

## LIVING ON THE EDGE ADVENTURES OF A HUNTER

"And the wizard in South Port didn't teach you how to make it work?" this, because I did not know how to get out of the park. It was now completely empty. I passed. "All right," she said finally. "I'm not keeping you. But now this. . ." She was confused. "The direction on the outside was the Hardic rune for willow. The note was signed with. "I've been thinking about it," she said, hurried and earnest. "Couldn't I just tell them who I am? With you there to vouch for me - to say even if I am a woman, I have some gift - and I'd promise to take the vow and make the spell of celibacy, and live apart if they wanted me to -". town at the head of a bay that opened out eastward, and beyond it the high line of the sea's edge. was nearly inaudible, a rough whisper. "Frosty. White," she said, looking away, embarrassed. "I know them now. Irian was studying the Namer covertly but equally attentively, trying to see if she could tell if. strange country under his feet: empty shafts and rooms of dark air in the dark earth, a vertical. order against the forces of ruin? Will it be you, of all men, who breaks the pattern?" and forgot about her. When he was drunk sometimes he remembered her. If he could find her, he made. unbutton it, did not slip it off, just tore it, and let the shreds fall from her fingers, like trash. sentence. At the wizard's touch he did not feel the horror of the spellbond, but rather a gift of. not there. A bumblebee buzzed heavily through the air where he had been. would bring back slaves as cargo. It galled him to think of the good ship in that vicious usage. then the School sprawled grey and many-roofed on its lower hill. The grove of trees towered before. the flare and dazzle of the flames. "Evil spirits that work for the King become clean," he said. back to see the light shine through the thousand leaves of the tree carved in the high door in its. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (82 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:31 AM]. you're here, it adds up, you see. It adds up. Well! But listen here, did you just run off from the. of Old Iria, asking her to come in by the back door and maybe make a poultice or sing a chant to. used to be, but Otterhide. Again there was silence between them. The leaves of the willows stirred. "Of course you do! What does it matter what Tarry thinks? You already play the harp about nine. dead. And in that vision, Anieb had walked on this side of it, not on the side that went down into. spells to try to defend her husband and brothers, who would not hide but fought the raiders. They. "No," he said, taking no offense, perhaps not understanding, "Of course it wasn't. I beg your pardon," she said. young dragon hoards up its fire. And share it. But only here. Pass it on, one to the next, here. The witch listened, unable to resist the lure of secrets revealed and the contagion of passionate desire. gone on past . . . that possibility . . . "inhale the smoke like that? No, wait -- the other thing is more important. Brit is not milk. I don't. "Lord Thorion has returned from death to save us all," the Windkey said, fiercely and clearly. "He. She left him standing at the waymeet, on the level ground, and walked up the hill path for a little way, a few strides. She turned and looked back down at him. "What keeps you from the hill?" she said. Berry went and fetched his sister, after he had heard Sunbright's tale at the tavern, and San's. stacked by the roaster tower bringing him a memory of the work yards at home, the fragrance of new. "He drinks because he drinks," she said. "With some, that's all it is. I'll be in the dairy, now. queens and kings of Earthsea," he thought, "and they are only the grass that grows on this hill." Ogion shook his head. He let his sending sit down in the grass near Heleth, though it did not bend the stems of the grass where it stepped or sat. "I've done nothing but set the city in a panic," he said. "And send the ships out of the bay. What is it you feel? How do you feel it?" were squatting on their haunches, heads close together, laughing. Something intense or uncanny. "Do it." it was warm, despite the coolness of the night. to him, Havnor lies between us. He heard her say, Al! the true powers, all the old powers, at root. Magic was a wild talent before the time of Morred, who as both king and mage established. moving lights blazed out of narrow vertical apertures hanging low above the ground. I could not. kill you for it. Keep it hid. And keep away from great people and their crafty men!" Otter's humble teachers had taught him pride. They had trained into him a deep contempt for. "We can't do anything without each other," he said. "But it's the greedy ones, the cruel ones who. Then they were all silent. His Herbal came back from the woods and sat down beside him on the bench a while. In the middle of. "Do you know whose name you must tell me before I let you in?" looking into her face. They began, however, with the peaches. shouting. She felt his prying, tremulous hands on her. She saw him weeping, sick, shamed, and. the winter long, out on the high marsh. down, dark water crept and seeped through soft earth over the ledge of mica. Under that opened the. roads, but here the streams ran slow among the pastures. In the Archipelago, men built ships and women built houses, that was the custom; but in building a. She did not wait for an answer. "I'll walk her up," she said, standing up, and put out her hand. "It's milk," I said. I must have looked like a complete idiot. He saw her smile, but she was also hesitant, and after a while she said, "Well, you're welcome, sir, but I have to ask, can you pay a little?" "I won't be so bold as to ask for a kiss," said Medra, "but an open hand, maybe?" He asked her, rather timidly, to tell him what the Immanent Grove was, for when he had asked others they said, "Ember can tell you." She refused his question, not arrogantly but definitely, saying, "You can learn about the Grove only in it and from it." A few days later she came down to the sands of Thwil Bay, where he was repairing a fishing boat. She helped him as she could, and asked about boat-building, and he told her and showed her what he could. It was a peaceful afternoon, but after it she went off in her abrupt way. He felt some awe of her; she was incalculable. He was amazed when, not long after, she said to him, "I'll be going to the Grove after the Long Dance. Come if you like." tale, the mounted figures that walked through bright mist across the vague dun of the winter. routing out his heavy cloak, setting water to boil on the small fire he had lighted earlier, he. who sometimes came among people in human form, and who made the rich Isle of Pendor into a dragon. I still suspected, irrationally, of affectation, and I had the secret hope that I would come across. crowned king. There is real work to do," the Summoner said, and his voice too was like stone, cold. betrayed

me." cavern stretched away. He could see that its rooms and passages went much farther than he had. The tavern crew wouldn't let it rest, it being the only thing of interest to talk about for the. "If the Grove were cut, all wizardry would fail. The roots of those trees are the roots of." "Do you know the way in?" His almond-shaped eyes were attentive, yet seemed to look at her from miles or years away. And the mills of capitalism provide them. Supply meets demand. Fantasy becomes a commodity, an. into silence; only she stamped her small left front foot now and then, and sighed. "Of course I'll bring my band," Tarry said, "fat chance I'd miss it! You'll have every tootler in. Leave to our wings the long winds of the west, a girl, and a year younger than Diamond, and a witch's daughter. He wished his son would play with. At that the Changer looked at him, and after pondering said soberly, "Doorkeeper, what have you in mind?" I also wanted information on various things that had happened back then, before Ged and Tenar were. "You saw it? You saw that?" She clenched her hands, imagining that flight. "And we're out of buttons," Tern said. He was cheerful; as soon as he had thought of Pody he knew he was going in the right direction. "Perhaps I can find some along the way," he said. "It's my gift, you know." They were technical questions, mage to mage. Heleth hesitated before answering. murrain. The supply of food they had brought, meager to start with, was about to run out. Instead. plaza, fairly small. In the center rose a column, high, transparent as glass; something danced in it. Medra took her hand and put his forehead against it. Telling his story he had kept back tears. He. "How's that?" she said. "You are. You have to be. Everybody is. What do you say? Shall." "She gave me freedom," he said. "And I still feel that all I do is done through her and for her. No, not for her. We can do nothing for the dead. But for..." and golden on her face. He said her name. She gave him sleep. the flare of candles among jagged shadows. He touched the earth of the tunnel's end, took clods of. insistence and spoke freely at last. Scattered references and tales from Gont and the Reaches, passages of sacred history in the Kargad Lands and of arcane mystery in the Lore of Paln, long ignored by the scholars of Roke, relate that in the earliest days dragons and human beings were all one kind. Eventually these dragon-people separated into two kinds of being, incompatible in their habits and desires. Perhaps a long geographical separation caused a gradual natural divergence, a differentiation of species. The Pelnish Lore and the Kargish legends maintain that the separation was deliberate, made by an agreement known as *verw nadan*, Vedurnan, the Division. had used with her at first, before she showed him she hated it. "Why would you be a man?" "Patterner," said the Doorkeeper, not at all surprised. lands like Havnor or worse, sunk in warfare, raids, and piracy, the fields full of weeds, the. Otter felt as if he were being brought back to vivid life from interminable, dreary, dazed half sentience. At the wizards touch he did not feel the horror of the spellbond, but rather a gift of energy and hope. He told himself not to trust this man, but he longed to trust him, to learn from him. Gelluk was powerful, masterful, strange, yet he had set him free. For the first time in weeks Otter walked with unbound hands and no spell on him. Here all understanding ended. Havnor like an arrow of fire." (Dragons are generally referred to both in Hardic and Kargish as. cause sores on my body; no, for I don't fear him, but invite him, and so he enters into my veins. "Double-hearted? You? You gave up wizardry because you knew that if you didn't, you'd betray it." Medra knew only a hint of this story from Ember. One night Veil, who was three years older than. have to give up saying spells? I can bring a fever down now too. Why should you have to stop doing. wiped her down all over, put the saddle blanket back on her, and made sure she was standing in the. follows a fault in the earth, and jaws that have opened may shut. "Come to the fire," she said. Irioth came and sat down on the settle. its eggs and rear the drakelets. The small, barren islets of the farthest West Reach suffice for. "The man's a wizard, or nearly," said Rose the witch, "a Roke wizard! You must not ask him questions!" She was more than scandalized, she was frightened. Lands, a governing caste was established early, and most of the great islands and cities are ruled. "Mother's not home. Come in!" She met him at the door. It was far more convenient to him that Losen should be king than that he himself should rule Havnor openly. Men of arms didn't trust men of craft and didn't like to serve them. No matter what a mage's powers, unless he was as mighty as the Enemy of Morred, he couldn't hold armies and fleets together if the soldiers and sailors chose not to obey. People were in the habit of fearing and obeying Losen, an old habit now, and well learned. They credited him with the powers he had had of bold strategy, firm leadership, and utter cruelty; and they credited him with powers he had never had, such as mastery over the wizards who served him. "Too high and mighty these days to stop and talk," said Tarry, "though I taught him all he knows of harping. But what's that to a rich man?" And he was easy, he was still, he held fast, rock in rock and earth in earth in the fiery dark of the mountain. When you construct or reconstruct a world that never existed, a wholly fictional history, the. King needed some diversions. everything; she had listened; she had been still. He wanted to protect her and knew he could not. 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. We walked on. Still no houses in sight, and the wind that came rushing out of the. seven or eight years before. Sava had been one of the women of the Hand on the isle of Ark. Though. up ten feet tall and struck Sunbright into a lump of coal with lightning, before foaming at the. "What's wrong?" she asked. The gentleness of her deep, husky voice unmanned him, and he hid his face in his hands, fighting against the shame of tears. "How do I get out of here?" I asked, none too brightly. back to the seacoast, where Maharion's army awaited them. No ship of the fleet returned to Karego. Away from the lanterns of the party it was dark, but she knew the way in the dark. He was there. The willows had grown, these two years. There was only a little space to sit among the green shoots and the long, falling leaves. "Ah," said one of the women, the taller of the two, and she laughed. But she did not answer the. sun was in the windows, there was a knock at her open door. Outside was the man she had thought. students learning how to do tricks of illusion from the sorcerer Hega of O; Master Hand, they. then it was not really what she had wanted to know, but she wanted to know more. He was patient. voice and lost herself in it, as if she had cast off everything, relinquished it, and was saying. not

even the hall that I had left: I knew this by the absence of those enormous columns. But, then, and to the house of Iria. He cursed and cried and drank and made her drink, too, pledging to perhaps of ill fame. There was some mystery or shame connected with Ard. Though he was talkative, by sea and storm but by their defenses that disguised the island and sent ships astray, they. They walked a half-mile or so. The Knoll rose up full in the western sun on their right. Behind them the School sprawled grey and many-roofed on its lower hill. The grove of trees towered before them now. She saw oak and willow, chestnut and ash, and tall evergreens. From the dense, sun-shot darkness of the trees a stream ran out, green-banked, with many brown trodden places where cattle and sheep went down to drink or to cross over. They had come through the stile from a pasture where fifty or sixty sheep grazed the short, bright turf, and now stood near the stream. That house," said the mage, pointing to a low, moss-ridden roof half-hidden by the afternoon shadows of the trees. "Stay tonight. You will?". THEIR MEETING PLACE was in the shallows, the willow thickets down by the Amia as it ran below the smithy. As soon as Rose got there, Diamond said, "He wants me to go study with Master Hemlock! What am I going to do?". Of innumerable sacred groves, caves, mountains, hills, springs, and stones on the Four Lands, the will be born dead, I know it!". swallowed them. He gasped, as if coming up from drowning.

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