


DAKINI'S LOVER

a novel of awakening

A person wearing a blue hooded cloak stands with their back to the camera, holding a wooden staff. They are positioned in a vast, hazy landscape under a warm, golden sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The person's cloak is illuminated from behind, creating a silhouette effect. The background shows rolling hills and a bright horizon line.

E. W. Fleming



Set in ancient Tibet, **DAKINI'S LOVER** is the story of a spoiled, young rich man who awakens when he learns important mystic lessons in Wisdom, Compassion and Skillful Use of Pleasure - from an older woman named Dakini. Their erotic passion becomes an ecstasy that transcends death. The novel describes the practices and philosophy of Mystic Sex. The narrator is a shy, young Tigress - who is Dakini's apprentice.

Dakini's Lover

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*DAKINI'S
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a novel of awakening

E. W. Fleming

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DEDICATION

My hope is that this story will edify and entertain you and will offer you another point of view.

I dedicate this book to you, my Reader. Words can both lead and mislead. Language can be illuminating and fulfilling, but at other times language can feel secondary or even useless. Occasionally, with luck and timing, words can be a vital catalyst and can inspire a wild, new understanding of life and death and love.

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E. W. FLEMING

This book provides content related to ancient Tibet and herbs, meditations and spiritual and sexual topics. As such, use of this book implies your acceptance of this disclaimer.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

E. W. Fleming is a Parent and Grandparent, author, philosopher, real estate company manager and homemaker, with a BA in English from Cornell University and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of California at Irvine. She has roots in New England and Hawaii (and also roots Beyond the Beyond, as her patient children, grandchildren and husband know).

PREFACE

“How do I open the Doors of Sexual Perception?” the Rich Man asked.

“...*gently....*” *she answered.*

“Is it that simple?”

“...*yes....*”

“And then what happens?”

“...*and then it is not so simple...each door reveals another door....*”

“Is there an end to the doors?”

“...*eventually....*”

“And then?”

“...*and then you can walk through walls...and past old age and death into eternity....*”

“What are you doing to me?”

“...*I am following your breathing, matching my breath to yours...sending starlight through your legs, arms, back, chest, face, soul...do you feel this?*”

DAKINI DEFINITION

*A dakini is a mystic, yogic woman who can walk up and down long slopes without effort,
Who can die consciously,
Who lets her soul leave her body with such force when she dies that a piece of her skull flies off
Many of these uncommon women come as common women, wanderers, plain and quiet.
They still move through India, Nepal, Tibet, Burma and China the way that rivers move,
nudging pathways through humanity
and then changing course to flow in new and secret directions.*

*They dance on the corpse of ignorance.
Dakini holds a skullcup filled with Red River blood, the life source.
She is the mirror of your mind.
Testing you, she smiles with her hair wild and hanging down her back.*

*The dakini's source is in antiquity.
No one knows who trained the first dakini.
No one knows the fountainhead of her obscure female river.
Dakinis can change the weather. Change history. Change shape. Move clouds.
They breathe life into the mouths of the dying
and cross beyond the Veil to bring back the dead.*

BASIC LESSONS

Wisdom: everything passes.

Compassion: what you feel, others have felt.

Skillful Use of Pleasure: sexuality can be a fast path to Awakening.

Conscious Conception: recognize the souls waiting to enter.

Conscious Dying: watch your breath at the moment of death.

MUSE CONFESSION

What writer can claim completely that she or he wrote a book without help? I had helpers in writing this book but they were not ordinary humans. The Dakini and her apprentice and lover are long dead, seven hundred years dead, but they are my mystic muses, corny as that might sound.

How did it happen? Why did I write this book, exposing the Dakini's story? One turbulent night, after midnight, a clichéd hour, I was sitting with my computer, struggling to squeeze my finances into a family budget that fit like bad clothes. I needed some sleep but blinked my eyes and was very alert when weird words that looked like something drawn with a twig in the dirt, with swirls and swoops, flashed on my computer screen, claiming: "There will be a rekindling of the Truth."

Those are the first words I wrote as this book began to lead me to the Dakini.

I rubbed my eyes and smoothed my forehead. Had those words dropped out of cyberspace? I am no stranger to the exotic, but I was baffled. How did that provocative sentence get into my budget? The words were a challenge. Where had they come from? I thought of deleting the intruding letters, but then I felt my fingers typing rapidly. Writers know this sensation of spontaneity in language. The keyboard makes a clacking sound like hundreds of ant feet tapping so fast that the mind can barely compete. The alphabet lay in front of me full of potential. I felt like a drummer creating rhythm for a rock band. Clack clack tap tap tap clack clack. Tap tappity taptap tap tip tap.

Outside my window, a wilderness wind slammed the trees around in the forest where I live. My family was in bed, a smart place to be.

My fingers tingled and typed: "If you follow what I teach, then you will help others. I know how strange this sounds to you."

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The door slowly opened a few inches. "Wind can do that," I thought to myself, as I watched the door swinging and the wind shoving. Warm breath passed by my face then, with a touch of longish whiskers. "There will be a rekindling of the Truth," purred the voice, disembodied, of a Great Cat.

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WISDOM

Everything Passes

THERE WILL BE A REKINDLING OF THE TRUTH

“May all animals be free from the fear of being eaten by one another.”

from the Bodhisattva Prayer

I was not seeking sacred teachings, sacred sexual awakening or sacred anything on the day I first met Dakini. Near starvation and wounded, I was looking for something small and weak to kill. I needed to eat fresh flesh and blood to merge with my own. Every breath counted in the skinny Himalayan air. I chewed weeds.

I was not hungry for soul healing or for the enlightenment that Dakini abruptly loaded onto my soul like a farmer shoveling alfalfa onto a cart. On that bleak afternoon, I was dying and only hungry for another night and day of life. Dakini barged into my hiding place and made me her apprentice. She healed my body, soul and mind, and especially my immature heart. None of this was my intention. Wisdom from feeling my own impermanence was my first lesson.

Simple water thorns were lodged that day like demons in my foot. When I met Dakini, the innocuous small thorns had turned vicious and had disabled my entire leg. I could not hunt. Fever and constant thirst were my torture. I longed for my errant, absent lover. Even the dank smell of his breath and his bad temper were welcome. I forgave him for his mistakes and I wanted him.

I didn't know that Dakini was about to become my teacher and change my life, especially my sex life. I did not even know I had a sex life. Sex was like food, water and sleep to me. Sex was something that happened in the day but had no special meaning.

Dakini seized my predatory eyes with her mystical eyes. She twisted Death away from me. She sent Death home as he prepared to dine on me. She squeezed me out of Death's dinner bowl. Death now stalks Dakini in revenge but has a long wait. Dakini is the first woman of power that I came to love.

On the day that she saved my worthless life, cold and hunger were about to end my existence, if my injured foot and leg didn't kill me first. Resting in the shelter of a boulder on the Tibetan plateau where Death and Dakini both watched me, I remembered my lover's body, his strength moving like an artist's brush through mountain air, his warm tongue licking my ear; but my lover was far away, as usual, pursuing his independence and other pleasures.

Now, my life is renewed. I take my place as Dakini's bodyguard and apprentice. In return for my protection, she teaches me the secrets of Soul Reading and Skillful Use of Pleasure, of Wisdom and Compassion, how to Move Clouds and the use of mystic practices that let a lover reach inside the karma of another and conceive a child consciously. Soon, Dakini will teach me to die consciously.

Today, the seasons are on the cusp of flux. Today we are resting in our cemetery charnel grounds and biding our time. Dakini lives in a cave here, when she is not walking barefoot around the mountains in snow. I feel at ease and safe. Gray stones shove up sharply through virginal white snow on the rocky peaks quite far away. The air is still. Today is the kind of day when nothing much happens.

Change is in the moon, though. I recline beside Dakini and contemplate my present good luck that grew out of my past misery. Trouble is on the horizon, unfortunately. Dakini sees it first, as usual. Her vision is trained for distance fighting. Squatting easily, with her bare feet flat on the ground, she uses her sharp, curved knife to carefully carve a human bone; and she barely looks up when a young runner appears on the horizon and plummets toward our charnel grounds. Most seekers come to us quietly, heads bowed, penitent.

"Who is this troublesome intruder?" I ask her.

Dakini, surprisingly, ignores me. The runner leaves a trail of dust behind him that is the color of mustard, like a trail of thin karma that needs thickening. Dakini rocks back and forth on her venerable heels like a wise old frog. Her dark glowing skin is coated with the light blue holy ash from our fire pit. She holds up the ritual arrow made of mortal bone that she is carving. Human thighbone. The bone is from a corpse that she dismembered in a ritual Tibetan Sky Burial ceremony earlier, from a funeral of hope. Dakini offers up the human

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meat and bones and organs and brains of the deceased, giving it to the holy birds, to the beautiful night-dark vultures. They are kindly black angels with thick wings. These holy birds of death scoop up bodily remains in their beaks and soar into Heaven, up to the Pure Land, taking the deceased into the next world in bloody chunks in their large, bold beaks. Dakini's hands can continue to carve while her eyes watch the vultures. Women aren't supposed to dismember corpses, I know, but Dakini does it anyway. Corpse work is an honor reserved for the trained male priests, for the lamas to perform in Sky Burial. Men have the privilege because, strangely, it is assumed that men are more advanced spiritually than women. We know that is a lie, told on purpose. Dakini does many things that she is not supposed to do. Dakini is one of the rebel female leaders honored by some men but hated by others. Younger lamas in the monasteries, who want change, respect her. This puts her in mortal danger.

Clumsy, the runner draws closer to our charnel grounds. Heart beating faster, I prepare for both good and bad. Who is this Rich Man, rushing toward us in expensive silks, bashing into my peaceful cemetery in the middle of our lovely afternoon, in the middle of a sweet autumn, in the middle of my unworthy life, in the middle of another stupid war, in the middle of Tibet, in the middle of a failing Holy Roman Empire Crusade as I rest in the charnel grounds with my middle-aged mentor named Dakini? I glare at the youth.

Rocky peaks behind the new intruder are solid and complete, as if the Hand of Spirit is finished with them. Will this new man be her student, too? Dakini gives to male students, as well as to women, the secrets of the Immortal Sisters and their esoteric knowledge. She teaches the Forbidden Mysteries, regardless of gender or age or race or culture, as long as she deems the student to be ready. Dakini rebels not only against men who hold themselves above women, but also against women who hold themselves above men. Dakini has taught the esoteric practices of the Immortal Sisters openly to those whom she trusts. The young runner bearing down on our charnel grounds may be her next student. I do not trust him. I sense something is wrong with him, broken. Dakini's serene sorrow transcends rules and complications, though, and she will see him differently, I know.

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Broken, to her, is not broken. She trusts herself to choose her students wisely. She is human, though, so is prone to error. Protecting Dakini from herself is my job. It is my right, actually, as her chosen apprentice and successor.

TRUST

*“If you trust yourself, you need trust nobody else.
If you do not trust yourself, you must put your faith in the goodwill of
others.”*

from the Dakini Practices of the Immortal Sisters

Here is our real beginning. The young Rich Man came like an unwanted gift to us alone, running hard, in pain from unaccustomed exertion, without servants, leaving behind his hated life of wealth and privilege, seeking a new life for himself with no guarantees of a loaf of bread. He ran with his lips pulled back over his young teeth as if smiling or grimacing. He approached the rim of my dharma like inclement weather. His karma slammed into mine like a thunderstorm.

Only a few days before, I learned, he was bored, angry, unsatisfied with his life and servants, and determined to find an answer for his restlessness.

On a single day, just in one morning of trouble and doubt, the Rich Man betrayed his mother, abandoned his father, lied to his servants and broke his pregnant lover's heart.

Now he expects to find a guru, to find someone who will dispel the ignorance chewing at his soul and bring him peaceful dreams at night.

Here is what happened, as it happened. Out of the brown, dusty Tibetan hills and sparse grove of yellow trees, I see him racing awkwardly toward our Place of Death, the place that he probably hopes will save his life. Seekers often come here to our charnel grounds, to our home of ashes and Sky Burial, where Dakini and I maintain order in this cemetery of dark hope. The young athlete's bright silk clothing glows on him like new coins. I sniff the air, not knowing that he will create an unwelcome bridge soon between my Ignorance and my Knowing.

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Big-beaked black vultures, our holy birds, also scrutinize the runner and his obnoxious rising dust that sullies the air on the horizon. Our charnel vultures are such cocky birds as they fly the corpses, piece by piece, into the flat clouds and the Afterlife, slurping bits of a life in their beaks. Vultures are likeable, but indulged, fat princes. Vultures are wise birds, too, because they know that All Things Pass; and so they wait for your body with the infinite patience of a monk.

How does a human taste? A lot like cattle. But sweeter. Human flesh tastes sweet.

Wishing for peace of mind, is this Rich Man hoping that our cemetery will release him from suffering, so he can get on with his life, with his mind grinding selfishly, as many seekers do? He wants his enlightenment, I would wager. He wants his freedom. His. His. His. He wants to feel better about himself. He wants wants wants. He has jumped onto the novice path like a bird onto a worm in the rain. Is he destroying the hopes and serenity of others while seeking his own serenity? Many pilgrims do.

Inhaling the aromas of Dakini's skin, I feel my throat tremble. Her odor is like edible ripe brown oily nuts freshly pried out of their protective shells. Dark and tough, small but imposing, tanned and burnished, secretive yet open as the night sky, Dakini pushes her thick gray hair back from her high cheekbones and slim, slanting dark eyes as she watches the runner with a serious, odd smile on her full lips.

Sheep nudge against wild ponies as they graze together near our charnel grounds, chomping grasses. Uneasy suddenly, the sheep seek shelter, as if to escape this hasty new arrival. Pulling nervously at the grass, the ponies rip it up by the roots and leave behind small holes in the ground. I feel a sudden need for shelter myself as the young Rich Man's karmic field of complicated desires impacts mine. He has power, I note to myself.

"Deep breath," I tell myself. "Breathe in seven heartbeats. Breathe out seven."

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“There will be a rekindling of the truth,” mutters Dakini. *“And mystic sex will be the fire,”* she adds in a miserable tone.

What? Can I believe my ears? What is she saying? I see how tightly she grips the dried human thighbone she is carving; the white remnant of a life that was well lived or perhaps poorly lived. Even the evil and forlorn find themselves tucked into the bodice of Mother Earth like good children at the end of their lives, their bones consumed and returned to the dirt as easily as the bones of the blessed. Earth accepts us all at death. Earth has no choice. Where else will our bodies go, after they are no longer necessary, but back where they started?

Dakini's eyes darken. Storm clouds float like uneasy fate in the distance. *“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,”* she murmurs. My skin pimples. I run my tongue over my teeth. She is a philosopher. I am a killer. I am protection. This runner reeks of wealth, but he could have stolen those silks that gleam, clothes that perhaps he will never wash for himself. He does not see us where we are hidden in shadow by the high stone overhangs.

Dakini rises, showing herself, so I rise beside her.

She looks down, so I drop my eyes as well. By imitating her, I know her. Waiting for orders, I think that without her, I am nothing. She whispers into my mind: *“Oh my apprentice, you and I walk a path long forgotten.”* “Is she warning me? I can feel her warming up to this new student, a new challenge. Although her mystic tirades annoy me at times, she still is my whole life and reason for living. I do not like competition. I love my heavy-eyed, sensual, celibate, strict, abstract and mysterious shaman trickster and mentor, and I want her for myself; but I can do nothing except accept one student after another as they arrive filled with their seeking of things both tangible and intangible.

“This young Rich Man is not like us,” Dakini thinks, and her thoughts enter my own without spoken words. She adds: *“We have no crops to harvest, no silver or gold or coins of exchange, need no woven rugs, own no land or turquoise or red coral, have no titles, no shoes, no allegiance to any country, no country of legal origin, no citizenship, no hoarding for a distant future, do not worship fire or*

weapons and do not take seriously the borders of kingdoms and kings."

What she says is true. Every breath that we take is ours, every single hair. Our drink is fresh water from the river, our food is what we can catch or harvest or villagers bring us as offerings. What we do own is our freedom.

This freedom is what the frenzied runner lacks. This is what he wants, from us. I form the mental words to send Dakini: *"He wants the nothingness that we own, that is natural to our way of living, because this young Rich Man is POOR POOR POOR!"*

Humming, Dakini breathes in rhythm with her heartbeat to detach herself from her emotions. I do the same. Closing my ears by jutting out my jaw, I can hear my heartbeat and the swooshing of my lungs. We practice together the Calming Breath.

She lays two fingers against her wrist to feel her pulse. She breathes in for Seven Heartbeats. Then she breathes out for Seven Heartbeats. She does this Seven times.

I do the same. Seven times. I ask again, without words, intentionally transferring my thoughts into the depths of her mind, *"Who IS this young man?"*

"I know a seeker when I see one," she answers me, with cunning regard.

The runner is nearly on top of us, yet still does not see us. What is wrong with him? Has his sweat leaked into his eyes and blinded him? Has Dakini put up one of her sightscreens around us?

The Rich Man's disrespectful feet pound past prayer stones at the entrance to the charnel grounds that pilgrims have painted in raucous red, green and blue. It is the reverent mantra of *Om Mani Padme Hum* painted on the stones that he ignores. Agile and thin, the youth leaps over the sacred stones as if they mean absolutely nothing to him. This is a good sign. Irreverence toward the symbols of mankind has a place in my pagan heart. I sniff the warm air, trying to catch his scent as he draws close with the wind. Opium, he smells like sweet opium.

There must be some mistake. Opium smokers are slow and meandering. They do not run like a stallion chasing a mare! The

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young man's long hair sticks to his cheeks and is loose with black sweating strands glistening like stunning oily vulture feathers. "He runs like a goat stung by bees," I say to myself. Dakini smiles.

Rushing right past us and plunging into the grove of yellow trees beside our burial grounds, he disappears behind the dry and dusty trunks and branches. We can hear him crashing around like a goat. "You see," says Dakini. "He is a seeker of the Meaning of Life."

I scoff at her. "He is a spoiled, petulant seeker, and I smell opium," I reply, and would say more negative things about the runner but I am distracted by the arrival of vultures. They fly in to see the new arrival. How would a dark bird like a vulture taste? I have not eaten one yet. Dakini spits. Green juice from the herbal leaves she chews dribbles on her chin. I remind her: "Seekers drag themselves on hands and knees in slow, humble steps up to our cemetery lair. They do not charge toward us like wild yaks without even seeing us, their clothing flying like rainbows! This is not a seeker. He is running away from something or he is here thinking he can purchase your secrets."

She ignores me. I have offended her. Why do I argue with my teacher? Our quiet day of arrow making is ruined. I grind my teeth, taste salty saliva building and despise this boy in his sweet silks. Dakini caresses her white arrow of bone as if it were a living thing, which it once was. My forehead shivers. She kisses the arrow. "This bone weapon is done," she laughs, "for the lamas. But maybe I will offer it to this new seeker."

I implore her: "No! Dakini, you have carved that bone as a ritual implement!"

"You may be right. I should give it to the lamas. The lamas tolerate me so well. They put up with a shameless woman who defiantly leads Sky Burials, which are traditionally the responsibility of men."

"And you do it so well," I add. "Your blade is sharp; your corpse cuts are clean."

"Yet some lamas refuse to come to me with their dead. They say women are deemed incapable of enlightenment or spiritual responsibility for the afterworld and bardo passages."

I smile at my maverick mentor who insists that men treat women as equals. And that women learn how to treat themselves as equals to men. Dakini is rewarded with outrage and dismissal for her spiritual independence, as well as with a tentative respect from many lamas. The majority of the Holy Fathers preach that women promote sin and are temptresses. In some lands, but not ours, thank the Goddess, a widow is considered worthless and willingly must throw herself onto her husband's burning funeral pyre. If she refuses, she will be apprehended, drugged and thrown onto the funeral fire violently, as her children scream in terrified panic and disbelief while their mother's living body twists and thrashes, dying in her dead husband's pungent flames.

Dakini rises to her feet, tossing her arrow from hand to hand. She peers into the bushes and trees where the boy vanished. She waits, breathing slowly. She watches.

I say, "*Our panting guest in the charnel grounds is now lost in a thicket of yellow trees that a baby could crawl through.*"

"*Is it fair,*" she complains at this inopportune time, as if we are not waiting for our undesired guest to emerge from the bushes, as if the insult against women is so great that she cannot let it go, "*is it fair that the Holy Fathers declare our great goddess to be merely a soft tear dripping from the eye of a male god, or that women were created from a rib of the first man as an afterthought to keep the man company and play at sex with him; or that a warrior goddess sprang from her father's forehead and needs no mother; or that a Tibetan priestess like me must die and be reborn in the body of a male before she can be enlightened! Who tells these lies? I will debate him! And where IS that hapless new student? Is he lost among these simple trees and shrubs!*"? She claps her hands in loud anger and spins in a circle.

I keep one eye toward the bushes and trees while she froths. I take my job as her bodyguard seriously and listen intently to the young runner rustling and coughing behind the umbrella and disguises of the trees. Is he sick? I fear he might be bringing the wasting disease that is passing through lands and villages, a disease that is following in the footprints of the wandering pilgrims who are

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fleeing the Holy War between Christian, Muslim and Jew, far away from us but not far enough away. My thick hair, for no reason, grows suddenly stiff. My eyes widen. Evil has the aroma of sulfur. My nostrils expand. Nervous energy puffs up my lungs.

I lean toward my teacher *"Someone or something is watching us with evil intent,"* I warn her.

Dakini looks at me. *"I sense nothing, except this odd boy in the bush. Be still. You are upsetting yourself. The boy looks innocent, healthy as a young yak growing full in the warm summer months fed on wild grasses under amber sun beside a cool brook flooding past the roots of forest trees. I sense nothing to cause alarm."*

If Dakini says there is nothing to worry about, then there is nothing. And yet, there is something. I should listen to my instincts, I knew later. My lesson is to learn to trust myself more than I trust any teacher, even Dakini. Her power charms me, though, and I follow her lead, although she is not in a charming mood at the moment. *"Hide yourself!"* she abruptly hisses at me. *"You will frighten him!"*

What?! I am so hurt. I hide myself. Wisdom waits inside these silly seekers like a cat asleep in the basket of their bellies and they already are what they seek, as true shamans have declared for ages! Idiots! I don't know why Dakini cares. Tugging at twigs stuck in her hair, slipping on a shapeless filthy dress of rags to cover her nakedness, she is busy dusting dirt off her feet while I am busy with my humiliation.

She rinses her mouth with fresh water held in half a human skull and thinks: *"He needs to remember that he is both living and dying at the same time."* Raising up her eyebrows playfully at me, she takes a deep full breath and looks up to see the young man emerge into the confusing sunlight of our charnel grounds, our cemetery, our place of paradox where life and death confront each other daily and nightly. Clouds pregnant with snow sag against the mountains. A vulture soars in hopeful loops. An ox cart filled with children rattles by in the distance with its wooden wheels spitting pebbles and making constant noise that mixes with the laughter of the cart riders. Dakini smiles, as the dusty youth in bright silks emerges, his coughing subsided.

He is panting, tongue out, like an abandoned dog. With amazement, he surveys our charnel grounds of rock and shadow and corpse, bones and spare trees. He senses Dakini but I realize suddenly that she has stepped behind a bush and he does not see her, just as he does not see me. I am hidden as Dakini so rudely ordered me to do. With equal amazement, I survey his androgynous, Buddha-like beauty.

Dark-wood eyes, watery silks and proud nose, his head royal with sweating brown skin, he inspires me. My own eyes rove with admiration and desire over him, over his thin chest and wide shoulders, and I feel like a predator landing on prey. He would make a fine meal. Thick amber and coral beads linked with turquoise on his necklace lay bumpy against the soft sleek silk of his tunic. I want his necklace. I would give it to Dakini but she would not wear it, even if I took it from this tired boy by force. The cave Dakini sleeps in is high. The climb is treacherous and the chunky necklace would be a liability.

Our tired young seeker walks unevenly along the rocks as I creep back even deeper under the rock overhang. My time will come. If I have to kill him, I want the advantage of surprise. A disorganized, loud flood of wings explodes over me! It is more vultures, inquisitive as usual, wheeling in to study the Rich Man, to admire his long black hair that is glossy as their own black wings. Our cemetery offers a place to slow down. He does not belong. I sense he has urgent drives, sexual urgency, a desire to please women but for all the wrong reasons. I see him for what he is, a confused young nobleman who wants what he wants. Ordinary. Still, I sense that he is not an ordinary spiritual seeker.

He wears a belt strung with the new metal coins coming to Tibet from our northern neighbor, China, whose emperor is impetuous. Coins have holes in their centers and images stamped on them, coins of inedible metal that men kill to possess and that I can not eat or drink; coins that leave a sharp, bitter taste if bitten or licked. How can this metal cause so much trouble and bloodshed? I hate wealth. Dakini mocks me about my fury against coins. Wealth, like sex, is neutral, she contends.

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Nothing to hate can exist in either base metal or precious metal. Why blame inert metal or a piece of land or a precious ruby or sapphire that a man claims is his?

Wealth is not good or bad. Only what we do with wealth can be called moral or immoral or amoral. Dakini argues this point with the Holy Fathers when they condemn gold as evil even while their own temple deities are coated with gold. She scowls at the Holy Fathers, who fear her and rightly so.

Reaching for Dakini's mind, I ask silently: *"Do you think this young runner is really rich or did he kill a rich man and take his clothes and coins?"*

Dakini sends back a thought to me: *"See, his fine tunic and pants are filthy and torn, sewn of fine silk made in China, threads stolen from silkworm slaves kept in boxes and fed mulberry leaves. Who protects him? Where is his father? How can this young Rich Man roam loose, without horse, servants or bodyguards! Where is his mother?"*

I agree with her. Solo travel is a death sentence now. Who is safe in these days of warlords? Who is safe now with whispered rumors of the recent mysterious deaths of innocent animals? Who is safe when pilgrims and hungry refugees are lost in the mountains? Wheezing like a sick goat, the attractive youth gulps fluid from the gourd that hung from his waist. Does he have the lung disease or is the boy just softened by easy living?

He tucks the gourd back into his waistband, wipes his mouth and looks around. "I am here!" he shouts to the rocks and vultures. "Where is the guru? The Holy Father! Come out! Show yourself! Who will help me? Where is the Holy Man in orange robes with long toenails? I need you. Help heal my soul!"

Extraordinary and rude, very rude, he is rude as Dakini. Maybe they will like each other. He does not see Dakini or me yet; but I feel this seeker's presence fill my future. I feel his karma slam against my karma. It is a challenge I accept.

"I want my guru and am prepared to pay him well," he thinks to himself. He smiles like a cheery child and pats a bag of coins that also hangs from his waistband. I am more than startled to realize that

his thoughts are open to me. *“Only Dakini’s mind is open to me for silent thought!”* I tell myself. I am baffled and more than a little worried. Is this sorcery? He looks around as if someone spoke to him, as if he heard the words form in my mind. Must I hide my mind from this young upstart, as well as hiding my body?! My mind shield drops like a moat over my thoughts. Only one small door to my psyche stands wide open for Dakini to enter. How could that boy hear me?

“There will be a rekindling of the truth. Mystic sex will be the fire,” I hear Dakini thinking. *“I will initiate this boy into the Forbidden Practices of the Dakini.”*

Oh no! *“Be quiet, Dakini!”* I implore. *“He may hear your thoughts! He can hear mine! And what thoughts they ARE! Forbidden sexual initiation? With this unbalanced boy? Are you MAD! You are celibate!”*

My heart beats faster, when I see the young Rich Man swivel his head to locate the source of Dakini’s provocative, disembodied words. So, he DID HEAR her. Who IS he? Why does he have this eerie private power? The handsome youth lifts his large eyes up into the sky and then stares at the ground, as if a person above or below spoke the haunting sentences that might answer his questions.

“Breathe the Calming Breath,” Dakini messages me. *“You are distracting yourself. The boy is only confused and is seeking something in the late summer months with his silks shining under our amber sun which sparkles like knives off the quiet brook in the dark green forest behind the village.”*

I agree. *“He is confused and he is seeking. Also his form is slim and built like an antelope under his silk pants and tunic that flap like dreams. I am charmed as he lifts up his sleeves. He enchants me against my will. But betrayals are common as mushrooms after rain now. He may be dangerous and sly. He may be a spy sent by the lamas who want to destroy you. This youth’s dharmic purpose is winding itself like a snake around my future. Such is the fate of an apprentice.”*

“Leave the young seeker alone,” Dakini warns me. I am again hurt! Is she choosing him over me? Dakini orders me to blend with

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shadow. Then she seals her blue command with violet light, from her crown chakra. It tosses my thoughts into stillness as I pull my body deeper into the darkness of the stone overhang.

His forehead furrowed, the boy looks for who keeps speaking. He hears us but does not see us and does not realize that the words were never uttered out loud. He heard everything that we thought. Our minds are open to him. This has never happened before. I am ready to fight his lovely magic.

Dakini shuts her mind to both the boy and to me. I cannot penetrate. Now the youth cannot either. Dakini can influence my mental powers, having taught me all I know of mystical communication. It appears that she can trick this youth also.

Across seas, a journey of many weeks from Tibet by sailing ship, coconut palms grow to the edge of the shore of an island protected inside a wide coral reef, where seals lay flat as gray boulders on the sand and turtles lay their eggs in season. The sky hangs low on this distant island on the other side of the world. Visions of lands I never visited lift up like clouds in me.

Beside the unrestrained ocean, a volcano's cauldron, her private source, boils with crimson lava rock. The dead bones of an island chieftain are lowered into a rock niche high above the molten lava. The royal corpse once wore a cloak of yellow and red bird feathers, similar to colors the Tibetan lamas wear. The volcano's vagina, her *padme*, is so private and dangerous that most humans will not make the trek up to the rim of her burning caldera. The rim of her volcanic genital mouth, her source, is magnificent and murderous. To make the pilgrimage to see her boiling lava is to risk death by poisonous gas and fire.

The chieftain's large bones are lowered respectfully into the heated orange vagina of the earth that boils and suffocates all life around it while burping up rich materials for new life. This phantasm overtakes me and then is gone.

Why do these visions arise in me?

Other visions threaten. Burning women on crosses of wood. Razed villages. Swords. Crusaders. Soldiers and pirates of land and sea moving in packs like stray dogs. Plague's fast-pummeling Black Death. Europa's territories of Espana, Italia and Germana disgorging pilgrims fleeing, insane with pain and grief, into Persia, Asia and Arabia, where religious zealots also are causing violent volatile rifts between Jew, Christian and Muslim.

Pagan cultures suffer the lash, as well. Our Tibetan people are at risk if these crazy battles of belief come much closer to our land.

Truces, trade agreements and betrayals of trade agreements change the world of commerce as new ships gain speed and horses are bred to be bigger and more powerful, swifter fighters.

Powerful weapons increase in their killing ferocity. Arrows reach further targets. Tigers are endangered, as are many species that men use to decorate their temples and homes or kill to protect their livestock. Can this chaos reach Tibet? I am ready. I enjoy fighting. I live to fight. It is my nature and my dharma.

FEMALE GURU

“The word ‘Padme’ has many meanings.”

“The outer meaning of Padme is ‘Lotus Blossom.’ The inner meaning of Padme is ‘Sacred Female Genitals.’ The secret meaning of Padme is ‘Pure Wisdom Consciousness.’ And the secret-secret meaning of Padme is not yours to know until initiation.”

from the Book of the Dakini Practices of the Immortal Sisters

“Dead!” Dakini shouts to the exhausted runner, as she leaps in front of him.

He jumps into the air and stumbles. She points to the bloated body of a beggar. “Dead!” she sings almost joyously, as she waves at the corpse with her bone arrow.

Startled, the young man’s mouth opens and closes like the silent jaws of fish when the river is not fed enough and water levels are low.

Abruptly, she is silenced also. She stands in front of the youth blinking at him. He stares at her. She stares at him. I hear Dakini’s mind startled into contemplation, grabbing at an astounding visual memory locked far away inside her heart. *“There is something special about this young runner. He...has...a way of walking and standing that reminds me of something I want to avoid.”* For a moment her mind and mine ponder together. I furrow my brow where I hide. What could possibly be the matter? Dakini knows, all at once, what the problem is! She knows why she is remembering what she would rather forget as she watches the young seeker push his long fallen hair out of his face so that each facial feature fills her world. Her eyes widen. The impudent youth comes closer, windblown, and she sees and smells him fully and clearly. Pain arches her body. The young man’s walk, his scent, facial features and his clothing all drag a memory around her that burns into her senses. She staggers. I prepare for battle. All I see is my teacher in trouble.

She quickly recovers her stability and returns to the Dakini that I know, tough and mocking, gentle and helping. The perplexed and troubled look is gone from her face. What just happened? What did she see in this impudent seeker that upset her so quickly?

Dakini says to the youth, “The first thing you must learn, my hurried young seeker, is that everything passes. Grab spiritual awakening by the throat! Come to truth with some respect for truth, but not too much respect. Come to truth not only for your own enlightenment. Also come for the enlightenment of others. Avoid the mistakes most seekers make. Many seekers are like pigs scuffling after corncocks. I can teach you. Just don’t throw up.”

He pounds his ears as if they are not hearing properly. “I can take it,” he responds, his eyes narrowed, both amused and disgusted as he surveys the sensual crone from the top of her wild-haired head with twigs sticking out of it to her dirty toes with their very long toenails. I gasp inwardly. He looks at her as if she is barely human. This is so disrespectful, but I have to admit she does look uncivilized. He pushes his hand at her as if knocking away a bothersome fly. “Where is the monk who lives here? I want to see him!”

She says: “There will be a rekindling of the truth.” Then she whispers to him: “and mystic sex will be the fire.” Her voice is so soft that he must lean forward to hear.

“Sex?” he whispers back.

“Sex.”

“What does sex have to do with truth or holiness?” he asks in a voice that he has not heard coming out of his mouth for years. It is the voice of a child, a trusting child.

“Sex has everything to do with truth and holiness,” Dakini replies.

“Everything?”

“Everything.”

His muscled, lithe body shows through his thin, sweaty tunic that is embroidered with magical phoenix birds and dragons, colors of hot amber flowers in red summer flourishing by the green forest’s clear blue brook. Is he wearing the notorious “blind stitch” of

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embroidery that causes the seamstress slaves to lose their sight from squinting? I want his smooth clothes to lay my head on when I sleep.

Dakini touches the white necklace of small children's teeth that rests around her thin dark neck. They are surprisingly sharp, these baby teeth; some like little daggers. Rumors that the baby teeth strung on deer sinew talk to her at night are not true. Villagers gave her the precious teeth of their children when they fell out, as talismans with merit.

Her name, *Dakini*, means Sky Dancer or Sky Walker. This does not imply careless cavorting in clouds; but reflects a *Practice* of covering huge distances, fast, in a rolling gait, her body off the ground, feet levitated. This youth is standing in front of a privileged saint but does not recognize it. He cannot know how Dakini appeared in the village, her body naked as a dusty brick, barging past mastiff guard dogs like a shadow. With her skin coated in blue ash from fire pits, her gray pubic hair brushed in yellow dust from her long journey, she stalked into the male sanctuary of the monastic temple. She performed so many miracles so fast that the lamas immediately forgot she was a woman. A naked woman. She must be a sign. Maybe a goddess testing them.

Dakini refused the fine-spun robe of lamb's wool that the lamas offered her to cover her breasts and full hips above her slim, hard legs, but she accepted a rough-spun robe that still held the oils of the animal. Willing and mystified lamas sat at her dirty feet as she read their souls and taught them women's secrets of the Immortal Sisters, to lead them into the mysteries traditionally only murmured in whisperings from priestess mothers to daughters of the lineage. Power over their own lives was all the monks needed to become fair-minded. She gave to men the forbidden secret of the Women's Wisdom. She taught them this: It is a LIE that a woman's bad karma begins with her being born female. It is not true that being born with breasts and womb is a female's first mistake. Original Sin does not exist. Humanity's downfall is not the result of female curiosity. Humanity is not fallen. Humanity is simply lost.

And humanity is awakening, through young people who question.

Now Dakini rides in the lamas' veins and spirits like a flea on a dog. That is not an attractive analogy. What I mean is that the spirit of a dakini woman can jump onto another person without being noticed. And give the bite of enlightenment. This spirit can heal you. You have nothing to do. She preaches and yells. Her knife reaches into the sky and then down into the body. She places an eye, a heart, liver, kidney, rib and foot onto her sacred Sky Burial rock with her curved blade. Genitals of certain dead lamas, however, remain in the temple in jars to be dried and used as relics.

Dakini saves the strongest bones for carving, saved in large jars she makes of river mud clay. The temple gains new adherents when she teaches villagers there. Married couples come to learn the sexual fulfillments. The satisfied couples bring offerings of chickens and grains, of silver and twisted incense to the temple. Auspicious signs show the truth of her teachings.

On the night she enlightened the lamas about the power of women, a summertime snow lit the air with the warm scent of flowers that fell onto the lacquered red altar inside the temple. These were the signs. It had been predicted that a woman would come and lead them. Dakini debated the highest lamas, slapping her open palm with her fist and spinning on her heel in a perfect circle after each point, using for argument the ancient Code of the Immortal Sisters, which is beyond debate. Pious holy men who knew women were beneath them had met a woman who knew she was not.

She adjusts her breath now, as she watches the young man who is about to change her life and mine. She breathes the way he is breathing, until her chest moves in time with the young runner's. I also match her breath with my own heartbeat and breath. I try to reach my mind out to her but it is useless now. She has no interest in me. I am crushed. She controls her pulse, the throbbing blood vessels and her racing heart. I try to reach her, to ask: "*You know this man? But who is he? You are matching his heartbeat and breath. Look, I am doing the same, Dakini. Let me show myself to him.*"

But she does not answer me. It is as if I am not even there.

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I feel so left out. What have I done? "*Dakini, what is troubling you?*"

Do I hear a tiger?

ROAR OF THE ROGUE TIGER

“May precious herbs arise spontaneously in your garden to protect you from evil.”

from the Bodhisattva Prayer

A tiger coughs lightly, some distance away. The threat blemishes the air gently. It is almost soothing except that I have invited no Great Cat into our charnel ground. Am I the only one who hears it? Brutal, magical, atrocious, rasping, low, the cough and a rumble of a purr is repeated. My skin feels hot and bumps rise under each hair.

“A *Great Cat*,” I think. “A killing sound.” My legs stiffen and then I know: “*I must protect Dakini and this confused, exhausted boy.*” The tiger snarls with intention. My eyes reach up to find him. High on a ledge, his furious strength is magnified against the plain air.

I am intimate with tigers, but this is a Cat of a different color. Dark black stripes pulse across his dark gray body.

“*This is no ordinary predator,*” I send a mind message to Dakini, who is showing off the corpse to her new student and seems so engrossed with him that she does not sense the feline danger standing on the ledge not far away. Muscled huge feline shoulders and sensual strength stand out against the infinite sky, as the creature leans forward on the jutting rock ledge that sticks out like a giant splinter in the distance poked into a speechless, cloudless blue sky. His snarling command is soft, like a challenge that is meant for me alone. The tiger’s eyes focus on me. They travel my body, hungry. I want to be small as a pebble, a wildflower, invisible, not here. His almost-human eyes do seem to smile. “*A black-striped, gray tiger. Aberration of nature.*”

My mind pushes the message over to Dakini, pleading for her attention. She is distracted. The beast’s clean teeth like white knives hang from the healthy gums. He retracts his lips to show me his sharp, wild weapons. I am enchanted, sexually aroused, terrified and

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disgusted with myself. *“Dakini, you and the exhausted runner will need my help, if this creature comes any closer.”* I actually am hoping Dakini will rescue me but don't admit it. After all, I am the bodyguard. Knocking at the door of her closed attention, I pray. Squirring in confusion, I have to admit my thighs feel warm. The predator keeps his energy-hungry gaze on me, as if pulling at my very soul, as if he could breathe in my soul and I would be dead. *“He is so attractive...in a loathsome way.”* My soul leans toward the beast. Or, rather, the beast pulls me toward him with his hypnotic intention.

Dakini turns her head slowly, a sad smile in her eyes, her arrow held like a baby to her chest. She watches the gray Rogue Tiger watching me. A bolt of fine blue light shoots out of her fingertips and hits the beast square in the forehead.

The Rogue Tiger heaves itself up into the air and twists mid-jump to avoid falling, landing in a potent pose and then is gone from the ledge above us.

As if nothing is amiss, an azure sky takes the tiger's terrifying but beautiful place.



Set in ancient Tibet, **DAKINI'S LOVER** is the story of a spoiled, young rich man who awakens when he learns important mystic lessons in Wisdom, Compassion and Skillful Use of Pleasure - from an older woman named Dakini. Their erotic passion becomes an ecstasy that transcends death. The novel describes the practices and philosophy of Mystic Sex. The narrator is a shy, young Tigress - who is Dakini's apprentice.

Dakini's Lover

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