The Moving Water
Book Two of the Rihanar Chronicles

Sequel to Everran's Bane

Sylvia Kelso
The great empire of Assharral is wealthy, peaceful and secure. Its ten provinces stretch across desert, plains and mountains. Its rooftree shields eight different races. Neighbours cannot breach its defences, rebels never disturb its peace. And nobody in Assharral sings.

The Empress of Assharral dreams by her fountain. Moriana is powerful beyond question, beautiful beyond flaw, immortal beyond the threat of age. Under her hand rests the Well of Wisdom, wizardry’s ultimate tool. The water moves, but by the fountain, Time has stopped. An empress need not concern herself with vagabonds. Even a vagabond who can steal the loyalty of her Imperial Guards, a vagabond who knows how she has enspelled Assharral. A vagabond wizard whose arts might match her power. The power of the Well slows Time, twists minds, breaks bodies, levels mountains. It can destroy any wizard who dares defy it. Only one power can stand in its path. A vagabond who dares look at an empress and laugh.

The Moving Water is a vividly realised high fantasy set in the world of Rihannar that appeared in Everran’s Bane, which was praised by reviewers for the depth of its world-building and its attractive characters. The characters have moved on, but the stakes are higher, the battles more epic, as love and magic contend not merely for an empire but for the dominion of human souls.
THE MOVING WATER
BOOK TWO OF THE
RIHANNAR CHRONICLES

THE MOVING WATER

SYLVIA KELSO

FIVE STAR
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Detroit • New York • San Francisco • New Haven, Conn. • Waterville, Maine • London
For my parents
Here and *in absentia*
With thanks to Lillian Stewart Carl for more than ordinary editing.

The title of this book comes from Robert Payne’s translation of a famous Li Po poem, variously titled “Conversation among the Mountains,” “Green Mountain,” “Question and Answer,” etc. The translation first appeared in Payne’s anthology of Chinese poetry, *The White Pony*, in 1947, and the third line reads, “The peach blossom follows the moving water”: an allusion to TaoYuan Ming’s even more famous prose tale of the peach blossom fountain whose waters led wanderers out of their world and time. I have been unable to get permission from Mr. Payne’s estate to quote the entire poem.
CHAPTER I

It is a long road to Eskan Helken here in the wastes of Hethria, and longer still when you do not know you are traveling it. As I did not. The day my journey began, I had never heard of Eskan Helken, and only vaguely of Hethria. All I knew was that, after morning inspection, the Lady Moriana wanted words with me.

Hardly momentous? But no one who served the Lady Moriana answered such a summons without a degree of sweat in the palms and tallying of his own and others’ recent sins. Certainly not the Captain of her Guard. Certainly not the newly promoted Captain of her Guard.

That was in my second’s manner when I said, “Hear defaulters for me, Evis. I’m going up there,” and he nodded without meeting my eye. It spoke from the rigid stance of the two sentries I had just posted, as I clanked between them up Ker Morrya’s green marble entry steps. From the schooled face of the steward with moontrees on the back and breast of his black silk surcoat, when I said, “The Lady asked for me,” and he replied, “This way, sir.” It persisted in the fit of my helmet, which was too tight, in the slip of my boots, which were too loose. In the chill of the first long colonnade whose tiles were scalloped moss-green, jade-green, by each archful of morning sun, in the piercing sweetness of a black-beaked eygnor’s song, and the suddenly lovely curve of each water-fern’s drooping frond. Such things grow precious when you may be seeing them for the very last time.
Glossary

Proper names given with capitals.

Coll., collective noun

Imp., imperative

Neg., negative particle

Note for readers of Everran's Bane who find word variants. This glossary uses eastern spelling, while Harran's tale was written down in the west.

aedr (pl. aedryx), in common sense, wizard. In aedric usage, practitioner of Ruanbrarx, q.v.
ahtar, sun
Ahlthor, Phaxian deity. From ahtar, sun, nur-nor, white
Alkir, Assharran personal name. Lit. Sower, from kyre, to sow
alsyr, peace. From ax, neg., syre, to weep
Ammath, evil. From ax, neg., math, good
anor, song, tale
a'sparre, aedric art. From ax, neg., yn-ynx, hands, sparthe, to kill
Assharral, empire. From aschar, roof-tree.
asterne, watch-tower, outpost
Astyros, Assharran border fortification. Lit. Wide-wall, from
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ax, neg. tyr, narrow, os, wall
ax, negative particle

Axaira Assharran province. Lit. No-farewell, from ax, neg., xaira, parting

axos, aedric art. To blind, from ax, neg., os, sing. eye

axvyr, infinity. From ax, neg., vyrne, last, end

axynbrarve, aedric art. Telekinesis. Lit. to act without hands, from ax, yn-ynx, briarve, all q.v.

az, blue

Azmaere, Phaxian range. From az, blue, maer, shadow

belphan, bay
ber, sea

Berrian, aedric personal name. Lit. Sea-fire or flame

Bhassan, Assharran town. Lit. smoke-place, from bhassa, smoke

brenx, peak
breve, pass
briave, to act, with sense of having power/competency to do so

caissyn, sugar-cane. From cau, stick, ais, sweet
cennaphar, sandalwood

Cessala, Assharran district. Lit. Sugar-land, corruption of caissyn, sugar-cane, q.v.

chake, aedric art. To command by compulsion
cletho, mud
clethra, mangrove tree

Climbros, Assharran province. Lit. grain-walls, from climbar, grain, os, wall
clythkemmon, Lyretail menura. From clythx, heart, kemmon, tail

Colne Clethra, Assharran fort. Lit. Mangrove Four, from clethra, mangrove, colne, four
culphan, cape

darre, taipan
Darrhan, aedic personal name. Lit. taipan-tongue. Venomous
Darrior, Assharran province. From darrith, room, space

del, gold
Delostar, aedic personal name. Lit. Wall or Eye of the Golden
Flower, from del, gold, os, eye or wall, tar, flower
delryn, poinciana. From del, gold, rien, crimson, nur-nor, white
deve, valley
Deve Gaz, Lit. Fallen Valley, from gase, to fall
Deve Saedryx Korven Battlefield. Aedic oath. From deve,
valley, sal, sour, bitter, korb, korven, ghost

Eakring Ithyrx, archipelago. From eakring, island, ithyr, spice
earnn, “kikuyu” grass
el-ela, coll. tree
elond, ironbark tree
emvath, lantana. From ema, poison, vath, shrub
end, apple
ensal, “quinine” tree. Lit. bitter-apple
Eskan Helken, Lit. Red Castle
Etalveth, Assharran town. From etal, sunset, veth, first, i.e.
westernmost
Ethryn, Alpha and Beta Centauri. From ethyre, to point,
indicate
Everran, Confederate kingdom. Possible corruption of Ber-
rian, q.v.
eygnor, magpie. Lit. black-white, from eygja, black, nor, white,
with play on anor, song
fanx (pl. fann), dog
femaere, demon. Lit. cruel-shadow, from feng, moon, fell,
cruel, with supernatural overtones

fendel (pl. fendellin), Assharran currency. From feng, moon, del, gold
feng, moon
Fengela, Lit. Moontree, from feng, moon, el-ela, tree. Matriarch of the Morheage, q.v. Also Assharran mythical being
Fengsaeva, Lit. Moon-wind. From saeva, wind
fengthir, aedric art. To command imperceptibly. Lit. to draw like the moon
Fengthira, aedric personal name. Lit. moonlight. From feng, moon, thira, light
ferrathil, bellbird. Corruption of pirra, bird, thellis, bell
ferroth, pawpaw
fing-fyng, green
finghend, emerald. Lit. green stone
Firkemmon, Scorpio. From fir, sting, kemmon, tail
Frimmor, Assharran province. From ferim, dairy-herd
Fylghjos, aedric personal name. Lit. Granite-eyes, from os, eye, fylg, granite
fyr-x, kelpie sheep-dog

gar, skin, hide
gas, spear
gastath, lancewood tree. From gas, spear, tath, wood
Gazzal, Lit. The Fall, from past. part. of gase, to fall
Gazzarien, Assharran district. From gazzal, the fall
Gazzath, Lit. The Fallers
geber, east
Gebria, Everran province. Lit. east-land
Gebros, Lit. East-wall, from geber, east, os, wall
Gerperra, whip-bird. From pirra, bird, ger, whip
Gesarre, Everran district. Lit. East-flower
Gevber, Lit. East-sea, from ber, sea, geber, east
ghend, stone
Gjerven, Assharran province. From gjer, grass, ven, way, road
gyar, foot (Gjerven dialect)

hasselian, swamp. From haz, earth, ilien, water
havos, spider. Aedric line
Haz, Sky-lord worshipped in Everran. Lit. earth
Hazghend. Lit. Earthstone, from haz, earth, ghend, stone.
Aedric line. Confederate nation
hazian, ruby. Lit. earth-fire, from haz, earth, iahn, fire, flame
Hazyk, inhabitant of Hazghend, q.v.
heagar, banyan fig. From heage, branch, gyar, foot (Gjerven dialect)
heage, branch (tree) family (sentient beings)
Heagian, aedric line. Lit. fire-branch, often called Flametree
Helkents, Confederate range. Untranslatable term for red of earth or rock
hellien, eucalyptus. Coll. from ilien, water, el-ela, tree
helmyrn, pandanus tree. From helym, barb, yb-ynx, hand
helve, V., imp., to go
Heshyr, Arcturus. From heshyr, shepherd, from huesh, coll., sheep
hethel, olive. Lit. desert-tree
Hethox, indigenous Hethrian inhabitant
Hethria, country. Lit. desert-land
hisgal, box tree. From his, gray, gar, skin
histh, gray
Histhira, Confederate range, aedric line. Lit. gray-light, from histh, gray, thira, light
hisyrx, heron. From his, gray, yrk-yrx, legs
Holym, Confederate country. Coll. cattle
hyrne, fang
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Iahin, Sky-lord worshipped in Everran. Lit. fire, flame
idrigg, cold
Ilien, Sky-lord worshipped in Everran. Lit. water
Iliennor, Lit. water-song
imlann, prized type of wood. Poss. “dead finish” tree
imsar Math, invocation. In the name of Math, q.v. below
istarel, saltbush. Lit. salt-tree, from istar, salt, el-ela, tree

kanna, banana
keerphar, bauhinia tree
keld, mine
Kemrestan, Assharran province. From kemres, border, march
Kemreswash, Everran River. Lit. border-water. From kemres, border, wash, river
Kenath, Assharran town. Lit. sale-place, from kenar, auction
ker, house, in sense of dynastic dwelling place
Ker Morrya, Lit. Black Keep, from ker, house, morg, black
kerym, lake
Kerym Cletho, Gjerven lake. Lit. Mud-lake
kymman, tamarind tree

langu, python. Assharran semi-mythical being
lase-lash, suffix, meeting, crossroad, junction
lathare, aedric art. “Mindspeech,” verbal telepathic transmission
Latharyn, Lit. The speakers. V. Ystryn. Assharran form of Tarot
lethar, dream
letharthir, aedric art. To mesmerise. Lit. to make dream, from lethar, dream, thire, to be.
lisbyr, rainmaker. From lisva, rain, byr, Ulven corruption of briave, to act, q.v.
Lisdrinos, Assharran forest. From drinos, forest, lisva, rain
los, spring, or contraction of lios, face
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Los Morryan, Lit. Blackwater Spring
Losssian, aedic personal name. Lit. The Well or Face of Flame
Los Therystyr, legendary spring. Lit. Well of the Purple Flower.

Los Velandryxe Thira, aedic artefact. From los, well, velandyxe, wisdom, thira, light

Losvure, Lit. Sky-faces. From los, face, os, eye, vur, sky

Lydel, possum. Lit. tree-hopper, from el-ela, tree, lyde, to hop

Lydwyr, kangaroo. From lyde, to leap, hop, wyre, great

Lydryr, hopper. Coll. Small marsupials, bandicoot, paddy melon, kangaroo rat, etc. From lyde, to hop

Lyffanx, kangaroo dog. From lydwyr, kangaroo, fanx, fann, dog

Lyng, morning

Lynghyrne, Confederate mountain. Lit. fang of the morning

Lynghthira, country. Lit. morning light, from lyng, morning, thira, light

Lythian, poinsettia. From lythe, leaf, iahn, fire, flame

Maer, shadow

Maerdrigg, aedic personal name. Lit. cold shadow, from maer, shadow, idrigg, cold

Maerheage, aedic line. From maer, shadow, heage, family

Maerian, opal. From maer, shadow, iahn, fire, flame

Mallerstang, Assharran town. Lit. orchid-cross, from mallar, orchid, tang, cross

Math, good

Math, abstraction. Aedic equivalent of god

Meldene, west. Region of Everran

Morg, black

Morgar, black-butt tree. From morg, black, gar, hide, skin

Morglis, Lit. black-nose. Confederate cape. In Assharral, black kite. From morg, black, perraglis, hawk
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**Morheage**, aedric line. From morg, black, heage, family

**Morhyrne**, Assharran mountain. Lit. Black-fang

**Moriana**, aedric personal name. Lit. Black Fire

**Morrya**, Assharran province. Lit. Black-land, ref. to volcanic soil

**morsyr**, black widow spider. From morg, black, syr, widow, from syre, to weep

**morval**, crow. From morg, black, val, wing

**nerran**, swamp tree

**nerrys**, ocean

**Nerrysyr**, ocean. Lit. peaceful ocean, from alsyr, peace, from ax, not, syre, to weep

**Nervia**, Assharran province. From nerev, banker, money-lender

**norgal**, ti-tree, paperbark. Coll., from nor, white, gar, skin, el, tree

**os**, eye or wall

**Othan**, Phaxian river. Lit. strong

**pellathir**, aedric art. To cause illusion. From pelere, to bear, carry, lethar, dream

**perra**, eagle. Corruption of pirra, bird

**perraglis**, hawk. From perra, eagle, aglis, small

**perridel**, coll. wattle-tree. From per, silver, del, gold, el-ela, tree

**perrilyss**, fish-eagle. From perra, eagle, ilys, fish

**Phamazan**, Phaxian capital. Lit. The Gathering

**pharaon**, Lit. maker, creator. Loose aedric usage for “god”

**pharaone**, aedric art. Telepathic vision. From phare, to see

**Pharaon Lethar**, Lit. maker’s dream. Aedric term for (1.) The physical universe, (2.) The Other World of ghosts and shamans. Cf. Hindu concept of Brahm who creates by
family

f. to volcanic
c, syr, widow,
r, peace, from

money-lender
e, gar, skin, el,

pelere, to bear,
el, gold, el-ela,

ge for “god”

share, to see

erm for (1) The

of ghosts and who creates by

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“dreaming” the world

**phare**, V. to see. Aedric art, to “read” an entire psyche

**pharrraz**, farmer. Lit. earth-seer, from phare, to see, haz, earth

**pharyn**, Lit. seers. Assharran Tarot. V. Ystryn and Latharyn

**phathire**, aedric art. Lit. see-being, from, phare, to see, thire, to be. Mental re-creation of the past

**Phathos**, soothsayer. Lit. seeing eye, from phare, to see, os, eye

**Phatrexe**, aedric art. From phare, to see, trexe, to write. To imprint telepathic messages on matter, keyed to correct receiver

**Phaxia**, country. Lit. The People

**Quarred**, Confederate country

**quennis**, lawyer cane. From quienn, hook

**ras**, source

**Rastyr**, Lit. Port-head, from tyr, narrow or port

**rhodel (pl. rhodellin)**, gold coinage of Everran. From rho, round, del, gold

**rhonur**, cotton. From rho, round, nur, white

**riendel**, cocky-apple tree. From rien, crimson, el, tree

**riendjer**, kangaroo grass. From rien, crimson, gjer, grass

**riendgis**, red kite. From rien, crimson, perraglis, hawk

**Rienvur**, Mars. Lit. crimson-brow

**rivannon**, scented tree, possible kind of cassia

**rovperra**, kookaburra. From pirra, bird, rove, to laugh at, mock

**ruan**, mind

**Ruanbrarx**, aedric arts. Lit. mind-acts, from ruan, mind, bri-ax, past. part. of briave, to act, q.v.

**Ruanbraxe**, aedric art. From ruan, mind, braxe, shield. To block from other aedryx’ awareness

**ruand**, numeral one. Also leader, head capital, etc.
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saeva, wind
saeveryr, wagtail. Also Cape, “where the wind turns,” from saeva, wind, ryde, rythe, to turn
Saevetir, south wind
Salasterne, Assharran fort. Lit. sour-watch, from sal, sour, asterne, lookout
salgar, Lit. bitter-bark, from sal, bitter, sour, gar, skin, bark. Assharran version of cinchona bark
Saphar, capital of Everran. Lit. delight
Sathel (pl. Sathellin), wanderer, nomad
scarthe, aedric art. Telepathic perception. Lit. to read verbal thought
Selionur, Sirius. From selloth, stars, lios, face, nor-nur, white
Sellithar, personal name. Lit. Star-flower
sellothahr, frangipani tree. Lit. Sun-star, from selloth, stars, ahtar, sun
skos, broad
slief, plateau, tableland
slithil, ibis. Lit. water-knife, from ilien, water, slith, knife
stiriand, north. Region of Everran. Aedric line
Stirian Ven, highway. Lit. North Road
Stirsselian, Lit. North-swamp, from hasselian, swamp, from haz, earth, ilien, water
syvel, wilga tree. From syve, thick, el-ela, tree

.tar, flower

tarsal, gidgee tree. Lit. sour-flower

taskgjer, Mitchell grass. From task, tussock, gjer, grass
Tasmar, Assharran province. From tassa, cloth
tathrien, red cedar. From tath, wood, rien, crimson
Taven, Lit. wood-road, from tath, wood, ven, road
Tengorial, Assharran town. Lit. cleared-land, from tengre, to clear, cut down
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terrephaz, brogla. From az, blue, terre, to dance
terrepher, lyretail menura. From per, silver, terre, to dance
terrian, jacaranda. Corruption of theryx, purple, iahn, flame
Thangar, Assharran province. From thangos, hilly
Th'Iahn, aedric personal name. Lit. The Flame
thillian, diamond. Lit. light-water-fire, from thira, light, ilien, water, iahn, flame

Thira, light
Thiryx, Sky-lord, worshipped in Everran. Lit. air. See Haz, ilien and Iahn

thorgan, king
Thor'stang, aedric chess. Lit. king's-war, from thorgan, king, gastang, war

thrithan, bamboo
tingan, lyretail menura. From tigrith, all, han, tongue

tingrith, numeral. Eight, all. Quarred government, loose confederation of aedric lines

Tirien, aedric line. Lit. south water, from tirs, south, ilien, water

tirs, south. Everran region

Tirstang, Crux Australis. From tirs, south, tang, cross
tyri, narrow. Port, in Hazyk dialect

Tyr Cletho, From tyr, port, cletho, mud
Tyr Coryan, Lit. Maze-port, from tyr, port, coryan, maze, labyrinth

Tyrwash, Lit. narrow-river. Aedric line

ulfann, dingoes. From ulce, wild, fanx, fann, pl. dog

Ulven, Neolithic Gjerven tribe. From ulce, wild, Gjerven, province, q.v.

Valinhynga, Venus. Lit. horns of the morning, corruption of valin, horn, lyng, morning

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**Vallin Taskar**, Assharran landmark. From vallin, horns, taskar, gate

**Velandryxe**, wisdom. Lit. high-vision, from vel, high, andeir, second or non-physical sight

**velandyr**, sage. Lit. high-seer

**Veldisk**, Phaxian plateau. From vel, high, disyk, brown

**ven**, highway, main road

**Vendring**, Assharran town. Lit. road-works, from ven, road

**Ven Selloth**, Milky Way. From ven, road, selloth, stars

**veth**, first

**Vorn**, aedric personal name. Lit. the tooth

**Vyrenia**, country. Lit. last-land, from vyrne, last

**Vyrlase**, Lit. Last-meeting, from vyrne, last, lase, meeting, crossing-place

**vyrne**, Lit. the last. Nickname of Vorn, q.v.

**Vyrene Taskar**, Phaxian province. Lit. last-gate, from vyrne, last, taskar, gate

**wash**, river

**wreve**, V. to master, control

**wreve-lan’x**, aedric art. Beast mastery, from wreve, control, lanyx, coll., beast

**wreve-lethar**, aedric art. Lit. to control the dream, i.e. to control or change the world. From lethar, the dream, aedric term for universe

**wreviane**, aedric art. Pyrokinesis

**wrevurx**, aedric art. To control the weather. From wreve, control, vur, sky

**wrock**, ridge, esp. watershed

**wyre**, great

**wyresparyx**, goanna. From wyre, great, emsparyx, lizard, from
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yrk, yrx, legs, and emspar, snake, from ema, poison, sparthe, to kill

Xaira, farewell, separation, aedric myth of same
xhen, aloe vera. From xhen, burnt, past. part. of xhiane, to burn

yazyk-yx, thief
yeld, blood
yeldtar, poppy. Lit. blood-flower. Juice used as soporific
yeltath, bloodwood tree. From yeld, blood, tath, wood
yst, truth
Ystanyrx, Lit. true songs. Cosmogony as preserved by Everran harpers

Ystir, Invocation. Truth it is
Ystryn, Assharran Tarot cards. Lit. truth-tellers. See also Latharyn.
yx, sing., before, pl., eyes
yxphare, aedric art. Lit. to see before. Clairvoyance

Zem-and-Zam, Assharran personal names. Lit. This-and-That
Zyphyr Coryan, Assharran capital. From zyph, city, wyre, great, coryan, maze, labyrinth
Sylvia Kelso lives in North Queensland, Australia, and has been writing or telling stories for as long as she remembers. The Moving Water is her second fantasy novel, the sequel to her well-received Everran’s Bane. She has also published poetry in Australian literary magazines, and has a Creative Writing MA for an alternate history/SF novel set in alternate North Queenslands. She lives in a house with a lot of trees in the garden, but no cats or dogs. She makes up for this by playing Celtic music on a penny whistle and is now learning the fiddle as well.
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Author photograph by Elisabeth Vonnarburg
Praise for Sylvia Kelso’s Everran’s Bane:

“Strong characters and a fully realized world combine with action and adventure”
—Library Journal

“The prose is dense and chewy, the worldbuilding complex and colorful, and plotting kept me turning pages till four in the morning . . . not without sly humor . . . as well as heartbreak and heroism. Highly recommended.”
—Lois McMaster Bujold, author of Nebula- and Hugo-winning Paladin of Souls

“Epic battles, magic, betrayal, courage, and love abound . . . there are so many themes—friendship, the nature of courage, what it means to be a leader—intertwined within the core of this tale . . . it would be a shame to miss it by not picking up this book.”
—Kathy Samuels, Romance Reviews Today

“. . . a poignant and moving fantasy . . . tense plot”
—Harriet Klausner

“. . . character-driven, with a very dark edge.”
—Lucy Sussex, The Age

Jacket illustration by Caroline Husher