

THE BRECKONWOOD  CHRONICLES

THE EYE OF LARILOTH



GRACE EGERT
DIANN & MILLS

THE EYE OF LARILOTH

Book 1
The Breckonwood Chronicles

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and
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The Eye of Lariloth: Book 1 of The Breckonwood Chronicles
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*Eldar, our light, gives his words to the pathfinders
so all will come to know him.
—The Ancient Writings*

CHAPTER 1

Early morning before sun-up, I sneak away to the highest cliff on the outskirts of Breckonwood, and from the peaks I see pale shades of first light creeping across the early sky, deep-blues slowly painted in yellow light.

I long for adventure like dry earth craves water. It's who I am, determined and real. The lure of climbing the steep cliffs overlooking the Zollmad Sea is my joy. Twice I've attempted to tame a baby loom before it turns vicious. I've watched a serpent the size of two men consume another in a fight. If only I could fly, I'd explore the far corners of Breckonwood and all of Elysium—and all of Gaia beyond.

I try to put my wild thoughts aside, but they invade my mind during the day and my dreams at night. Sometimes it seems someone or something else is in control of me.

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Mama and Papa don't understand why I'm discontent living a simple life as a farmer's daughter. I try to please them, but my promises to them, and to myself, never seem to last.

Why do I yearn to return to this cliff when I know doing so directly disobeys my parents?

I close my eyes and let the sun warm my face. Many erstles pass, and I wish I could stay, but the sun is nearing the tops of the trees. The gathering has begun, and there is much to be done to prepare for the coming snows of the claiming season.

Dong...dong...dong...

I startle at the sound of the early bell, the call to break-the-fast. Have I tarried so long that Mama and Papa will discover I'm gone?

I take off running across the valley, hoping it's Mama ringing the bell and not Papa. Her scolding is less severe. Above me, the thunderous roar of dragon wings capture my attention. I slow to glimpse three flaming red teshuah dragons that are fearless and ridden into battle by Breckonwood warriors. Why are they here before the gathering is over?

I rush toward home, while my thoughts scramble with why fighting teshuah-warriors have come to the western province of Breckonwood.

A neighbor steps out from beneath the canopy of blue fern-like branches of a minness tree, a kindly man by the name of Carlton, who has silver hair and soft words. Often I pass him in the valley, where he walks his pet dragon, a docra, a sweet, honey-colored dragon. Before a word passes between us, we watch the teshuah dragons and their warriors circle above us.

"Too soon for them to take what we have," Carlton whispers as though the warriors in the sky can hear us.

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“Excuse me, child, for speaking my mind. King Breckon’s warriors must be searching for fahdar dragon eggs.”

“Mama and Papa say they are all to be destroyed, but how?”

“The warriors toss them into the sea for the ceamonos to eat. The Ancient Writings warn us about the dragons from these shells will rule all creatures.”

I shudder at the thought of a dragon that powerful. “I need to hurry home. The morning bell has already sounded once.”

“Then go. Be sure to tell your papa about the teshuah-warriors.”

“Yes, sir.” I thank him and race toward home. Up ahead I see Papa behind out home facing me and our valley. His hand wraps around the bell’s rope as though he plans to ring it again. The closer I get to him, the more the lines in his face deepen like a plowed field.

Papa is the strongest, wisest man in all of Breckonwood. His smile warms me, and I treasure his deep-throated chuckle, which is why I don’t like to disappoint him.

I hurry to Papa and stiffen my shoulders. I want to explain my actions, and I pray to Eldar for the right words. I face him and hide my hands within my tunic in case they tremble and reveal how nervous I am. He stands over me, six-bosks-tall compared to my four. At twelve seasons, I should be taller.

“Is being a farmer’s daughter so hard for you?” he says, sadness sweeping over his face. “You should have been helping your mama.”

“I’m sorry.”

“We warned you to stay away from the cliffs.” He places his hands on my shoulders, rough with calluses. “You are my

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straight arrow,” Papa says, reminding me of my name. “Your mama and I gave you a name that means ‘to see straight into the heart of Eldar.’”

“Yes, Papa.” My tongue drags over dry lips. Should I tell him? But I’m more afraid to learn the truth than of any punishment from papa.