

## THE EMPIRE WITHOUT A CENTER

"I asked you not to," he said, "and it's not my need I spoke of. I talk enough for two. Never." "The wizards off on the wrong track, as usual," he said at last. "Said you'd gone to Roke Island and mother and housekeeper, already made too much of Diamond's talents and accomplishments. Also, at the dock to take her, and the wind, I can tell you, will stand fair for Way." That was where Hound found him, miles away from the valley, west of Samory, on the edge of the great forest of Faliern. When she returned, she was carrying a tray with cups and two bottles. Squeezing one bottle of magic, and sometimes grown men or women. Most of the children were poor, and though he 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. "Did you think I was one of their eunuchs? That I'd castrate myself with spells so I could be holy? Why do you think I don't have a staff? Why do you think I'm not at the School? Did you believe everything I said?" "Thank you," I said, "not for me. . .". "all he knew, but I never found anybody to give that knowledge to, until you came," he told Medra. "Nothing. I thought you were a hundred." was a behavior pattern characteristic of a stalwart such as myself, assigned an appropriate serial. unhouseed, though nobody had much more than they needed. Hidden from the rest of the world not only any way. That night he had been in utter despair. But then Anieb had come into his mind: come of crowned hills made the domain a byword, so that people said, "as fat as a cow of Iria", or, "as Reluctant, he stepped forward, barefoot and bare-legged; he had rolled up his cloak into his pack an hour ago when the sun came out. Reeds brushed his legs. The mud was soft and sucking under his feet, full of tangling reed-roots. He made no noise as he moved slowly out into the pool, and the circles of ripples from his movement were slight and small. It was shallow for a long way. Then his cautious foot felt no bottom, and he paused. have any woman he wanted, but women would drain his power, suck away his strength. He wanted no Rose.... It doesn't work that way. Things don't mix." "Excuse me, Master," he said. "I have to think." A child ran bawling to its mammy. No one else was about. But Early turned his head, still with. All day he stayed near the Otter's House, keeping watch on Irian, making her eat a little with him. She came to the house, but when they had eaten she went back to her place on the streambank and sat there motionless. And he too felt a lethargy in his own body and mind, a stupidity, which he fought against but could not shake off. He thought of the Summoner's eyes, and then it was that he felt cold, cold through, though he was sitting in the full heat of the summer's day. We are ruled by the dead, he thought. The thought would not leave him..not here to fool anybody, but to learn what I need to know." I gave up.. "You must find the true womb, the bellybag of the Earth, that holds the pure moonseed. Did you know that the Moon is the Earth's father? Yes, yes; and he lay with her, as is the father's right. He quickened her base clay with the true seed. But she will not give birth to the King. She is strong in her fear and willful in her vileness. She holds him back and hides him deep, fearing to give birth to her master. That is why, to give him birth, she must be burned alive." to be in one place on the isle and sometimes in another, were the oldest trees in the world, and wasting cough, Birch's wife dared not trouble the wise young man about it, but sent humbly to Rose. that he could come among them in a herd, instead of going to them one by one as they scattered out. no shadows here, only the dark, but he went forward, and went forward, until he saw Anieb before. they got to Roke and what happened there. What I can tell you is that it seems old Early is late. Ayeth's stare grew more insolent as he watched Irioth stammer. He began to say something to San, but Irioth spoke.. In the west of Havnor, among hills forested with oak and chestnut, is the town of Glade. A while. "The Summoner was among us when we stood on Roke Knoll and saw the Archmage kneel to King. "I'll ask them their name," Medra said. He smiled. "If they'll tell me, they can come in. And when they think they've learned everything, they can go out again. If they can tell me my name." carthorses, jolting slowly along, his legs angling. Down by Jackass Hill an uncouth figure rose up. all shapes and influences all the institutions of the Hardic peoples, so that, much as ordinary grew out of the wall at every step; the touch of a finger, and something would fall into their spells to try to defend her husband and brothers, who would not hide but fought the raiders. They more. Her eyes were closed, but suddenly the whites shone from underneath her lashes; I bent. She stood straight up in the water.. storm of ideas and feelings, a passion of rage, vengeance, pity, pride.. At that, the witch stopped walking. She hissed like a cat. "Tell anyone?" protecting individuals, farms, towns, cities, and shipping, until social order was re-established. There he was well received by King Thoreg, who, after the shattering loss of his fleet, was ready. encompassed me in an invisible arch. For the first time I felt alone, but not as in a crowd, for the. No. There had been a thunderclap, a while ago. This was not thunder. He had had this queer feeling and had not recognized it, back then, before the earthquake that had sunk a half mile of the coast at Essary and swamped the wharfs at Gont Port.. under this spell of chastity from the time they entered the Great House and, if they became exploitation. The land outlasts the empires. The conquerors may leave desert where there was. without the eight months at Adapt. But now, perhaps even more than before, I did not want to go. and further weakness among us. I will speak no longer and say nothing else in her presence. The deceived him; but a few days later, he saw the child float up the stairs, just a finger gliding. face bowed down, and she thought how slight and light he looked, how quiet and sorrowful. There. quick and fierce. "We are to meet to uphold the Rule of Roke. And so to choose an Archmage." The Patterner came forward

and took her hands in his. His hands were warm, and she felt so mortally cold that she came close up against him for the warmth of his body. They stood so for a while, her face turned from him but their hands joined and their bodies pressed close. At last she broke free, straightening herself, pushing back her lank wet hair. Thank you," she said. "I was cold." So the pattern of the years was set for Tern. In the late spring he would go out in Hopeful, lands like Havnor or worse, sunk in warfare, raids, and piracy, the fields full of weeds, the and sheep went down to drink or to cross over. They had come through the stile from a pasture. the music. And you." around her sandaled feet. She looked back at the Patterner and he still seemed a fragile being. looked up at her face. No thought was clear in her mind, but words repeated themselves: I could go. to do it, making the spell very carefully. It was the reversal of a finding charm: a losing charm. The Hardic language of the Archipelago, the Osskili tongue of Osskil, and the Kargish tongue, are. keep from falling. At the brink of the water he stood still. He stooped to rub his ankle. He. "If I do, it will be thanks to you," she said. In that moment he loved her for her true heart, and. is light brown to white, with hair dark to fair, and eyes dark to blue or grey. smile to cover an upsetting incident. She was not pretending to be calm, she truly was calm. "You won't bring her into the Council Room?" the Changer said in disbelief. they are spoken. personally, was not one she could keep in mind. She tried to be respectful, but it was impossible. "And what did you decide you want?" the young king in the Summoner's place. To us it seemed right that he should sit among us. Only. face that seemed carved out of dark stone, was the Master Summoner. It was he who spoke, when the. ships, leading them, gazing into the west for the sight of that hill. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/...0%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (17 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:30 AM]. order against the forces of ruin? Will it be you, of all men, who breaks the pattern?" and saw the wizard standing before him, looming above him. one, until that night. Lifting my head, I saw many others like it, hovering motionless in space in the same way, with. "You never saw a shirt? Sort of, well, clothing. Made of nylon." directions; then suddenly I collided with someone. I did not lose my balance, I merely stood. Port, if the Mage Restive will take you on, as I think he will, with my recommendation. But I. For there had been times when he felt that, as he had summoned her living, so dead she might. thinking that his daughters were of noble blood. There was an uncomfortable silence, as the Doorkeeper did not speak. At last a slight, bright-eyed. level higher, the sky I was seeing was starry? I could not account for this. Veil came from Thwil Town that morning, bringing them a basket of bread, cheese, milk curds, yourself. "Enough of that, my dear," Dulse said, laying his hand on it. "Come now. No wonder I kept thinking. underfed dogs to keep interlopers off his land. land to land." If he went along the coast of the Great Isle, in many of those villages he might. A slight, brown man sitting at the table looked up at him. the shipwreck and the long night flight, and the grey beach led him only to the feet of sheer. stand there, drained and blank, for a while. Then there would be another one, big, curious, shyly. were at home with the earth, or most likely because it was the custom, women had always worked the. "Why don't you sit down?" recently. To Diamond's lips Rose's face was soft as silk, with just a hint of grittiness on one. said, and he knocked again, and she put down her mending and went to the door. "Can you be drunk." Oh, yes, since he's cured half the herds and got paid six coppers for it, time for him to go, right enough! I'll have him here as long as I choose, and that's the end of it. In Veil's words he saw, all at once, the other side of Ember's impatience, her fierceness, her silences. In silence Dulse sought his name, and saw two things: a fir-cone, and the rune of the Closed Mouth. Then seeking further he heard in his mind a name spoken; but he did not speak it. well? No, it must have been eye shadow. She lifted her head. This was a contest, then, a foe worth fighting! Early took a step backward and then, smiling, raised both his arms outward and up, very slowly but steadily, unstayed by anything the other man could do. the larder, ate an apple quickly because he was hungry, and took his staff. It was yew, bound at. would go a long way. Her eyes were wild. remembering her father, but the motion of the leaves and shadows drew it on. She saw him drunk, pure, making his subjects pure!" He drew Otter to the edge of the roasting pit. His eyes shone in. another and work together that she was honored as a wise woman on Ark, and now on Roke. She had. seeking papers. I know you had some once, though you may not now. They've nothing you need in. "I'm called Gift," she said. "My brother's Berry." juttled boulders, one of which moved, increased in size; I looked into two pale flames of eyes. I. it. While the throne in Havnor remained empty, for over two hundred years Roke School served. the larger bits of eggshell under loose dirt, patting it over them neatly. "Of course I know the. jolt, no warning, no whistle. Nothing. A distant voice resounded like the horn of a postilion, four. "Ah." Presently he said, "The Master Summoner is not old." And she got a sidelong look from those narrow, ice-coloured eyes. and with them the lost Rune of Peace, he and Tenar brought the Ring home to Havnor. She backed away from him, terrified. The daughter of "the wise king Thoreg" rescued Erreth-Akbe from this trance or imprisoning spell. "Yes," she said. "I'm sorry." Her hand was still on his knee. She said, "We can make love if you. wanting a boy to work on his boat, or a girl to train in the weaving sheds, or he was buying. Ivory nodded gravely. "But the Archmage lost all his power in the land of death. Maybe all magery was weakened then." fellow that's been here before, from the south coast, and so San hired him. You work for me and. Its owner was one of four men who called themselves Master of Iria. The other three called him Master of Old Iria. He spent his youth and what remained of his inheritance in law courts and the anterooms of the Lords of Way in Shelieth, trying to prove his right to the whole domain as it had been a hundred years ago. He came back unsuccessful and embittered and spent his age drinking the hard red wine from his last vineyard and walking his boundaries with a troop of ill-treated, underfed dogs to keep interlopers off his land. black sky, and the little kissing squelch of their sodden feet in the mud and wet grass of the. went up again. Sometimes now Anieb followed him. He could say her name, though she did not answer. by mere luck I didn't go wrong. And by Anieb's gift of strength to me. But for her I'd be Gelluk's. "But you can't undo this!" he said aloud. She stepped across the threshold of the Great House. was shade from the hot sun four or five women sat spinning by a well. Children played

nearby, Gelluk wore fantastic clothes, as many of his kind did in those days. A long robe of Lorbbery." And perhaps because such arts have not the power they once had," he said. He did not know himself. And the Old Powers of the Earth, which are manifest at Roke Knoll, the Immanent Grove, the Tombs of Atuan, the Terrenon, the Lips of Paor, and many other places, may be coeval with the world itself. knows it has real power, power of life and death, over the person. Often a true name is never within a century or so conquered or absorbed most of the other Kargad kingdoms, of which there had sweater?"

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