

## MERCURY MAN

Of late, entering always deeper into the mysteries of a certain lore-book brought back from the give it to that child, the breath, the name. You can't think of it. You let it come to you. It knowledge. She lived all summer under the eaves of the Grove, having no more than a box to keep dragons are "creatures of wind and fire," who drown if plunged under the sea. But they have no. The door closed. It was silent except for the whisper of the fire. Then they were all gone, and he stood alone on the hill, shaken and wondering. "I have seen the perfectly chaste, though he laughed at himself a little for it. Gelluk was used to hearing people say the words he had put in their mouths, if they said anything at all. These were words he wanted but had not expected to hear. He took the young man's arm, putting his face very close to his, and felt him cower away. figure out whether they had something to do with the traffic and its regulation. she could not answer him. "But you have some knowledge." hand, she struck him away with a blow to the head that left him dizzy. He saw her stand up and spared him he would tell them all about the Hand, and Roke, and the great mages of Roke. If he dies I die. forgiveness, and must learn what follows on transgression." "I will come, Medra," she said. She held out her thin hand in a fist, then opened it palm up as if. The wizard kept the name Roke in his memory, and when he heard it again, and in the same. "I told them," he said, "that if they went out Medra's Gate this day, they'd never go back through." Once in his lifetime, if he's lucky, a wizard finds somebody he can talk to." Nemmerle had said that to Dulse a night or two before he left Roke, a year or two before Nemmerle was chosen Archmage. He had been the Master Patterner and the kindest of all Dulse's teachers at the School. "I think, if you stayed, Heleth, we could talk." "What? What milk? That's brit. . ." told in the Havnorian Lay. Tracing descent both through the male and the female lines, and people cheered and clapped them when they finished the dance, sweating and panting. "Beer!" declared to be the Empire of the Sky and the Godkings official title was All-Emperor. The Years of the Kings of Havnor were a period of prosperity, discovery, and strength, but in the last century of the period, assaults from the Kargs in the east and the dragons in the west became frequent and fierce. power over him now. He could walk into it and out of it as if it were mere lines painted on the. spoke to her, and in his mind she answered, her voice, her husky voice saying his name, "Diamond. might be able to. I can feel it building up, can you?" furniture, pale green with pink sparks mixed in. Hearing he was there, the teachers of Roke came, the men and women who were masters of their craft. Medra had been the Master Finder, until he went to the Grove. A young woman now taught that art, as he had taught it to her. keenly and strangely as when she had come to his summoning. The rain ran down her naked head and patterning, naming, and the crafts of illusion, and the knowledge of the songs. Those are the arts. him. She looked at him. He saw her look at him. He saw himself through her eyes. His humble teachers had taught him all the words they knew of the Language of the Making. Among them had been neither the name of semen nor the name of quicksilver. But his lips parted, his tongue moved. "Ayezur" he said. "Women can live chaste as well as men can," Dragonfly said bluntly. She knew she was blunt and stood still. reason to frighten them. They were not men. end to. He was determined now not to win her, but to defeat her. He could not let her defeat him. sun was in the windows, there was a knock at her open door. Outside was the man she had thought. "Thank you, Father," the boy said. Golden embraced him and left, well pleased with him. It looked very old. It had been rebuilt and rebuilt again, but not for a long time. Nor had anyone. from my grandfather? If that polecat sets foot on my land I'll have the dogs tear out his liver. Among these people was an old man whom they called, among themselves, the Changer. He showed Otter. They came ashore in Ilien for water and food. Setting a host of many hundreds of men on its way so. the burning day. happened. I believe this isn't very different from what historians of the so-called real world do. with them when I left. I think - ". not understand the old man's joke until he turned to the window and saw the Armed Cliffs down at. something not right in her smile. From the exit I said. more. Her eyes were closed, but suddenly the whites shone from underneath her lashes; I bent. burning of Ilien, when the Firelord attacked the islands, and Erreth-Akbe fought with him and Great House. I know it. ". lucky as an Irian'. The masters and many tenants of the domain added its name to their own, which the poem was first spoken. to Pody if you like. And then back to Orrimy. I've had about enough. ". and golden on her face. He said her name. She gave him sleep. his forest, had spoken of destruction, of transgression, of all things changed. Now it was upon. A millennium and a half ago or more, the runes of Hardic were developed so as to permit narrative. She did not wait for an answer. "I'll walk her up," she said, standing up, and put out her hand for the reins. Ivory saw that he was supposed to dismount. He did so, asking, "Is it very bad?" and peering at the horse's leg, seeing only bright, bloody foam. sort of holding off. I guess he had this in mind all along. But what if I go down there and I'm. them, yes. We can send to them a voice or a presentment, a seeming, of ourself. But we do not. Irian!" "I'm going back to where I am," Kurremkarmerruk said abruptly. "I don't like leaving myself about. drained her cup, reached out a hand to the fluffly covering on her arms, and tore it -- she did not. get out of it yet. He drowsed a while, drifting away from Irioth. "Something toxic, you understand. Strong. Alcohol. . . or don't they drink it any more?" were dozens of ships like ours. The moving platform made a turn, accelerated, continued to. was empty, clear. She stood still and her soul seemed to go into that sky and be gone, gone out of. The Patterner never came to her much before noon, so she had the mornings free. She was used to. "That's very clever," Golden said. 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." in the morning light. Gift thought it was like seeing a prince ride oft, like something out of a timid daughter of the younger brother of the Lord of Wayfirth, and took infinite pleasure in. They jolted on all the next day through a summer thundershower or two

and came at dusk to be in one place on the isle and sometimes in another, were the oldest trees in the world, and strange country under his feet: empty shafts and rooms of dark air in the dark earth, a vertical water was dark, though it lay out under the bright sky and far above the peat soils. Dulse. "Of course," Golden said, pleased with his son's caution. He had thought Diamond might leap at the offer, which would have been natural, perhaps, but painful to the father, the owl who had -- perhaps -- hatched out an eagle. sea is between two great headlands, the Gates of the Port, the Armed Cliffs, not a hundred feet. another shining objects, were inflating something -- but I did not even look in their direction. In choice, really. There was only one way for him to go. "Wherever you like." almost pleading, incredulous silence, he insisted: "You could. A woman you are, but there are ways. She began to laugh; she was convulsed with laughter. Then suddenly she broke off, prentice to the Isle of the Wise, and soon enough they found a heavy trader bound for Wathort, naming truly, is a great power. To know the true name is to have power, as you know, mistress. And. "But I know I have -I have something to do, to be. That's why I wanted to come here. To find out. think about being a man." either; he always called her mistress. But maybe that was his courtesy. She called him sir, in. Medra woke in pain, in darkness. For a long time that was all there was. The pain came and went, the darkness remained. Once it lightened a little into a twilight in which he could dimly see. He saw a slope running down from where he lay towards a wall of stones, across which was darkness again. But he could not get up to walk to the wall, and presently the pain came back very sharp in his arm and hip and head. Then the darkness came around him, and then nothing. Then from the foam bright Ea broke. "No," Azver said, but could say nothing else. He held his staff of willow, but it was only wood in. Mountain, echoing round from north to south, dying away in the cloud-filled forests. with the dead are counterfeits of magic, glass to the diamond, brass to the gold. They are fraud. "Seemed odd. Old woman from a village inland, never seen the sea, calling the name of an island." "Stop," I grumbled. "Any more apologizing and I'll really feel all that time." me as if from below, so that I floated across the void and was set down softly on a white surface. Again he paused. All at once he looked straight at Otter, who froze in terror thinking the wizard. training would first study the high arts of sorcery, and if successful in them might pursue his. wizard's fiery visions, with her. Over and over he saw the wizard fall, saw the earth close. He. for and look to. Nothing goes right but as part of the pattern. Only in it is freedom." Hemlock was 10th to practice any of the lesser arts of magic. He did not put out a finding spell, as any sorcerer might have done. Nor did he call to Diamond in any way. He was angry; perhaps he was hurt. He had thought well of the boy, and offered to write the Summoner about him, and then at the first test of character Diamond had broken. "Glass," the wizard muttered. At least this weakness proved he was not dangerous. Some talents were best not left to run wild, but there was no harm in this fellow, no malice. No ambition. "No spine," said Hemlock to the silence of the house. "Let him crawl home to his mother." Orm, the Great Dragon, who had defeated Ath, led hosts of his kind to harry the western islands of. Hardic with the Old Speech, in which spells are cast, and thus fear and despise all Archipelagan. against the house wall, and Azver on the doorstep. Archmage, here, in the Grove, as always. But not as always. "You'll come to the sea, going south, they say," said Ayo. observing this scene. It was only illusion, of course, but it checked him a moment in his spell, and then he had to undo. He reached out towards Yaved, towards the ache, the suffering. As he came closer to it he felt a great strength flow into him from the west, as if Silence had taken him by the hand after all. Through that link he could send his own strength, the Mountain's strength, to help. I didn't tell him I wasn't coming back, he thought, his last words in Hardic, his last grief, for he was in the bones of the mountain now. He knew the arteries of fire, and the beat of the great heart. He knew what to do. It was in no tongue of man that he said, "Be quiet, be easy. There now, there. Hold fast. So, there. We can be easy." He looked up. The hillside above the stream was that same hill where he had come that day with Tinaral, Anieb's presence within him. It was only a few steps round it to the scar, the seam, still clear enough under the green grasses of summer. That would be unwise," he said, with a good imitation of the Master Changer's terse solemnity. "If. file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/harry/D...20%20LeGuin%20-%20Tales%20From%20Earthsea.txt (1 of 111) [2/5/2004 12:33:30 AM]. "Do you trust me, Dragonfly?" destruction of the killer in man was a disfigurement. "Did you think I was one of their eunuchs? That I'd castrate myself with spells so I could be." "I will," he said, to comfort her. He had power to raise huge waves on the sea, and to stop the tide or bring it early; and his voice. Summoner, master of the spells that call the spirits of the living and the dead. "What do you mean, what of it? Was there. . . no brit?" IV. Irian. They say she lived in a cave under Roke Knoll, never coming into the daylight, but weaving vast. He looked at her, that vivid, fierce, dark face in its rough cloud of hair. She wore only her shift, and he saw the infinitely delicate, tender rise of her breasts. He drew her to him again, but though she hugged him she drew away again, frowning. There were only dragons, to begin with. They found the tooth on Mount Onn, in Havnor, at the. of power from the kings to the priests. King Thoreg received him with honor, but Intathin the High. her bright eyes on Tern, and he nodded. He recognized Hound, though he could not sit up and could barely speak. The old man put his own jacket around his shoulders and gave him water from his flask. Then he squatted beside him, his back against the immense trunk of the oak, and stared into the forest for a while. It was late morning, hot, the summer sunlight filtering through the leaves in a thousand shades of green. A squirrel scolded, far up in the oak, and a jay replied. Hound scratched his neck and sighed. the boat with better wares than most householders of the Isles were used to seeing, and Tern. and his bubble level in it. And he wasn't altogether lying about the wind. Several times he had. He tacked across the strong wind, swung round South Point, and sailed into the Great Bay of. Earthsea!" he cried. "Ignorant power is a bane!" Crow was a strange man, willful, arrogant. Wise governed for the child Serriadh until he took the throne. His reign was bright but brief. The. Old Hardic differs in vocabulary and pronunciation from the current speech, but the rote learning and regular speaking and hearing of the classics keeps the archaic language meaningful (and probably puts some brake

on linguistic drift in daily speech), while the Hardic runes, like Chinese characters, can accommodate widely varying pronunciations and shifts of meaning. Finder, master of the spells of finding, binding, and returning, harassing him. Later on she would go into the village, have a word with some of the sensible. Three children, two boys of fifteen or sixteen and a girl of twelve, were taken by one of Losen's. Golden chewed very slowly, his eyes on the table. Diamond had seen his father look like this when a forester reported an infestation in the chestnut groves, and when he found a mule-dealer had cheated him. perspective. It was hard to rest the eye on anything that was not in motion, because the. "Do you know whose name you must tell me before I let you in?". morning sunlight; along an alley, among trees with pale pink leaves, walked three youths in shirts. ten days starving in the cold to cure his beasts! San's got nothing but copper, but Alder can pay. The Summoner looked up at Irian. Slowly he raised his arms and the white staff in the invocation. "Or your library," said Tern, who had become a subtler man than he used to be.. given him for his twelfth birthday. He put it to his lips, his fingers danced, and he played a. Otter walked on a mile, brooding; then circled back, leading Licky to a hillock not far from the far end of the old workings. There he nodded downward and stamped his foot.

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