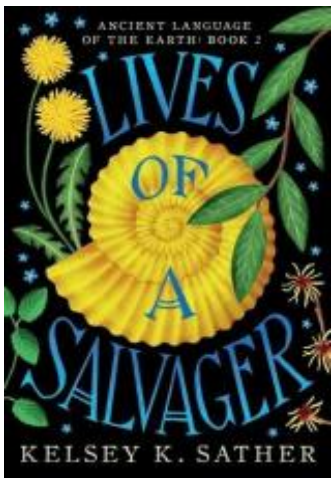
Lives of a Salvager: Ancient Language of the Earth, Book Two

by Kelsey K. Sather



About the Book

??The storytelling is propulsive? the lasting costs of ecological devotion are attended to with precise emotional weight.?

? ***Foreword Reviews***

One Salvager. Two thousand years. An unstoppable empire is destroying the world. LIVES OF A SALVAGER is a stand-alone book in this multigenerational fantasy series about plant magic, memory, and the cost of saving a dying planet.

In the ancient world of Aligaea, Laurel serves the Anima?s army, wielding plant magic, potions and powerful artifacts in the ongoing Task to restore ecological balance. Across centuries, she witnesses empires rise and fall, magical forces evolve, and the fragile order of the natural world begins to collapse. As a master of botanical magic, she crafts deadly charms, invisibility tinctures, and Birch Skin armor --- magical tools shaped by the pressures of war.

But as the Imperium rises --- the greatest threat Aligaea has ever faced --- Laurel begins to question the ethics of everything to which she has devoted her life. If saving the world requires endless war, sacrifice and manipulation, is it a mission worth completing? Is the Task truly restoring balance?

Haunted by memory, burdened by time, and pushed to the edge of insanity, Laurel must confront a devastating truth: some knowledge cannot be forgotten, and some power comes at a cost too great to bear.

A sweeping work of epic fantasy rooted in nature, magic and moral complexity, LIVES OF A SALVAGER explores memory, environmental change, and the price of shaping a world.

Discussion Guide

Questions for Discussion

1. In LIVES OF A SALVAGER, Laurel is raised by strong female mentors, especially the Crow. Do you have someone like this in your life? If so, what kind of influence has she had on you?

2. A key question that LIVES OF A SALVAGER poses to the reader is: ?Is the Task ethical?? What do you think, and why?

3. How might our own world change if there were Salvagers, those with the power of eternal Hindsight, among us?

4. In Part III, Anima Avni tells Laurel, ?I will die and no longer have to bear this burden while you --- you are the one to carry the Task for centuries upon centuries.? What are some of the burdens and benefits that come with the long lifespan of the Salvagers?

5. What parallels do you see between the events in the book and those in our own world throughout history?

6. While teaching at the Haven, Laurel poses the question to her students: ?Bad and Disordered, are they the same?? How would you answer this question?

7. In LIVES OF A SALVAGER, Laurel discovers that the birth of the Anima follows the golden ratio, 1.618, just like the formation of the ammonite. If the natural world inherently follows these endlessly repeating patterns, does that imply that Aligaea?s history is also bound to repeat itself, or can those cycles be broken?

8. As Avni, the fifth Anima, lies dying, Laurel comforts her with the words: ?Everything is temporary.? This is a phrase Laurel will repeat for millennia. Do you agree or disagree? What is the significance of this mantra in Laurel?s lives?

9. Mayra chooses to live her entire life in the land where she was born, caring for orphans rather than embarking on a quest to fulfill the Task. Was Mayra?s decision ethically sound? Why or why not?

10. As a being with a lifespan of thousands of years, Laurel lives many lifetimes and embodies many identities, living as Zalina, Laurel and Khen. How do these different lives factor into the challenges she faces throughout the book? Why did she choose to take on these different lives?

11. Is there a character with whom you most strongly identify? If so, why?

12. In the *Ancient Language of the Earth* universe, only women may become the Anima. What is the significance of this rule?

Enhance Your Book Club

1. Visit author Kelsey K. Sather?s website for more information about her and the *Ancient Language of the Earth* series,

including detailed maps of Aligaea and a comprehensive glossary of terms from the *Ancient Language of the Earth* universe.

2. Plant Magic: Recreate delicious versions of Laurel?s tinctures and charms. At your next meeting, have a selection of dried loose-leaf teas and herbs available for your group to blend to their taste. Discuss the variety of natural healing properties and benefits each tea or herb holds.

3. If you could create your own world, what would it look like? Look at the maps and illustrations Kelsey K. Sather created for the *Ancient Language of the Earth series* on her website. Get inspired and make your own maps and drawings.

4. Debate Night: Hold your own Counsel of Keepers gathering. Assign each book club member a role and debate important questions from the book. For example, would you inform the next Anima of her role, or let her discover it on her own?

Author Bio

Kelsey K. Sather is a Montana-based author whose work explores the intersection of humanity and the natural world through literary and fantasy storytelling. She is the author of BIRTH OF THE ANIMA, the first book in the A*ncient Language of the Earth* series, and LIVES OF A SALVAGER, the second installment. She holds an MA in Environmental Humanities from the University of Utah and has taught creative writing at the university level. A former writers? collective co-manager and outdoor sports instructor, she draws inspiration from mountain landscapes and her deep connection to nature.

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