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The Blackness is Dark

Michael M. Levy

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Mythcon 51: A VIRTUAL “HALFLING” MYTHCON

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Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

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Abstract

Imagine, please, a lightless, cold world, A dark, wooded world of somber green,

Keywords

Poetry; Mythril; The Blackness is Dark; Michael M. Levy

arms for a hug. A serene young face framed by auburn hair peeped down from the loft.

"Nicholas! You're home," and Cynthia Silverseed, sixteen years old, came lightly down the ladder in her night-robe. Marjorie sighed and turned away to count the coins.

"Tell me all about Castletown," smiled Cynthia, drawing her brother to a seat by the fire. "Have you had your supper?"

"Aye," said Nicholas, "I ate at the Puss and Fiddle in Knobles, and rode home with Bacon Davies after."

Marjorie looked up. "Did you stop by?" Her look said plainly that that being the case, his lateness was forgiven, but Nicholas shook his head.

"I'm to stop there tomorrow," he said, and seeing her expression, added, "before I leave again for Castletown. I'm going up to take service with the king."

"With the king!" exclaimed

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Cynthia, "whatever for?"

"The bard is dead," answered her brother, "and since Martin will not compete, I am going up. No doubt Oliver will be going too."

Marjorie stared at him across the table. "And what are we to do without you for the next six months?"

But Nicholas had been steeling himself for this. "Richard already does better than I in the field; and I'll send down my earnings as they're given to me. The purse from the Three-Gold Feast is still untouched," he nodded toward the cupboard, "and this is a fair amount here." He indicated the little heap on the table. "And you shall have Noggin, for I'm going to walk this time."

Marjorie considered. "'Tis a good decision," she said at length, "and you may go. I could no longer stop you if I wished it--your birthday falls tomorrow, and your father's legacy," she continued dryly, "shall go with you."

She swept up the coins into her apron. "You've done well for once, Nick."

It was the closest thing to a compliment that Marjorie had ever given him, and Nicholas smiled to himself as he began to undress for the night. A fretful wail from above sent Cynthia up the ladder again to poke her head through the trap.

"Hush, darlings, hush now. Jennifer, can you settle them? 'Tis only Nick returned from Castletown."

Nicholas listened fondly to the cosy sounds of home: the gentle hiss of embers smooored for the night; the low voice of his sister calming the twins; the faint creak of wood as Richard and John shifted about in the bed near the fire. Tomorrow he would leave all of this behind, perhaps forever. He slipped into bed beside his brothers and shut out the future in the warm silence of sleep.

TO BE CONTINUED

Homeless FROM PAGE 7

the cliff's edge and into the air. I, Cheraan the Leader, sailed glorious and free on the night wind, down into the valley, across the desert, toward Saliinhar and home.

Lord Ranek stood silently and watched Cheraan go, gliding like a bird set free. Then, his eyes still on the retreating figure, he spoke quietly to his horse.

"Well, Windswift, there he goes. Our job is done, old friend. Our part in the plan is fulfilled; now all that remains is to wait for the war, for the end. I wonder how he feels?" Ranek nodded after Cheraan. "Does he still hate the Hold? It's no easy thing to be a changeling--as I well know--and worse to be one but not know it. Is he bitter?" The horse whickered softly at his side.

"And I wonder how much of the plan they saw fit to tell him. Does he know of me and my part as guardian and guide? And when the war comes and the Hold is destroyed, will he look upon me in anger, will he kill me as an enemy, or will he know me as a friend?"

Ranek smiled and patted Windswift's neck. "I know, it doesn't matter. The prophecy has been fulfilled, and my part is at an end. All that remains is to go back to the Hold, to play this role to the end. But it would be nice to know..."

"No matter." He mounted his horse and turned to go down to where his men waited. Before he did, he turned around for one last look at Cheraan, a speck of whiteness now in the distance. He raised his hand in salute.

"Farewell, my countryman." And so saying, Lord Ranek headed back down the trail from Stormstill Peak, down and into darkness.

THE BLACKNESS IS DARK

By Michael M. Levy

Imagine, please, a lightless, cold world,
A dark, wooded world of somber green,
Whose crooked boughs are forever swirled,
By a gale that's felt, but never seen;

A many hilled land that hangs in place,
(Above and below, a void of stars)
A brooding island in untracked space,
The brutal, empty blackness, it mars.

Its edge is at the crumbling earth's end,
A place to see eternity from,
And underneath black, knarled roots descend,
Some hanging forlorn, or dead, and some

Twisted about, by that same wind blown
That tears and shakes the trees up above,
A frigid wind that does shriek and moan,
As a damned soul lost and without love.

Here I came in the dark of my time,
When my soul was parched and without hope,
But no saving Virgil could I find
To lead me from hell, up despair's slope.

I wandered dark woods, and saw no light,
Found nothing, ate Despair's bitter fruit,
Chased after shades, from shadows took flight,
And lost all my joy, my voice gone mute...

