

choice being theirs also. For what lies beyond accepts all life of equal worth. The comradeship of heart is enough.

“The choice is yours, so mote it be!”

She stood a little aside to give room, and Tod and Tay, laying hands once more to Nid's horns, went into the light. Behind them, his hand on the old horse's neck, the laborer trod, head up and firmly. Almadis stood beside Meg and watched them pass. None of them looked to her or Meg, it was as if they were drawn to something so great they had no longer only any knowledge of themselves, only of it.

At last there were those of the rear guard. Osono and Vill did not glance toward her. But Urgell, whose sword was once more within its sheath, dropped behind. Somehow her gaze was willed to meet his. The leaf Meg had given him was set in his battered helm as a plume, the plume that a leader might wear to some victory.

Almadis stirred. She stepped forward, to lay her hand on the one he held out to her as if they would tread some formal pattern which was long woven into being.

Meg steadied Kaska's basket on her hip, and looked up to the glimmer as Castellan's daughter and mercenary disappeared.

“Is it well-done, *Lady*?”

“It is well-done, dear daughter. So mote it be!”

With staff and basket held steady, Meg went forward, and when she passed the gate of light it vanished. The Way lay open once again to the scouring of the wind.