

THE RETURN OF THE DEAD AND OTHER BALLADS

Mead looked at her sister. "Then it's time we talked a bit to you," she said, sitting down across. At last she moved, and kissed his cheek, and whispered, "I missed you, I missed you, I missed you. How long can you stay?" shoes off his feet, and left him sleeping. She went to look at the other one. He looked feverish, asked, fascinated, when she saw it, and when he answered with a laugh, "Rosemary," she laughed. domestic and community worship of the Old Powers, the chthonic or gaeic forces manifest as spirits. "It's not Roke magic," the old man said. His voice was dry, a little forced. "Not to do with the. with women. As I walked by I put my hand, without thinking, into the jet of an illuminated. which all of them did. This speech, innate to dragons, can be learned by human beings. Some few people are born with an. and sent the healing into his hands with the words of power spoken over and over. After a while. "There's bread," Ayo said, and Mead hurried to pack hard bread and hard cheese and walnuts into a. "Yes," Irioth said. "I understand. You are a kind woman." She was talking about him, about his not. "Now, what is forbidden to the summoner, or any wizard, is to call a living spirit. We can call to. stranger. When they saw Irioth they looked uneasy. San went into his house and the stranger. "No, nothing. And if a girl visits a man, what then?" not a shred of power left in me to follow him with. So he got away from Roke. Clean gone. asked Tern to take her to see her family, mother and sister and two sons; he would leave Mote with. generosity, after three years, to pay his passage to Roke. That was all Dulse knew about him. He stood silent a minute, and then said, "In Karego-At, when I was a barbarian, I was Azver. In Hardic, that is a banner of war." strong in her fear and willful in her vileness. She holds him back and hides him deep, fearing to. He turned and made for the shore, hasty, careless where he set his feet and not caring if he broke. wood as the plane ran down the silky oak board. Some noise or movement roused him. He looked up. He had not thought. He had taken the shape that came soonest to him, run to the river as an otter would, swum as the otter would swim. But only in his own form could he think as a man, hide, decide, act as a man or as a wizard against the wizard who hunted him. has clung to it since. Witches paid dearly for practicing the arts they thought of as their own. there maybe a room above the tavern? Havnor Great Port, Roke has remained without an archmage. It appears that this office, not. "Shall we go?" he said to the cowboy, who set off at once with a wave to Gift and a snort from his little mare. The curer followed. The hinny had a smooth, long-legged walk, and her whiteness shone in the morning light. Gift thought it was like seeing a prince ride oft, like something out of a tale, the mounted figures that walked through bright mist across the vague dun of the winter fields, and faded into the light, and were gone. Magic was a wild talent before the time of Morred, who as both king and mage established. All the rumors of Roke had said that it was spell-defended and charm-hidden, invisible to ordinary eyes. If there were any spells woven about that hill or the bay he now saw opening before it, they were gossamer to him, transparent. Nothing blurred his eyes or challenged his will as he flew over the bay, over the little town and a half-finished building on the slope above it, to the top of the high green hill. There, striking down dragons claws and beating rust-red wings, he lighted. witch's use-name was Rose, like a great many women of Way and other islands of the Hardic. He dreamed of clouds passing over the shores of islands, and a high, round, green hill that stood. "We must give what we have to give," said Medra. "If all but us are slaves, what's our freedom worth?" frightened. it seemed to me, but no one paid the least attention to the change, and I could not even say when. Azver nodded, in silence. The slow stiff words carried great weight. "So, to be blunt about it, if you have this gift, Diamond, it's of no use, directly, to our wizards. Ath did not. His book, lost for centuries, is now in the Isolate Tower on Roke. And they talked about that, all the wise women of the island: what was the true art of magic, and where did it turn false; how the balance of things was kept or lost; what crafts were needful, which useful, which dangerous; why some people had one gift but not another, and whether you could learn an art you had no native gift for. In such discussions they worked out the names that ever since have been given to the masteries: finding, weather-working, changing, healing, summoning, patterning, naming, and the crafts of illusion, and the knowledge of the songs. Those are the arts of the Masters of Roke even now, though the Chanter took the Finder's place when finding came to be considered a merely useful craft unworthy of a mage. throat as he swallowed, and they laughed and chattered, and he shivered all over like a cart horse. The girl motioned them to come in. Crow chose to wait outside. The room was high and long, with traces of former elegance, but very old and very poor. Healers' paraphernalia and drying herbs were everywhere, though ranged in some order. Near the fine stone fireplace, where a tiny wisp of sweet herbs burned, was a bedstead. The woman in it was so wasted that in the dim light she seemed nothing but bone and shadow. As Tern came close she tried to sit up and to speak. Her daughter raised her head on the pillow, and when Tern was very near he could hear her: "Wizard," she said. "Not by chance." trees, not many people. The ashy soil grows a rich, bright grass, and the people there keep. "Or the music without you." "in the Mountain?" "A sending - only a seeming of him. It could not hurt you, Irian." something Dulse could teach him: what went deeper than mastery. What he had learned here, on Gont. There are some who say that the school had its beginnings far differently. They say that Roke used to be ruled by a woman called the Dark Woman, who was in league with the Old Powers of the earth. They say she lived in a cave under Roke Knoll, never coming into the daylight, but weaving vast spells over land and sea that compelled men to her evil will, until the first Archmage came to Roke, unsealed and entered the cave, defeated the Dark Woman, and took her place. everything. . . back, because I saw one of her men, down the way, in the tavern. I'll go ask about. Find out if. He asked her to stay, he did not tell her to. All she could do was nod. "I am." file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (42 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:31 AM]. shifting depths of the forest. "I think what we have to do," he said without preamble, "is try to hold the fault from slipping." Some old women

down by the docks. An old sorcerer. His sister." "A witchwind coming. Following. Get the sail down." The town at the bay's head, Thwil, shared something of the uncanniness of the Knoll and the Grove. He resolved to wait and watch. Being a patient man with a strong will, he did so for four years, till Diamond was sixteen. A big, well-grown youth, good at games and lessons, he was still ruddy-faced and bright-eyed and cheerful. He had taken it hard when his voice changed, the sweet treble going all untuned and hoarse. Golden had hoped that that was the end of his singing, but the boy went on wandering about with itinerant musicians, ballad-singers and such, learning all their trash. That was no life for a merchant's son who was to inherit and manage his father's properties and mills and business, and Golden told him so. "Singing time is over, son," he said. "You must think about being a man." the park I had ridden up, yet back there, in the plaza with the dancing colors and where the streets. He was angry then, very angry, a hungry man whose food is snatched from his hand. He summoned the. She nodded shortly, frowning her black brows. island, and there was no island. Then there were some men from one of the great galleys. They said. "I don't know," the Herbal said. "I can only tell you that when I'm with him, when I'm in the Great House, I feel that nothing can be done but what has been done. That nothing will change. Nothing will grow. That no matter what cures I use, the sickness will end in death." He looked around at them all like a hurt ox. "And I think it is true. There is no way to regain the Equilibrium but by holding still. We have gone too far. For the Archmage and Lebannen to go bodily into death, and return - it was not right. They broke a law that must not be broken. It was to restore the law that Thorion returned." eagerly imparted, had nothing to do with his power or with any true power. Mining and refining. offering him something. Then she was gone. "Master," Medra said, afoot, "wake up." prophecy, they say so will the Archmage be one returned from death." Thwil Town, near the Grove and looking to the Knoll. Its walls were built not only of stone and another world. "Everything's perilous," Dragonfly said, gazing now through the sheep, the hill, the trees, into still depths, a colorless, vast emptiness like the clear sky before sunrise. under my breath and took the cup. She poured herself a drink from the second bottle. This liquid. crowned king. There is real work to do," the Summoner said, and his voice too was like stone, cold. "I spoke your true name. It's not what I thought it would be. And I don't feel easy about it. As if I'd left something unfinished. But it is your name. If it betrays you, then that's the truth of it." Rose hesitated and then spoke less angrily, more coldly: "If you want the power to betray me, Irian, I'll give you that. My name is Etaudis." at the dock to take her, and the wind, I can tell you, will stand fair for Way." So it proved. Indeed, to Golden's amazement, Master Hemlock sent back a scrupulous two-fifths of. shed for the cart, and straw in the stable loft for the carters. The loft was dark and stuffy and. "It's the first time I ever saw one. . . So that's what a cigarette looks like. How can you. submitted to her absolutely. When she said, "Move your foot!" the mare moved her foot. The woman. "Didn't know you were after him. I've been after him a long time. He fooled me." Hound spoke. teaching him, petting him a bit as he had done yesterday. He sat down with him in the sun. Gelluk. "He wanted me to go to Roke." mouth, froze in readiness. "Put it away," she said, with another laugh, and a flurried motion of her hands. "If you can cure. Doorkeeper. What he found on Roke was both less and more than the hope and rumor he had sought so long. Roke. with four apples and a bladder of resinated wine, in case he had to stay out all night. He. increasingly on wizards to fend off dragons and Kargish fleets. In the Havnorian Lay and The Deed. prentices were faithless, Gelluk thought, reminded of his prentice Early, too clever by half, whom. Irioth's head drooped as if in utter weariness. All tension and passion had gone out of his body. But he looked up, not at Ged but at Gift, silent in the hearth corner. "I'll show you. So help me!" He hard-boiled the three new eggs and one already in the larder and put them into a pouch along with four apples and a bladder of resinated wine, in case he had to stay out all night. He shrugged arthritically into his heavy cloak, took up his staff, told the fire to go out, and left. of. The Child Taker, they called him, a dreaded sorcerer who carried children to his island in the. After the death of Orm the dragons remained a threat in the West, especially when provoked by. knowing what he was doing. She was forgiving him. "A kind sister," he said. The words were so new. That was unusual, though perhaps not so unusual among the wealthy as among common folk. At any. They saw it, they said it. What they had they shared. In that it was indeed Morred's Isle. Nobody on Roke starved or went. isles-and beyond. People have puzzled at their choosing the empty sea for their domain, since. leaves behind when he asks questions. Listen, can you work with the wind at all?" "That's a formality. We senior sorcerers may carry a staff when we're on Roke's business. Which I am." The air was darkening around them. The west was only a dull red line, the eastern sky was shadowy. shadows, though looking very ill. "Come on," Gift said, and got him on his feet, and walked slowly. I must be going now, I told them voicelessly, with my lips only. I began to back off in the. to her; and she came. But Havnor is also the Great Isle, a broad, rich land; and in the villages inland from the port, "Witchery," they said, "sacrilege, defilement." "Only the Master can open the door. Only the King has the key." they all had. Evidently, it was the same with brit. "I forget-I always forget," he said, downcast again. "I forget the walls of the prison. I'm not such a fool when I'm outside them... When I'm here I can't believe it is a prison. But outside, without you, I remember... I don't want to go, but I have to go. I don't want to admit that anything here can be wrong or go wrong, but I have to... I'll go this time, and I will go north, Elehal. But when I come back I'll stay. What I need to find I'll find here. Haven't I found it already?" A while after that he left Pendor, drawn southward again, and maybe went to Ensmer. In one guise. So little Diamond grew up in the finest house in Glade, a fat, bright-eyed baby, a ruddy, cheerful boy. He had a sweet singing voice, a true ear, and a love of music, so that his mother, Tuly, called him Songsparrow and Skylark, among other loving names, for she never really did like "Diamond." He trilled and caroled about the house; he knew any tune as soon as he heard it, and invented tunes when he heard none. His mother had the wisewoman Tangle teach him The Creation of Ea and The Deed of the Young King, and at Sunreturn when he was eleven years old he sang the Winter Carol for the Lord of the Western Land, who was visiting his domain in the hills above Glade. The Lord and his Lady praised the boy's

singing and gave him a tiny gold box with a diamond set in the lid, which seemed a kind and pretty gift to Diamond and his mother. But Golden was a bit impatient with the singing and the trinkets. "There are more important things for you to do, son," he said. "And greater prizes to be earned."

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