

## GRIM LOVELIES

know. . .". "Patterner," said the Doorkeeper, not at all surprised. The traveler stood at the crossway and whistled back at the reeds. better. He knew that magic itself resists untruth. Conjuring, sleight of hand, and false commerce. "I guess he did. Another curer came up this way, a fellow that's been by here before. Doesn't comfort to talk to him even if he was no longer there, "is get into the mountain, right inside; known to anybody but the giver and to the owner, who both keep it secret all their life. The power. the women of the Hand, though we're not women only. But it serves to call ourselves women, for the. between sorcerers over work was nothing new and nothing to take on about. But San and his wife and. "Close!" Otter cried, dropping to his knees, his hands on the earth, on the raw lips of the crevasse. "Close, Mother! Be healed, be whole!" He pleaded, begged, speaking in the Language of the Making words he did not know until he spoke them. "Mother, be whole!" he said, and the broken ground groaned and moved, drawing together, healing itself. None of the mages answered him. In the silence, the men with him murmured, and a voice among them. From time to time in the years since then, Dulse remembered how he hadn't lost his temper when Silence asked about keeping goats; and each time the memory gave him a quiet satisfaction, like that of finishing the last bite of a perfectly ripe pear. and shepherds followed their flocks over the mountain to better pastures. The old house that had. "Stand!" he said to it in its language, and let go of it. It stood as if he had driven it into a socket. now. From the very first moment I was invariably behind in everything that went on, and the. "I won't sail my boat across Havnor, dear love. I plan to go around it. By water." He could always make her laugh; he was the only one who could. When he was away, she was quiet-voiced and even-tempered, having learned the uselessness of impatience in the work that must be done. Sometimes she still scowled, sometimes she smiled, but she did not laugh. When she could, she went to the Grove alone, as she had always done. But in these years of the building of the House and the founding of the school, she could go there seldom, and even then she might take a couple of students to learn with her the ways through the forest and the patterns of the leaves; for she was the Patterner. "There was no place for him among the Masters, since a new Master Summoner had been chosen, a. around them, a few lights glimmering, pulsing, so that they were encircled now by an orange. him. . .". broken staff. tightening as he moved. He could stand, but could not take a step towards the door. He could not. "Gully," he named himself after a pause, and she thought it was a name he had made up to call. I put out my cigarette. the silence by splashing and breathing hard. He slogged back up the path through the reeds till he. knowledge. The patterns the shadows of their leaves make in the sunlight write the words Segoy. you could, no one would want to. You can't fly before you're thirty. You have to have two. "It must be weird, coming back like this," she said almost in a whisper. She shuddered. hid some reluctance or self-doubt. It was the father's idea, not the boy's, that he was gifted. "What's that all about?" Golden said to his wife, a rhetorical question. She looked at him and said nothing, a non-rhetorical answer. about it. What I said to you about men of a craft sticking together. And who we work for. Couldn't. Something happened. I heard raised voices. I leaned out of my seat. Several rows in front. people they told me of, but I don't know. I think the trees I saw from the hill hold some great. But Heleth was shaking his head: "No," he said, "no time. Not your kind of thing." He was more and. head and he would practice it mentally on the harp in his mind, and so drift off to sleep. "I'm all right," she said. "Diamond." He trilled and caroled about the house; he knew any tune as soon as he heard it, and. Her eyes were shining and attentive. passengers. The bright colors of the women's clothes I had by now learned to accept, but the men. Roke School was founded by both men and women, and both men and women taught and learned there. "A mage called Highdrake told me that when Ath stayed in Pendor, he told a wizard there that he'd left the Book of Names with a woman in the Ninety Isles for safekeeping." "Some old women down by the docks. An old sorcerer. His sister." to do it, making the spell very carefully. It was the reversal of a finding charm: a losing charm. "Avert!" Irian blurted out, making the sign to prevent word from becoming deed. None of the men. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (76 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:31 AM]. When she asked him if students came there from the Great House, he said, "Sometimes." Another time. "We knew there was a great gift in her," Ayo said, and then fell silent for a while. "We didn't. ground glimmered faintly before their feet. That was no doubt Kalessin taking Ged home, multiplied by sailors making a good story better. But. wondered if he had always talked to himself, if he had talked all the time when Silence lived with. gave her mine." He spoke haltingly, with long pauses. "It was I that walked with the wizard," "But you can? Right? You really can? No," she whispered, as if to herself, "you are not. sound. She adjusted the back of it, gave me a smile, and left. I sat down. The cushions were. I started toward her. She raised her hands. How far does the forest go? and parts of islands, parts of ships, parts of the human body. The words never made sense, never. sweeps half manned, Medra's staying spell half spoken, when the witchwind struck. Books of history and the records and recipes for magic exist only in written form- the latter usually in a mixture of Hardic runic writing and True Runes. Of a lore-book (a compilation of spells made and annotated by a wizard, or by a lineage of wizards) there is usually one copy only. begun to get a sense of the missing word that might fill one of the gaps, he almost had it, and. the flowers -- and my voice failed me. She was calmly chewing the delicate petals. She looked up. Maybe that's what the Masters are afraid of. Maybe celibacy isn't as necessary as the Rule of Roke. Tawny," Gift said, very earnest. "I know it." "That's the trouble, love," said Tawny. "And you. He sat up. The dark sea was so quiet that the stars were reflected here and there on the sleek lee. claiming lands and cities as his property. The warlords made those they conquered slaves, and. She asked no more questions. She never argued; it was one of her virtues. "They won't buy our milk and cheese," Berry whined. or island twice without years between, letting his trail grow cold. Even so he began to be spoken. "My father," he began, and stopped, and gave a kind of laugh. "They don't go together," he

said. "Mages can do more than that," the girl said. "What Master?" .learn an art you had no native gift for. In such discussions they worked out the names that ever. "Did Nemmerle know you were coming to work with me?" .and her shame turned slowly into anger. .In the Archipelago, men built ships and women built houses, that was the custom; but in building a great structure women let men work with them, not having the miners' superstitions that kept men out of the mines, or the shipwrights' that forbade women to watch a keel laid. So both men and women of great power raised the Great House on Roke. Its cornerstone was set on a hilltop above Thwil Town, near the Grove and looking to the Knoll. Its walls were built not only of stone and wood, but founded deep on magic and made strong with spells. .direction south. Central level -- gleeders, red local, white express, A, B, and V. Ulder level, .down the path. He had not been standing there until the other mage said 'Ah.' Irian stared from. Only a few steps ahead of them now was the place where underfoot, underground, two or three feet down, dark water crept and seeped through soft earth over the ledge of mica. Under that opened the hollow cavern and the lode of cinnabar. .salt destroyer," says the poem. But as he fled, he captured her brother Salan, who was sailing. the dark night brings forth the moon!" .people, Morred withdrew. .The town at the bay's head, Thwil, shared something of the uncanniness of the Knoll and the Grove, for though the raiders had run through it seeking slaves and plunder and setting fires, the fires had gone out and the narrow streets had sent the marauders astray. Most of the islanders who survived were wise women and their children, who had hidden themselves in the town or in the Immanent Grove. The men now on Roke were those spared children, grown, and a few men now grown old. There was no government but that of the women of the Hand, for it was their spells that had protected Roke so long and protected it far more closely now. .They let him walk among them, wild as they were and having had nothing from men's hands but. He forgave her gracefully. He did not try a love-charm on her again. "It's milk," I said. I must have looked like a complete idiot. .apart with the palm of his hand. "Everything is practice," Tangle said. She was never ill-natured. She seldom thought to do. He spoke, giving her his true name: "I am Medra." "Oh, it's you who have it to spare, sir. We're poor folk here. And ignorant," she said, with a. As she blew out the lamp and got into bed, the witch's daughter heard an owl calling, the little. .The slave, short and thin, hairless, with running sores on his hands and arms, uncapped a stone cup by the rim of the condensing shaft. Gelluk peered in, eager as a child. "So tiny," he murmured. "So young. The tiny Prince, the baby Lord, Lord Turres. Seed of the world! Soul-jewel!" .what seemed the confines of the wood. They walked there in silence, and spoke seldom when they. At the stream Serrenen, where it runs within the north wall of the city, the midwife gave Otter. hungry," Ember said. "Nais. . ." I said quietly. I dropped my hands. "You did?" .put her face in her hands. .looked back at him with a grin. .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. .thought to ask him if he might want a bath, which he did. They heated the water and filled the old. entertainers and musicians it was their living, and though uninvited they were welcomed. A tale- .there were few guards, and they were not on the alert, since the wizard's spells had kept the. These legends are best preserved in Hur-at-Hur, the easternmost of the Kargad Lands, where dragons. The Changer and a thin, keen-faced old man standing beside him nodded in agreement. The Master Hand said, "Irian, I am sorry. Ivory was my pupil. If I taught him badly, I did worse in sending him away. I thought him insignificant, and so harmless. But he lied to you and beguiled you. You must not feel shame. The fault was his, and mine." .were challenged by Irioth. His gift was as great as Thorion's, I think. He used it to use men, to. "Not if I carry a staff," he said. .The evil reputation magic had gained during the Dark Time, however, continued to cling to many of the practices of sorcerers and witches. Women's powers were particularly distrusted and maligned, the more so as they were conflated with the Old Powers. "She came to this place at this time," the Namer said. "And to this place, at this time, no one comes by chance. All any of us knows is how it seems to us. There are names behind names, my Lord Healer." .And the Old Powers of the Earth, which are manifest at Roke Knoll, the Immanent Grove, the Tombs. "I forget-I always forget," he said, downcast again. "I forget the walls of the prison. I'm not such a fool when I'm outside them... When I'm here I can't believe it is a prison. But outside, without you, I remember... I don't want to go, but I have to go. I don't want to admit that anything here can be wrong or go wrong, but I have to... I'll go this time, and I will go north, Elehal. But when I come back I'll stay. What I need to find I'll find here. Haven't I found it already?" .The wizard stepped forward. "I come," he said in his joyous, tender voice, and he strode. "I'd always counted on your going into the family business," Golden said. His tone was neutral. .He did not forgive his son. It would have made a happy ending, but he would not have it. To leave. fingers on the metal surface of the table, and from the wall jumped a nickel claw, which tossed a. and further weakness among us. I will speak no longer and say nothing else in her presence. The. communities from drought, plague, invaders, dragons, and the unscrupulous use of their art. .Rose was very dark-skinned, with a cloud of crinkled hair, a thin mouth, an intent, serious face. Her feet and legs and hands were bare and dirty, her skirt and jacket disreputable. Her dirty toes and fingers were delicate and elegant, and a necklace of amethysts gleamed under the torn, buttonless jacket. Her mother, Tangle, made a good living by curing and healing, bone-knitting and birth-easing, and selling spells of finding, love-potions, and sleeping-drafts. She could afford to dress herself and her daughter in new clothes, buy shoes, and keep clean, but it didn't occur to her to do so. Nor was housekeeping one of her interests. She and Rose lived mostly on boiled chicken and fried eggs, as she was often paid in poultry. The yard of their two-room house was a wilderness of cats and hens. She liked cats, toads, and jewels. The amethyst necklace had been payment for the safe delivery of a son to Golden's head forester. Tangle herself wore armfuls of bracelets and bangles that flashed and crashed when she flicked out an impatient spell. At times she wore a kitten on her shoulder. She was not an attentive mother. Rose had demanded, at seven years old, "Why did you have me if you didn't want me?" .knew about Early. Not a sign of him nor from him. Maybe I could

find him, they said, joking me, from women, and they want men to make the decisions for all. Now what compromise can we make with. Golden reassured him that the wizard had actually said so, though of course what kind of a gift, too drunk to talk. Haven't seen the old man for years. He had a daughter, I think." The cowboys were discussing whether or not it was safe to eat the meat of a steer dead of the murrain. The supply of food they had brought, meager to start with, was about to run out. Instead of riding twenty or thirty miles to restock, they wanted to cut the tongue out of a steer that had died nearby that morning. There was a little struggle in the mind, but the mouth opened and the tongue moved: "Medra." Medra stayed three years with Highdrake, and when the old mage died, the Lord of Pendor asked Medra to take his place. Despite his ranting and scolding against dragon hunters, High-drake had been honored in his island, and his successor would have both honor and power. Perhaps tempted to think that he had come as near to Morred's Isle as he would ever come, Medra stayed a while longer on Pendor. He went out with the young lord in his ship, past the Toringates and far into the West Reach, to look for dragons. There was a great longing in his heart to see a dragon. But untimely storms, the evil weather of those years, drove their ship back to Ingat three times, and Medra refused to run her west again into those gales. He had learned a good deal about weatherworking since his days in a catboat on Havnor Bay. Dragonfly peered close at Rose's work. Rose brought out a maggot, dropped it, spat on it, and probed again. The girl leaned up against the ewe, and the ewe leaned against the girl, giving and receiving comfort. Rose extracted, dropped, and spat on the last maggot, and said, "Just hand me that bucket now." She bathed the sore with salt water. The ewe sighed deeply and suddenly walked out of the yard, heading for home. She had had enough of medicine. "Bucky!" Rose shouted. A grubby child appeared from under a bush where he had been asleep and trailed after the ewe, of whom he was nominally in charge although she was older, larger, better fed, and probably wiser than he was. and his bubble level in it. And he wasn't altogether lying about the wind. Several times he had. "How else?" he said. startled gaze, saw him question the Doorkeeper, low-voiced, intense. The four Kargad islands are mostly arid in climate but fertile when watered and cultivated. The pushed and shoved in the swarming crowds, I attempted to work my way to some clear space, but. The wizard sometimes had him come with him to his work, mostly laying spells of safety on ships. "So some wise men say," said Veil mildly, and smiled again, and bade him goodbye. My eyes still closed, I touched my chest; I had my sweater on; if I'd fallen asleep without. the ending from the beginning, her own silken flanks, her legs sliding through waterweeds. All trouble and restlessness washed. anything much for her daughter, but never hurt her, never scolded her, and gave her whatever she. The original loose, roughly descriptive use of the words witch, sorcerer, wizard, was codified into a strict hierarchy by Halkel. Under his rules: Early did not punish Hound for his failure, but he remembered it. He was not used to failures and

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