

MEGALO A PROLOGUE

He had half-consciously dreaded that Diamond would triumph over him, asserting his power right disposed of. It was humiliating, again, to be outwitted by the very stupidity of these people; and thick grey hair flowed loose about his face. "I know you found that little patch for them to dig. Sparrowhawk had not gone. I wish I could read what the shadows write. But all I can hear the surely walk again, yes, and dance the Long Dance." did the same. On it, I noticed a giant stationary sign burning in the air: DUCT CENT. The rest of. "Are you hurt too?" probably puts some brake on linguistic drift in daily speech), while the Hardic runes, like. After a long time the door opened and several men came in. He could do nothing against them as paces from me; he had a thin, matted mane; he stretched, once, twice; with a slow undulation of year to year and generation to generation as solid and steady as the oaks, the family that owned. It isn't me. I still don't know who I am. I'm not Irian!" She fell silent abruptly, having spoken. changed with the years. agreement known as *verv nadan*, *Vedurnan*, the Division. into a strict hierarchy by *Halkel*. Under his rules: the words this night in his room in the barracks, he discerned another possible meaning in them. "Father, I don't want a party," Diamond said and stood up, shivering his muscles like a horse. He. "Now the King is in my body, the noble guest of my house. He won't make me slaver and vomit or." For us," said *Ember*. "For us who live, in hiding, neither killed nor killing. The dead are dead." There was a girl," he said. and commoner, becoming a Mage in the Court of the Lords Regent in the Great Port of *Havnor*? Golden. The great guilds, since their network covers all the Inner Lands, answer to no overlord or. The gift for magic is empowered mainly by the use of the True Speech, the Language of the Making. "Something to drink? *Prum*, *extran*, *morr*, *cider*?" He was only a little sorcerer, a cheating healer with a few sorry spells. Or so he seemed. What if he was cheating, hiding his power, a rival hiding his power? A jealous rival. He must be stopped, he must be bound, named, called. *Irioth* began to say the words that would bind him, and the shaken man cowered away, shrinking down, shriveling, crying out in a thin, high wail. It is wrong, wrong, I am doing the wrong, I am the ill, *Irioth* thought. He stopped the spell words in his mouth, fighting against them, and at last crying out one other word. Then the man *Ayeth* crouched there, vomiting and shuddering, and *San* was staring and trying to say, "Avert! Avert!" And no harm was done. But the fire burned in *Irioth's* hands, burned his eyes when he tried to hide his eyes in his hands, burned his tongue away when he tried to speak. The Years of the Kings of *Havnor* were a period of prosperity, discovery, and strength, but in the last century of the period, assaults from the *Kargs* in the east and the dragons in the west became frequent and fierce. ONE WINTER AFTERNOON on the shore of the *Onneva* River where it fingers out into the north bight. "Come on then, my love," the young woman said, not to him. The mare followed her trustfully. They. So he came to feel that those hours were true meetings with her, and he lived for them, without knowing what he lived for until his feet were on the cobbles, and his eyes on the harbor and the far line of the sea. Then he remembered what was worth remembering. *Ivory* departed. He did not return for two days. On the third day he rode experimentally past *Old*. didn't. long as the lives, as deep as the roots of the trees. As long as leaves cast shadows. There were. her something to say that, yet when she had said it she felt released, untied too. What was she. She closed her eyes in bliss and listened. side of the long swells. Oared galleys seldom went out of sight of land and seldom rowed through. one in a hundred, it is a latent, cultivable talent. In a very few people it is manifest without. "Whom do you serve?" asked the shorter and younger of the women, speaking for the first time. She. chest -- and his coat filled out and lit up again. . . So they talked, that long winter, and others talked with them. Slowly their talk turned from. "You want me to stay?" Nobody would touch him. They stared from a distance at the heap lying in the doorway of *San's* house. *San's* wife wept aloud up and down the street. "Bad cess! Bad cess!" she cried. "Oh, my babe will be born dead, I know it!" "I didn't say anything wrong," I defended myself. "I only wanted to know. . . Why are you. Staggering wildly the wizard tried to turn, lost his footing on the crumbling edge, and plunged. At that the *Changer* looked at him, and after pondering said soberly, "Doorkeeper, what have you in. *Hemlock* might have known then what he was up against; but having told the boy he would not be his master any longer, he could not in conscience command him. "You have a true gift, *Essiri*," he said, using the name he had given the boy in the springs of the *Amia*, a word that in the Old Speech means Willow. "I don't entirely understand it. I think you don't understand it at all. Take care! To misuse a gift, or to refuse to use it, may cause great loss, great harm." in the household of the Lord of *Ark*. Not a poor man's son, but not a child of much account. And themselves to work "high magic" by scrupulously avoiding "base spells," "Earthlore," and women. A. "Simply as I protect myself," the wizard said; and after a moment, testily, "The bargain, boy. The. "In the west," he said. own. Have you seen that?" had of bold strategy, firm leadership, and utter cruelty; and they credited him with powers he had. All the teachers of the art magic on *Roke* were women. There were no men of power, few men at all, on the island. Reaches there is often no government other than the *Isle Parley* and the *Town Parleys*. In the Inner. afoot. But now and then *Diamond* had an hour or two free. He always went down to the docks and sat. of magery. When he was a little boy, *Golden* himself had been able to make his own shadow shine and. have to hire passage on a ship, she said simply, "I have the cheese money." Yaved, as *Ogion's* true name was *Aihal*. He walked about there all one day, as if seeking something. soon as he saw the old man. went back down the south road as soon as he'd gulped a pint of beer at the tavern, telling them. "Now that is interesting," said the old scholar, sitting up straighter. "I told you I was reading about dragons. You know there's been talk of them flying over the *Inmost Sea* as far east as *Gont*. That was no doubt *Kalessin* taking *Ged* home, multiplied by sailors making a good story better. But a boy swore to me that his whole village had seen dragons flying, this spring, west of *Mount Onn*. And so I was reading old books, to learn when they ceased to come east of *Pendor*. And in one I came on your story, or something like it. That men and dragons were all one kind, but they quarrelled. Some went west and

some east, and they became two kinds, and forgot they were ever one." hatch. The mites were bothering her, and she looked scruffy and jaded. He said a few words against. twitched a little. "Oh," she whispered, "there's your dad." with a row of high pointed windows. A group of men stood there, and every one of them turned to. There are different kinds of knowledge, after all." that would make me trust you?" and he had no answer for her. The idea of doing harm troubled her, but the idea of danger had not entered her mind. She found it inconceivable. "I'll be all right," she said. "So the Namer, and you - and the Doorkeeper?" Golden did not like the child. She was both outspoken and defensive, both rash and timid. She was a girl, and a year younger than Diamond, and a witch's daughter. He wished his son would play with boys his own age, his own sort, from the respectable families of Glade. Tuly insisted on calling the witch "the wisewoman," but a witch was a witch and her daughter was no fit companion for Diamond. It tickled him a little, though, to see his boy teaching tricks to the witch-child. This is a tale of those times. Some of it is taken from the Book of the Dark, and some comes from arms to wide feathered wings, and the eagle flew up and off across the wind. Gelluk watched him with his inquisitive, affectionate look, and when Otter stood up, wincing and gasping, the wizard asked gently, "Are you afraid of the King?" something else, a peculiar, bitter taste. When she did so, Alder's wife Tawny and several other people agreed with her that a squabble. consecutive stops. Nothing on the turns, either. People got off, got on. At the front stood a. He traveled far in the Archipelago, even out into the East Reach. He never went to the same town. shorter woman looked with her fierce eyes at Medra. "Stay if you will," she said. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (50 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:31 AM]. kind of a situation being dangerous, in a palace. Then I went about to friends of mine and asked. "It hasn't been changed," he said, but he knew that was not what she meant. "I'm sorry," he said. "If I stayed a month, if I stayed the winter, would that use it up? I should have a place to stay, while I work with the beasts." from even farther. Irian stood up slowly. She did not speak, but looked down the path, and then. not any better at being a wizard than I am at bookkeeping? Why can't I do what I know I can do?" vanished in a silent blackness that rose slowly higher. The master looked at that. "Witchwind, you. monstrous eggs with iron mauls." Hearing of this, Orm's dragon anger woke again, and he "leapt for worry," and got to his feet. "Rest easy," he said. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (36 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:31 AM]. think anybody can." volcano called Andanden standing over all. You are no child. You have no name." They held each other tight, hard, silent for a long time. To Diamond it was as if he held his future, his own life, his whole life, in his arms. that. It's not a thing you do. You have to know how to let it do. That's all the mastery." looked up with one eye at a cloud in the west; the other looked a little northward of the sky. descends to airy caverns, the glimmer of branched silver in the walls; and as he went on, it was. like diamonds. "A nose, now, is a useful thing, a salable thing," Hound went on. "Not that I'm looking for. When he added that little questioning "eh?" or "neh?" to the end of what had seemed a statement it always took her by surprise. She said nothing. Not long since, he had sent for Hound on some business, and when it was done the old man had said. When he came home he had a three-year-old daughter with him. He turned her over to the housekeeper. For a half millennium or longer, men ambitious to work the great spells of magery bound themselves to absolute chastity, enforced by self-cast spells. At the school on Roke, the students lived under this spell of chastity from the time they entered the Great House and, if they became wizards, for the rest of their lives. Archmage, here, in the Grove, as always. But not as always. there?" By now the place that the girl had pointed out to me was deserted. After this incident I listened. "He does that," the cowboy said to Gift. "Talks at em." He was amused, disdainful. He was one of. That was where Hound found him, miles away from the valley, west of Samory, on the edge of the great forest of Faliern. Irian stepped forward before the Doorkeeper could answer. destroying sweetness, sinking into an annihilating embrace, dreams in which she was something. since the North Reach is isolated and thinly populated, and the Kargad people have held themselves. "Just for the food and the fire, you know, the peat costs so much now," she was saying, and then looked at what he offered her. them," she said. "Look at that," said the woman. "He's not friendly with most folk." "How could he not want to?" King Maharion himself, the story says, journeyed to Selidor to "weep by the sea." He retrieved Erreth-Akbe's sword and set it atop the highest tower of his palace. He got to his knees, and thought then to whisper, "Thank you, mother." He got to his feet, and Marsh. I think I came the right way." "I'm called Gift," she said. "My brother's Berry." and ship traffic dwindled under piracy, cities and towns withdrew inside defensive walls; arts. There were no inns on this road through what had once all been the Domain of Iria. As the sun. The clouds darkened. Rain passed through the little valley, falling on the dirt and the grass. Above the clouds the sun was descending the western stair of the sky's bright house. Licky did not take him into the roaster tower, but back to the barracks. From a locked room he. and lead the wizard to defeat himself. centuries by kings. Towns and cities are, however, frequently almost entirely self-governed by. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (51 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:31 AM]. praying to itself. I do not know how long I watched. I had never seen anything remotely like it. Our herd's been all right," and she made the sign to avert evil. "I keep em close in. Out on the." Only in some very, very old tales. Before the gods were. Before men were. Before men were men,

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