

F DONALD MACLEODS GLOOMY MEMOIRIES OF THE HIGHLANDS ISLE OF SKYE II

a wide, fine net of resistance. Even now there were strands and knots of that net left. Medra had. The villagers shook their heads. Gift was a brave woman, but there was such a thing as being too. Her mother Ayo and her mother's sister Mead were wise women. They healed Otter as best they could. than be murdered in this hole. Roke Knoll off to the right. But standing on the path just outside the door as if waiting for them. Master, never counted among the Nine. A vital ethical and intellectual force, the archmage also. message to the wise women," he said, and the villagers showed him Ayo's house. As he stood in the. will be born dead, I know it!". "We should find shelter and rest," he said. him home. A wise man, said Otter's mother Rose, surely a wise man. Nothing was too good for such a. them, not keeping them secret each to himself, as the wizards do.". That had been their signal, summer nights, when they sneaked out to meet in the willow grove down. Old Speech. Hardic practitioners of the art magic learn it from their teachers. Sorcerers and. Something happened. I heard raised voices. I leaned out of my seat. Several rows in front. among the women who practiced magic. her hand on it. Everybody gasped and muttered, "Avert! Avert!" except Tawny's youngest daughter. "Nothing. But, then, it's only a thought, and I don't have the slightest intention. . .". "I understand, no need to go on. All right. So it's a kind of safety measure? Very strange!". "A hundred and twenty-seven. What about it?". wide awake now. father's carters, along with Master Hemlock. As a rule, people do what wizards advise them to do. training would first study the high arts of sorcery, and if successful in them might pursue his. "I am Anieb," she whispered. learn an art you had no native gift for. In such discussions they worked out the names that ever. It was hard work out in the pastures. "Who doesn't do hard work?" Emer had asked, showing her round, strong arms, her hard, red hands. The cattleman Alder expected him to stay out in these meadows until he had touched every living beast of the great herds there. Alder had sent two cowboys along. They made a camp of sorts, with a groundcloth and a half tent. There was nothing to burn out on the marsh but small brushwood and dead reeds, and the fire was hardly enough to boil water and never enough to warm a man. The cowboys rode out and tried to round up the animals so that he could come among them in a herd, instead of going to them one by one as they scattered out foraging in the pastures of dry, frosty grass. They could not keep the cattle bunched for long, and got angry with them and with him for not moving faster. It was strange to him that they had no patience with the animals, which they treated as things, handling them as a log rafter handles logs in a river, by mere force. light a fire or douse it with a word. He could make pots and pans fly through the air. He could. "What's that all about?" Golden said to his wife, a rhetorical question. She looked at him and said nothing, a non-rhetorical answer. more distracted by whatever it was he sensed in the earth or air, and through him Ogion felt that. "Are. . . are we still in the station?". need to be. Well, send me a student now and then. Roke needs Gontish wizardry. I think we're. "There is.". The Song of the Young King, sung annually at Sunreturn, the festival of the winter solstice, tells. werelight shot through by silver lines of rain. When she stumbled he caught her arm. After that. "Oh, yes," he said, confused, and got up and limped back to the bedroom for his pouch. He brought. After a long time, she came back to the sunlight and the stableyard and her thoughts and puzzles. "But even if he's gone," she said, "surely some of the Masters are truly wise?". "I can protect you here, and have done so. On Roke, of course, you'll be perfectly safe. The very. "Ivory," said the Doorkeeper. "A lad from Havnor Great Port, whom I let in three years ago, and. of gifts and in pledge of peaceful intent, Erreth-Akbe went alone to the City of the Kings on. life in the Archipelago seems to resemble that of nonindustrial peoples elsewhere, there are. gift.". there; but those people were unnaturally tall -- and all at once I realized that what I had in front of. "I don't think so," she said. "What do you have there, the white thing under your. far end of the old workings. There he nodded downward and stamped his foot. Must they do so for a thousand years with no hope?". "Take your shoes off," she said, "they're soaking. Come in then." She stood aside and said, "Come to the fire," and had him sit down in Bren's settle close to the hearth. "Stir the fire up a bit," she said. "Will you have a bit of soup? It's still hot.". The Patterner pushed four pebbles into a little curve on the sand and said, "I wish the. quieted. From it something rose, coming close, coming clear, the image he had seen down in the. all, searching. Over and over he stood in that tower room and looked at the woman, and she looked. choking grip of that power. Hound came in on her heels. "Well," he said, "in the first place, when I got to the city, I go up. "Would you like some fresh curds? It makes a good breakfast." She was eyeing him, but not for. her son, Maharion (reigned 430-452), was the last king before the Dark Time. Songs and stories indicate that dragons existed before any other living creature. The Old Hardic kennings or euphemisms for the word dragon are Firstborn, Eldest, Elder Children. (The words for the firstborn child of a family in Osskilian, akhad, and in Kargish, gadda, are derived from the word haath, "dragon," in the Old Speech.). "I was new at the business of being Archmage then. And younger than the man we fought, and maybe not afraid enough of him. It was all the two of us could do to hold our own against him, there in the silence, in the cell in the tower. Nobody else knew what was going on. We fought. A long time we fought. And then it was over. He broke. Like a stick breaking. He was broken. But he fled away. The Summoner had spent a part of his strength for good, overcoming that blind will. And I didn't have the strength in me to stop the man when he fled, nor the wits to send anyone after him. And not a shred of power left in me to follow him with. So he got away from Roke. Clean gone. The breeze was moving again slightly; she could hear a bare whispering among the oaks. "A little," she said. "No. It isn't the High Art. It isn't the True Speech. A wizard mustn't soil his lips with common. to fear him. I do not need to fear his power. I do not need his power. I must see him, to be sure. "Something toxic, you understand. Strong. Alcohol. . . or don't they drink it any more?". "They won't buy our milk and cheese," Berry whined. "He wanted me to go to the College on Roke to study with the Master Summoner. He was going to send me there. I decided not to go.". "He cannot harm me anywhere," she said, the fire running through her veins again. "If he tries

to, "Nonsense! Not history!" said the old Namer. "The first Archmage came centuries after the last. This is only a seeming of me, a presentment, a sending," the old man said to her. "I don't live. Otter's breath was coming hard. Hound put his hand on Otter's hand for a moment, said, "Don't. He told her, as well as he could. "We were strangers. Yet she gave me her name," he said. "And I said nothing, a non-rhetorical answer. "You won't bring her into the Council Room?" the Changer said in disbelief. None of the mages answered him. In the silence, the men with him murmured, and a voice among them said, "Let us have the witch." had her name and with it the power to make her do whatever he wanted, days ago, weeks ago, with a Gelluk's fall had not brought Losen down. The pirate king had other wizards in his pay, among them. streets: a creeping, a peristalsis with necklaces of light, and over this, in the perpendicular, The heap moved, and roused up slowly. They saw it was the curer, just as he had been, no fires or shadows, though looking very ill. "Come on," Gift said, and got him on his feet, and walked slowly up the street with him. That would be unwise," he said, with a good imitation of the Master Changer's terse solemnity. "If need be, I'll do it, of course. But you'll find wizards very sparing of the great spells. For good reason." By the beginning of autumn, Losen was hanging by a rope round his feet from a window of the New. and with them the lost Rune of Peace, he and Tenar brought the Ring home to Havnor. "I don't see why," she said. "My mother can cure a fever and ease a childbirth and find a lost. it? You learn what you're doing while you do it. No chance to practice. "Ah-there! You feel that?". bareback and made the going easy. But there was nothing left for him to eat. When he rode back to. won't as can't. I thought of making plugs in the planking of that galley, near the keel-you know. and after a while she smiled a little. Turning back to Medra, she said, "We're prisoners, and so. she could not answer him. you to meet together." crowned hat made him seem taller than a man could be. Otter did not need to see his clothes to. wizardries. Enlad of the Kings, and bright Ea, eldest of isles! Surely we'll find allies there". "What do you mean, what of it? Was there. . . no brit?". entrance of the mine. They went underground. The passages of the mine were a dark maze like the. she was proud of her strong arms, her energy and skill. He nodded. There, women know the Old Powers. Here too, witches. And the knowledge is bad - eh?". traces of former elegance, but very old and very poor. Healers' paraphernalia and drying herbs. a place of honor, but he wasn't one of the Nine. He'd been passed over. Maybe it wasn't a good. showing, as it rose, a bottom riddled with lights. But perhaps that leviathan shape was the. that that's where we are. We won't defeat him." beyond comprehension and he was nothing at all. He woke from those dreams shaken and shamed. In. from the wayside and asked the carter for a lift. "I don't know you," the carter said, lifting his. had taken to be a gardener, and the youngest-looking of them, a tall man with a stern, beautiful. "You have?". leave us the air-sea, the unknown, the utmost. . . years he came forth and announced, in the words of the poem. "It's not my word, it's Waris's. But they've refused. They want the Rule of Roke to separate men from women, and they want men to make the decisions for all. Now what compromise can we make with them? Why did they come here, if they won't work with us?". "Just for the food and the fire, you know, the peat costs so much now," she was saying, and then. said goodbye," he said. He wept once, and his tears fell on the dry dirt among the grass-stems and. "No. I'll write him," Diamond said, in his new, level voice. vomiting and shuddering, and San was staring and trying to say, "Avert! Avert!" And no harm was. "What? What milk? That's brit. . ." "Where?" he whispered, and then said the word aloud in the language all things understand that. he got to his feet and went on. He never saw Anieb but he knew she was there. He followed her. "But," said Dragonfly and stopped, caught by the argument. After a while she said, "So a name has. Once there in the Grove she had no thought of earning, or deserving, or even of learning. To be. all darkness. But in his body, not in his mind, burned a knowledge he could not name any more, a. told you. Sir." Her eyes were shining and attentive. All the way down the spinning, reeking stone stairs he talked, and Otter tried to understand, because this was a man of power telling him what power was. "She's called Dragonfly, and she does all the work, and I saw her once last year. She's tall, and. "What's up?" said Kurremkarmerruk. "I've been reading about dragons. Not paying attention. But all. breath. Words came to me and I spoke them. I said, Hama Gondun! And Kurremkarmerruk told them this. His humble teachers had taught him all the words they knew of the Language of the Making. Among them had been neither the name of semen nor the name of quicksilver. But his lips parted, his tongue moved. "Ayezur" he said. the last high note. "I haven't got it right yet," Diamond said, vexed and embarrassed. Next day he had Licky send him the boy. He looked forward to seeing him, to being kind to him, parents, and go to the Great Port, or to Roke. Half your year's fee, which I'll return to you. "And cast wide!" He looked from one to the other again. "I wasn't well taught, in the City of Havnor," he said. "My teachers told me not to use magic to bad ends, but they lived in fear and had no strength against the strong. They gave me all they had to give, but it was little. It was by mere luck I didn't go wrong. And by Anieb's gift of strength to me. But for her I'd be Gelluk's servant now. Yet she herself was untaught, and so enslaved. If wizardry is ill taught by the best, and used for evil ends by the mighty, how will our strength here ever grow? What will the young dragon feed on?". sheened. going beyond certain limits they had to abandon symmetry and regularity of form, and learn from. Most people of the Archipelago have brown or red-brown skin, black straight hair, and dark eyes; "I'll keep the door," Medra said. "Being lame, I won't go far from it. Being old, I'll know what to say to those who come. Being a finder, I'll find out if they belong here." hill, into the terrible ground under him, gone. He was no wizard, only a man like the others. The water shivered. He felt it first on his thighs, a lapping like the tickling touch of fur; then he saw it, the trembling of the surface all over the pond. Not the round ripples he made, which had already died away, but a ruffling, a roughening, a shudder, again, and again. King needed some diversions. there was a light that was not werelight. He went forward. He had been crawling for a long time. She was getting used to his strange face now and was able to read it. She thought that he looked. he wouldn't smile so if Rose's cough was anything serious?. would have dragons for his dogs. Archmage, here, in the Grove, as always. But not as always. "Thus." And Ard's long arms had stretched out and upward in the invocation of

what Dulse would an eye for beauty, and liked to look at the old house dreaming away in the dappled light of the

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