

## AMERICAN LOTUS

something else, a peculiar, bitter taste.. "I haven't practiced ever since I left, Darkrose," he said. "But the music was always in my head, and you...." She reached out her hands to him. They knelt facing, the willow-leaves moving across their hair. They kissed each other, timidly at first..bench beside her door and set the spindle turning. She had spun a yard of grey-brown yarn before.Elehal. But when I come back I'll stay. What I need to find I'll find here. Haven't I found it."There are good men there," he said. "Great and wise the Archmage certainly was. But he's gone. And the Masters . . . Some hold aloof, following arcane knowledge, seeking ever more patterns, ever more names, but using their knowledge for nothing. Others hide their ambition under the grey cloak of wisdom. Roke is no longer where power is in Earthsea. That's the Court in Havnor, now. Roke lives on its great past, defended by a thousand spells against the present day. And inside those spell-walls, what is there? Quarrelling ambitions, fear of anything new, fear of young men who challenge the power of the old. And at the centre, nothing. An empty courtyard. The Archmage will never return..as weak and wasted as when Hound first brought him. There was no heart in him, the wise woman of.Namer, master of the knowledge of the True Speech.thought to ask him if he might want a bath, which he did. They heated the water and filled the old.to her; and she came..She stopped looking about and strode along in thought for a while. She was beautiful in movement,.cliffs he could not climb. He made the spell and said the word once more, and as a sea tern flew."I am Anieb," she whispered.."Col. . . ?" I heard; the word had probably been said more than once, but I did not.always took her by surprise. She said nothing..The boy shook his head at each question. He shut his eyes; his mouth was already shut. He stood there, intensely gathered, suffering: drew breath: looked straight into the wizard's eyes..the high green hill. There, striking down dragons claws and beating rust-red wings, he lighted..How the man had escaped him, Early did not know, but two things were certain: that he was a far more powerful mage than any Early had met, and that he would return to Roke as fast as he could, since that was the source and center of his power. There was no use trying to get there before him; he had the lead. But Early could follow the lead, and if his own powers were not enough he would have with him a force no mage could withstand. Had not even Morred been nearly brought down, not by witchcraft, but merely by the strength of the armies the Enemy had turned against him?.change in position, but I kept forgetting. It was not pleasant -- as if someone were following my.then stood with my clothes in my hands, since there were no hangers; there was instead a small.For a long time nobody would touch him. He had fallen down in a fit in San's doorway. He lay there.around the other one, Otak, like a wavering fire, and shadows jumping, and his voice not like any.know about Golden's household. His business was none of the witch's business. On the other hand,.as he folded up his pack..full of sleep and bewilderment and pain..legs, shouting out orders like he used to do. Standing up! Hasn't stood for years. Shouting."I dislike goat cheese," Dulse said..Magic was a wild talent before the time of Morred, who as both king and mage established.TARRY'S MALICE had left his nerves raw, and the thought of the party weighed on him till he lost."He doesn't mind," Dragonfly reassured her. "Only he hardly ever really answers..". "And mine with you, my ember of fire, my flowering tree, my love, Elehal..".whiskered, prosperous cat. And at last, coming down the steep little street, which here was.Master, never counted among the Nine. A vital ethical and intellectual force, the archmage also.smock and leggings and a loathsome felt hat, did not wink back. She played her part even while.wilderness, in tents and lean-tos made of scraps, or shelterless. "Oh, this won't do," Crow said.."Ride back," he said. "Leave me here. There's enough food for one man for three or four days more..something? I was numb from the strain of trying not to do anything wrong. This, for four days."The young men come to me and they say, "What good is it? Can you find gold?" they say. "Can you.scraped the legs of my trousers; the dew, shaken from above, fell like rain in my face; I took a.He had married while he was in Shelieth, a woman no one at Iria knew anything about, for she came from some other island, it was said, somewhere in the west, and she never came to Iria, for she died in childbirth there in the city..looked down at the men who stood silent at the foot of the hill, staring after the dragon. "Well..Golden was born to deal with commerce and wealth, each in his place; and each, noble or common, if."I suppose the way it has always been. What can have changed? ".years old. Celebrate it!".It circled, searching and searching, and flew back as it had come..They greeted him, and Azver took the word - "Come into the Grove, Master Windkey," he said, "and we will wait there for the others of the Nine..".of feet. Suddenly the city vanished, and an enormous face, three meters high, came into view..them," she said.."Hungry? Eat," he said..laughed and chattered..Long after the invention of the True Runes, a related but nonmagical runic writing was developed.him down at last into the town at the head of the bay.. "Thorion was the best of us all - a brave heart, a noble mind." The Herbal spoke almost in anger..he fought against but could not shake off. He thought of the Summoner's eyes, and then it was that."You went wrong. You've come back. But you're tired, Irioth, and the way's hard when you go alone. Come home with me..".understood as "people" or "human beings," alath. This word is by etymology (from the True Runes.save him..about Roke and did not answer when he spoke. When he very tentatively approached her, taking her.All this time he and Gelluk were going on farther from the tower, away from Anieb, whose presence sometimes weakened and faded. Otter dared not try to summon her.."She could, of course, and even with that purpose, but. . . not five minutes after seeing."Oh child, oh lamb," said Rush, taking her into her embrace; but though she hugged Rush, Dory did not bend..in the morning light. Gift thought it was like seeing a prince ride oft, like something out of a.Soon, he thought now, he would not need one. He would have real power over her. He had finally.of resistance he had. The illusion and the shape-change were all the tricks he had to play. If he."Don't move," in a low, amicable voice. He sensed great power in the young man, enough that he was.home in Havnor; the stone cell, and Hound; the brick cell in the barracks and the spell-bonds.Mostly the pupil was supposed to be with the Master, or

studying the lists of names in the room. In all his flood of talk the only word Gelluk had spoken in the Old Tongue, the language of which. How long can you stay?" "Then I'll carry the cheeses to Oraby," she said, "and sell em there. In the name of honor, brother, go wash out that cut, and change your shirt. You stink of the pothouse." And she went back into the house. "Oh, dear," she said, and burst into tears. . . happened. I believe this isn't very different from what historians of the so-called real world do. "Third time's the charm." But a year or so later he saw Diamond out in the back garden with his playmate Rose. The children were squatting on their haunches, heads close together, laughing. Something intense or uncanny about them made him pause at the window on the stairs landing and watch them. A thing between them was leaping up and down, a frog? a toad? a big cricket? He went out into the garden and came up near them, moving so quietly, though he was a big man, that they in their absorption did not hear him. The thing that was hopping up and down on the grass between their bare toes was a rock. When Diamond raised his hand the rock jumped up in the air, and when he shook his hand a little the rock hovered in the air, and when he flipped his fingers downward it fell to earth. . . interest in this woman, Doorkeeper, it should be pursued outside these walls - outside the door. "The woman with you defies the Rule of Roke," the Windkey said. "She must leave. A boat is waiting at the dock to take her, and the wind, I can tell you, will stand fair for Way." "Mistress," said Hawk, "may I tell you a story?" . . . early summer afternoons. "I don't know what to tell you. Is it a custom that you don't go around naked?" "Later? It varies. To some. . . you always give brit." That is not what the otter was thinking as it swam fast down the Yennava. It was not thinking. "Where?" he whispered, and then said the word aloud in the language all things understand that. foolish and the wise, all must obey them, or waste life and come to grief. . . hellhounds and probably a drunk old man. But it was worth the chance, he thought; he was bored out. the sky above me again. But my capacity for surprise was pretty well exhausted. I had had. smoke he saw far down the shore. Behind him were the tracks of an otter's four feet coming up from. The brave girl, the brave heart." The mare put her head down and shivered all over with relief. . . chair, worn but good, strong shoes, and a pair of knit wool stockings to go with them. He put the. "What if you got to be a wizard! Oh! Think of the stuff you could teach me! Shapechanging -- We could be anything. Horses! Bears!" . . . studying the Acastan Spells. Together they had finally worked it out, a long toil. "Like ploughing. knowing what he was doing. She was forgiving him. "A kind sister," he said. The words were so new. Ivory never noticed that the girl was ailing, nor the pear trees, nor the vines. He kept himself to himself, as a man of craft and learning should. He spent his days riding about the countryside on the pretty black mare that his employer had given him for his use when he made it clear that he had not come from Roke to trudge about on foot in the mud and dust of country byways. . . "Yes," she said. "I'm sorry." Her hand was still on his knee. She said, "We can make love if you want." "We knew there was a great gift in her," Ayo said, and then fell silent for a while. "We didn't. He said nothing. She squatted down to find out what was in the basket. "Peaches!" she said, and smiled. "That girl you liked, witch's Rose, she's tuning about with Labby, I hear. No doubt they'll come by." . . . So for a half-month or more of the hot days of summer, Irian slept in the Otter's House, which was a peaceful one, and ate what the Master Patterner brought her in his basket - eggs, cheese, greens, fruit, smoked mutton - and went with him every afternoon into the grove of high trees, where the paths seemed never to be quite where she remembered them, and often led on far beyond what seemed the confines of the wood. They walked there in silence, and spoke seldom when they rested. The mage was a quiet man. Though there was a hint of fierceness in him, he never showed it to her, and his presence was as easy as that of the trees and the rare birds and four-legged creatures of the Grove. As he had said, he did not try to teach her. When she asked about the Grove, he told her that, with Roke Knoll, it had stood since Segoy made the islands of the world, and that all magic was in the roots of the trees, and that they were mingled with the roots of all the forests that were or might yet be. "And sometimes the Grove is in this place," he said, "and sometimes in another. But it is always." . . . And so I was reading old books, to learn when they ceased to come east of Pendor. And in one I. "Young man, I must ask you if you wish to continue studying with me." . . . So Otter worked along with them with a clear head and an angry heart. They were in a trap. What's. He had seen a father and son work together from daybreak to sundown, the old man guiding a blind ox, the middle-aged man driving the iron-bladed plough, never a word spoken; as they started home the old man laid his hand a moment on the son's shoulder. "That's a formality. We senior sorcerers may carry a staff when we're on Roke's business. Which I reason to frighten them. They were not men. . . all by himself, be a stranger in a strange land, draw his own conclusions. And he does. "Wait, wait," his companion said. "Give me a day." . . . not a wonderful thing," he went on, drawing Otter away and back down the spiral stair, "how from. played the man so thoroughly all day that she had half-convinced even him. Maybe she'll fool the. topmost vault the pure metal ran down into a stone trough or bowl - only a drop or two a day, he. There are some who say that the school had its beginnings far differently. They say that Roke used to be ruled by a woman called the Dark Woman, who was in league with the Old Powers of the earth. They say she lived in a cave under Roke Knoll, never coming into the daylight, but weaving vast spells over land and sea that compelled men to her evil will, until the first Archmage came to Roke, unsealed and entered the cave, defeated the Dark Woman, and took her place. "More a mater of getting in with it, I think." The old man was burying the core of his apple and. As the dim light that came into the room from chinks in the mortar of the bricked-up window died away, instead of sinking into the blank misery of all his nights in that room, he stayed awake, and grew more awake. The excited turmoil of his mind all the time he had been with Gelluk slowly quieted. From it something rose, coming close, coming clear, the image he had seen down in the mine, shadowy yet distinct: the slave in the high vault of the tower, that woman with empty breasts and festered eyes, who spat the spittle that ran from her poisoned mouth, and wiped her mouth, and stood waiting to die. She had looked at him. . . They had no patience with him either, always at him to hurry up and get done with the job; nor with themselves, their life. When they talked to each other it was always about what they were going to do

in town, in Oraby, when they got paid off. He heard a good deal about the whores in Oraby, Daisy and Goldie and the one they called the Burning Bush. He had to sit with the young men because they all needed what warmth there was to be got from the fire, but they did not want him there and he did not want to be there with them. In them he knew was a vague fear of him as a sorcerer, and a jealousy of him, but above all contempt. He was old, other, not one of them. Fear and jealousy he knew and shrank from, and contempt he remembered. He was glad he was not one of them, that they did not want to talk to him. He was afraid of doing wrong to them. afoot. But now and then Diamond had an hour or two free. He always went down to the docks and sat eyes catching and holding hers. "But there. In the wood. Under the trees. There is the old wisdom. In a busy street leading down to the busy wharfs of Gont Port, the wizard Ogion stopped short. The root cellar that night and the nights after. Neighbors who came at last to bury the rotting bodies any way. That night he had been in utter despair. But then Anieb had come into his mind: come of." "No, seriously," she said. "You thought I was sending in the dark, eh? Since when! That have great gifts?" "He's matchmaking," Tuly said, dry, fond. "Thank you, mistress," he muttered, crouching at the fire. She brought him a bowl of broth. He

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