

THE VODKA TRAIL

"Irian of Way, my lords," said the Doorkeeper. They were all silent. He motioned her to come farther into the room. "The Master Changer you have met," he said. He named all the others, but she could not take in the names of the masteries, except that the Master Herbal was the one she had taken to be a gardener, and the youngest-looking of them, a tall man with a stern, beautiful face that seemed carved out of dark stone, was the Master Summoner. It was he who spoke, when the Doorkeeper was done. "A woman," he said. "I told them," he said, "that if they went out Medra's Gate this day, they'd never go back through him away. I thought him insignificant, and so harmless. But he lied to you and beguiled you. You of Havnor had been burnt to the ground. The king's wizards had spell-caught and killed several. He drew back, staring, and made a fierce motion of his hand that brushed away the stream in a spray like a fountain blown by the wind. The gash in the earth grew deeper, revealing the ledge of mica. With a sharp rending crack the glittering stone split apart. Under it was darkness. Apple on the tree. But for these ills, somebody had to be to blame: and the witch or sorcerer was work undone, to be a vagrant musician, a harper twanging and singing and grinning for pennies --. When he unbound him, the boy tried to pretend he was still stone, and would not speak. Early had to go into his mind, in the way he had learned from Gelluk long ago, when Gelluk was a true master of his art. He found out what he could. Then the boy was no good for anything and had to be disposed of. It was humiliating, again, to be outwitted by the very stupidity of these people; and all he had learned about Roke was that the Hand was there, and a school where they taught wizardry. And he had learned a man's name. . . smiled. He was a peaceful man, but he did not mind a bit of danger. Gelluk watched him with his inquisitive, affectionate look, and when Otter stood up, wincing and. "Destroy us? Destroy this hill? The trees there?" She looked down to a grove of trees not far from the hill. "Maybe Segoy who made them could unmake them. Maybe the earth will destroy herself. Maybe she'll destroy herself through our hands, in the end. But not through yours. False king, false dragon, false man, don't come to Roke Knoll until you know the ground you stand on." She made one gesture of her hand, downward to the earth. . . every child's education are taught and learned aloud, passed on down the years from living voice. Doorkeeper, you know I'd never question your judgment, but the Rule is clear. I have to ask what. "Off you go, then," she said, "and leave us to settle this matter of the Rule." Her frown was as. 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. . . "What form is he in?". He came back in the evening, lamer than ever, for of course San had walked him clear out into the Long Fields where most of his beeves were. Nobody had horses but Alder, and they were for his cowboys. She gave her guest a basin of hot water and a clean towel for his poor feet, and then thought to ask him if he might want a bath, which he did. They heated the water and filled the old tub, and she went into her room while he had his bath on the hearth. When she came out it was all cleared away and wiped up, the towels hung before the fire. She'd never known a man to look after things like that, and who would have expected it of a rich man? Wouldn't he have servants, where he came from? But he was no more trouble than the cat. He washed his own clothes, even his bedsheet, had it done and hung out one sunny day before she knew what he was doing. "You needn't do that, sir, I'll do your things with mine," she said. "Maybe our hope is there," said the Namer. . . and cruelty. I look at the world, at the forests and the mountain here, the sky, and it's all. We have inhabited both the actual and the imaginary realms for a long time. But we don't live in. He looked from one sister to the other: the one so mild and so immovable, the other, under her. They went to Gont and sought our lord, to find what that meant, "a woman on Gont". Eh? But they. In the rage of his agony the Enemy raised up a great wave and sent it speeding to overwhelm the. Old Speech. Hardic practitioners of the art magic learn it from their teachers. Sorcerers and sparks, no, fireflies, swarms of burning moths. The chaos of lights extinguished the stars. When I. "You have been a witch, Irian?". He did as he often did, made a little design out of whatever lay to hand: on the bit of sand on the riverbank in front of him he set a leaf-stem, a grassblade, and several pebbles. He studied them and rearranged them. "Now I must speak of harm," he said. . . irritable and arrogant, the dragons may have felt threatened by the increasing population and. The Doorkeeper caught up with her as she came to a cross-corridor and stood not knowing which way. the palace of the kings. "A great enemy has gathered against you, south in the Inmost Sea, and we." "What are you saying, Nais? What about pilots? And various rescue workers? And those. naked in the chill of the rain. All her will was aimed on walking forward; she had nothing else in. declared to be the Empire of the Sky and the Godkings official title was All-Emperor. . . mended their nets. There was a hearth there, and they would light the fire. People came even from. "And if. . ." Enlad. "Really? Why not?". He knew it was well to use caution with this man. Otter had defeated Tinaral, and there was this. "I am. . ." wisdom," said the Archmage. He looked at Emer again. "May he stay here, mistress? Is that your. Ogion, obedient, bringing himself back to himself in the stuffy, tapestried room in Gont Port, did not understand the old man's joke until he turned to the window and saw the Armed Cliffs down at the end of the long bay, the jaws ready to snap shut. "I will," he said, and set to it. "What all the students do. Live alone in a stone cell and learn to be wise! It might not be what you dream it to be, but that, too, you'd learn." The house vanished. No walls, no roof, nobody. Early stood on the dust of the village square in the sunshine of morning with his arms in the air. . . the moment I stood before them and was opening my mouth to speak, I saw that she was eating. looked at the pages. Long, long lists of names and numbers, debts and credits, profits and losses. . . shepherds there. A year ago last spring. That wizard they spoke of came there, casting spells. . . "About the hundred years?". spirits like a stone. There was nothing here for him except the girl Dragonfly, who had come to. "She bled again just now, and I couldn't stop it," Dory said. Tears ran out of her eyes and down. "Now, what is forbidden to the summoner, or any wizard, is to call a living spirit. We can

call to like all women, she was inclined to babble and gossip, and indiscriminate in her friendships. The these old mines. And he wants it. So it's best for us that we find it. Now I'll walk you out. It's. He was only a little sorcerer, a cheating healer with a few sorry spells. Or so he seemed. What if. and had not recognized it, back then, before the earthquake that had sunk a half mile of the coast. Wathort. Maybe that man, too, had thought he could do no harm. blowing, he saw, high and far above the blue strait and the vaguer blue-brown of the land, the. "Any brit? How could he not have it?" everything that had happened to me in the past several hours. brightly lit; I had the impression that above it trains of some kind were running, since the floor. the wizards. Though they speak the True Speech, they are endlessly devious. Some of them clearly. When he saw it, faint and green above the misty sea, he cried out—the men in the ships heard the dragon scream—and flew on faster, leaving them to follow him to the conquest. masthead, taking in sail at the hint of a west wind. But the wind held steady from the north. A. always did. "Take me there," he said, trying to control himself, but so violently compelling Otter. "Yes, sir. I decided that I don't want to be a wizard." sometimes weakened and faded. Otter dared not try to summon her. Hand said, "Irian, I am sorry. Ivory was my pupil. If I taught him badly, I did worse in sending." "No. So this drinking is like wearing clothes? Just as necessary?" He had been through a long hard trial and had taken a great chance against a great power. His. and before him. As when he had gone through the night with Anieb to her death, each step into the. Erreth-Akbe, sailing into the bay "with sails worn transparent by the eastern winds," could not. "Who's to lay this floor?" he said, now merely querulous. "So it was ordained by the first Archmage, centuries ago," said Ivory. "But ... I too have. fault and they would know nothing about it. He thought about it for a long time, working out how. Ivory smiled. He said nothing, but she knew how petty the doings of a village witch appeared to. THE ISLAND OF SEMEL lies north and west across the Pelnish Sea from Havnor, south and west of the Enlades. Though it is one of the great isles of the Earthsea Archipelago, there aren't many stories from Semel. Enlad has its glorious history, and Havnor its wealth, and Paln its ill repute, but Semel has only cattle and sheep, forests and little towns, and the great silent volcano called Andanden standing over all. The dragons offered no threat during this period, and the Kargs had withdrawn into their own internal quarrels, but the disintegration of the society of the Archipelago worsened as the years went on. Moral and intellectual continuity lay only in the knowledge and teaching of The Creation and the other myths and hero-stories, and in the preservation of crafts and skills: among them the art magic used for right ends. He told Birch that he had received a sending from his teacher on Roke, the Master Hand, and must. along with us -- you can't take a step here, I thought, it's a wonder they still have legs -- but this. held the other end, following him. He let Otter walk into a couple of the spells, and after that. the Mountain. you and watch what they do, you think about it seriously, and you try to tell it honestly, so that. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (45 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:31 AM]. fierce as ever, but her voice was seldom as harsh as this when she spoke to him. "Walked." She shuddered. beyond comprehension and he was nothing at all. He woke from those dreams shaken and shamed. In. ends. "tower were naked or wore only breechclout and moccasins. Otter glanced again at the slave. "So. . . how old are you, really?" To which Silence of course had said nothing, letting him hear what he had said and feel its. He was half asleep, sitting on the ground in the shade by the barracks, the smell of the logs. "It would be a terrible long way," said Mead. highly strung, and worn out, having walked forty miles in sixteen hours without food. "It'll stop by midday," the wizard told the chickens. He fed them and squelched back to the house with three warm eggs. When he was a child he had liked to walk in mud. He remembered enjoying the cool of it rising between his toes. He still like to go barefoot, but no longer enjoyed mud; it was sticky stuff, and he disliked stooping to clean his feet before going into the house. When he'd had a dirt floor it hadn't mattered, but now he had a wooden floor, like a lord or a merchant or an archmage. To keep the cold and damp out of his bones. Not his own notion. Silence had come up from Gont Port, last spring, to lay a floor in the old house. They had had one of their arguments about it. He should have known better, after all this time, than to argue with Silence. need a room for the night, I have one. Or San might, if you're going to the village." Yet as Dory spoke he saw what the girl saw: a long hill going down into darkness, and across it, fought, "talon and fire and word and sword," until: "Your fear. Did you think I would attack you, or what? But that's ridiculous!" that darkened the air about him for an instant. Summoner, in the Language of the Making, the tongue the dragons speak. "That I'm a fool." cowboys along. They made a camp of sorts, with a groundcloth and a half tent. There was nothing to. violence, their actors to dolls, and their truth- telling to sentimental platitude. Heroes. Ogiön shook his head. He let his sending sit down in the grass near Heleth, though it did not bend. Nobody fools with me. We make a pretty good living. Winters, I go stay with Mother and help her. and flew. That was a leap in the darkness. Which of them had said it? "Forty -- what of it?" Taken back to Omer, one of the boys broke down and blubbered about joining the Hand. Hearing that. The spoken name of a True Rune may be the word it signifies in the Old Speech, or it may be one of the connotations of the rune translated into Hardic. The names of commonly used runes such as Pirr (used to protect from fire, wind, and madness), Sifl ("speed well"), Simn ("work well") are used without ceremony by ordinary people speaking Hardic; but practitioners of magic speak even such well-known, often used names with caution, since they are in fact words in the Old Speech, and may influence events in unintended or unexpected ways. long rows and beds of vegetables, greens, and herbs, with berry canes and fruit trees beyond. She. "I was born in Havnor and trained as a shipwright and a sorcerer. I was on a ship bound from Geath to O Port. I was spared alone from drowning, last night, when a witchwind struck." He was silent then. The thought of the ship and the chained men in her swallowed his mind as the black sea had swallowed them. He gasped, as if coming up from drowning. confused.

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