

THE LAIRDS LUCK AND OTHER FIRESIDE TALES

"If I went away -" She saw him shake his head. "I could go to the Namer -." "What's Alder paying you for all this?" she demanded while the water was heating. She was still. On the island of Ark, and in Orrimy on Hosk, and down among the Ninety Isles, there are tales about a man who came seeking for a land where people remembered the justice of the kings and the honor of wizards, and he called that land Morred's Isle. There's no knowing if these stories are about Medra, since he went under many names, seldom if ever calling himself Otter any more. Gelluk's fall had not brought Losen down. The pirate king had other wizards in his pay, among them a man called Early, who would have liked to find the young upstart who defeated his master Gelluk. And Early had a good chance of tracing him. Losen's power stretched all across Havnor and the north of the Inmost Sea, growing with the years; and the Hound's nose was as keen as ever. wings, a butterfly. He put out his finger and the butterfly lighted on it. He shook his finger and. The Osskili use the Hardic runes to write their language, since they trade mostly with Hardic-speaking lands. Some people of great innate and trained power are able to find out the true name of another, or even to have it come to them unsought. Since such knowledge can be betrayed or misused, it is immensely dangerous. Ordinary people-and dragons-keep their true name secret; wizards hide and defend theirs with spells. Morred could not even begin to fight his Enemy until he saw his Enemy's name written in the dust by the falling rain. Ged could force the dragon Yevaud to obey him, having by both wizardry and scholarship discovered Yevaud's true name under centuries of false ones. feet. No one was there. She stood afire, shaking with rage. She leapt back down the bank, found. against his arm. He asked her who she was, and what they had done, and how they had done it, but. buckets, going to the pump. She would not use the stream water for anything at all, these days. My eyes still closed, I touched my chest; I had my sweater on; if I'd fallen asleep without. "He lived always on Roke, for it's there that all knowledge of magic comes and is kept. And he had. "If Roke was now what it once was, known to be strong, those who fear us would come again to destroy us," said Veil. "Then to me you are Silence," the wizard said. "You can sleep in the nook under the west window. There's an old pallet in the woodhouse. Air it. Don't bring mice in with it." And he stalked off towards the Overfell, angry with the boy for coming and with himself for giving in; but it was not anger that made his heart pound. Striding along-he could stride, then-with the seawind pushing at him always from the left and the early sunlight on the sea out past the vast shadow of the mountain, he thought of the Mages of Roke, the masters of the art magic, the professors of mystery and power. "He was too much for 'em, was he? And he'll be too much for me," he thought, and smiled. He was a peaceful man, but he did not mind a bit of danger. bowing down before her, bowing slowly down to earth, and lying on it. in the air, turned concave, and became motionless. We sat facing each other; the girl tapped two. all the eastern sky he saw the foam and spittle run scarlet from her mouth. Sometimes she clutched. And it's true that in the time of Medra and Elehal the people of Roke, men and women, had no fear. Gont Port lies at the inner end of a long narrow bay between steep shores. Its entrance from the sea is between two great headlands, the Gates of the Port, the Armed Cliffs, not a hundred feet apart. They are safe from sea-pirates in Gont Port. But their safety is their danger; the long bay follows a fault in the earth, and jaws that have opened may shut. The so-called Six Hundred Runes of Hardic are not the Hardic runes used to write the ordinary. "You're not," Irian said. She thought him between thirty and forty, though it was hard to tell; of pulling it off, but it pleased him as a gesture of disrespect to all the piety and pomposity of. As they coasted that island, he himself put an illusion about Hopeful, so that she would seem not. "Even if I argued for you. They won't listen. The Rule of Roke forbids women to be taught any high. "I think you feared him." gift. He had forced them to boil any water they used. Now he said, "If you eat that meat, in a year you'll begin to get dizzy. You'll end with the blind staggers and die as they do." looked at me, and reddened terribly. "No doubt that's what Alder gave you," she said. "The flint!" dances, races, sacrifices, carvings, songs, music, and silence. Worship was both casual and. stung by flies. He said, "Oh! I can't --!" He bolted off into the dusk beyond the lanterns hanging. She was in his charge, in his care, he had known that when he saw her. Though she came to destroy. thousand years ago. years before?. fly to Roke. Or swim, or sail, or come in any way at all. So we must ask what brought you here." him to, and sobbed in weariness, and slept. After she died, he lived a while alone in the small house near the Grove. The summer ended too soon that year. Rain came early; snow fell in autumn even as far south as. "Have you anything to tell me?" Dulse asked them. "I'd tell you mine," she said. "If that... if that's how we should begin." Changer, master of the spells that transform matter and bodies. "We do not teach women here," said the Windkey. "You know that." indeed he let one of the children filch a little mirror of polished brass, seeing it vanish under. "Because it would have meant only one thing." Kembermouth, a walled, prosperous port city. They left the carter to his master's business and. that she might see me, I walked more and more slowly. I was already in the ring of brightness. Making. "Come along, then, Ulla," he said, and the heifer came a step or two towards him, towards. uneasy in an ordinary-looking town on a sweet spring morning, but in such silence he must wonder. under the Kings, became common. Magic was the primary weapon in forays and battles. Wizards hired. "Who does?" kill you for it. Keep it hid. And keep away from great people and their crafty men!" behind a city horse, in a city cart, like a prince!" the city was beautiful and peaceful and the people prosperous. had won his staff on Roke, was used to having boys come to him begging to be tested and, if they. dragons the wing. harmful. He did not talk to his teachers about it. If he was doing wrong, it was none of their. fulfilled, the son of Morred is crowned, and yet we have no peace. Where have we gone wrong? Why. stems, and the scattered glow in their hair -- a luminescent powder? A narrow passage led me to a. dragon hunters, but they withdrew from their encroachments on peopled islands and peaceful. "Said he thought he'd better keep the doors," said the Herbal. He closed is many-pocketed pouch carefully and

looked around at the others. "But I don't know if he can keep a lid on the ant-hill." "I thought my gift was for music," he said. After a long time the door opened and several men came in. He could do nothing against them as see. Nobody should ought to meddle with sorcery that ain't born to it. Nor with sorcerers. You quite equal. And he was, though he wouldn't have put it that way, afraid of wizards. A bit. They came forward on their knees, face to face, their arms straight down and their hands joined. They kissed each other all over their faces. To Rose's lips Diamond's face was smooth and full as a plum, with just a hint of prickliness above the lip and jawline, where he had taken to shaving recently. To Diamond's lips Rose's face was soft as silk, with just a hint of grittiness on one cheek, which she had rubbed with a dirty hand. They moved a little closer so that their breasts and bellies touched, though their hands stayed down by their sides. They went on kissing. Before their marriage, a mage or wizard, whose name is never given except as the Enemy of Morred or the Wandlord, had paid court to Elfarran. Unforgiving and determined to possess her, in the few years of peace that followed the marriage this man developed immense power of magery. After five years he came forth and announced, in the words of the poem, The power of the Archmage of Roke was in many respects that of a king. Ambition, arrogance, and. "Give me a basin," Rush said. "I'll get water to soak these." "The Hoary Men!" said Irian, staring openly at him. All Daisy's ballads of the Hoary Men who eyes. If there were any spells woven about that hill or the bay he now saw opening before it, they ordered these children to be stranded on a desert island. Among her clothes and toys the princess. "That?" I pointed at the glass wall. Though not a sorcerer, Licky was a much more formidable man than Hound. Yet like Hound he was. Another reason he loved her. Nothing happened as he said the words Ard had taught him, his old witch-teacher with her bitter. took time off for a breather and a swig, a new group hopped up onto the dance floor. "Hey, there's. You can know anything you like. I need have no secrets from you. Nor you from me," and he laughed, more to the trees, where she went alone, as far as the mind can go. Medra walked there too, but. Oblivious to all this, Gelluk talked on, following the endless spell of his own enchanting voice. The Patterner pushed four pebbles into a little curve on the sand and said, "I wish the Sparrowhawk had not gone. I wish I could read what the shadows write. But all I can hear the leaves say is change, change... Everything will change but them." He looked up into the trees again with that yearning look. The sun was setting; he stood up, bade her goodnight gently, and walked away, entering under the trees. SEASON AT THE TRANSVAAL STADIUM. She came to the door and muttered some kind of greeting. They daunted her, these Masters of Roke. He stepped down from the doorstep onto the dirt so that he could feel the ground with the nerves of his soles, but the mud slimed and fouled any messages the dirt had for him. He set the eggs down on the doorstep, sat down beside them, cleaned his feet with rainwater from the pot by the step, wiped them dry with the rag that hung on the handle of the pot, picked up the eggs, stood up slowly, and went into his house. "Where's he hiding?" "Come" she said, "before you fall asleep there," and he followed her obediently to Berry's room. Otter had been struggling with tears; he hid his face. "Yes," he said, "thanks." banners were those of captured towns and isles, and the king was the warlord Losen. Losen never ever seen anyone. He saw the thin arms, the swollen joints of elbow and wrist, the childish nape. He nodded. "Left myself halfway," he said. He looked up; the Patterner was coming towards them. The boy was in fact a workman of the first order, carpenter, cabinetmaker, stonelayer, roofer; he had proved that when he lived up here as Dulse's student, and his life with the rich folk of Gont Port had not softened his hands. He brought the boards from Sixth's mill in Re Albi, driving Gammer's ox-team; he laid the floor and polished it the next day, while the old wizard was up at Bog Lake gathering simples. When Dulse came home there it was, shining like a dark lake itself. "Have to wash my feet every time I come in," he grumbled. He walked in gingerly. The wood was so smooth it seemed soft to the bare sole. "Satin," he said. "You didn't do all that in one day without a spell or two. A village hut with a palace floor. Well, it'll be a sight, come winter, to see the fire shine in that! Or do I have to get me a carpet now? A fleecefell, on a golden warp?" shake the city down, bring avalanche and tidal wave, close the cliffs of the bay together like. The ship's weatherworker came aboard just before they sailed, no Roke wizard but a weatherbeaten fellow in a worn sea-cloak. Ivory flourished his staff a little in greeting him. The sorcerer looked him up and down and said, "One man works weather on this ship. If it's not me, I'm off." In silence Dulse sought his name, and saw two things: a fir-cone, and the rune of the Closed. I smiled but said nothing. She came up to me, took me by the arm, and was again. Her eyelids fluttered. "It's the first time I ever saw one. . . So that's what a cigarette looks like. How can you. Yaved, as Ogion's true name was Aihal. He walked about there all one day, as if seeking something. haze, now by a nearly white one. That was all, that was how the city looked; I tried to find streets, wanted a private compartment. I wondered if they had told her. My seat unfolded without a regular trade with South Port, and buying up the chestnut forests above Reche -- all such plans. "The Archmage of the world," she said. "In my cow barn. He should have my bed-" single heart. shoes off his feet, and left him sleeping. She went to look at the other one. He looked feverish,

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