



Historical Association
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Write your own Historical Fiction 2022

The Amethyst Necklace

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Chapter 1

"Where are we going father?" asked a young girl, peering over the edge of the large boat to catch a glimpse of her slowly disappearing homeland. "Angle Land, my girl," came a reply from the front of the boat, in the same rough language as his daughter. The dark blue ribbons continued to splash against the wooden oars as they made headway to `Angle Land`.

Chapter 2

Cock-a-doodle-doo, Wnyflaed was harshly woken. "Wnyflaed! Put your best tunic on, Kenric and the other raiders will be back today," bellowed her father. He was busy stoking the flames that were dancing in the hearth which sat in the center of the wooden rectangular room. "But father, why do I have to go and see them come back, can't I stay here and go and play with Hamia, my best friend?" She sighed as she pulled on her unadorned, blue tunic. She stared at her father furiously out of the corner of her eye. "Wnyflaed, you need to understand that I am the leader of this village, so you need to listen to me! Do you want to get sold like Edmund did as a punishment." It was clear that he had absolutely no more patience left so she collapsed on her straw-filled bed and allowed herself to get lost in her thoughts.

The world swirled around her, leaving her startled when she left the thoughts of her homeland. The hard bed had left her back stiff and aching but she forced herself to get up.

Chapter 3

The strong daytime sun had been swallowed by the moonlit, misty sky, when the sound of lighthearted voices travelled down the rolling river. They were back. Their wooden boats piled to the brim with food and weapons. But Wnyflaed (who was standing beside her father) had noticed something else or rather someone else, crouched in the corner. Her hair was a dark shade of brown and covered with dirt and debris; she was about the same size as Wnyflaed although it was hard to tell in the darkness. As the men began to haul the goods in wagons back to the barn, her father stepped forward facing the crowd that had gathered. "I would like to thank our gods for these wonderful gifts and would like to announce that we shall have a feast tomorrow night to celebrate." The crowd cheered.

Wnyflaed's attention turned rapidly back to the girl. Who was she? She had to ask her father, even though she was somewhat annoyed with him. The slight winds chilled her bones as she made her way through the gradually disappearing crowd, who were all going back to their halls. "Father, who is that, the girl in the back of the boat?" she asked, pointing to the rowing boat which was banked on the grass next to the river. "How many times have I told you to stop asking so many questions. She is a new slave if you must know though. Anyway, would you like me to tell you a story tonight? Your favorite – Beowulf mayb.." "Ordway, an attack is being planned for two days' time on a Britton stronghold to the south. We need to prepare. I am sorry to disturb you." Ordway turned around to find his daughter's disappointed face and his second-in-command. "Don't worry darling, I can tell you a story another night, this is very important." With that, Ordway and his second-in-command walked with haste down the meandering path towards the main hall.

Chapter 4

"I win!" shouted Wnyflaed's friend Hamia, who was jumping around in excitement. "Aren't you happy for me, it's the first time I've won?"

"I'm just a bit tired, that's all," she replied pretending to yawn.

I wish he didn't have to go away all the time to fight. This will be the fourth time since we came here. I just wish we never came here in the first place; my father wouldn't be going to war all the time and most importantly, my mother – Annis - wouldn't have died of tuberculosis on the journey here. The sudden sound of her father's booming voice broke her from her trance. "Sorry Hamia, I have to go, please don't tell my father you have seen me and well done on the game." She jumped up with great speed and headed towards the edge of the stronghold, near the far side of the woods.

She was breathing frantically as she leaned against the trunk of a conifer tree, towering immensely above her. The ground was damp, and the leaves rustled beneath her feet as she circled the tree to check if anyone was nearby. A sparrow sat on a branch above her. It was staring at her intently, a worm dangling from its black beak. The rustle of the dead leaves and twigs as Wnyflaed stumbled sent it flying in fright to the depths of the woods. "Ok, now I have no one to keep me company now. Well at least I only have to stay here for a night – till my father goes off to war. Then I can go back and explain to Hamia," she said to herself, her voice drifting through the endless forest.

That night in the forest seemed to go on forever for Wnyflaed – the agonizing, bitter memories of her mother had kept her eyes open the whole night but it was over now. Morning sun trickled through the gaps in the canopy and the birds gathered their choir.

Meanwhile, darkness surrounded Ordway in the main hall. "I can't go. Annis would have been so unhappy with me leaving Wnyflaed this many times. I just can't leave, I'll just have to hope that she comes back."

"You can't, we need you to be there when we attack. Do you want to make a life for your daughter here or not? If we don't attack them now, they will drive us out and we will have to go back. Back to the hunger. She has probably been captured as a slave by the Britons anyway, no one has seen her. You have to come." shouted his second-in-command forcefully.

Ordway sighed heavily.

Chapter 5

It was after midday when Wnyflaed finally heard the sound of footsteps marching along the road to the war. She clambered up and dusted the mud of her tunic. Sprinting faster than she had in her whole life, she finally felt like she had when she was back at home. Happy. Content. Free. All of a sudden, that moment ended as she landed on a heap on the floor. "I... am so so...rry. I was not look...ing where I were go...ing. Please not beat ...me" said a girl, struggling to pronounce the unfamiliar sounds of the language. " No, it's me that should be sorry, not just for this but for everything else as well." The young slave got up silently and ran back to the slave barn.

Wyflaed reached Hamia's hut eventually. Hamia was outside reluctantly helping her mother to wash some clothes in a bucket of slightly murky water. "River water and rosemary does just the trick Hamia." However, the sight of her friend had broken Hamia completely from her mother's long lecture, " Wnyflaed, where did you go? Why did you leave? Why were you gone so long?" blurted Hamia, rushing towards her.

"Don't worry, I'll tell you all about it later around the fire. I 'm so glad to see you. Oh, I must tell you something but promise you won't tell my father when he gets back."

"Of course I won't tell him, it's a secret and you're not supposed to tell secrets, are you?"

Wnyflaed sighed and held her breath. My father would be so angry about this she muttered to herself.

"What is it then?"

"On my way here, I accidentally bumped into the new slave girl. I want to help her; I have seen how we treat he slaves and she is only around 7 like us. ."

"Your father would be furious; we aren't supposed to mix with slaves. But I will help you if that's what you are asking."

Hamia's mother stopped her jobs and came towards them. "Your father said he wanted you to have this. It was your mother's."

Chapter 6

"Come on class. We are going to visit the Anglo-Saxon Exhibition next." The children hurried along excitedly, chatting to their friends about the mummies they had seen in the Egyptian Exhibition. "Here we are, go and have a look at all the artifacts. Ask me if you have any questions." A young boy and girl were peering into a glass box at a tarnished necklace. "This is beautiful Miss, what's it made from?" asked Jake.

"Oh, this necklace looks like it is made from a gem called amethyst. It says on the label here that it was uncovered at Sutton Hoo – the burial ground - and it was believed to have belonged to a child.

"Wow, I wonder what their life was like."