

# THE JEWEL OF VISHNU



CHRONICLES OF A LOST CONTINENT

R.K. SINGH



# THE JEWEL OF VISHNU

CHRONICLES OF INDIA'S LOST CONTINENT

Volume One

A YOUNG ADULT NOVEL

**R.K. Singh**



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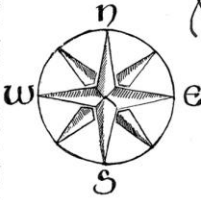
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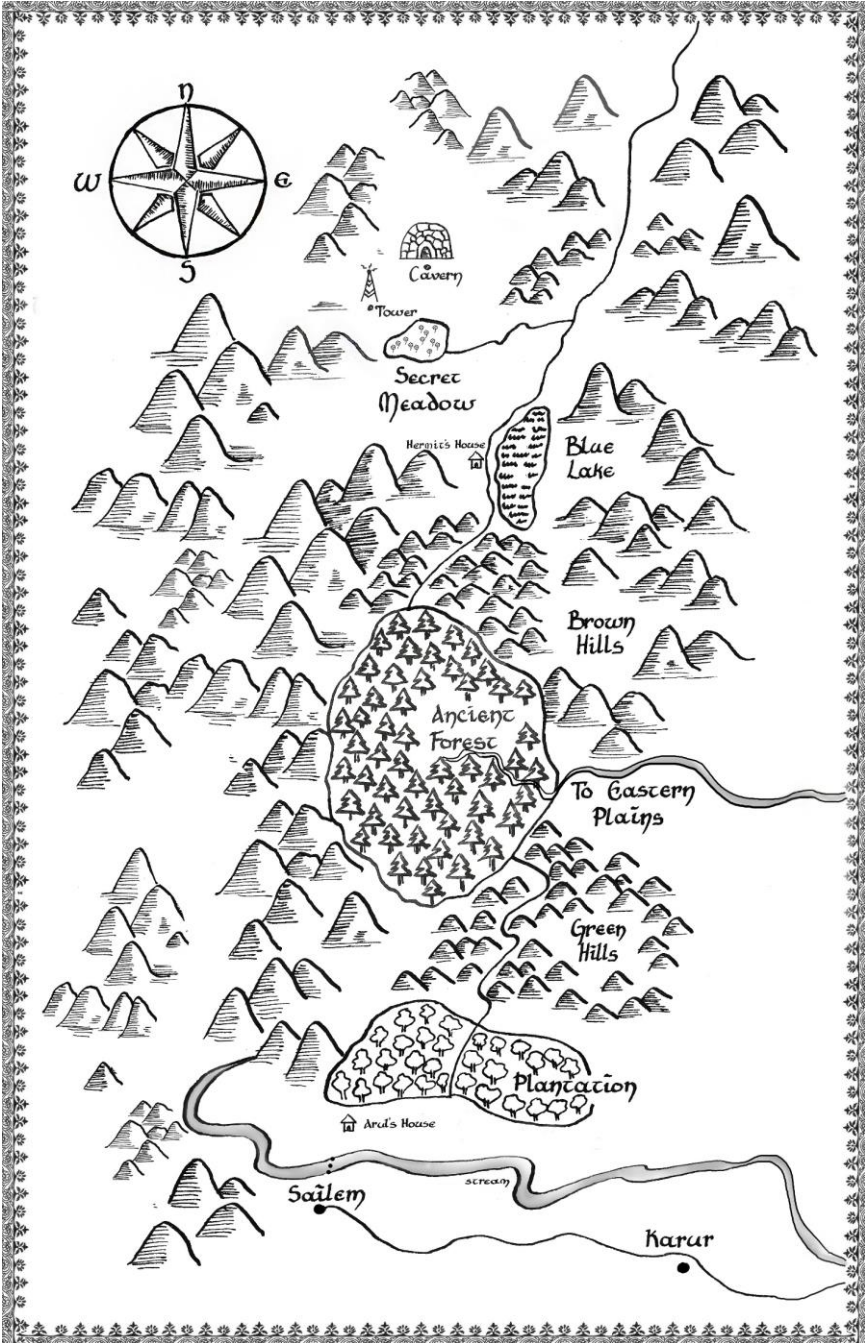
FOR ARYA

*Gurkha, flying a swift and powerful vimana  
hurled a single projectile charged with the power  
of the Universe. An incandescent column of  
smoke and flame, as bright as ten thousand suns,  
rose with all its splendour.*

From India's Mahabharata.

# Kumari × Kandan







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## Song of the Navigators

*Across seven stars we ruled worlds beyond measure.*

*Power undreamt of filled our hearts with pride.*

*Ascending to the threshold of heaven, we challenged the gods.*

*Celestial weapons we hurled with dark anger.*

*Brought upon ourselves the rage of the Gods.*

*The wrath of their greatest warrior, Lord Indra.*

*We fled our ruin, our cities consumed by unholy fire.*

*But Lord Vishnu brought us light.*

*Bestowed upon the Navigators gems of great power.*

*In shining vimana we crossed oceans of stars.*

*Finding refuge on a far blue world.*

6000 B.C.E

The continent of Kumari Kandam

900 Miles South of India

High Priest Vazhuthi stood deep in thought at the edge of the vast pit, brooding over the power of something so dark. He shifted his compact body, rubbing his shaved head, fear swirling in his eyes. His rugged face was more like a warrior's than that of a priest. Indeed, his vows often caused him to issue commands that were very un-priest-like.

In the far south of Kumari Kandam dwelt the Oru Arrakan, the light-swallowing demon imprisoned in the mountain. Legend told that it could even distort time, although that seemed rather fanciful to the High Priest. Like others in his secret order, Vazhuthi was terrified of the demon, although he did not know exactly what it was. There were things about the dark pit that made no sense to him.

For thousands of years, his ancestor-priests had dwelt far below the mountain, constantly performing ritual puja to keep the demon satisfied. They were the keepers of the Oru Arrakan, guardians of the demon since the beginning of time.

He stared at the huge metal slabs suspended around the pit at regular intervals, utterly smooth and unlike any metal he knew of, perfect after countless centuries.

The darkness that dwelt in the pit was once a power source for the entire continent, yet no one remembered who had built it. The High Priest had no idea how its energy was harnessed, but only knew it had been doing so for thousands of years beyond counting. The old writings spoke of the darkness captured in the stars by ancient Navigators, beings chosen by the God Vishnu to save their people from extermination.

Vazhuthi listened to the low hum rising and falling like waves on an ocean. He furrowed his brow, looking up to the domed roof of the chamber many hundreds of feet above, where points of light glittered from a vast star map. He often puzzled over the strange constellations, so unlike the night sky over Kumari Kandam. What's more, the Royal Astronomers insisted there were no star formations such as these. It was merely the imaginings of ancient artists, they told him. Vazhuthi however, was a deep thinker.

*Yes, there are no star constellations like this in our night sky. But out there, far beyond the sun?*

He knew that was impossible because no one could travel that far. The priest shook his head, dismissing the foolish thought. He gestured to his assistant waiting in the shadows.

'I must have the last gem of the Navigators, Vazhuthi said. 'It alone will control the Oru Arrakan. The rulers of Kumari Kandam will fall at our feet.'

'Our scouts have found it, Holiness,' said the assistant, his pocked face breaking into a smile. 'A peasant-boy who dwells in the mountains to the north.'

'How came such a gem to this child?' Vazhuthi said. Who are his parents?

'We only know that his father is a Royal Forester.'

'It matters not. Order our assassins to kill him and take it.'

'And his father?'

‘Kill anyone who stands in your way.’

‘What is this village called?’

‘Sailem, Holiness. It is called Sailem.’

Vazhuthi looked at his assistant with eyes dark as a moonless ocean. ‘Kill the whole village if you have to. They are of no consequence.’

The assistant priest shivered and pulled his black robes tighter, stepping backwards and bowing. Vazhuthi closed his eyes and focussed his mind on the gem that he so desired. Yet in the depths of his mind, he felt some unseen power protecting the boy. He did not like unknowns. Unnerved, he left the chamber, his trembling assistant in tow.

That night as Kumari Kandam slept, the bright stars of the Seven Sages wheeled over the extinct volcano. With a sound like distant thunder, another of the twelve stone guardians failed, its hum falling silent forever. Three Guardians now lay dead in the mountain under the stars. The *Oru Arrakan* surged against the remaining Guardians, fighting to escape.

*It had always fought to escape.*







## Chapter 1



### Child of the Mountains

The boy shifted on the carpet of ochre leaves, light as the whispering air which wove its way around the trees. The forest shivered and fell silent as the breeze died. Briefly fingering the feathery tips of tarupai grass, he sniffed the cool autumn air with the slightest hint of a smile.

*Blood. I smell it in that hollow.*

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