



GILL LEWIS

THE ISLAND VET

The Winter Snow Goose

Illustrated by
IRINA
AVGUSTINOVICH

The Winter Snow Goose

ALSO BY GILL LEWIS:

Island Vet 1: Pirates and Sea Monsters

Island Vet 2: Rescue at Seal Bay

Island Vet 3: Devil Bird Island



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IRINA AVGUSTINOVICH

For Jen

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GANNET CRAG

WEST HAVEN

Lighthouse

Dolphin Cove

GULL HAVEN

Seal Bay

Eagle Crag

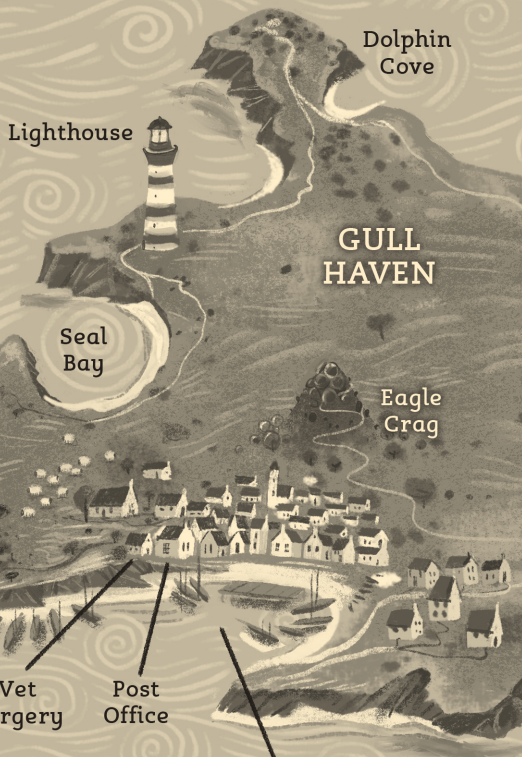
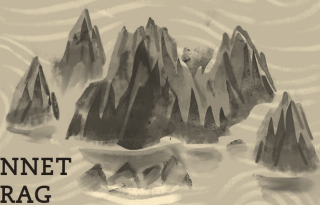
Vet
Surgery

Post
Office

Harbour

Sharks' Teeth
Rocks

SEAL HAVEN



DEVIL BIRD
ISLAND

Shell
Bay

Campsite

EAST HAVEN





CHAPTER 1

Pinkies

Tia was bored.

It was raining again.

It had rained for days.

Summer had ended. All the people who'd been on holiday had gone back home.

The people who lived on the Haven Islands all year round, like Tia, were getting ready for the winter.

Tia yawned. "I'm so bored. I miss the summer."

Tia had moved to the Haven Islands with her mum nearly a year ago. They lived on the main island called Gull Haven. This would be their first winter.

Tia knew everyone on Gull Haven. She was inside the post-office shop with Peggy, the post lady. Norman, Peggy's dog, was lying by the door looking out at the rain.

Norman yawned too.

"Even Norman's bored," said Tia. "He misses all the holidaymakers."

Peggy pulled a cardboard box from underneath the counter. "I've been having a clear-out of things that haven't sold this summer. Have a look in the box and see if there's anything you'd like."

Tia peered in and pulled out a cracked mug, a china mermaid with a broken tail and a bouncy ball that didn't bounce. Then she pulled out a package that was ripped and dented. There wasn't a label, so Tia looked inside. There were six tubes of paint.

"Oh, you might like to take those home," said Peggy. "You can paint on glass with them."

"Thank you," said Tia. "I've never had glass paints before."

Just then, Nat came in with Guzzler. Nat was Tia's best friend and Guzzler was Nat's dog.

"I'm so bored," said Nat. "There's nothing to do."

"Not you as well!" said Peggy. "Why don't you both go for a walk and get some fresh air?"

Nat nodded. "I think Guzzler needs a run."

Tia pulled on her coat. "Come on, Norman. Let's go too," she said. She put the paints in the deep pocket of her coat. "Thank you for the paints, Peggy."

The wind whipped around Tia and Nat as they walked out of the village. Ahead, Tia spotted her mum in a field checking some sheep that had been herded into a pen. Her mum was the island vet and Tia loved helping her with the animals.

Tia waved to her mum. "What's the matter with the sheep?" she called.

"Nothing," said Mum. "I'm giving them a health check for Farmer Thomas before they go and spend the winter on East Haven. There's more grass for them over there. But I need to check they will be fit for the winter."

"I've never been to East Haven," said Tia.

“It’s a nature reserve, isn’t it?” said Nat.
“I’d love to go.”

Farmer Thomas smiled. “Do you want
to come with me when I take the sheep over?
I need some help.”



“Yes, please,” said Tia and Nat together.
They both loved exploring new places.

“Woof!” said Norman, who didn’t want to stand around any longer.

“Come on,” said Tia.

They walked along the path above the cliffs. It was late afternoon and the rain had stopped at last. The sun was sinking lower in the sky.

The days were becoming shorter and Tia missed the long summer evenings. She felt sad because all the seabirds had gone back out to sea. She had to wait for the spring to see them come back to lay their eggs on the cliffs and raise their chicks again.

Nat’s dad was walking along the path too. He had his binoculars and he was looking out to sea. Nat’s dad was the wildlife ranger for the islands.

“Look,” he said to Tia and Nat, and pointed into the sky. “There’s a swallow. I think it might be the last one. The rest have already flown south on their migration.”

“The last swallow,” said Tia sadly. She could see its pointed wings and long forked tail. She watched it zip through the air and vanish into the distance.

A gust of wind pulled the last leaves from a tree.

“Everything is changing, Nat.” Tia tried not to cry but she couldn’t stop tears running down her face. “Everything is leaving us.”

“Not everything,” smiled Nat’s dad. “Come with me up onto the top of Eagle Crag.”

“What for?” asked Tia.

“Wait and see,” he said. “If we’re lucky, we’ll see something you’ll never forget.”

Tia and Nat, Norman and Guzzler climbed up to Eagle Crag with Nat's dad. From there you could see the other islands and far into the distance. There was a footpath all the way up. The top was flat with stone seats for people to sit and look at the view.

"Wow!" said Nat, looking around. "This view is amazing!"

"I can see my house," said Tia. She pointed to the vet hospital down by the harbour. The lights were coming on in the houses and the town looked pretty in the darkening sky.

"What did you want to show us?" asked Nat.

"Just wait," said Nat's dad. "Keep looking into the sky over there."

Tia sat on one of the stone seats and pulled her coat around her to keep warm.

"Look!" said Nat. "What are those?"

Tia looked too and she could see some specks in the sky in the far distance. They were birds flying in a V shape towards the islands. They were coming closer. Then there were more of them.





There were so many birds filling the sky. As they got nearer, Tia could hear the beating of their wings and their honking calls. They were large brown birds with pink feet.

“They’re pink-footed geese. People call them pinkies for short,” said Nat’s dad. “They come from the far north. I’ve seen a few arrive already. I’m sure others are on their way. They will stay with us for the winter on East Haven and graze in the fields. In the spring, they’ll fly back north again.”

Tia watched the geese. They flew in a circle above Eagle Crag. There were all calling to each other. *How far have they flown?* she thought to herself. *And what stories could they tell about their travels?*

As the sun set, Tia and Nat watched the geese fly down and settle on East Haven Island, safe for the winter.

Change was happening. Darker nights were coming.

But now Tia was excited by all the wonderful things that winter might bring.