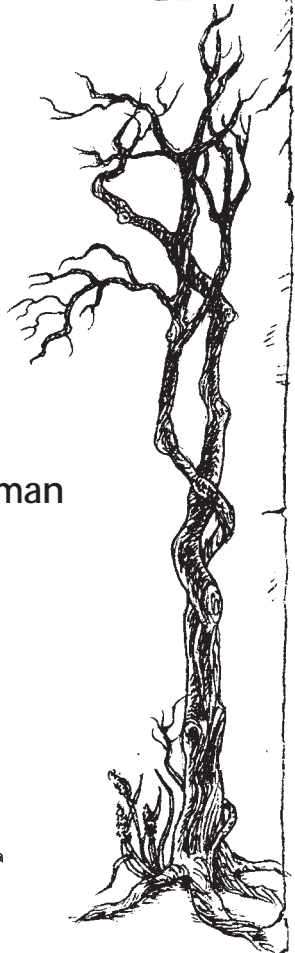
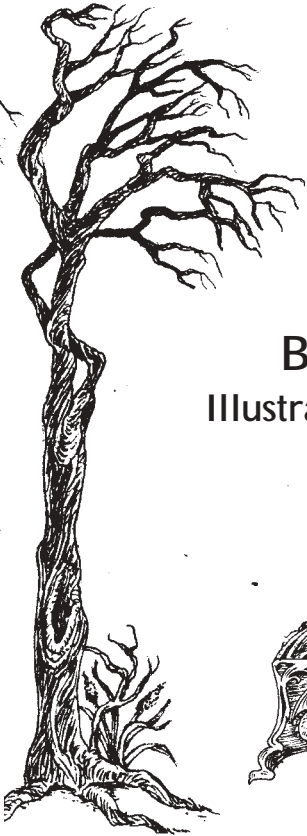


# Aidan of Oren

## *The Journey Begins*



By Alan St. Jean  
Illustrated by Judith Friedman



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*“For Judy, the love of  
my life. Thank you for  
believing.”*

*—Alan St. Jean*



*“For Jean-Pierre,  
with all my love.”*

*—Judith Friedman*





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# Aidan of Oren

# The Awakening



**AWAKE...AWAKE!** A voice broke the night silence. Aidan sat straight up in bed. He looked around his bedroom, but no one was there.

“Odd,” he thought. “Was I dreaming? But it was so real.”

He sat motionless, listening, hardly breathing. As he looked from shadow to shadow, his eyes pierced the darkness. All seemed in order. Slowly and silently, he pulled his quilt aside and stepped out of bed. The wood plank floor beneath his feet felt cold as he moved across the room. Perched in the corner was Aidan’s pet falcon, Charles, fast asleep.

This was not the first time Aidan had been awakened by a dream. Lately he had been having many dreams...dreams about castles, knights in shining armor, ferocious dragons, giants, and curious elves. Ever since he was very little, Aidan was intrigued by the stories told by the old women of the village. They often gathered together in the fireplace room here at his Grandmama’s cottage to work on quilts, and while they did, they told the most magical stories.

# Aidan of Oren



## The Awakening

Aidan's bedroom was right beside the fireplace room. He looked forward to these nights...Grandmama would come into his room and tuck him into bed. With a gentle kiss on his forehead, she would whisper goodnight and return to her friends just outside his door.

After pretending to be asleep, Aidan would crawl out of bed and peek through a crack in his door. He would watch and listen—often late into the night—hanging on every word as the stories would unfold. The old women told tales of adventure; some funny, some scary. Grandmama was the very best storyteller of them all. But, they were just stories...stories told around the glowing warmth of a roaring fire.

Aidan moved toward the door and peeked through the crack into the fireplace room. The glowing embers revealed only that the room was now empty. The old women had already gone home. Still confused by what he had heard, Aidan went back to bed. He shuffled around on his hay-filled mattress and wrapped himself tightly in Grandmama's quilt. Finding a comfortable spot, he lay back and stared at the ceiling.

Although he was used to dreaming about the stories he overheard, tonight's dream was different. Tonight, Aidan had dreamed of a magnificent horse. But not just any horse—a pure white horse with wings. None of the stories told by his Grandmama or her friends mentioned such a horse.

## Aidan of Oren

“AWAKE...AWAKE!” The words still echoed in his head. It all seemed so real, but it must have been a dream. What else could it be? Eventually, Aidan fell back to sleep.

