



Broken Beyond Repair

WHAT ARE ANNALS?" Terell asked.
"They're like journals or archives, reporting on things that have happened over a period of time," Liddy answered matter of factly.

Terell shook his head. "Thanks, Miss Dictionary."

Ryann grinned at their banter. "You know, guys, this book could tell us something about the history of Aeliana."

"Let's take a look and see," Liddy said, moving in closer to Ryann's right side, while Terell moved in on the left. Daylight poured in from the entrance, providing more than enough light for them to see the decorative script as Ryann carefully turned the next page.

By authority of Aurelia, princess of the elven clan, as ordered by Aodan of Myraddin, these are the recordings of Inwë Silimaurë, scribe and keeper of the annals of Aeliana. No words may be taken away from this book, and new chapters may only be added through the testing by the fire of the Word most high.

Book Two—The Aodan Years

Chancellor Aodan was inaugurated in front of the Tree of Life upon the departure of Madawen, the first overseer of Aeliana. Madawen was called by the Word to set sail across the Morganwyn Sea with

fifty others, and to be fruitful and multiply in a new land. It was upon the watch of Aodan that darkness and death entered Aeliana, which is recorded in this book.

Liddy stopped reading. “Chancellor Aodan was the head of the high counsel when we were here, but I don’t recall Inwë.”

Ryann’s eyes grew wide. “Do you remember what Aodan told us the last time we were before the counsel? He was going to have Princess Aurelia’s elven clan record everything that had happened—in a book!”

“This must be the book!” Liddy squealed. “I can’t believe we’re actually holding it!”

“Ahem!”

Ryann and Liddy turned to face Terell. “Aren’t the two of you forgetting something?”

“What?” Ryann asked.

“I may not be the brains here,” Terell smiled, “but if she recorded what happened during Aodan’s life, then that means that the three of us should be in this book.”

“Genius!” Liddy squealed a second time. “Scan ahead and see, Ryann.”

Returning to the open book, Ryann moved his finger down the page. Seeing nothing, he flipped to the next pages and continued the effort. “It looks like the beginning is an account of Aodan’s rulings and decrees as the new leader.”

Liddy reached over. “Here, let me look.”

“Okay,” Ryann conceded as he moved it over to her lap, “I see someone’s a little impatient.”

Liddy flipped to the next page. “Here it is!”

“Hey, I was almost there,” Ryann said.

“No need to get upset,” Liddy grinned. “Okay, here I go.” She cleared her throat.

Raz the Raccoon and Esselyt the Leopard were the first to encounter the human boy from another land. His name was Ryann Watters and he hailed from Mount Dora, Florida. He was sent by the Archangel Gabriel and tasked with finding the King's sword. As proof of his calling, he had in his possession three gifts from the angel for assistance in his travels: a metal staff, a glowing ring, and an ancient horn.

As Liddy read further, her animated expressions made for an exciting recounting of Ryann's first visit to Aeliana. “Ooh, here comes the good part—when I come in!”

“Oh, brother,” Terell sighed. “I saw that coming.”

“Ahem!” Liddy cleared her throat again while lifting up her nose in a display of superiority. “And now, may I continue before I was so rudely interrupted?”

Terell shook his head. “Sure, whatever.”

Liddy tried to suppress her grin as she read about her first visit to Myraddin.

Upon his second visit, Ryann Watters returned with Lydia Thomas, also of Mount Dora. The two of them, along with Raz and Esselyt, attended the one hundred and forty-fourth feast of the Word at Myraddin. The truths from the Word are recorded in the Proclamations of the Feast by another scribe from our clan, Amroth Silimaurë.

Screeeech!

They jumped at the unexpected noise. Ryann swiveled like a gunfighter, pointing his staff toward the cave entrance. Liddy and Terell hunched over, low to the cave floor, behind him. Surprised by how quickly he moved, Ryann figured his reflexes from previous visits had returned. Creeping forward on his hands and knees, Ryann peered just outside the cave and scanned the skies for the creature that had emitted such a powerfully shriek.

“There!” Ryann whispered forcefully, pointing off to their left.

Large brown wings flapped in a heavy sweeping motion, propelling the creature away from them. The size of the wings seemed no match for the golden-brown body of a lion, to which they were attached.

Screeeech!

The winged lion turned its head to give them their first glimpse of its lion-sized eagle head. “If I have my mythological creatures correct,” Liddy whispered, “I believe it’s a griffin—half-bird, half-lion.”

“Whoa, I—I wouldn’t want to get in its way,” Terell said as the griffin flew away.

“Guys, check this out!” Ryann said, motioning them forward.

Liddy and Terell edged forward outside the shadows of the cave, stopping at Ryann’s outstretched arm. Together they glanced down in the direction he was looking.

“Ahh!” Terell gasped, backpedaling until he fell awkwardly on the ground. “I hate heights!”

Ryann and Liddy peered down to the sandy beach a hundred or so feet below them. Waves crashed onto the shoreline then flattened as the seawater ran up to the beach and immediately retreated backwards to start all over again. Looking up the cliff, the craggy rock face continued at least the same distance in the opposite direction.

“Now what?” Liddy asked, clutching the book to her side.