



MARIE JUDSON

Elf Stone  
of the  
Neyna

Lost Xentu, #1  
A Fantasy Sci-Fi Series

# ELF STONE OF THE NEYNA

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This beguiling novel will bring you to a turbulent world where Yanda, a woman with untapped powers, is snatched from her home planet, leaving behind a daughter she loves dearly. You'll root for her as she endures imprisonment and worse at the hands of an evil being who intends to exploit his captives to rule the universe. Yanda forms alliances, but after every victory, new perils arise, and you simply have to keep reading until the very end. – Laura McHale Holland, author of *The Kiminee Dream*

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# Elf Stone of the Neyna

Lost Xentu  
Book One

Marie Judson



# Prologue

Yanda had no idea, getting up for work that day—that fateful day—that she had little time left on her home planet of Alland.

But was it her *home planet*? She'd never fit in. Taken in and raised by a couple in the small town of Balyou, she'd never known her real parents or where they'd come from. Her amber eyes, butterscotch skin, and tawny, unruly hair were unlike anyone she'd seen.

Her mother was never cruel but was suspicious of her ability to see through things, and constantly told her to keep her ability secret. Her adoptive father, a quiet man, kept to the background. They never told her how they had come to adopt her. If they knew about her bio-parents, they didn't say.

Yanda stepped to the window of her high-rise apartment. She'd never expected to find herself living in such a place, so far from nature, after growing up in the countryside with Omshi and Nedri. She'd chosen the apartment because it was an easy distance from Shrapels Hospital, where she was a surgeon. She could take sky-tunnels and be at work in minutes.

Beyond the city, low greenery stretched to infinity, cut into patterns by deep water channels. Electric rail lines further bisected the terrain past the suburbs. Alland, a high-tech planet, had no oceans and no forests.

It was Yanda's ritual to look out each morning toward the rising sun, in the direction where her six-year-old daughter Seiti lived, raised by Omshi and Nedri as well. She called them gramma and grampa.

Aching for the weekend, when she would ride the rail home and hold her little girl in her arms, Yanda pulled her satchel onto her shoulder and left her apartment, catching the sky-tube one floor down. Other tubes snaked between the high buildings, and, far below, Yanda saw through clear plaz, streets teaming with early

morning workers like disturbed insect nests.

She unlocked her office door, barely registering the name plate, "Dr. Yanda Selkeden" – a source of immense pride a few years back, now starting to fill her with doubt. She hardly saw the day to day changes her daughter was going through. It was healthier, she told herself, for Seiti to grow up in the country with other children, a family. The air was cleaner there. The usual sadness and doubt about spending so much time away from her young daughter gripped her but she shoved it down, not ready to throw away her ambitions of a high-status career.

Inside her office, Yanda waved the transparent panel over her desk into life and checked her schedule. Nearly a half hour 'til surgery. Time for a hot cup of stimulating *cuffa*. She slipped into her medical coat, leaving her bright sweater in the closet.

The dining hall was abuzz with activity.

"Selky!" A woman of indiscernible age and springy orange hair called Yanda's nickname, waving from a table near the windows.

Yanda signaled back, purchased her stimulant and made her way across to join the other woman. "Gotta be quick." She dropped into a seat, blew on her drink, and took a tentative sip.

"You have a heart surgery, don't you? The one no one else'll touch?" Celly was a masterful plastic surgeon.

"It's a tricky one. I've studied the scans and just can't tell what's eluding us."

"Not a good one for robotic surgery?"

"Apparently not. Boss Konkle called it." Yanda had a niggling suspicion the head of the department might have set her up to finally catch her using powers during surgery. But this was probably just paranoia. There had been questions here and there as she moved up the surgery ranks swiftly. Why did she seem to see things others did not? That sort of question.

"Well then," Celly conceded as she broke off a corner of her breakfast pastry and popped it in her mouth. "Guess that takes care of it."

Yanda gulped the rest of her beverage and stood. "Time to scrub in."



Poor Joe Hoskins, bellhop at a local hotel, was slipping away. Without thinking, Yanda slid her mind down through the layers and swiftly mended the man's heart, making healthy what was blocked, torn, ruptured. She glanced at the monitors. Vital signs had improved.

Her shoulders ached. She'd tried to stick to standard procedure, but she was losing him. Instinct had taken over. Sweat trickled down her hairline and into one ear, making her shiver as it tickled, unable to remedy it with gloved hands. She looked around at her surgical team. Mind-powers were not credited on this planet. Worse than that, use of them would be grounds for dismissal. So far, with discretion, Yanda had managed to use her ability without being caught. But she'd never gone this far. "It's done."

Her team stared at her, then began to close the man's chest. Vital signs were strong now.

Letting out a long breath, she set instruments on a tray and walked from the surgery. As she stood at the sanitizer, several of her colleagues approached.

"I didn't see how you solved it," Arjan exclaimed.

"It was in a tricky spot. I had to take a chance." When would they open up to *other* practices so she could explain honestly, without fear of reprisal from the magic-hunters? Though some of what she'd done, she couldn't explain herself.

This planet had gone through purges until all unique abilities had been driven underground. Yanda had never found any text that spoke of powers such as hers, to see through.

"Magnificent. You have some eyes," said her assisting surgeon.

Yanda suddenly stumbled and wrapped her hands around the edge of the sink to catch her balance, her head pounding.

"Are you alright?" someone put a hand under her elbow.

Her world turned into confusion as a voice thrummed inside her head. She looked around and gave a shaky smile to the small group facing her. "I'm going to lie down in my office."

Her friend, Magali, a fellow surgeon who'd been watching from the viewing room, touched her shoulder in sympathy. "Yeah, that was intense. Great job."

Something was distancing her from those around her, like a swarm of buzzing insects in her head. She slipped away before she acted more strangely.

Inside her office, Yanda locked the door and flung herself on the couch. But a moment later she rose, pulled her satchel from a drawer, changed into her street clothes, locked the door, and hurried down the hall. She searched the empty corridor to make sure she was not followed, then stepped into the lift and punched in the sub-level that connected to the spaceport by an underground tube. A force drew her there and she couldn't seem to fight it or think for herself.

The swarm grew louder in her head. The only clear thought was, "Book passage on the Lark." The rest of her mind seemed asleep. Only the faintest voice deep in her mind panicked as her feet took her along the bright tiled corridors flickering with messages and images. She navigated a maze of *move-walks*, and infallibly arrived at a counter announcing the imminent departure of the Lark. When she showed her ID, she was waved through, no questions. No payment.

"No payment?"

"It's covered."

*That should bother me.* The thought did not rise up to real consciousness.

Robotic attendants settled her in a private cabin with a stasis-bed.

# Chapter 1

Coming to, Yanda felt nauseous. Raising her hands to rub bleary eyes, she realized she was shackled, wrists and ankles. She writhed, clawing at the metal band that circled her neck as panic surged through her.

Then she noticed something else. Her abilities were gone. She could not see through anything. It made her feel smothered, closed in. She couldn't seem to think clearly. How had she gotten there? Her past seemed to start in that room. Who was she?

Two beings with the Lark insignia on their uniforms escorted her—none too gently—from the ship. She was vaguely aware of boarding an aircart and shooting through tubes, traveling between domes with occasional clear panels giving her glimpses of darkness outside and several moons. Night? A bleak place, it appeared. By the domes, tube travel, and lack of plant life, she suspected no atmosphere. For the first time in her life, she could not see through walls. Perhaps the metal clamped around her neck dampened her ability? It felt suffocating.

The transport stopped and lowered to the concrete between similar shuttles. An auto-door shfff'ed open and her escorts' gloved hands locked on her arms as they entered a hall illuminated by dim floor and ceiling lights.

Yanda's eyes widened as they passed caged humans and other human-like beings of varied appearances, one, two, three... She thought she counted nine. Their eyes followed her.

The uniformed escorts shoved her into the last barred cell. When the enclosure sealed, they left. Yanda stood in the center of the small enclosure and felt for her ID, comm unit, money. Nothing. Wobbly, she collapsed onto a hard narrow bed at the side, dropped her head against the wall and closed her eyes.

"What name haff you?"

A tall, thin creature—Yanda thought female—peered through the bars from the cell across from hers. In the low lighting, Yanda made out what appeared to be feathered skin.

“I’m Yanda.” So she did know her name. At least she remembered that much. She stayed seated, feeling ill. “You?”

“I person Aktat” The bird-woman—a Jejod, Yanda thought—spoke with clicking noises, pressing a long, bony hand to her chest.

Yanda had read of the Jejod but they’d seemed mythical. The female must be seven feet tall since she had to nearly double over to look through the bars. The creature did a series of acrobatic moves, rolling, swinging off the bars and landing on her bed mat where she proceeded to do push-ups, planks and other exercises, confirming Yanda’s suspicion that the tall being must feel constricted by the small space.

# About the Author



*Marie Judson*, a Northern California native, is an avid fantasy and sci fi reader herself. She's been a coffee roaster, a high school teacher and a college professor. Find her blog and more of her books at:

[www.mariejudson.com](http://www.mariejudson.com)