

Hadi Waya'as



I grew up on the outskirts of a small town in rolling plains of Cyra, in the shadow of the Quarna Mountains. The wind never seemed to stop blowing, roaring down from the mountains and rippling across the plains. My father told me that I was born during one of the most chaotic storms that anyone could remember, where winds blew the roof off the local temple and toppled the water tower. The clerics said I was marked. I made them nervous, even as a child.

My family herded goats, and we sold the milk and cheese in town. We also raised a few wollipeds for their fleece, which my father spun and wove into fine blankets and clothing that were prized by both

locals and big-city merchants. My job as a child was to take the herd up into the mountains during the summer to the high pastures. I loved it up there, alone with only the animals, the birds, and the wind. During the winter, I attended school in the town, and while I did ok, I never made any close friends. The other kids were polite, but wary. My blue hair, gold eyes, and bluish swirls under my brown skin marked me as different. Most of the other kids didn't know what a sylph was, but they knew I was different.

Up in the mountains, I was happiest. I explored every inch, and learned every animal and plant. I would carve fallen branches from the ancient, twisted cedars into small charms and whistles. A curious magpie would come every afternoon and we would play a sound games with each other – I with my ocarina and he with his malleable voice. He told me his name was Anqit. In many ways, he was my closest friend. Sometimes he brought me small treasures he had found; a cedar cone of exceptional beauty, a scarlet windflower, a shiny blue pebble. He showed me these with pride, and then would take them to decorate his nest.

One day he arrived with a beautiful green gem, that seemed to glow from within. He was exceptionally proud, and pranced around at my feet with it, squawking with delight. That night, a huge storm cloud burst down upon us out of nowhere. This was no ordinary storm. Magic crackled all around, and suddenly a sorcerer stood in front of me. They screamed "Where is it!? Where is the Eye?!?" I cowered and said I didn't know what they were talking about. But then they saw Anqit's nest and screamed. In terror, Anqit tried to flee but was caught in a spell, crying out in pain as his feathers burned. I yelled and blindly threw myself at the sorcerer, winds seeming to roil and swirl around me, and blowing the sorcerer back a step.

Taken by surprise, the sorcerer focused their attention on me and brought the spell down on me. I managed to mostly hide under my wolliped blanket. It seemed to magically deflect much of the spell. But my exposed leg burned and withered, and I cried out.

"Stop!" I said, "Please, he didn't mean to steal it. I'll get it for you! Just stop!" They paused and I hobbled over to the nest, grabbing the gem and handing it over. Satisfied, the sorcerer left, and I dragged myself over to Anqit. There was nothing I could do for him, and he died before sunrise. I cremated his little body, and let the wind take the smoke of his soul back into the blue sky he loved so much. Then I wrapped my leg, made a staff from a dead cedar, and painfully tried to gather my frightened and scattered herd.

The local healers could do nothing for my leg, and my family was distraught. I would forever walk with a limp. That winter, in my sorrow, I slowly carved a likeness of Anqit on my new walking staff. I found a tiny perfect shiny blue stone for his eye. He would have loved that stone. I also played over in my mind the way the winds had moved around me during the attack. My family were not surprised when I told them I needed to leave home and find my answers. My mother explained bits of lore she knew of my kind, but apologized that she didn't know more.

During my travels, I met a druid, who taught me not only about my race, but shared her great knowledge. She became my mentor for many years, until we amicably parted ways. I continued to wander, and learn what I could of the natural world.

During a stop in a small village, I was "listening to the wind" (listening to people's conversations) when someone noticed me doing it. But rather than becoming angry, which was the typical reaction, the individual asked me if I wanted to put my skills to use. Her name was Luloh and she was catfolk. She said her stepmom was part of an investigative agency in Blindreach, and that they could use my talents. Curious, and also in need of some income, I agreed to come to Blindreach.