
Before Impression, Pt. 2

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2860.12.02 (Present)

The gentle nudge from Reshath's moist snout brought Consetta's thoughts back to the present. Slowly, she cast her teary gaze down to her green, and spotted Reshath's wide expressive eyes as they whirled softly in tones of green and marine blue. Consetta watched those magnificent faceted eyes as they gently swirled, and she felt herself become lost in the beautiful vast ocean within them. It was enough to captivate Consetta, and she felt herself fall in love once more with the young green dragonet.

Consetta pensively caressed Reshath's light green cheek, and noted every detail of her beloved dragonet as her hand continued down her soft, slender neck to her wing shoulders. With every loving stroke Consetta gave her, Reshath began to drift off, her eyelids closing one after another until she finally became lost in sleep.

A cautious inquiry trickled into the back of Consetta's thoughts. It was her firelizard, Polo, who timidly projected an image of his icy blue body edging ever so slightly next to her on the bench. Consetta realized it was his way of asking permission to finally join her after she previously demanded that he remain in the candidate barracks for the Hatching. She laughed to herself.

'You can come here, Polo,' her thoughts whispered to him. She felt the little blue respond jubilantly.

A strong sensation of awe projected from Polo when he appeared above her and landed delicately on her shoulder. Once his eyes found Reshath, his gaze never left her.

Consetta felt Polo's confusion fill her thoughts as he watched Reshath inquisitively. He made a chirp that accentuated his perplexity before he turned back to Consetta for answers.

"Her name is Reshath, Love. She's family now," Consetta attempted to explain to the little blue.

He responded with a trill, his green eyes growing wide with curiosity; then he stepped closer towards Reshath. He slid down from Consetta shoulder down her chest until he was on Consetta's lap right next to the huge head of the dragonet. He gave Reshath inspecting sniffs here and there, almost as if he were testing her before he gave her a loving lick and curled into a tight ball next to her.

Consetta was happy to see he approved.



2860.08.05- Porlian Seahold

It did not take Consetta long to discover the infection that was building in Ornia after thirty-four hours of intense labor. It was the smell that passed her nose, a scent that imitated spoiled milk, that gave away the danger that was beginning to brew within Ornia. When Consetta pressed her hand on Ornia's damp forehead, she pulled away quickly as if she had burned her hand on a fire. Ornia was becoming feverish.

"Polo," she called to the small firelizard.

He dropped down from the shelf that he had perched on, and glided agilely to her shoulder.

Consetta watched Polo intensely as her mind gave him the order to go find her mother. She projected the image of the familiar woman with her dark hair tied up in a rude knot, and attached a sense of urgency to her.

He gave a chirp before he dropped off her shoulder and jumped *between* to find Linetta.

Hopefully he would return shortly, Consetta wished to herself.

Ornia called out with another delirious moan, and Consetta stepped back to her bedside in response. It seemed Ornia's fever was getting worse, or at least that was what Consetta feared was happening, and when Consetta placed her hand once more on Ornia's sweltering forehead her fear was confirmed. Again, she hoped for Polo's quick return.

"Consetta?" A muffled voice from the door called to her.

"Good," Consetta murmured to herself in relief. She turned her eyes to the doorway, partially expecting to see her mother, but instead she caught sight of her cousin, Brinedette. "Oh."

Brinedette entered into the room, and closed the door behind her. "How is she doing?"

Consetta turned back to Ornia resting in bed. The woman did not seem very coherent. "She's not doing well," Consetta began in a soft whisper. "I think she might have an infection."

A look of concern shadowed Brinedette's face. "Are you certain?"

Consetta nodded somberly. "Unfortunately, yes. I've already sent Polo out for my mother."

Brinedette peered past Consetta to Ornia. "All right then, I'll take over from here."

"What?" Consetta responded in confusion. "But you aren't supposed to relieve me for another hour."

Brinedette turned away to the window, her dark fierce glare staring at something outside. "Well, apparently you're needed elsewhere," she replied in a sour tone.

The first thing that manifested in Consetta's mind was that she had somehow managed to get herself into trouble. "Why? Did I do something wrong?"

"No, but your presence is requested out in the courtyard." Brinedette turned back to Consetta. "There are two dragonriders here on Search, and they're demanding that everyone of age 'come forth.'" She said "demanding" with an emphasis that suggested she was insulted by the riders' request.

Careful not to let her countenance betray her to Brinedette, Consetta displayed an expression of melancholy

to her cousin, but internally she felt as if she were flying. "Very well, then," she answered in an even tone. Once she turned away from Brinedette, and stepped out of the door, she began to grin excitedly.

It was difficult for Consetta to keep herself from dashing down the hallway, but she did maintain a brisk pace as she left the cot and marched down the path to the courtyard where two dragons, one blue and one green, awaited those that were eligible for Search. It was not the first time Consetta had been called to attend a Search, which she failed every time, but that did not prevent her hopes from rising every time they came, and wishing that this time would be different.

As she approached the line of hopefuls, Consetta found herself beguiled by the two dragons. The green stood alongside the blue, her head swaying back and forth languidly, while the blue rested calmly, his faceted eyes watching the line of potentials. So beautiful, so elegant. It was enough to make her stop in her tracks as she gazed up at them, their rich hides glistening in the sun that peeked through the clouds.

The hold Steward called out to her impatiently, grabbing her attention away forcefully from the dragons. "You," he pointed a rigid finger at her, while his eyes fastened on her. "Get in line. You're slowing everything down."

Consetta meekly did as she was told, and nearly stumbled as she found a place among the others.

It felt like forever as Consetta stood there waiting for the riders to approach. As she waited she turned her gaze to the dragons as they stood there watching. The green's gaze traveled down the line of candidates, her eyes whirling slightly as the head followed the line of young men and women. For a brief moment, Consetta could have sworn the green lingered on her, the dragon's blue faceted eyes watching her steadily before they blinked and moved on.

The blue dragon did much the same. Once he surveyed her, he craned his neck back to the green and then continued his gaze down the line of potentials.

"Name and age please," the bluerider requested of her.

So focused on the dragons, Consetta did not realize the rider was standing there next to her, and she was startled when he spoke. Quickly she responded. "Consetta, and I'm seventeen."

He wrote her information down quickly before he looked back up at her and gave her a polite smile. Then he moved on down the line.

And that was that.

Consetta felt a little disappointed, but at the same time, what did she expect? It was a Search after all, and chances were slim to none that she would ever hear back from the Weyr, especially after all those other failed Searches. After a defeated sigh, Consetta made her way soberly to Ornia's cot, where the Search was of small importance. Instead she brought her mind back to the issue at hand, and pushed away any remaining hopes of Search or Impression.



2860.08.08- Porlian Seahold

Consetta's anxiety threatened to strangle the tears out of her as she sat stunned on her office stool and stared at Daret. "You're moving up the wedding?"

"Yes," he nodded with a wide smile and took her hand. "I mean, we've done so well, and I thought it would be best."

"But," Consetta held back the cries that longed to flow from her. "You promised to wait until midsummer."

A shadow of dejection crossed Daret. "You're upset."

"Of course I'm upset." A tear finally fell and she averted her gaze to the floor. "You promised to wait until summer."

"But it's months away." He wiped the tears off her cheek and lifted her chin so that she could face him. "Besides, I thought Spring would be a better time of Turn. With the flowers blossoming and all, and that gown that you'll be wearing, I thought it would be more memorable for the both of us if it were in Spring." He leaned in to kiss her, but Consetta turned away and slipped off the stool. "Consetta." His voice altered into its firmer tone of irritation and impatience. "Why are you being like this?"

Consetta was hesitant at first to answer him as she walked over to the table that Polo was sprawled out on. Instead, she stroked her firelizard's soft blue hide as she tried to think of how to respond.

"Consetta?" he asked again when she did not reply.

"I..." She tried to speak, but she could not come up with a way to answer him that would not anger him. She was tempted to be truthful with the man, to just come out and say it was him. She felt no attraction for Daret whatsoever, and just the thought of sharing his bed made her recoil in disgust. Trapped, and fearful of what he would say or do if she told him the truth, Consetta felt cornered, and through her sobs of helplessness that began to escape her, Consetta was barely able to say, "I don't know." But she knew, she knew very well why she dreaded her marriage to the man.

"It'll be all right, Consetta," he whispered to her. He took her into his arms and buried his lips in her hair. "I promise you that you'll love the wedding. Spring is a great time to be married." He slipped his hand along her jaw and lifted her gaze to him.

She did not resist.

He looked at her and pushed back her loose strands of hair, and his eyes wandered over her face. "You're going to be so beautiful," he spoke with awe before he gave her a warm smile and chuckled. "Not that you're not beautiful already."

Consetta wanted to turn away from him, but she did not fight when he did finally place a tender kiss on her lips. She closed her eyes, and tried her best to imagine Taldin so that she would not be completely repulsed by Daret, but when she tasted the foulness of his breath, it became enough for Consetta to pull away.

"What is it?"

"Nothing," Consetta smiled back, covering her distaste for him. "I just need to get back to work." She motioned to the herbs that she was originally tying up to be dried, before he interrupted her.

He gave a glance to the small pile of greenery. "Very well then," he responded and brushed against her forehead with his lips. "After dinner, I'll see you tonight, and we'll tell our families about our plans."

'You mean your plans,' she thought, but she still managed to force a smile on her face for Daret. "Thank you."

Once Daret left, Consetta turned back to her work, placing herself back on the stool so that she could tie what was left of the featherferns. She felt numb as she wrapped the string around the stems. Then slowly from the void of despair, Consetta began to weep. It was in this moment that Consetta felt lost and forlorn just as she had so many times before in the recent months, yet her pain hurt all the same.



2860.08.09- Porlian Seahold

It was mid afternoon, and Consetta was assisting her mother with a woman who was laboring prematurely. So when Consetta received word that she was to report to Seaholder Normellis's office, she did not know what to do.

"You shouldn't keep the Seaholder waiting when he sends for you," Linetta answered Consetta's unspoken question.

Consetta nodded in agreement.

"Go," Linetta wave her off. "I'll have Brinedette take your place while you're gone."

"Thank you," she replied. On her way out she reached for Polo, who was perched on the edge of a dresser, and placed him around her neck before she continued onward to Normellis's office.



Consetta did not even knock on the Seaholder's door before he gave her permission to come in. Timidly, she entered into his office and closed the door behind her, and humbly waited for him to speak.

"Well," he began in his rough, aged tenor voice. "I guess I'll just get right down to it." He placed a piece of folded paper onto his desk and rested his gnarled hands on top of it. "It has come to my attention that you've an important decision to make today. On one side, you have your place in the hold, your family, and, of course, your marriage to Daret."

Consetta remained silent.

Normellis's eyes watched her steadily for a moment until he continued. "On the other side however, there is this." He took the folded piece of paper from his table and handed it to her. "It appears that Weyrwoman Lybelle thinks you might be dragonrider material."

At first, Consetta was not sure she heard the Seaholder correctly. She opened the piece of paper and began to read it. Her eyes ran through the note once, and then a second time. Then, slowly Consetta began to feel the darkness that had consumed her over the past months disappear. For the first time since her engagement to Daret was declared, Consetta felt hope again. "Me?" she stammered in disbelief. "I've been Searched?"

Normellis muttered something under his breath that Consetta did not catch before he answered. "It looks that way, doesn't it?" He replied impatiently.

Before Normellis could officially ask her whether she accepted Kadanzer Weyr's invitation, Consetta already knew her answer. All her life she had longed for the moment when a dragon would find her on Search. To her, it was the freedom that she had sought her whole life. To her, nothing could compare to the freedom she could achieve on dragon wings. As a rider, no one would pressure her into marriage to a man she did not want to be with, and she would no longer be bound to the hold. She could see the world, and she could be the woman that she, Consetta, was meant to be rather than be molded by the tradition that had governed the Holds for thousands of Turns before her. As a rider, Consetta would be free.

When she opened her mouth to give him her answer, he raised his hand to stop her. "Let me finish before you go spouting off an answer with that impulsive mouth of yours, girl," he snapped back.

Consetta quickly shut her mouth, though she was still eager to give him her answer.

"Now, before you say yes, which I know you will--" He eyed her pointedly "--I want you to know what you're getting yourself into, and understand that there will be consequences if you say yes. I give this speech to everyone who is Searched from his Hold. I gave it to your cousin, Nidanna, who, like the wherry fool that she was, went anyway. I gave this speech to your cousin, Brinedette, who had the wits about her to stay, and I gave this speech to your mother long before she married your father and left for the Healer Hall, and like Brinedette, she was also smart enough to say 'no' to the Weyr."

This caught Consetta off-guard. "My mother was Searched?"

"It's what I said, isn't it?" He replied sharply. A scowl pulled at the creases of his weathered face while his heavy brow furrowed. "As I said, you're too quick, and you make assumptions. I've seen your type before, time and time again. You've romanticized the ways of the Weyr. Handsome riders, dragons, freedom to do as you please." His final comment dripped with disgust. "You pathetically naive little girl."

Consetta stiffened and Polo's eyes flared into pieces of ember. "I am not naive. I'm not blind to what the Weyr is."

"I want to believe that," Normellis replied. "And I want to believe that you'll honor your mother, and your family, especially your father."

Consetta rested her hand on the pocket that contained her deceased father's journeyman knots. Never once had she thought about what he would think of all of this. Would it be a dishonor to her father and his memory if she left for Kadanzer Weyr? She contemplated this as Normellis continued on.

"I want to believe that you've inherited your family's more admirable qualities, and that you've the wits about you to know the dangers of the Weyr, but one thing I can assure myself is that the tainted ways of the Weyr will never reach this hold." Slowly Normellis stood to his feet and made his way around his desk to face her. "If you choose to go to the

Weyr to fulfill this ridiculous fantasy of yours, you can never return."

Consetta was astonished at first by his ultimatum, but then she began to feel the tumult of outrage rise within her. With her feelings of indignation, Consetta's normal reservations began to disappear in place of rage and fury. "And what if I don't Impress?"

"Well now, that's the real question, isn't it?" His challenging, icy eyes met hers. "As I said before, I will not allow the filth of the Weyr to infest my Hold. If you leave for the Weyr, there is no turning back. You will never see your family or your friends ever again. Do you want that?"

"No," Consetta replied as she fought her tears of anger. But then through the confusion of her fury and helplessness, a moment of clarity overcame her. Her father and her family had nothing to do with his.

Normellis was trying to manipulate her. He was trying to make her choose the Hold. Whether it was because she was of some value to his hold, or he simply had a hatred of the Weyr, which Consetta strongly suspected the latter, he wanted Consetta to say no. Consetta, however, would not give him the pleasure.

And what of her family? She did love her family dearly, especially her mother, her father, her brother, and her sister, but Consetta knew her place was not in the hold. Besides, if her father had been alive, Consetta knew he would understand her decision to leave, and he would never manipulate her choice like Normellis tried to do.

"That's what I thought," Normellis nodded to Consetta's last verbal answer. "So I guess it's settled then." He turned around back to his seat. "I wish you luck on your marriage to Daret, Consetta, and don't worry. I'll send word to the Weyr that you will not be attending Orylath's Hatching."

"I'm going."

Normellis paused before he reached his seat, but he did not face her. "I thought it was decided—"

"No, you decided, but I am going."

Slowly, he turned around and eyed her dangerously. "Do you understand what you're saying?"

"Yes," she replied with as much confidence as she could muster under his hard, dominating glare.

"And you are willing to never see your family, ever?"

She remained firm with her decision, but her voice quivered with great regret that she would be exiled from Porlian, never to see her mother, her siblings, or her family ever again.

Normellis peered at Consetta, scrutinizing her with his narrow eyes, but then he turned away from her, and motioned for her to leave. "Very well then. I will send word for the Weyr to retrieve you this evening. You may leave now."

A deadness swept through Consetta as the decision was finalized. She knew part of her was jubilant for making the decision to leave, but she could not feel it. Instead all she felt was the sorrow of her impending departure, and that the next few hours would be her last with her family.



Their early dinner was long and silent for Consetta. She sat quietly and sipped her soup with her family. Consetta's

aunt and uncle, Lanala and Garridet, along with Brinedette and her husband, never cast even a single glance at her, and once dinner was over they offered their shallow farewells and departed.

After their callous display, Consetta no longer cared if she never saw Brinedette, Lanala or Garridet ever again. They could go *between* for all she cared after they shut the door behind them. She felt foolish to have thought that they would at least remain loyal to her, but now she knew better. They did not even bother to stay for the special dessert that her mother had toiled over.

Now it was only the four of them. Consetta glanced from her mother over to her young adolescent sister, Mira, and her little brother Casin. Mira seemed to avoid her gaze, while Casin watched her intensely with his awe-stricken, familiar gray eyes.

"Are you really going to go to the Weyr to become a dragonrider?" the little boy asked eagerly. He had not even touched his bubbly pie yet.

Consetta beamed down at the boy. At least Casin was not ashamed to show that he still loved her. "That's what I'm going to try to do, Casin," she replied honestly before she looked back to Mira.

The girl poked at her food with little interest and a morose countenance.

"Mira?" she said to her sister.

Mira did not bother to respond. Instead, she stood up from the table and marched into the family sleeping quarters, slamming the door behind her.

With concern, Consetta turned to her mother before she looked back to the door that Mira had disappeared behind. She set her fork down, and stood from the quiet table and made her way to the room.

"Mira?" she called to her sister as she opened the door. She slowly walked into the cramped bedroom. On the small cot that sat under a window, Mira lay with her head buried in her pillow. Consetta reached for her, but when her hand touched Mira's calf, the girl tucked her legs closer to her. "Mira." Consetta knew the girl was upset, but she did not know whether it was because she was leaving, or if Mira was angry with her entirely.

After Consetta combed her fingers through Mira's silky dark brown hair, Mira finally responded in anger. "Go away," she cried out through her stifling tears.

"Mira," Consetta reached for her, but when she did Mira shot up and yelled fiercely at her.

"Go away, and go to your Weyr!"

Consetta did not even flinch when Mira lifted a hand to hit her. Instead, Consetta reached out and embraced the reluctant girl until she became a ball of sobs in her arms. "Shhh, shhhh..." she murmured to her little sister as she rocked her in her arms. "It's all right. I'm right here."

Mira's body convulsed in Consetta's arms as her wails escaped her, and through her choking cries she attempted to speak, and she barely succeeded. "Why do you want to leave us?"

"I don't want to leave you," Consetta responded. Her sister's pain forced tears to burn in her own eyes. She lifted Mira's face to her. "I never wanted to leave you," Consetta continued. She took the sleeve of her dress and dabbed the tears that ran down Mira's cheeks.

"Then why are you going to the Weyr?"

Consetta offered her a warm smile. "Because it's where I need to go, it's where I need to be."

Mira inhaled several times before she was able to control her tears. "Why do you need to be there?"

"Because I never felt like I belonged here. When the dragons found me on Search, I felt like they were giving me a chance to live the life I was supposed to."

Before Consetta could finish, Linetta and Casin stepped through the door. Linetta sat on the other side of Mira, while Casin found a spot on Consetta's lap. "Can I be a dragonrider some day?" the little boy turned to her before he looked to their mother for permission. "Can I, Mama?"

Linetta smiled at her son. "If that is what you want." Slowly, the cheerfulness that she displayed for Casin faded, and instead she glanced back to Consetta and then to Mira with her motherly love. "Now, I know this is difficult for all of us," she began. "But we should respect Consetta's decision to go to Kadanzer Weyr."

"But what if we never see her again?" Casin looked up to Linetta sadly.

"We'll see her again," Linetta assured him. "Even if we have to go to the Weyr."

Consetta looked to her mother with astonishment. "You would come to the Weyr?"

For the first time in Consetta's life, she saw a tear run down her mother's face. Even in the faintly lit room, Consetta saw her mother's face begin to give way to the sorrow that she had hidden from her daughter for so many Turns. "We're family," Linetta finally spoke with a voice that threatened to give way to a heap of cries. "And we always will be. I-" she paused for a moment and breathed deeply. "I know we've had our disagreements in the past, Consetta, but you have to understand I only wanted what I thought was best for you."

"Mother-" Consetta did not know how much more she could take before she lost her composure.

"Consetta, I love you, and I love this family." She gave Mira a heartfelt squeeze. "You are all I have left. And I'm not going to let anyone, not even Normellis, keep us apart."

Consetta watched her mother as she absorbed what she was saying. Never had Consetta known her mother to be so dedicated to her children that she would cross continents just to be with them. For Turns, Consetta even had her twisted misconception that her mother was only acting out of her best interest, but in that moment Consetta knew everything she thought she knew about her mother was wrong. Linetta was a woman of experience and she was full of the wisdom that Consetta could hardly comprehend with her few youthful Turns.

"Are we really going to go to Kadanzer Weyr?" Mira spoke between her calming tears.

"Yes we are dear," Linetta answered with a loving smile before she placed a warm kiss on her youngest daughter's forehead.

"Will we leave with Consetta tonight?" Casin spoke with his child-like interest.

"No," Linetta laughed at the young boy. "That dragon is a special dragon for Consetta only. We'll have to leave another way."

"Do you know how?" Consetta asked.

Linetta sat back and turned her eyes out Mira's window. "Most likely when the riders come to take us to Kadanzer Weyr for the Hatching. I don't think we could leave any other way."

Consetta was not sure such a plan would work. "Will Normellis let you do that?"

Linetta chuckled quietly. "Probably not, but Weyrwoman Lybelle might, especially when she finds out the ultimatum Normellis gave you. Perhaps it would make the Weyrwoman sympathetic to our cause to stay together."

The Weyrwoman... The plan seemed sound enough, though Consetta did not know how she would stand up to someone like Weyrwoman Lybelle. From what she had heard the woman was fierce, making a man cower with a single glance. She was a woman whose very presence demanded respect, and Consetta did not think bringing her family to the Weyr without permission was a very respectful thing to do. She would most likely be berated for it, but at the same time, it was for her family.

After she took a moment to prepare herself for her future reprimand with the Weyrwoman, she spoke. "How long have you been thinking about this? I mean leaving for the Weyr?"

"Ever since the Search several days ago," Linetta replied with her gaze still staring beyond the window of Mira's room. "I knew if you were found on Search, you would go."

Consetta knew the remark was not meant to hurt her, but it still did. "It wasn't an easy decision to make," Consetta began as she tried to justify her choice. "I wasn't trying to abandon anyone."

"I know," Linetta replied with her soft, loving smile. Then with that final remark, Linetta looked to Casin. "Well, how about we go back to the table. Our desserts are getting cold."

Mira and Casin both ran out of the room giggling to one another while Consetta and Linetta were more tranquil with their departure, but before they left the room, Consetta had to ask the question that burned the most on her mind. "Normellis said you were found on Search. Is that true?"

Linetta turned to face her daughter and slowly nodded. "Yes, yes it is."

"Why didn't you go? Did you not want to be a rider? Or was it because of the same threat that Normellis gave you?"

Linetta's smile still remained as she answered. "I was younger than you are now when I was found on Search. But I knew my place wasn't at the Weyr, especially when I met your father. But you, you have a different path to follow." Her hand reached out and settled on Consetta's shoulder. "Don't be ashamed because of your decision. I understand, and I know you are staying true to who you are. Just remember who you are when you go to the Weyr, Consetta."

"I understand," Consetta responded back before she allowed her mother to take her into her arms for a loving embrace. "I love you Mama."

"I love you too Consetta," she whispered back to her daughter.





The bluerider who had Searched her a few days earlier, awaited Consetta as she approached with her mother, brother, and sister. As she neared, she felt Polo tighten his tail so eagerly around her neck that she had to force the little beast to loosen his grip. *It's all right, boy*, she assured the little blue once she was face to face with the dragonrider.

"Consetta," the rider grinned down at her. "I don't think we've been properly introduced. My name is T'raff, and this is my dragon, Kanubith, and we'll be escorting you to Kadanzer Weyr this evening."

Consetta nodded to the tall man, before she glanced nervously back to her family. "I guess this is it," she spoke softly.

Mira and Casin quickly ran into her arms. "We'll miss you," Casin cried to her.

"I'll miss you too, Casin," she replied before she placed a kiss on her little brother's forehead and then moved to her sister. "Mira."

Mira said nothing as she clung tightly to her sister as if life itself would escape Consetta if she let go.

"I'll see you again soon, Mira. And promise me you'll practice your writing by sending me letters."

"I promise." Mira finally managed to say before Consetta stood back up to face her mother.

"Mama, you be careful," Consetta began before her mother took her into her arms and held her one last time.

"You be careful too, Consetta."

"I will."

"Consetta," T'raff called to Consetta just as she released her mother. "Are you ready?"

"Yes," she answered back while she wiped away the last of her tears.

He took her pack of belongs from her and tied it onto Kanubith's side. Then he offered his hand to her as the blue offered his forearm. "Time to go, Consetta."

She cast her family one last backwards glance before she took the bluerider's hand and heaved herself up onto the

massive beast's neck. T'raff placed himself in front of her before he turned around and strapped her into place. "This is so Kanubith won't drop you," he chuckled to her.

When T'raff made the remark, Kanubith craned his head around with his eyes whirling into shades of orange. T'raff briefly became still before he laughed heartily to himself. The blue dragon snorted.

"What is it?" Consetta asked the bluerider.

T'raff peered back at her with his brown eyes that danced in the rising moons' light. "Kanubith wants me to tell you not to listen to me, and he promises he'll never drop you."

"Ah." Well, it was nice to see she was in good hands.

As T'raff made the signal for Kanubith's take off, Consetta waved vigorously to her family. Then out of the corner of her eye, by the Hold entrance, she saw a figure. It was Daret, but before Consetta could do anything, Kanubith sprung forcefully into the air. Within a single swoop of his mighty wings, they left behind Daret, the engagement, her mother, her sister, her brother, her family, and everyone else she knew and loved in Porlian Seahold, but she had no regrets.

All she had left now were the clothes in her pack and on her back, and her shivering blue firelizard, Polo, who clung tightly to her neck as the cold winter air struck against them during their ascent into the sky. With Porlian Seahold behind her, Consetta turned her eyes to her future on the horizon, to Kadanzer Weyr with the hope that some day she could achieve the very thing she had dreamed of since the early Turns of her childhood.

And then the blackness came...

(To be continued)



Kadanzer Weyr
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