He stuck his tongue up against his top teeth and into the eerie quiet of the awesome amphitheatre, he poured out the call to Sa.

The shaman, standing nearby, clucked some sharp throat sound and leaped toward Tan, knife upraised, but from a point close in, Sa called again—a deathly wail of defiance and challenge. And Sa leaped into the glow of the firelight. Hackles up, the handsome young son of Olak leaped toward the slab on which Tan was bound.

"Ah-h-h-h—" sounded from the awed cliff dwellers.

There was a mumbled conference between the tribal heads, and then suddenly came the soft low sound of Lai's voice.

"People no keel Tan," she murmured.

Men thrust torches into the fires and advanced toward Tan and Sa. His great fangs exposed, Sa backed off. Tan spoke softly to him.

Two natives rushed in and cut Tan free. He was carried off to one of the caves, where a council was held. Lai was freed, to act as interpreter.

"People want Tan stay—be chief medicine man," Lai interpreted the conclusions of the head ones. "Tan is spireet of Olak-Achak. Night of beeg moon, Lai will mak' sacrifice to Olak-Achak—"

"No! Tell them no, Lai," Tan cried. "They must not keel you."

But Lai did not convey this message.

She smiled softly at Tan.

"Say yess, Tan. There is time before beeg moon. Mebbe so we fin' way to go—Lai and Tan."

Tan's face brightened. This was an idea. Until the night of the big moon, at least, he would become the spirit of Olak-Achak, and chief medicine man.

On receipt of Tan's declaration of his agreement with the council heads, a great feast was at once prepared. Lai was permitted to bring Tan food—roast young caribou. Tan and Lai ate in silence, but their young minds were hard at work, plotting, planning.

THE following night, a woman was stricken with an illness, and Tan was called on to invoke the help of the spirit of the great White Phantom. He called again, and again to Sa and was almost despaired of receiving an answer when, from the distance, along the canyon, Sa replied. It was taken as a good omen, and Tan's position was strengthened with the council heads.

Almost every day, following, he was called upon to practice some magic. He had no opportunity to study the wild, forgotten tribe. Like the Eskimos, they were almost entirely flesh eaters, save for the fruits and the distilled wine of mixed fruits which they ate and drank.

Not once had Tan seen any sign of gun or rifle. The men carried short spears, knives and clubs. The cooking pots were crudely fashioned from baked clay, but all the tribe seemed in excellent condition. There were very few children, so Tan concluded that many children were killed at birth.

He wondered if he would be successful in escaping, in getting back to Tuk with word of these strange people.

Came the eve of the big moon. Lai crept to Tan's cave and whispered softly to him that a great feast was in preparation. Already many of the men were drunk with the fruit wines.

“Lai no want die,” the girl breathed timorously.

“Lai not die,” Tan said sharply. “Ayaie! Wait until they are more drunk.”

“Then we go—yess?”

Tan nodded. But at the moment he would have given anything for his carbine. Without it, the escape trail would be difficult.

Suddenly, the girl shrank into hiding. The shaman was reeling up to the cave mouth. He was shrieking and gesticulating at Tan, and Lai was obliged to come from her hiding place to interpret.

“Heem say want magic sign from Olak-Achak,” the girl interpreted. Tan had to think fast.

“Tell heem I go to mak’ medicine talk wit’ the spirit,” Tan murmured. “I go, Lai, but I wait for you along the canyon. When I call—whistle, you come. Savvy?”

Lai nodded. She spoke sharply to the shaman in a tongue Tan could not understand. Satisfied, the ugly medicine man staggered back to the fires. Silently, Tan stole away. It would be dangerous to take Lai yet, but he would call for her.

DOWN along the dry canyon, Tan trembled as he moved. It was a place of haunting shadows. More than once he glimpsed greenish flares from the shadows, the eyes of some watching wild creature.

He kept on, wondering if already he had come too far. Pausing, he could dimly hear the throb of drums and occasional man voice sounds. Until those had all died down, he could not risk calling to Lai.

At last he lifted his head and called a long, penetrating note which echoed weirdly along the canyon. Then Tan squatted down to wait, to watch.

It was not long till the slender, shadowy form of the girl appeared. She crowded trembling to Tan’s side.

“Dey sleep. Tan—all but shaman. Come queek.”

They struck off to eastward. Tan leading. Lai had suggested the route, which would necessitate a swim of the lake where Tan had first met her. Tan essayed no observation. He was afraid, yet strangely brave.

An hour before dawn, they came to rest in a patch of dense timber, and Tan back-tracked some distance to make sure they had not been immediately followed. When he returned to Lai’s side, he found her almost paralyzed with fright. A mad chorus of wolf sounds told Tan that Sa was not far off. The young wolf had made a game kill.

The water was icy cold as Tan and Lai headed into the lake, but the speed with which they swam soon

brought them warmth. The swim was long, and before they reached the far shore. Tan was obliged to support the girl.

Tan wisely rested for half an hour. Both he and Lai were already weary, and ravenously hungry, but the best Tan could hope for in the way of food was to snare a grouse at dusk, with the thongs of his moccasins.

They recommended their climb of the craglands. Lai flagged. The moccasins were just tattered shreds about her feet. But Tan urged her on, at times supporting her with all the strength he could spare.

They put mile after mile between them and the strange wolf worshipers’ village. But not yet was Tan able to throw off that throbbing misgiving that they were by no means safe yet.

That night, he wrapped Lai in grass and soft spruce bows. He allowed her to sleep until nearly dawn, when utterly weary, he lay down to snatch an hour’s sleep while Lai watched.

Throughout the eerie night, Acheeta, the cougar and his kind, padded about the camp site, and occasionally Tan was startled by the almost humanlike wails of a nomadic lynx tom.

Supper had consisted of raw grouse flesh and cool spring water. Breakfast consisted of the same fare, a fare which nauseated Tan, for he was not used to eating raw flesh. Lai made no complaint, because it was part of the ritual of her people, that a certain amount of raw flesh be eaten at each change of the moon.

ON THE second night along the escape trail, Tan was almost asleep from sheer fatigue, when he suddenly started. He was disturbed by a rhythmic roll of sound. His mouth became suddenly parched, for he was sure that what he heard was the roll of the skin drums of Nahanni. “Ayaie!” he gasped. “They come.” The night dragged on, with the drum sounds growing no nearer, and yet Tan was filled with a great fear. At the early edge of dawn, he shrilled a call to Sa. Not all the day before had he glimpsed a sign or track of his friend.

His whistled call brought Lai from her sleep like a frightened doe. She clung tightly to him, her eyes wide with fear. She, too, had heard that sinister roll of the tom-toms.

There was a stir in the nearby wild cherry thicket.

“Eet iss per’aps a ’unter—wan of my people,” the girl murmured brokenly.

In near frenzy Tan again called to Sa. And then from ayross a long gully came that welcome howl:

“Ou-u-u-u-u-u— A h-h-h-h-h-h— Ou-u-u-u-u-u—”

A wild shriek suddenly broke from the thicket. Lai screamed and Tan leaped as a war club whirred through space. It crashed against a boulder at Tan’s head, falling close to his feet. He was stooping to retrieve it when the skulking wolf-worshiper leaped to attack, long knife drawn.

Tan aimed a smashing blow with the club, but the other danced nimbly out of range. With an animal-like snarl, he whirled. Tan drove in to meet him, using the club as a battering ram. He struck the other in the midriff, backing him off.

In the brief respite Tan whistled shrilly. There was a snarl from a nearby copse, and Sa leaped, fangs agape. The knifeman howled, and attempted to dart away.

Sa sprang, and cut him off. The hunter was closer to Tan now, and in a panic, rushed, to drive down his knife.

Lai screamed. Tan held up his club to ward off the knife, then suddenly he heard a dull thup, a thup attended by the crashing blast of a rifle shot.

The wild one clutched at his chest, staggered a few paces and pitched to his face.

There was a stir in the thicket. Sa’s hackles rose and he advanced threateningly. There were more of the wolf-worshippers there, ready to attack.

But Sa went leaping to safety himself at the boom of three more shots. A man-shape crashed out of the underbrush. He was calling Tan’s name. It was Tuk Cramer.

With a little cry of fright, Lai squeezed in behind Tan, but he reassured her with a half-hysterical chuckle. Scrambling down the bank in Tuk’s wake, came Netan. In another moment, Tan was in his sister’s arms, while Lai stood by bewildered.

THERE were no tears from these stoics. Netan embraced her brother. warmly, then turned to smile softly at the girl.

“Who, Tan?” she queried.

“She is Lai. I have saved her from the wild ones. Ayaie—just as Grand-notwe told us in the lodges. They are there, and live in the caves. Look—this is one of them, mucha Satan.”

Tuk Cramer bent in low to examine the dead man. He came to his feet, clucking. He looked sharply at the girl, whose eyes were blue.

“She is not of their tribe. Tan,” he said in Cree.

“She speaks English, Tuk,” Tan observed. “And yet, look thou, her skin is dark.” He walked over and asked Lai to show her locket.

Tuk Cramer examined the picture of the man in the locket closely. “Father?” he asked the girl.

“Fa—ther? Not know,” Lai replied. Tuk Cramer took Netan’s arm and drew her away from the young couple.

“Ayaie, it is strange, Netan. It is case for mounted police. We take girl back, yes?”

“Yes. You must give locket to police, Tuk. Girl is white, but do not say so to Tan. Look, he love her much.”

Lai had crept into Tan’s arms, and the boy gently stroked her coppery hair.

But now, something stirred in the thicket. With a prodigious bound, Sa cleared the camp site. Tan took a sharp step forward.

“Sa!” he cried. “Sa!” But with his mate at his heels, Sa bounded on to safety.

“’Twas lucky we heard Sa,” Netan said softly. “We have been days and nights on your trail. This morning we heard Sa, and your call, Tan. It is good that you cared for Sa so well, when he was young. He will never forget.”

Tan’s eyes were narrowed, he was looking off along the gully, until at last Sa vanished from view. The boy’s lips moved, framing the words of an unuttered prayer. Then he turned and spoke to the girl. Together, they moved on to Tuk’s camp site, where food was given the younger ones.

Tan watched Lai as she ate ravenously. She was his, and never would he give her up. She, and Sa, the son of Olak, were his greatest friends.

But together, Netan and Tuk whispered of the mystery of Lai, and her association with those worshippers of the great White Phqntom. The police would know. The Mounted would quickly get out on the trail of the cliff-dwellers.

Off in the distance there came the long, resonant wail of a wolf. Tan jerked up his head and Lai stiffened at his side.

“Sa-a!” she exclaimed. It was the first time she had pronounced Sa’s name. “Sa-a is d’ great wan. Sa-a—my fren’, Tan.”

Tan swallowed hard, and gulped. He was happy. He would teach Lai to call to the great one. Ayaie! When the police had visited the tribe of wolf-worshippers and got them under control, Tan would return with Lai to one of these valleys, where they would trap and hunt, with Sa ever near to answer their calls.