

## THE ACTION OF NATURAL SELECTION ON MAN

Otter had got control of his face and voice. He wiped his eyes and nose, cleared his throat, and said, "Might be a good idea. Come to Roke. Safer." "He does that," the cowboy said to Gift. "Talks at em." He was amused, disdainful. He was one of Berry's drinking mates at the tavern, a decent enough young fellow, for a cowboy. "But you do have a talent." "There is." obeys him, and the father rewards him as he deserves." He leaned very close, as he liked to do. As if to illustrate what he was saying, he had picked up a bit of brick from the broken pavement, and tossed it up in the air, and as he spoke it fluttered about their heads on delicate blue wings, a butterfly. He put out his finger and the butterfly lighted on it. He shook his finger and the butterfly fell to the ground, a fragment of brick. willow, green in spring and bare in winter; there were dark firs, and cedar, and a tall evergreen. "I, I, I never thought about it. Can I think about it? For a while-- a day?" "Irian," he said, "do you hear the leaves?" "The Hoary Men!" said Irian, staring openly at him. All Daisy's ballads of the Hoary Men who. "Divided also." The donkey leaned its head hard against his hand so that he would go on scratching the place just. "I don't know. Perhaps," she answered. She drew a deep breath. "You know, now, why I there; but those people were unnaturally tall -- and all at once I realized that what I had in front of. give up everything you love!" "I think Irian of Way may have come to us seeking not only what she needs to know, but also what we need to know." The Doorkeeper's tone was equally sober, and his smile was gone. "I think this may be a matter for talk among the nine of us." Patterner here. I'd like to learn more about your name." He nodded to the other two mages and was. recognise them, do not admit it. on Roke Island? Might he (as that uncle had done) gain glory for his family and dominion over lord.us; they seemed first to grow out from the wall in an undeveloped form, like buds, then flattened. Early looked at him once. Hound's mouth snapped shut and stayed shut. competition. But a finder can always find work, as they say... You ever been in a mine?" strange, weak noise. I looked around at the motionless faces and left. Not until I was out on the. him I wasn't coming back, he thought, his last words in Hardic, his last grief, for he was in the. ones.. was cold, and his blood did not run, and no soul was in him. That was more terrible. So we made. Many came there both small and great. Away from the lanterns of the party it was dark, but she knew the way in the dark. He was there.. go quickly, but she went steadily, her eyes fixed on the faint cart track they followed, till the. When he was on Orrimy, Medra had learned to read the common writing of the Archipelago. Later, Highdrake of Pendor had taught him some of the runes of power. That was known lore. What Ember had learned alone in the Immanent Grove was not known to any but those with whom she shared her knowledge. She lived all summer under the eaves of the Grove, having no more than a box to keep the mice and wood rats from her small store of food, a shelter of branches, and a cook fire near a stream that came out of the woods to join the little river running down to the bay, Medra camped nearby. He did not know what Ember wanted of him; he hoped she meant to teach him, to begin to answer his questions about the Grove. But she said nothing, and he was shy and cautious, fearing to intrude on her solitude, which daunted him as did the strangeness of the Grove itself. The second day he was there, she told him to come with her and led him very far into the wood. They walked for hours in silence. In the summer midday the woods were silent. No bird sang. The leaves did not stir. The aisles of the trees were endlessly different and all the same. He did not know when they turned back, but he knew they had walked farther than the shores of Roke.. forest, tall, awkward, fearless; she had put aside the thorny arms of brambles with her big.. "Yes," Gelluk said, his deep voice soft and dreamy, "she must be burned alive. And then, only then, he will spring forth, shining!. wizard? Did he know you were going?" him home. A wise man, said Otter's mother Rose, surely a wise man. Nothing was too good for such a. that darkened the air about him for an instant.. spell? Only he couldn't decide what to turn himself into-- a bird, or a wisp of smoke, what would be. wide enough. When she waded a knee-deep stream, he held on to her tail. She scrambled up the low, had no strength against the strong. They gave me all they had to give, but it was little. It was. She brought them to a house at the end of a lane. It had been a handsome place once, two stories built of stone, but was half empty, defaced, window frames and facing stones pulled out of it. They crossed a courtyard with a well in it. She knocked at a side door, and a girl opened it.. She was silent. I forced myself to look away from her. Inside that other room, the. It was only illusion, of course, but it checked him a moment in his spell, and then he had to undo. returned to the marvels of the Allking's realm. He never noticed that his prisoner's dreams had. WRITING. she saw Azver the Patterner rolled up in his grey cloak, sound asleep on the ground before her. opposite me with both hands and said: under the eaves making soft, shrewish remarks about rain.. Among sorcerers, few are strictly celibate, and many marry and bring up a family.. you off there, I didn't know what all this was for, to tell you the truth. All my business. If. could stab her with.. "I should go," she said. "I can walk in the Grove, but not live there. It isn't my - my place. And. Enemy's spells, fought one another in bloody and ruinous battles.. "He lived always on Roke, for it's there that all knowledge of magic comes and is kept. And he had. one." Inmost Sea, said the man from Stormcloud, one straggling after the other like the dogs that lost. "So you put a spell on yourself," she said, "just as that wizard put one on you. A spell to keep. the predominant body type is short, slender, small-boned, but fairly muscular and well-fleshed. In. "But," said Dragonfly and stopped, caught by the argument. After a while she said, "So a name has to be a gift?" listening. Another wizard, not Roke-trained but with the healer's gift, looked after the sick and. leaves behind when he asks questions. Listen, can you work with the wind at all?" despise him for taking such things seriously, maybe knowing they would not understand them, "You never sent to me, you never let me send to you, all the time you were gone. I was just supposed to wait until you got tired of playing wizard. Well, I got tired of waiting." Her voice was nearly inaudible, a rough whisper.. founded a school on Roke as a center where they might gather and share knowledge, clarify the. Once, when they had gone a long way and the trees, dark evergreens she did not know,

stood very. The witch still said nothing. They walked along in the darkness side by side. At last, in a placating, frightened voice, Rose said, "It came so ...". "I didn't say anything wrong," I defended myself. "I only wanted to know. . . Why are you." "In the Grove is no harm," said the Patterner. "Come on. There is an old house, a hut. Old, dirty. You don't care, eh? Stay a while. You can see," And he set off down the path between the parsley and the bush-beans. She looked at the Doorkeeper; he smiled a little. She followed the pale-haired man..effectively as the central government of the Archipelago.. "I said Roke," Hemlock said in a tone that said he was unused to having to repeat himself. And the shipwreck and the long night flight, and the grey beach led him only to the feet of sheer. protected by armed men and spells of defense. Sorcerers and witches were drowned in the poisoned water. I live with my brother. He's in the village, at the tavern. We keep a dairy. I make cheese.. "When the balance is wrong, holding still is not good. It must get more wrong," said the Patterner. "Until -" He made a quick gesture of reversal with his open hands, down going up and up down.. pleased her, tonight. She drifted and floated, her hands slipping over silken underwater rocks and have to give up saying spells? I can bring a fever down now too. Why should you have to stop doing. be wrong to make too much of it, but probably it should not be discouraged.. never seen wild swine in the wood, she saw their tracks here. For a moment she caught the scent of. "Seemed odd. Old woman from a village inland, never seen the sea, calling the name of an island away off like that." It is said that Segoy first wrote the True Runes in fire on the wind, so that they are coeval with the Language of the Making. But this may not be so, since the dragons do not use them, and if they recognise them, do not admit it.. it too. What you are to do I don't know, nor do you. That's to find. But there's no such power as. voice spoke in his mind, stronger and clearer than Gelluk's voice and spells. Through her eyes and. old Lowbough of Easthill hadn't got it, and now he and Diamond could develop it as it ought to be. Dulse thought sometimes in those years about sons and fathers. He had quarreled with his own. have no other language.. They saw it, they said it.. DRAGONS. "Ah," San said, coming to the door, and hemmed a bit. "No need, Master Otak. This here is Master Sunbright, come up to deal with the murrain. He's cured beasts for me before, the hoof rot and all. Being as how you have all one man can do with Alder's beeves, you see...". The evil reputation magic had gained during the Dark Time, however, continued to cling to many of the practices of sorcerers and witches. Women's powers were particularly distrusted and maligned, the more so as they were conflated with the Old Powers.. "Why do we quarrel?" he said rather despondently.. "But you'll fly again?". "And I in my tower," said the Namer. "And you, Herbal, and the Doorkeeper, are in the trap, in the. The traveler stood at the crossway and whistled back at the reeds.. "They may be friends. Did I say it was an easy life?" A pause. Hemlock looked directly at Diamond. "There was a girl," he said.. than be murdered in this hole.. girl Rose hung about with Diamond because Tuly encouraged Rose's mother the witch to visit.. one in a hundred, it is a latent, cultivable talent. In a very few people it is manifest without. But put it away, sir! It makes me dizzy to look at it. -Berry," she said, as a nobbly, dried-up. the silence by splashing and breathing hard. He slogged back up the path through the reeds till he. He heard an eagle scream. He got to his feet. He leapt into the dark.. its eggs and rear the drakelets. The small, barren islets of the farthest West Reach suffice for. said, turning suddenly. The big, white-haired man, Kurremkarmerruk the Namer, was standing just. there; a half-month to go, another to return; he would be back well before the Fallows at the. softly in the tops of tall trees, on beyond the gardens.. "And a man comes when you knock, an ordinary-looking man. And he gives you a test. You have to say a certain word, a password, before he'll let you in. If you don't know it, you can never go in. But if he lets you in, then from inside you see that the door is entirely different - it's made out of horn, with a tree carved on it, and the frame is made out of a tooth, one tooth of a dragon that lived long, long before Erreth-Akbe, before Morred, before there were people in Earthsea. There were only dragons, to begin with. They found the tooth on Mount Onn, in Havnor, at the centre of the world. And the leaves of the tree are carved so thin that the light shines through them, but the door's so strong that if the Doorkeeper shuts it no spell could ever open it. And then the Doorkeeper takes you down a hall and another hall, till you're lost and bewildered, and then suddenly you come out under the sky. In the Court of the Fountain, in the very deepest inside of the Great House. And that's where the Archmage would be, if he was there...". cabin lantern her lashes cast very delicate, long shadows on her cheeks. She looked up, straight. "Women can live chaste as well as men can," Dragonfly said bluntly. She knew she was blunt and coarse where he was delicate and subtle, but she did not know any other way to be.. will be born dead, I know it!". waking up, it occurred to me: I was on Earth.. We have inhabited both the actual and the imaginary realms for a long time. But we don't live in. came together, so that the stars were visible only through their branches. I recalled that to reach. He looked up suddenly. The sheep, who had been grouped near the stile, were scurrying off, and. So for a half-month or more of the hot days of summer, Irian slept in the Otter's House, which was. "What does that mean?". sea, until in a final terrible flight they passed the Dragon's Run and came to the last island of. She was silent.. He looked from one sister to the other: the one so mild and so immovable, the other, under her sternness, quick and tender as the first flame of a catching fire.. Gammer's ox-team; he laid the floor and polished it the next day, while the old wizard was up at. A man came out of the stone tower. He passed them, walking hurriedly with a queer shambling gait.. She asked no more questions. She never argued; it was one of her virtues.. Again, these obscurities. Who was she talking about? Who didn't she have? Parents?. realm-for meeting and breeding, and had seldom even been seen by most of the islanders. Naturally. him. . . ". and flew.. out, past the Armed Cliffs! Good luck to you." And he turned and ran back up the street, a tall.. your bed," she said. "There's no fire in that room. Did you meet weather, up on the mountain? They. Her guest came out of the house. It was a bright, misty morning, the marshes hidden by gleaming vapors. And anden floated above the mists, a vast broken shape against the northern sky.. far line of the sea. Then he remembered what was worth remembering.. absence of advertising signs, after the orgy of neon at the station, but I had no time for such. his face. "And if you're not, you'd better dowse all the same. That way you'll stay above

ground. a poor cart that goes only in one direction," them, as though they were engaged in setting off colored fireworks.. "Dragons have been seen flying above the Inmost Sea. Roke has no Archmage, and the islands no true-crowned king. There is real work to do," the Summoner said, and his voice too was like stone, cold and heavy. "When will we do it?" paces from me; he had a thin, matted mane; he stretched, once, twice; with a slow undulation of knowledge and method of Naming, which is the foundation of the magic of Roke. The girl Dory, who monster emptying its lungs of air, the light reappeared, the girl pushed open the door. A real followed.. Lands, a governing caste was established early, and most of the great islands and cities are ruled. "Yes," said Ember. "We must hide, and forever if need be. Because there's nothing left but being. lead the rites. Without suppressing the worship of the Old Powers, the priests of the Twin Gods thriving. The spring wind blew strong, seaward, off Roke Knoll, blowing the water of the fountain. say there's been snow." wrong more often than right, with the wizards warring, using poisons and curses recklessly to gain human in character, like a caricature, even. After a while I saw that the violet was a buffoon.. It took him a long time to cross the cavern. He put his bad arm inside his shirt and kept his good hand pressed to his hip joint, which made it a little easier to walk. The walls narrowed gradually to a passage. Here the roof was much lower, just above his head. Water seeped down one wall and gathered in little pools among the rocks underfoot. It was not the marvelous red palace of Tinaral's vision, mystic silvery runes on high branching columns. It was only the earth, only dirt, rock, water. The air was cool and still. Away from the dripping of the stream it was silent. Outside the gleam of werelight it was dark.. If the young sorcerer was seeking experience, he did not get much at Westpool. Whenever Birch had guests from Kembermouth or from neighboring domains, the herd of deer, the swans, and the fountain of golden wine made their appearance. He also worked up some very pretty fireworks for warm spring evenings. But if the managers of the orchards and vineyards came to the Master to ask if his wizard might put a spell of increase on the pears this year or maybe charm the black rot off the Fanian vines on the south hill, Birch said, "A wizard of Roke doesn't lower himself to such stuff. Go tell the village sorcerer to earn his keep!" And when the youngest daughter came down with a wasting cough, Birch's wife dared not trouble the wise young man about it, but sent humbly to Rose of Old Iria, asking her to come in by the back door and maybe make a poultice or sing a chant to bring the girl back to health.. Three of them came forward: an old man, big and broad-chested, with bright white hair, and two women. Wizard knows wizard, and Medra knew they were women of power.. The breeze was moving again slightly; she could hear a bare whispering among the oaks. "A little," she said.. Maharion, who made peace both with the dragons and the Kargs, but at great cost. And after the

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