

The Legend of Greywinds – Book 1

Isle of Tana

Chapter 1 – The Isle

It was only getting worse. The skies were once again as black as coal. Neither of Yerg's two moons was visible. This was going to be a storm that would claim the lives of those unaware of its presence. It was my family's turn to watch the evening sky. Mother dreaded the times when Assiral storms approached on our watch. Because I was younger and more agile, I would be the one to race to the center of the village and sound the bell that sat there. Those on watch in surrounding villages listened for the distinctive tones. They would sound their own alarm bells warning clansmen to take cover.

After ringing the bell, I rushed home to help Mother and Father secure our cottage and the cottage next door that belonged to Vayda. Then we waited for the storm to pass. After every storm we Shaylee Healers were called on to assist those hurt or maimed by the swirls that descended from these frightening tempests.

Shaylee Hamlet was situated on the northwestern side of Tana. Although our land bordered the breathtaking northwestern shore, our ancestors chose to build their homes further inland at the base of the rugged mountains dividing our hamlet from that of the Gelsey to the north. Each Shaylee cottage had fragrant gardens dedicated to herbs and healing plants. Members of the clan were known as Healers and each carried a sacred pouch containing healing stones. They were called on to heal not only people but also animals, birds and other creatures.

Although it was thousands of years later, we followed the same customs as our predecessors. Simple robes with hand-braided sashes were still the official garb. We also donned herbal wreaths on our heads and maintained the same types of gardens. Shaylee was no different today than it was thousands of years ago—except for the increased devastation from the storm swirls.

Vayda was chosen as the Shaylee representative for the Council of Prophecy. Although she appeared quite youthful, she was the oldest council member — over 200 years old. She was a great Healer among the Shaylee, her connection with healing stones far greater than any other Healer in the hamlet. She was also extremely knowledgeable of herbs and healing plants and their various uses.

Many young Shaylee were sent to her for training and refinement of their skills. She also spent time with other Healers sharing her knowledge and understanding of plant life

and their many uses in healing physical, emotional, and mental conditions. Vayda was passionate about helping others, yet she was very humble and always thanked the grey winds for her gifts. She was highly respected by all clans on Tana.

Vayda and the other Council members had spent the last 100 years or so trying to find a way to eliminate the storm swirls. No matter what they tried, the storms continued.

We huddled together by the stone fireplace in our cottage. The sound of the swirls striking animals and people who had not found shelter was disheartening. Blood-curdling screams kept me awake all night. *Why could the Council not find a way to make these storms go away?* I silently questioned in my mind.

The night dragged on and on. When the swirls and the black sky finally disappeared, it was daylight. The green and yellow sun was already in the sky. The yellow sun with red and orange bands was just climbing above the horizon. What a beautiful sight it was.

Healers began to gather around the base of the storm bell. Teams of Gelsey and Echo began sending messages about the injured needing our help. An Echo about my age stood ready to relay these messages to those of us waiting.

“Laree requests six Healers in the northern part of Echo Hamlet. A herd of goats did not make it back to the stables before the storm struck. Many are dead and over thirty are severely injured,” reported this young, red-headed Listener.

“Maru is requesting the aid of two or three Healers at the base of Riga Mountain. She says four horses were trapped in the small canyon on the Gelsey side of the mountain. They will die unless Healers arrive within the next few hours.”

Vayda motioned for the young Echo to wait before continuing. She turned to address an elder Shaylee.

“Saro. Take five Healers with you and take care of the goats in Echo Hamlet.” Then she turned back to the Echo with a response. “Jaqua, tell Laree that we are sending Healers immediately. They should arrive by mid-morning.”

Then she motioned to my Father. “Nalan, you and Rima head for Riga Mountain.”

“Oh, Vayda, may I go too?” I begged, the words leaving my lips before I could stop them.

“Carena, these horses appear to be badly injured. Are you certain you are ready to deal with that?”

“I would like the chance to help them. Mother and Father will be there to help me should I have any difficulty in completing my task.”

Vayda looked at my parents and they both nodded. “Very well, then.” She turned to the Echo once again, “Jaqua, let Maru know that we are sending three Healers. They should be there in less than an hour.”

Jaqua nodded and relayed her messages to her Echo counterparts waiting for replies.