



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

**Kelsey K. Sather**

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After centuries of devotion, Kelsey K. Sather's epic fantasy novel *Lives of a Salvager* asks how devotion survives.

Laurel, a salvager, is one of three humans alive at any time with unique abilities. Her purpose is to support the Anima, a woman transformed into a bridge between humanity and the animal kingdom. The Anima is tasked with restoring the sacred balance that imperial expansion works to destroy.

Split into six parts covering distinct eras, with individual chapters titled after plants, the book transitions between centuries, reflecting accumulated grief and altered landscapes. Laurel herself remains consistent across these shifts. When she is in crisis, the storytelling is propulsive; during quieter centuries, her story itself is still true to its thematic concerns.

Botanical and sensory details ground the prose, which has a tactile quality, infusing “fire lilies and snakeroot, moonflowers and witch’s gloves” with grand meaning. The chapter titles function as a secondary register, connecting human dramas to the ecological philosophy at the novel's core in a subdued manner. An exasperated declaration from Avni, the fifth Anima—“My happiness has nothing to do with it”—works because of the decades of cost behind it.

Spanning around two thousand years, the novel carries the structural weight of a chronicle. Still, its real preoccupations are intimate: the cost of sustained commitment to a cause in the face of centuries of loss; the question of whether a choice freely given remains free after a lifetime of consequences. Grief for those who outlive grand victories is well-conveyed.

In the multigenerational fantasy novel *Lives of a Salvager*, the lasting costs of ecological devotion are attended to with precise emotional weight.

JOHN M. MURRAY (May / June 2026)

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