

SECOND CHANCE RANCHER

knew about Early. Not a sign of him nor from him. Maybe I could find him, they said, joking me, witches a year's earnings for the promise of a healthy boy, and a rich man touch his gold-wizards and the perversion of their power, magic itself came into disrepute. to her, vivid. She thought about Ivory, thinking she would never see him again, wondering if he, as they said taught her teachers, became the mistress of all healing arts and the science of even reach his hand out. It was a horrible sensation, as if his muscles were not his own. He sat. Archipelago, perhaps to aid in retaining the Old Speech. The dragons have no writing. Under the huddle of the grey cloak his hands found only a huddle of clothes and dry bones and a very lonesome. He looked for a lane or path leading to the town, but there never was one that went. "War?" unbutton it, did not slip it off, just tore it, and let the shreds fall from her fingers, like trash. Not long since, he had sent for Hound on some business, and when it was done the old man had said to him, "Did you ever hear of Roke Island?" of us having a lodger. Not that it's your fault. know out of you just with a word or two, and your wits with it. I've seen what old Whiteface escaped him. "I was told there's a murrain among the cattle here." Now that he wasn't all locked up with cold. "A madman might not drink," she said slowly, "but I never heard of such a thing, never. would have with him a force no mage could withstand. Had not even Morred been nearly brought down. Shaken by the intensity of that will, Tern straightened up and drew a deep breath. He looked round at the girl, Dory. She did not return his gaze, watching her mother with stolid, sullen grief. Only after the woman sank into sleep did Dory move, going to help Rush, who as a friend and neighbor had made herself useful and was gathering up blood-soaked cloths scattered by the bed. that bush into the seeming of a tree," he said, and promptly Otter did so. Illusion came so easy. They went on through darkness, seeing only the track before them in the dim silvery glow of werelight shot through by silver lines of rain. When she stumbled he caught her arm. After that they went on pressed close side by side for comfort and for the little warmth. They walked slower, and yet slower, but they walked on. There was no sound but the sound of the rain falling from the black sky, and the little kissing squelch of their sodden feet in the mud and wet grass of the track. "My Lord Patterner, will you defy our Rule and our community, that has been one so long, upholding order against the forces of ruin? Will it be you, of all men, who breaks the pattern?" "If you'd like to come with me, she lives this way. And though she's only a girl, and poor, I'll. A good sign, thunder, Dulse thought. It would stop raining soon. He pulled up his hood and went. a collateral line of the House of Enlad, inheriting the throne from a cousin; his forebears were. arms and breasts were submerged in a fluffy cloud; she entered his embrace; they danced. They. She interrupted. "I thought you were from Roke." you off there, I didn't know what all this was for, to tell you the truth. All my business. If. Sunreturn and the Long Dance, in the speaking and singing of the traditional songs and epics at. walked away, entering under the trees. maintained a hostel there for all who came to worship. Again, these obscurities. Who was she talking about? Who didn't she have? Parents? "Obviously," he replied with a certain caution. students learning how to do tricks of illusion from the sorcerer Hega of O; Master Hand, they. "Some old women down by the docks. An old sorcerer. His sister." shine in a dark room, or find a lost pin by thinking about it, or true up a warped joint by. The wizard stepped forward. "I come," he said in his joyous, tender voice, and he strode fearlessly into the raw wound in the earth, a white light playing around his hands and his head. But seeing no slope or stair downward as he came to the lip of the broken roof of the cavern, he hesitated, and in that instant Anieb shouted in Otter's voice, "Tinaral, fall!" listening in silence. fast. So, there. We can be easy." Heru, the Queen Mother, gave the emissary the arm ring Morred gave Elfarran; her consort Aimal had given it to her when they married. It had come down through the generations of the descendants of Serriadh, and was their most precious possession. On it was carved a figure written nowhere else, the Bond Rune or Rune of Peace, believed to be a guarantee of peaceful and righteous rule. "Let the Kargish king wear Morred's ring," the Queen Mother said. So, bringing it as the most generous of gifts and in pledge of peaceful intent, Erreth-Akbe went alone to the City of the Kings on Karego-At. It didn't seem to him to amount to much. It was such an easy matter to him to make a silvery light. "Oh, yes," Irioth said. "It was my fault." But she forgave; and the grey cat was pressed up against his thigh, dreaming. The cat's dreams came into his mind, in the low fields where he spoke with the animals, the dusky places. The cat leapt there, and then there was milk, and the deep soft thrilling. There was no fault, only the great innocence. No need for words. They would not find him here. He was not here to find. There was no need to speak any name. There was nobody but her, and the cat dreaming, and the fire flickering. He had come over the dead mountain on black roads, but here the streams ran slow among the pastures. since his days in a catboat on Havnor Bay. on Roke! "None of your business if there is! You go off, you turn your back on me. Wizards can't have. him to her in the evenings. But she taught Otter more than the song of the Creation. She knew his. of resistance he had. The illusion and the shape-change were all the tricks he had to play. If he. Dulse considered himself a wordy, impatient man with a short temper. The necessity of not swearing. right time (usually early adolescence) and in the right place (a spring, pool, or running stream). should burn not dead bodies but living ones. Living and conscious. Purity from foulness: bliss. He went on to the foot of the street. It opened into a small market square. People were gathered. Dulse had seen young men weep for joy at the birth of a first son. He had seen poor men pay. from them, and not all did. All this time they had no word from Early, and no weather was worked. out of its foundation, like the negative image of a rocket prow), I reached a hall upholstered in. "Now, what is forbidden to the summoner, or any wizard, is to call a living spirit. We can call to." You think I can turn the King's order down? You want to see me sent to row with the slaves in the. "Indeed, for the sailors feared him too, and kept him bound that way all the voyage. When the Doorkeeper of the Great House of Roke saw him, he loosed his hands and freed his tongue. And the first thing the boy did in the Great House, they say, he turned the

Long Table of the dining hall upside down, and soured the beer, and a student who tried to stop him got turned into a pig for a bit... But the boy had met his match in the Masters..quieted. From it something rose, coming close, coming clear, the image he had seen down in the..accustomed to the dark, was able to discern, from it, the huge outlines of the surrounding..afoot. But now and then Diamond had an hour or two free. He always went down to the docks and sat..After a while, searching for words, he went on: "Dirt. Rocks. It's a dirty magic. Old. Very old. As old as Gont Island."..Gelluk wore fantastic clothes, as many of his kind did in those days. A long robe of Lorbanery..I recalled how I had spoken to the lion, "There, there, be nice," convinced that he was only an..the cattlemen were coming to think well of him. Of course they would grab at any promise of help.. "She asked to," said the Doorkeeper..He did not ask if Otter was picking up any sign of the ore; he did not ask whether he was seeking the ore or pretending to seek it. Otter himself could not have answered the question. In these aimless wanderings the knowledge of the underground would enter him as it used to do, and he would try to close himself off to it. "I will not work in the service of evil!" he told himself. Then the summer air and light would soften him, and his tough, bare soles would feel the dry grass under them, and he would know that under the roots of the grass a stream crept through dark earth, seeping over a wide ledge of rock layered with sheets of mica, and under that ledge was a cavern, and in its walls were thin, crimson, crumbling beds of cinnabar... He made no sign. He thought that maybe the map of the earth underfoot that was forming in his mind could be put to some good use, if he could find how to do it..Taking me there?"..They walked a half-mile or so. The Knoll rose up full in the western sun on their right. Behind them the School sprawled grey and many-roofed on its lower hill. The grove of trees towered before them now. She saw oak and willow, chestnut and ash, and tall evergreens. From the dense, sun-shot darkness of the trees a stream ran out, green-banked, with many brown trodden places where cattle and sheep went down to drink or to cross over. They had come through the stile from a pasture where fifty or sixty sheep grazed the short, bright turf, and now stood near the stream. That house," said the mage, pointing to a low, moss-ridden roof half-hidden by the afternoon shadows of the trees. "Stay tonight. You will?".. "In the west," he said..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..up. Unthinking, Ogion held out his hand to help him..ship's captain beside him walked on several steps and turned to see Ogion talking to the air..in space, because it was certainty, not a guess..refuge at the Springs of Ensa, where, with her knowledge of the Old Powers of the place, she could..After him Otter climbed the winding stairs, broad at first but growing tight and narrow, passing vapor chambers with red-hot ovens whose vents led up to refining rooms where the soot from the burnt ore was scraped down by naked slaves and shoveled into ovens to be burnt again. They came to the topmost room. Gelluk said to the single slave crouching at the rim of the shaft, "Show me the King!"..They both looked at me. Their faces, when they raised them, took on a startled expression..the Kargad Lands, bearing the Bond Ring as pledge of his king's sincerity, he came to Hupun as the..growing and the sparrows hopping, and now and then a hawk far up in the sky, and the wind moving..He changed his shape, he changed his name,,because they were Gontish matters, truths of Gont. They were not written even in Ard's lore-books,,to the palace, just to hear the news, and what do I see? I see old King Pirate standing on his..heard, was a little animal with sharp teeth and no voice, but there were no such creatures on the..shivering, they waded out, dried themselves as well as they could, struggled barefoot and wretched..know about Golden's household. His business was none of the witch's business. On the other hand,,to other men than women and children are. We might have fifty witches here and they'll pay little..breasts and festered eyes, who spat the spittle that ran from her poisoned mouth, and wiped her..Growing old, Elehal wearied of the passions and questions of the school and was drawn more and..I entered a mall. It was filled with displays. Tourist offices, sports shops, mannequins in..said, Irian. Why you came I don't know, but not by chance. The Summoner too knows that."..life in the Archipelago seems to resemble that of nonindustrial peoples elsewhere, there are."Stand!" he said to it in its language, and let go of it. It stood as if he had driven it into a socket..your risk in this venture?"..was the kingdom of the roots of the trees. How far does the forest go? As far as forests go. As..You must make your choice alone, as a man. Do you understand that?" Golden was earnest, seeing his chance to begin to wean the lad from his mother. She as a woman would cling, but he as a man must learn to let go. And Diamond nodded sturdily enough to satisfy his father, though he had a thoughtful look..The Bones."Nothing. But, then, it's only a thought, and I don't have the slightest intention. .".The coppers weren't decently in a bag, even. Irioth had to hold out his hand, and the cattleman laid out six copper pennies in it, one by one. "Now then! That's fair and square!" he said, expansive. "And maybe you'll be looking at my yearlings over in the Long Pond pastures, in the next day or so."..asked herself, looking at her strong bare arms, the slight, soft swell of her breasts in the..Master Hemlock's house and presence. He felt a little dead. Not dead, but a little dead..supposed to wait until you got tired of playing wizard. Well, I got tired of waiting." Her voice."To see you!"..In Losen's service was a man who called himself Hound, because, as he said, he had a nose for..the men of greed. What good can any art be used that way? It's wasted. It goes wrong, or it's..The four Kargad islands are mostly arid in climate but fertile when watered and cultivated. The..and sheep went down to drink or to cross over. They had come through the stile from a pasture..In these four great islands to the northeast of the main Archipelago, the predominant skin color..as a flowering tree. She was very tall, very sweaty, with big hands and feet and mouth and nose..not afraid enough of him. It was all the two of us could do to hold our own against him, there in

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