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The Eye in the Waste

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# THE EYE IN THE WASTE

*By LORD DUNSANY*

**T**HERE lie seven deserts beyond Bodraháhn, which is the city of the caravans' end. None goeth beyond. In the first desert lie the tracks of mighty travellers outward from Bodraháhn, and some returning. And in the second lie only outward tracks, and none return.

The third is a desert untrodden by the feet of men.

The fourth is the desert of sand, and the fifth is the desert of dust, and the sixth is the desert of stones, and the seventh is the Desert of Deserts.

In the midst of the last of the deserts that lie beyond Bodraháhn, in the centre of the Desert of Deserts, standeth the image that hath been hewn of old out of the living hill whose name is Ranorada—the eye in the waste.

About the base of Ranorada is carved in mystic letters that are vaster than the beds of streams these words :

To the god who knows.

Now, beyond the second desert are no tracks, and there is no water in all the seven deserts that lie beyond Bodraháhn. Therefore came no man thither to hew that statue from the living hills, and Ranorada was wrought by the hands of gods. Men tell in Bodraháhn, where the caravans end and all the drivers of the camels rest, how once the gods hewed Ranorada from the living hill, hammering all night long beyond the deserts. Moreover, they say that Ranorada is carved in the likeness of the god Hoodrazai, who hath found the secret of Mana-Yood-Sushai, and knoweth the wherefore of the making of the gods.

They say that Hoodrazai stands all alone in Pegana and speaks to none because he knows what is hidden from the gods.

Therefore the gods have made his image in a lonely land as one who thinks and is silent—the eye in the waste.

## THE EYE IN THE WASTE

They say that Hoodrazai had heard the murmurs of Mana-Yood-Sushai as he muttered to himself, and gleaned the meaning, and knew; and that he was the god of mirth and of abundant joy, but became from the moment of his knowing a mirthless god, even as his image, which regards the deserts beyond the track of man.

But the camel drivers, as they sit and listen to the tales of the old men in the market-place of Bodraháhn, at evening, while the camels rest, say: "If Hoodrazai is so very wise and yet is sad, let us drink wine, and banish wisdom to the wastes that lie beyond Bodraháhn." Therefore is there feasting and laughter all night long in the city where the caravans end.

All this the camel drivers tell when the caravans come in from Bodraháhn; but who shall credit tales that camel drivers have heard from aged men in so remote a city?

—*From the Gods of Pegana.*