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Opening Extract from...

The Moonstone Legacy Trilogy

Written by
Diana de Gunzburg and Tony Wild

Published by Moonstone Legacy

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Praise for The Moonstone Legacy Trilogy

‘Why is the universe so suited to life?’ In successfully dramatizing this compelling question, The Moonstone Legacy takes the reader on a thrilling voyage of mind and imagination, yet at the same time keeps us firmly rooting for our brave, funny and funky heroine through all her terrifying ordeals.

Anja C Andersen, Professor of Dark Cosmology at the Unversity of Copenhagen

A compulsive and entertaining read with gripping modulations every few bars. Hugely enjoyable.

Michael Berkeley, composer and BBC classical music presenter

The Moonstone Legacy is the most entertaining and enlightening book I’ve read in years! It speaks to all of us on a deep and resounding level, reawakening the childlike wonder and unfettered courage we should all live our lives by. If you read nothing else this year, the transformational power of The Moonstone Legacy is a must!

Susyn Blair-Hunt, MsD (Doctor of Metaphysics), Psychic, Astrologer, Metaphysical

What critics have said about *The Moonstone Legacy Book One*

A compelling East–West adventure takes us from the Temple of the Moon on the remote coast of Gujarat, India, to an Anglo-Indian mansion on the Yorkshire moors. A sumptuous saga with an exciting cliff-hanger ending.

Michael Morpurgo, author of *War Horse*

Gripping story… the tension and cliff-hanger chapter endings make this almost impossible to put down.

Sunday Express

Most ingenious and imaginative.

William Dalrymple, author of *White Mughals*

I'd love to see this as a Sunday-afternoon family drama as I think it would be perfect for it. I just hope someone out there in TV land agrees with me!

Narratively Speaking (blog)

A terrific mix of mysterious quest and compelling family saga that visits the cultures of both East and West… you will be utterly gripped to the pages.

Lovereading.co.uk, 'Book of the Month', June 2010

A cracking mystery story.

Northern Echo

This was an excellent book… definitely a page-turner.

The Bluestocking Guide (US website), 'Top Ten Books of 2010'

The thrilling mystery adventure story… to an extent they have updated Kipling and Forster which is commendable.

Agra Today

A gripping story.

Dawn (Pakistani newspaper)

Written in short chapters, reading this book is a breeze. It is meant for young adults yet can be a gripping story for all.

Flash News Today (India)

The Moonstone Legacy explores the enduring relationship between Britain and India.

theultimatebookguide.com, 'Book of the Week'

The Moonstone Legacy is an adventure story set in England and India and the first book of the trilogy… I recommend reading this book!

www.youngwriters.co.uk, ‘Parents Recommended Reads’, July 2010

This book is aimed at young adults and is a really great read. The authors manage to keep you in suspense about the outcome of the book right until the very end and the climax of the book is action-packed.

www.bookbabblers.co.uk

What can I say? I was blown away. This little novel is a hidden gem (those who have read it excuse the pun), it has absolutely everything anyone could ask for, there’s suspense, drama, tragedy and romance.

Pretty Little YA Books (blog)

The Moonstone Legacy Trilogy

Diana de Gunzburg and Tony Wild



To Sasha,

The inspiration for Lizzy,

With love

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Moonstone frontispiece © Darren Rees 2014

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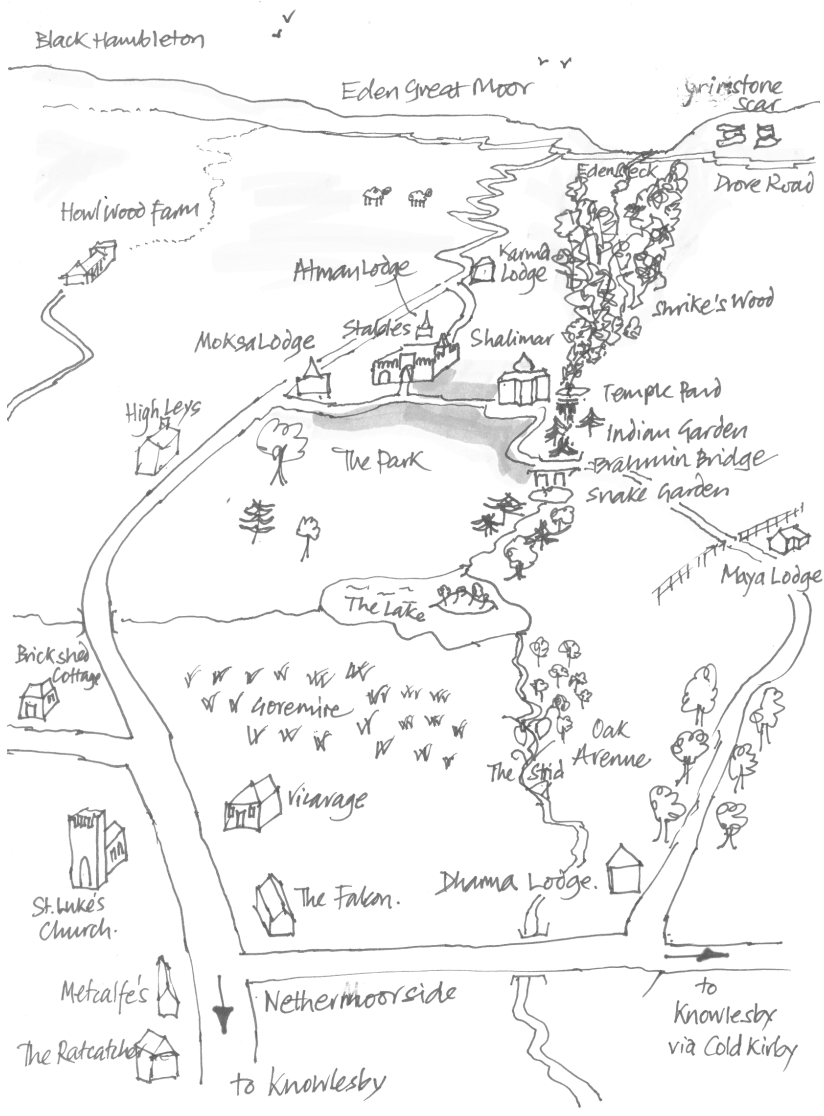
The Moonstone Legacy

By day I gleam, the golden sun of burning cloudless noon;

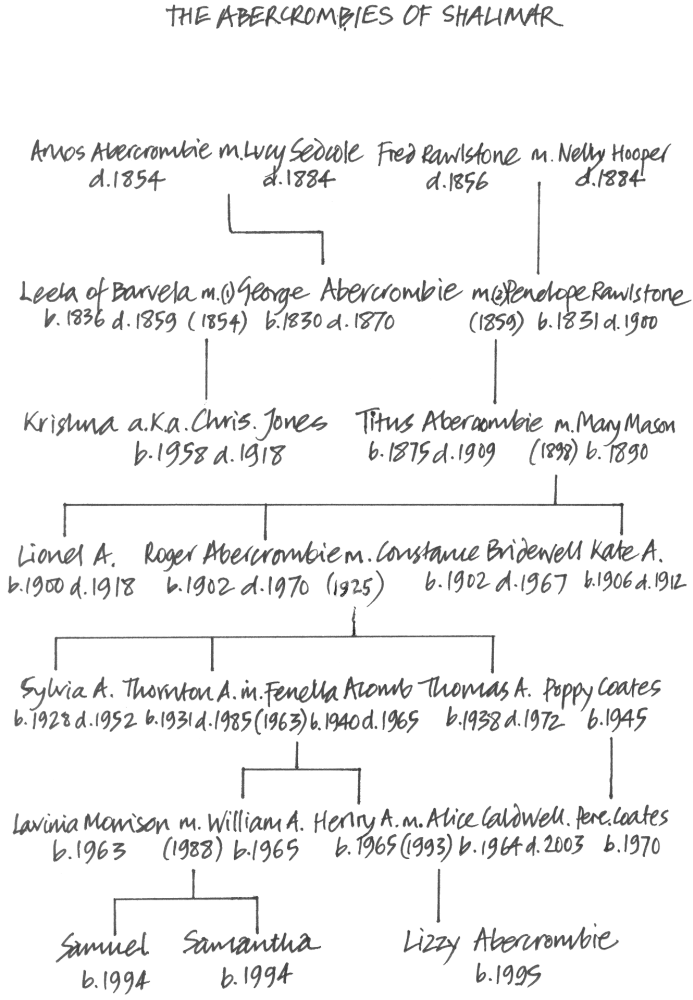
By night, amid the asterisms I glide, the dappled moon!

Bhagavadgita, Chapter 10 (‘Of Religion by the Heavenly Perfections’)

The Shalimar Estate, Yorkshire



The Abercrombies of Shalimar



The Temple of the Moon, India





1

Death by Moonlight

Blood dripped from Lizzy's hands into the snow. Her mother's blood.

'Mum!' she cried, pleading, clutching her body close, willing her not to die.

'Lizzy!' her mother whispered. Her eyes wide open in terror, gazing at something…

Lizzy turned.

But there was nothing. Just the glimmering dome of Shalimar, the frozen moors beyond and, hanging high in the ice-clear sky, the full moon.



2

The Anniversary

It had been two years to the day since her mother's death, but the horror of that moment was seared in her memory forever.

As fourteen-year-old Lizzy stood under the great cedar tree where the accident had happened, she laid a bunch of lilies on the ground. Sighing, she brushed a strand of long dark hair from her face as she looked across the sweeping lawns to Shalimar. Its intricate stone arches and pavilions glowed in the last rays of the setting sun. 'The Taj Mahal of the Yorkshire moors!' her mother had called it—and promised to take her to see the famous monument one day. But there would be no trip to India, no Taj Mahal…

It was almost dark by the time Lizzy made her way back home to Maya Lodge. She was surprised to find her Uncle William's old Bentley parked outside.

What he's doing here? Lizzy wondered. Uncle William hardly ever came to visit. Her father, who was a scientist, had been lent the lodge by his elder brother, but he and Aunt Lavinia were usually far too busy hosting fancy shoots, dinners and weekend parties at Shalimar to take much notice of them.

Sitting on the bench under the wooden veranda, Lizzy pulled off her wellies and let herself in. Uncle William's voice was booming from the living room.

'…If I were you, Henry, I'd be worried sick about Lizzy,' he said. She stopped in her tracks, listening intently.

'I don't know how you've coped, I really don't. After Alice's death, I hardly slept, I can tell you. All I could think was that it could be my kids next…'

'Don't be so melodramatic, William,' Lizzy heard her father reply. 'You can't honestly expect me to still believe that ridiculous curse story Nanny used to frighten us with!'

What the hell's he talking about? Lizzy tiptoed down the narrow hallway and stood stock-still near the half-open door.

'Come on, Henry!' Uncle William said. 'You know full well that ever since that no-good George Abercrombie disappeared off the face of the earth, one in every generation of the family has died in some sort of terrible accident. And when did they all die?'

Her father didn't reply. Lizzy could sense the tension between them.

'On the full moon!' Uncle William said. 'And unfortunately your wife was no exception. No wonder they say that the Abercrombie family is cursed!'

O my God! The full moon! Lizzy flashed back to the moment of her mother's death.

The springs of an armchair squeaked as Uncle William hauled himself to his feet. 'Listen, I'm sorry, I really didn't mean to end up arguing with you like this, not today of all days. But just take care of Lizzy, that's all. I'd better get going. In any case, Lavinia's got a houseful of guests, and there'll be hell to pay if I'm late back…'

Lizzy slid unseen into the loo under the stairs as her father accompanied Uncle William down the hall. She leant back against the door, heart pounding.



3

The Temple of the Moon

Shankar Pujari looked down from the top of a rocky hill on the coast of Gujarat. Below lay the familiar white marble walls of the Temple of the Moon, the Arabian Sea beyond glistening in the moonlight. Streams of white-clad pilgrims were converging on the Temple from all sides for the opening ceremony of the Soma Mela.

He nodded to his driver, who went to the boot of the car and got out a large trunk. Shankar changed from his elegant suit into the ochre clothes of a priest.

'Wait here!' he said, and set off down the stony pathway leading to the Temple.

* * *

Minutes later he joined the heaving crowds of pilgrims flooding into the Temple. Drums throbbed incessantly, and the stifling heat reeked of sweat and incense. All eyes were fixed on the head priest, who swung a censer in front of the statue of the four-armed Moon God. The pilgrims chanted incantations at the sight of the bronze idol gleaming in the light of guttering oil lamps.

As Shankar pushed his way slowly towards the back of the Temple he glanced over to where the other priests gathered around the statue. He'd been cast out of their priestly brotherhood at the age of fifteen. They had said he had violated his oath and had become obsessed.

Obsessed! If they only knew!

* * *

As he sat in the dim torchlight of the Temple archive, Shankar surveyed the old documents spread in front of him. He frowned, shaking his head. He was no closer to finding what he was looking for.

The frenetic drumming of the ceremony was reaching its climax. *Not much time left.*

Quickly gathering all the papers together, he stuffed them in the satchel he had hidden under his upper-body cloth. Something fell out of a yellowed envelope—a rusty clasp knife, a tarnished inscription on its silver handle. He breathed on the metal, and polished it on the cloth—as he peered at it closely, a smile began to play across his lips…

'George Abercrombie,' he read. 'The Honourable Company Resident, Junagadh, India 1853.'