

The Legend of Greywinds – Book 2

Land of Meena

Chapter 1 – Palu

The shorter journey would have taken us across land through Assiral. Our other option, almost twice as long, was by sea. We had arrived in the land of Meena by water, avoiding the Assiral Plains at all costs. Though the trip by water took longer, the Council of Prophecy was not willing to take the chance of possibly losing one or both of the Chosen Ones. They made that very clear each time we met to discuss our journey. The Plains was a vast wasteland. Those crossing the Assiral Plains were often never heard from again. Fiera believed she could handle whatever the wasteland of Assiral inflicted on its visitors, but she had been uncertain that I could survive the ordeal.

“Come,” said Captain Redik. “I will show you where you will spend the night.” He unloaded the supplies and the two remaining horses. I took the lead for my horse and Fiera took the lead for hers. The others grabbed supplies from both ships as we moved down the pier toward the shore. This was a land that appeared to be mostly flat. As I stepped off the wharf onto the warm sand, I was a bit giddy. We were now in Meena. Palu to be exact.

I never dreamed of coming to this place. I had expected to live the life of a typical Shaylee—travelling to one or two hamlets beyond the Shaylee border and healing those in need. Yet in less than two moon cycles, I had visited Echo Harbor, Celie Hamlet and Tana Bay, encountered deadly creatures from the Assiral Plains, held a black bat plant, ate in a most beautiful cave, and sailed the sea to Meena. From here, our journey was less certain. We had a plan to get to Valana, but no one knew where our journey would lead after that. For tonight, I wanted to enjoy the time I had left with my new friends before their departure back to Tana. We arrived at an inn that was visible from the shore. The innkeeper showed us to our rooms. We unpacked as Captain Redik took the horses to the stable for the night.

Crabs, clams, and small game along with various fruit and vegetables were the fare for the evening. Palu was a seaside village with very friendly inhabitants. Many of the inn’s guests were regular visitors. We had a wonderful time that evening. This village was filled with people who enjoyed their leisure time. There were various types of gatherings throughout the village at all hours of the day and night. People here were happy whether they were working or not. And when they were not working, it was sheer enjoyment to be around them. It was no wonder visitors returned to Palu regularly.

That night I thanked the grey winds for keeping mine and Fiera’s horses from harm and asked for their protection throughout our journey into the unknown. I listened to villagers singing as I faded into a deep, restful sleep.

When I woke, I heard sounds coming from the streets of Palu. The first sun had just risen, but the second one had not. What was going on so early in the day? Then I

remembered that Palu was a village that never slept. It was a bit disorienting to say the least. If I hadn't seen the single sun, I would have thought I had slept through most of the day. I looked out the window of my room and noticed Redik and Leky standing at a fountain in the courtyard of the inn. I quickly dressed and went down to the fountain to meet them.

"Up a little early, are we?" chuckled Redik. "Did the excitement in the village wake you?"

"It is so unlike my home in Shaylee," I answered wide-eyed.

They both laughed as Jada joined us. She had just come from seeing Vee and Fiera. They were putting the final touches on our weapons. Jada suggested that I join them in short order for training. Jada saw my 'Do I have to?' look and answered before I could get a word out, "Fiera may not always be there to protect you. You must learn. If you are fortunate, you will never need to use these skills. In the event you do, you must be ready, Carena."

I knew she was right, but I was certainly not a warrior by any stretch of the imagination. I hoped Fiera and Vee would be patient teachers. Turning a Healer into a warrior seemed an impossible task to me, but I had to try. So, I nodded to Jada and followed her to the area where I was to train. Fiera and Vee were already engaged in a demonstration of combat with the daggers. I paid attention to how they used each and every weapon as they continued their demonstration.

While I trained, the others met at the fountain. Captain Leky had invited Losi, the great builder of Palu, to meet with our entourage. He told our group that he was expecting the remnants from two Blossom ships whose captains were killed during the last storm. He asked for the group's assistance in moving the disassembled ships to the southern side of Palu where he would begin the construction of a healing center for the people living there. The group offered its assistance as long as it did not interfere with its main reason for being in Palu, namely, to assure our safe and speedy departure from this seaside village.

Three blasts from a horn down by the shore signaled the arrival of the remnants from the two ships whose captains had perished in the recent storm. Losi signaled for the group to follow him down to the shore. Some of the villagers were already making their way to the wharf. Others were headed toward the site chosen by Losi. One of the villagers climbed on a large rock and motioned for the crowd to quiet down. Everything went still. Then he proceeded to give thanks for the gift from these two dead Blossom captains and asked the grey winds to bless them for their kind act. There was a moment of silence and then the wagons made their way to the shoreline. Villagers, visitors, and those in our group created lines from the wagons to the ships holding the cargo of remains. Pieces were passed down the lines to the waiting wagons. The loaded wagons then proceeded to the southern end of Palu where a site had been marked for the healing center.

Once the ships had been unloaded and the last wagons had been filled, everyone at the shore proceeded to the site to help the others unload the wagons.

It was late afternoon when Jada, Lexa and Arial came to find us. They stood and watched as I clumsily tried to work the bow. Only one out of five arrows actually hit the cross-section of a tree trunk we were using as a target. The sounds coming from the side of the