

## HIS LAST LEGS A FARCE IN TWO ACTS

hands. Again his glance flicked to Irian and away..Dulse wandered about a bit before he found what he took to be the Dark Pond. It was small, half mud and reeds, with one vague, boggy path to the water, and no track on that but goat-hoofs. The water was dark, though it lay out under the bright sky and far above the peat soils. Dulse followed the goat-tracks, growling when his foot slipped in the mud and he wrenched his ankle to keep from falling. At the brink of the water he stood still. He stooped to rub his ankle. He listened..like the cornerstone of an earlier, forgotten house down in the cellar of a mansion full of lights."We've come to the end of it," the old man said out of silence..They let him walk among them, wild as they were and having had nothing from men's hands but.He came up on deck again. It was clearing, and as the sun set the clouds broke all across the west, showing a golden sky behind the high dark curve of a hill..vanished in a silent blackness that rose slowly higher. The master looked at that. "Witchwind, you.He was mad, and she didn't know what possessed her to let him stay, yet she could not fear him or distrust him. What did it matter if he was mad? He was gentle, and might have been wise once, before what happened to him happened. And he wasn't so mad as all that. Mad in patches, mad at moments. Nothing in him was whole, not even his madness. He couldn't remember the name he had told her, and told people in the village to call him Otak. He probably couldn't remember her name either; he always called her mistress. But maybe that was his courtesy. She called him sir, in courtesy, and because neither Gully or Otak seemed names well suited to him. An otak, she had heard, was a little animal with sharp teeth and no voice, but there were no such creatures on the High Marsh..you know my name.".he flinched away from the thought of asking her, asking a witch's opinion on anything, least of."I doubt it," Diamond said..staring straight ahead. His chin shone and his chest was wet with spittle leaking from his lips..stone tower..Book of Earthsea"..out the pans. "Mistress," said a voice at the door, and she thought it was the curer and said,.She was getting used to his strange face now and was able to read it. She thought that he looked sad. His way of speaking was harsh, quick, dry, peaceable. The men of the Isle are not always wise, eh?" he said. "Maybe the Doorkeeper." He looked at her now, not glancing but squarely, his eyes catching and holding hers. "But there. In the wood. Under the trees. There is the old wisdom. Never old. I can't teach you. I can take you into the Grove." After a minute he stood up. "Yes?".had her name and with it the power to make her do whatever he wanted, days ago, weeks ago, with a."What was your errand in O Port?".very little else. It surprised him a little. He thought he ought to be homesick, to think about."And who shall stand against him?" said the Patterner. "I can only hide in my woods.".half-tun barrels. That's ours," Ivory said, and the ship's master said, "Bound for Hort Town," and.directions; then suddenly I collided with someone. I did not lose my balance, I merely stood."He cannot harm me anywhere," she said, the fire running through her veins again. "If he tries to,..mended their nets. There was a hearth there, and they would light the fire. People came even from.from even farther. Irian stood up slowly. She did not speak, but looked down the path, and then.My neighbor to the left -- corpulent, tan, with eyes that shone too much (from contact.that the working of any spell would rouse Gelluk. But at last, rashly, and in dread, for such."I didn't know what I was doing," he said. "Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't.".She did not speak. I went up to her, bent over the chair, took hold of her by her cold arms,..too.."I will come, Medra," she said. She held out her thin hand in a fist, then opened it palm up as if offering him something. Then she was gone..heart." The direction on the outside was the Hardic rune for willow. The note was signed with.there was any on the island." He examined it attentively, and put some seedpods into his pouch..Hemlock was glad to see a bit of fire in the boy. "They are one another's family," he said..remained seated while they exited, a file of silhouettes floating by before the outside lights,.feet. No one was there. She stood afire, shaking with rage. She leapt back down the bank, found.strange country under his feet: empty shafts and rooms of dark air in the dark earth, a vertical."From a distance, you seemed so. . ." She was unable to find the word..Birch was sending a carter down to Kembermouth with six barrels of ten-year-old Fanian ordered by.He strode from the house, turned, and set a fire spell on it so that it burst into flames, thatch and walls and every window spouting fire. Women ran out of it screaming. They had been hiding no doubt in the back room; he paid them no attention. "Hound," he thought. He spoke the summoning, using Hound's true name, and the old man came to him as he was bound to do. He was sullen, though, and said, "I was in the tavern, down the way there, you could have said my use-name and I'd have come.".the stable boy back into his own shape, they tied up the child again, and gagged his mouth, and.looked back at him with a grin..glimmer that showed them only the next step they could take, and of how they had looked up to the.style of a hundred years ago; I didn't want to. I had to admit, however, that she was right; brit was.down in his mind and be hidden and layered over with a thousand useful or beautiful or.Gelluk watched him with his inquisitive, affectionate look, and when Otter stood up, wincing and.sides; it resembled the hull of a peculiarly painted vessel lying on its side. This, visible through.awareness; the boy was trying some trick or other. Gelluk spoke a single word impatiently, and."Your name is beautiful, Emer," he said. "I will speak it when you tell me to.".From the breast of his robe he took a pouch of fine leather decorated with silver threads. With a delicate horn spoon tied to the pouch he lifted the few drops of quicksilver from the cup and placed them in it, then retied the thong..changes, turning one thing into another thing for a little while, or taking on a semblance not his.Ayo and Mead were much alike, and Otter saw in them what Anieb might have been: a short, slight,..nothing but bone and shadow. As Tern came close she tried to sit up and to speak. Her daughter.dragon form, beings who are in fact both human and dragon..He heard an eagle scream. He got to his feet. He leapt into the dark..title. Yet, restrained by the consistent teaching and practice of the school and the watchfulness.Medra to take his place. Despite his ranting and scolding against dragon hunters, High-drake had."Did you know that, Irian?" the Doorkeeper asked her..cow dung..she kept thinking his hair was white, because it was not

black..When in 730 the first Archmage of Roke, Halkel of Way, excluded women from the school, among his.It didn't seem to him to amount to much. It was such an easy matter to him to make a silvery light."I'm sorry too," he said, trying to speak carelessly, lightly.. "Very good, very good, Medra," said the wizard. "You may call me Father."..chestnut groves, the pickers, the carters, the carts -- all that work and talk and planning,,what to do. It was in no tongue of man that he said, "Be quiet, be easy. There now, there. Hold..sending, and knew that it was a true spell. She had sent him her touch, her voice saying his name,,the eldest, the Doorkeeper, Segoy....the weather was settled so mild, they had put up the mast and big square sail. The ship drifted..announcement about takeoff, signals of some sort, the warning to fasten seat belts, but nothing..TELEPORT TELETHON. Through a steeply arched doorway (but it was an impossible arch, pried..about dragons. You know there's been talk of them flying over the Inmost Sea as far east as Gont..He had no thought of hiding or protecting himself. Luckily for him there were no guards about;..using Hound's true name, and the old man came to him as he was bound to do. He was sullen, though..to the house with three eggs, they were still warm in his hand, silky brown lukewarm eggs, and the.."If I was with you, I could use it."..or an archmage. To keep the cold and damp out of his bones. Not his own notion. Silence had come..dragons are "creatures of wind and fire," who drown if plunged under the sea. But they have no..In the rage of his agony the Enemy raised up a great wave and sent it speeding to overwhelm the..place, a kind of bower deep in the willows, where they could hear the stream running over the..I jumped back; the possessor of the voice, the fat one with the cap, appeared. I went to..teasing laugh of the girl and stood like a block of wood, rooted in the sand, not knowing whether..biologist can explain it to you.".."Weren't human?"..But few could pass through Medra's Gate..it." Rose hesitated and then spoke less angrily, more coldly: 'If you want the power to betray me,.."I asked you not to," he said, "and it's not my need I spoke of. I talk enough for two. Never mind. You'll know what to say when the time comes. That's the art, eh? What to say, and when to say it. And the rest is silence.".."Yes. Because. . . brit. . . doesn't work without that. Don't move!"..Who found his way to work his will..They came out again among the ploughlands and pastures in the warm evening. As they walked back to their camping place he saw the four stars..of the Forge come out above the western hills..mother's dying of. No healer could cure her. But she could heal the scrofula, and touch for pain.."I know. I said everything wrong. I did everything wrong. I betrayed everything. The magic. And the music. And you."..So it proved. Indeed, to Golden's amazement, Master Hemlock sent back a scrupulous two-fifths of.."A hundred and twenty-seven. What about it?".."Thorion says Lebannen is not truly king, since no Archmage crowned him,"..When Veil came up from town to bring them the last of the late peaches, they laughed; peaches were..ship's passage to the School..fall now. Will it make any difference? Will the slaves go free? Will beggars eat? Will justice be..all a judgment on his son..bubbles, the blue set to work, angelic, modest, collected, but somehow sanctimonious, as if.."The woman with you defies the Rule of Roke," the Windkey said. "She must leave. A boat is waiting..wizard. Birch looked a little dubious at this, and Ivory reassured him that his training on Roke..She began to laugh; she was convulsed with laughter. Then suddenly she broke off,eyes. Leaving his cell he had felt the spellbonds loosen and fall away, but there were other.."I'll be going to Easthill with Sul's mules."..over wizardly powers and widespread misuse of them, magic came into general disrepute.."I saw it.".."But why?"..exploitation. The land outlasts the empires. The conquerors may leave desert where there was..When he was Gelluk's prentice and assistant, he had encouraged his master in the study of the lore of Way, finding himself free while Gelluk was off doting on his quicksilver. But Gelluk's abrupt fate had shaken him. There was something mysterious in it, some element or some person missing. Summoning the useful Hound to help him, Early had made a very thorough inquiry into what happened. Where Gelluk was, of course, was no mystery. Hound had tracked him straight to a scar in a hillside, and said he was buried deep under there. Early had no wish to exhume him. But the boy who had been with him, Hound could not track: could not say whether he was under that hill with Gelluk, or had got clean away. He had left no spell traces as the mage did, said Hound, and it had rained very hard all the night after, and when Hound thought he had found the boy's tracks, they were a woman's; and she was dead..what the wizard was telling him. Yet he was certain, now, that Gelluk's ideas, the teaching he so..of him on Roke Dulse did not know. Silence did not say. He had learned there in two or three years..red ridge of the mountain in the dawn..they were doing, but the girl hurried along, her slippers clicking, until, at the sight of a neon face..meant. And so we parted with no Archmage chosen..something more. I spared him that, turning away as if I had not noticed anything, and went up the..They came to where the miners were extending the old tunnel. There the wizard spoke with Licky in.."The Hoary Men!" said Irian, staring openly at him. All Daisy's ballads of the Hoary Men who sailed out of the east to lay the land waste and spit innocent babes on their lances, and the story of how Erreth-Akbe lost the Ring of Peace, and the new songs and the King's Tale about how Archmage Sparrowhawk had gone among the Hoary Men and come back with that ring -. "So. . . how old are you, really?"..language. Their true names in the Old Speech must be memorised in silence. The ambitious student..hmn. They know I love him. As for the ships, some had come back, with the men aboard saying they..can keep his mouth closed. And I'll leave him my lore-books. If he can clean out a henhouse, and.."Do that," the old mage said..They walked past the roaster tower, past the old shaft and the new one, on into the long valley..great forest of Faliern..human beings with a powerful gift of magic, or through the ancient kinship of humans and dragons, increase his soldiery and the fleets he sent out to take slaves and plunder from other lands. As..He went on to the foot of the street. It opened into a small market square. People were gathered..So these are reports of my explorations and discoveries: tales from Earthsea for those who have..He broke free, stood up, stooping; neither of them could stand straight in the low cabin. Clenching and unclenching his hands, he stood as far from her as he could, his back to her..He recognized Hound, though he could not sit up and could barely speak. The old man put his own..IV. Irian..images in his mind: great fires blazing, burning sticks with hands and feet, burning lumps that

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