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Brennan, Marie. A Natural History of Dragons

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From a young age, Isabella had a most unlady-like interest in science, with a particular fascination for sparklings—tiny fiery creatures considered to be a type of insect. As she aged, however, her fascination shifted to dragons, those various, wide-ranging, and mostly unknown creatures. Her interests were tacitly indulged by her father, despite the impropriety, but her wild and impulsive nature was certain to get her into trouble. Indeed, once married to Jacob Camherst, a nobleman who shares her interest in dragons, Isabella finds herself part of an expedition to the country of Vystrana to study and examine the local rock-wyrms—and neck-deep in trouble with the taciturn and suspicious locals, with the smugglers using the hills as their base, and with the possibly corrupt government of Vystrana itself. Plucky, smart, and spirited, Isabella is at first undaunted. But can she get out of this situation alive, with her reputation intact?

Written in the style of a Victorian memoir, Lady Isabella's recollections about her youthful adventures are engaging, humorous, fast-paced, and colorful. Though the setting and the wild beasts are fantastic, the book is nevertheless familiar in its tone and style, making this book one which should appeal to fans of historical fiction with strong female protagonists as well.

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