

*the Legacy*

M I C H A E L  
P H I L L I P S



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This is a series about generational legacies, those that extend in both directions. As I have written these stories, my thoughts have been filled with influences that have come down to me from my own parents and grandparents and ancestors even further back, including their Quaker heritage. And I am constantly reminded of those who have followed, namely Judy's and my sons and grandchildren, and whatever my life has been and will be capable of passing on to them.

More than two decades ago I dedicated books of a series to our three sons. They were young, and my father's heart was filled with visions of the years ahead we would share together. Now they are grown men. Whatever legacy a father is able to pass on to his sons looks much different to me at today's more mature vantage point from which to assess life's unfolding and progressive journey—both mine and theirs.

Therefore, to our three sons and the men of spiritual stature they have each become, I gratefully and lovingly dedicate the volumes of this series.

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*the Legacy*

to

Gregory Erich Phillips

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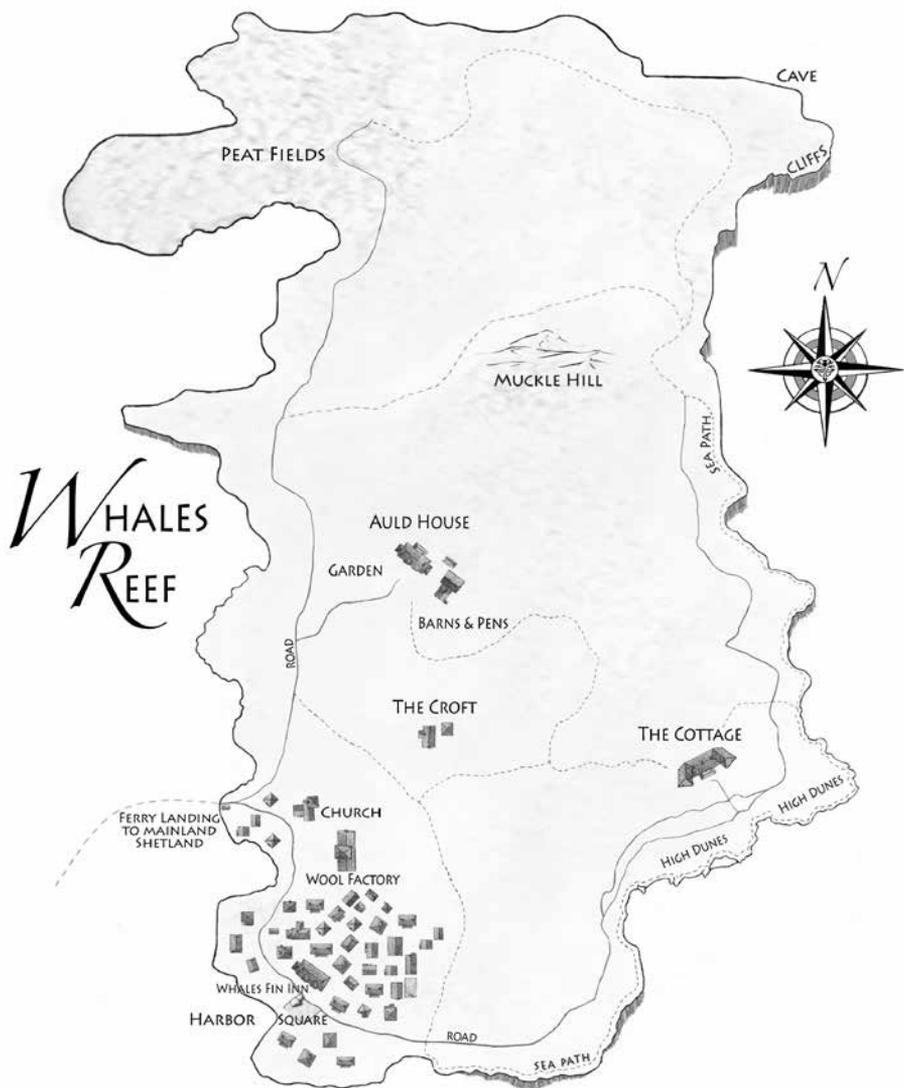
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PART **1**





# The Laird

AUGUST 2006

WHALES REEF, SHETLAND ISLANDS

Loni Ford, heiress to most of the land surrounding her on this remote island in the Shetlands, set down the book in her lap and breathed deeply of the fresh morning air.

The unbelievable change that had come to her life began two months ago with the fateful letter from Shetland solicitor Jason MacNaughton.

*Dear Miss Ford, she had read,*

*Last year in the small Scottish fishing village of Whales Reef in the Shetland Islands, Mr. Macgregor Tulloch passed away leaving no will and no immediate family. After an exhaustive search . . . we finally have been able to locate . . . you as the closest living heir to Mr. Tulloch's estate.*

The last thing Loni had expected was for the island and village of Whales Reef to exercise such magic upon her that she would fall

in love with them. The contrast could not have been greater between her fast-paced life in Washington, D.C., and the peaceful setting in which she now found herself.

As she explored the island and met villagers and familiarized herself with the Cottage, discovering books and heirlooms and photographs, Loni slowly found new places coming to life within her. The land and surroundings, the people and history, the traditional Scottish music, even such simple things as plaids and tartans and oatcakes, tugged at her soul with emotions altogether new. She had grown up knowing almost nothing about her roots. Suddenly she had more family connections than she knew what to do with.

From the antipathy in which she was held at first by those who considered her an American usurper to old Macgregor's inheritance, gradually the people of the island warmed to her presence. They began greeting her with smiles and bows and curtsies. She stood nearly a head taller than all the women, and several inches above most of the men of the island. What could be more logical in their legend-steeped minds than that she was an ancient Norse goddess or Scottish queen, the Auld Tulloch's long-lost heir in whom the Scots and Norse strains had come to rest? They invited her into their homes for simple meals around peat fires and tea made the old-fashioned way, with water boiled in a black kettle hanging from an iron hook in the fireplace. They told stories of the old times, about grandparents and aunts and uncles and dead bodies and hidden rooms and legends. Each contributed its share in beguiling Loni into the complex tapestry of island life.

Perhaps most surprising, after a rocky start, Loni's perceptions about clan chief David Tulloch became more personal. The whole island now suspected how things stood between their new American laird and their chief.

Loni smiled at the thought. During those first days with David, she had made a fool of herself more than once. Yet their relationship had blossomed like a slowly unfolding flower of subtle hues.

She glanced down at the heather and wool ring on her right hand. Did she dare hope it signified more than mere friendship?

Now here she was calling the island Cottage "home," while her modern apartment in Washington, D.C., sat vacant, and her office on the seventh floor of the prestigious Capital Towers building was occupied by a temp who had taken her place as Maddy's assistant.

The only question now was, how long would the fairy tale last? What lay over the horizon of her future? What *would* she do about her job in D.C.? Could she find a way to balance her life *there* and her life *here* as the new “laird” of Whales Reef? For a few more days at least, Loni was content to live in the glow of the dream.

She had grown to love every inch of this small island in the North Atlantic. She had adopted David’s custom of starting each day walking its bluffs and moors and coastlines. The two did not often encounter each other during their solitary morning rambles, though each occupied the other’s thoughts. David’s early excursions from the Auld Hoose on the other side of the island had usually concluded before hers began. The sea air had not succeeded in making her quite such an early riser as he.

Her favorite place to come and read, when it was not too cold, was the large flat rock on which she now sat, mostly sunk into the peat turf of the surrounding landscape.

She looked about . . . quietly, peacefully, drawing in several long draughts of the crisp morning air, then returned her attention to the book in her lap. She smiled as she remembered opening it a month before to see in careful script, *The Journal of Emily Hanson*. On the next page were the words with which Emily had begun her tale so long ago.

*I am so excited! A month ago I learned of an opportunity to travel to the Shetland Islands . . .*

How different, Loni thought, from her own first thoughts of coming here. She was discovering every day how similar she and her great-grandmother actually were, and how parallel had been their sojourns in this place.

Her thoughts drifted back in time to her great-grandmother’s unlikely adventure.



## Exciting Opportunity

JUNE 1924

NEW YORK HARBOR

NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

A young woman stood at the rail of the Norwegian ocean liner *Viking Queen*. Her final good-byes said, Emily Hanson thought fondly of her farewell three days earlier with the dear woman who had helped make this trip possible.

“Good-bye, Grandma,” said Emily. “This would not be happening without you.”

“You just have the time of your life in Scotland,” replied Grandma Hanson with a hug and a smile. “And don’t forget to write down everything,” she added, pointing to the wrapped package in Emily’s hand. “Remember what I told you about when I was your age. This next month will change your life.”

“Thank you, Grandma. I will remember.”

Emily knew she was not the adventurous type. But this was a rare opportunity such as might never come again. She was determined to make the most of it. When the dean of her college told her about travel-

ing to the Shetland Islands as a companion for her aunt, Emily knew immediately that the main objection would come from her father.

“My father is planning for me to spend the summer with my elderly grandmother,” she told Dean Wilson. “She lives only three miles from us in Burlington. He feels that she should no longer live alone, that she needs someone with her.”

“Ah, yes . . . I see,” replied the dean. “Well, family concerns always weigh in the balance. However, you will discuss the trip with them?”

“Of course. And my mother can be very persuasive,” Emily added with an inward smile.

Tingling with excitement, Emily telephoned her parents that same evening. The moment she heard of it, Emily’s mother had no intention of allowing anything to stand in the way of such an opportunity. Discussions and plans followed, as did a meeting between Emily and Dean Wilson’s aunt, Harriett Barnes.

All that remained was for Emily to apply for a passport. An experienced traveler, Mrs. Barnes took everything in hand and saw to all the necessary arrangements.

“I know you will take good care of our daughter, Harriett,” said Mrs. Hanson, shaking the hand of Emily’s temporary guardian one last time before the older woman left the three Hansons alone beside the ship for their final good-byes.

“I will, Amelia,” replied Mrs. Barnes with a twinkle in her eye. “But don’t forget, it is Emily who is supposed to be taking care of me!”

“From what short time we have known one another, I have the feeling you can take care of yourself.”

Mrs. Barnes laughed. “You are right. There is not much I haven’t seen in my years of travel. I am just glad to have Emily with me. She is a delightful young lady. I anticipate that we will become great friends.”