

Alan Garner

THE MOON OF GOMRATH

Read by Philip Madoc

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1	Chapter 1 The Elves of Sinadon	3:12
2	Chapter 2 The Well	4:38
3	Colin and Susan walked along the foot of the Edge.	4:36
4	Chapter 3 Atlendor	7:39
5	Chapter 4 The Brollachan	4:45
6	Susan looked at the band of ancient silver...	5:53
7	Long ago, one of the old mischiefs...	7:16
8	Chapter 5 'To a Woman yt was Dumpe'	5:05
9	They sat down at the table...	6:57
10	Colin never knew what woke him.	5:43
11	Chapter 6 Old Evil	7:15
12	There was a glare of light...	6:34
13	Chapter 7 Old Magic	6:45
14	'But what shall we do?' cried Albanac.	7:19
15	Chapter 8 Shining Tor	3:20
16	Suddenly through the trees and over the Beacon Hill...	5:03

17	'Who's there?' he shouted.	6:06
18	Colin pulled her back over the sill...	6:04
19	'Caer Rigor,' said the wizard.	5:46
20	Chapter 9 The Horsemen of Donn	4:46
21	But Susan was carried away by the urgency of the fire.	4:58
22	'Wakeful are the sons of Argatron!'	4:31
23	Chapter 10 Lord of the Herlathing	7:12
24	Colin and Susan jumped...	4:42
25	As she entered the tunnel...	4:21
26	Chapter 11 The Dale of Goyt	6:36
27	Uthecar and Atlendor sat in the moonlight...	6:29
28	The track divided, and the cats drove Colin...	3:02
29	Chapter 12 The Mere	4:27
30	Susan had no idea where she was...	5:51
31	Chapter 13 The Bodach	6:13
32	Twice the path crossed the stream...	5:24

33	She set off up the hill.	3:58
34	Chapter 14 The Wild Hunt	7:34
35	Then it was too late for their courage.	7:12
36	Garanhir strode through the bodachs' ranks...	5:33
37	Chapter 15 Errwood	5:43
38	'Let us ask Cadellin first...'	6:28
39	Chapter 16 The Howl of Ossar	4:08
40	'What about the Morrigan?' said Susan.	4:23
41	Chapter 17 The Witch-Brand	5:32
42	'Now!' cried Uthecar...	5:48
43	Chapter 18 The Dolorous Blow	5:12
44	The elves were holding their circle...	7:02
45	Chapter 19 The Children of Danu	4:48
46	Colin and Susan went along to the side of the house...	7:05
47	Chapter 20 The Last Ride	6:13
48	Susan felt the sky go black above her...	5:57

Total time: 4:31:37

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THE MOON OF GOMRATH

The Moon of Gomrath grew out of the landscape and people of my childhood, as did *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*. In particular, I was influenced by Joshua Rowbotham Birtles, a farmer on the hill of Alderley Edge, where both our families have been long settled.

Every Friday, Joshua used to deliver eggs and vegetables in his cart, pulled by his horse, Prince. Some of my earliest memories are of Joshua's britches, stockings and boots looming over me as I sat on the floor, and of hearing his voice, pitched to carry against gale and hill, jarring the windows. His hands were gigantic, spilling cauliflowers, cabbages and potatoes over the table, and seemed to be producing the great bounty without the need for soil. He was huge in frame and spirit, and almost not credible in appearance, as if he stood outside Time.

When I learned to walk, Joshua would let me ride next to him on the seat and hold Prince's reins. And all the while, Joshua was telling me things: the reason why a particular boulder in a bank was called the Golden Stone; that the smooth, round hummock, known as the Beacon, on the

highest point of the Edge was the grave of a king. Much later, I discovered that the Beacon was a Bronze Age burial mound, 4,000 years old. So, through Joshua, I began to see that story is also memory.

When I came to write, I knew that I had to record Joshua's life, in some form. But, since he was not dead, I had to find a name for him, and the name had to be as genuine as he was. Invented names sound wrong.

One day, I was cleaning the grass from old tombstones in the churchyard at Alderley to record their inscriptions, and I uncovered the stone of Gowther Mossock, 'Thirty-eight Yeares Rector of this Parish, Who was Interred ye twelfth Daye of April in ye Yeare of Oure Lord 1580'. I had my name.

There was something else the Edge gave, but that was beyond my reach. It was the Pennines, the line of bleak and desolate hills that lie nine miles to the east of Alderley, 2,000 feet high. They were clear to view, from Castle Rock, from the Devil's Grave, from Stormy Point, from Seven Firs and from the Golden Stone. But they were too hard to get to by bicycle, too dangerous and steep. It was not until I became an athlete

that I discovered the Pennines, by running there. And among those hills and valleys I found places as powerful as the Edge, but different. One of the strangest, and the most disturbing, was Errwood.

I had set off on a spring morning, and by midday had reached the peak of Shining Tor, the highest point in Cheshire. All around, the views were tremendous. To the west there was the Cheshire Plain, with the Edge now a dark sentinel, and beyond there were the Welsh mountains. In all other directions the Pennines lolled, treeless, bracken browns and marsh greens, with drystone walls lacing the lower slopes.

I thought that I would take a route I'd not investigated, from Shining Tor along the ridge towards Cats Tor. About half way along the ridge, in the valley to my right, I saw the tops of trees, a wood growing where no woodland should be. I made towards it.

The way became steeper and springs drained from the peat and joined to make rivulets that cut into the hillside, so that I was running on loose shale, which clattered down to the water. Inside the wood was no easier, and the trees were dead.

Something showed between the trunks. It was a small stone building, the shape of a

beehive, with a doorway. I stooped inside. It was bare, except for a stone table. And on the table was a bunch of fresh primroses.

I had seen no one since I reached the hills. The farms were scattered, few, and poor. Here, any workable soil was used for the families' vegetables. There was no place for the luxury of flowers. Yet the stems were moist.

A wood of dead trees; and beyond it were glimpses of high foliage. It was an impenetrable wall of rhododendron, acrid leathery, breathing, alive. I moved around the barrier and came to two formal gateposts. The wilderness growth had nearly blocked the way, but a thin line of path remained and I followed it, brushing through, spitting out the black and bitter dust of the shrub bark.

I came to a fork in the path, and took the left. It curved around a small hill. The way became a wide approach, and led to what had been a terraced lawn, below steps, clad in weed. And on the lawn was the ruin of a nineteenth century Italianate mansion. Everything above the ground floor had collapsed and was covered by grass, with architecture sticking out. The walls that remained were pierced by full-length windows, now glassless holes in stone; and

where the main entrance had been there was the carved image of a griffin.

The whole thing, the whole edifice, should not be here in this ancient and wild land. What was it? What had it been? Whatever, it was no good place, and I had to leave.

I went back along the path and down the fork. The remnants of two bridges crossed what was now a brook.

After half a mile I came to padlocked and chained iron gates, rusted into a single

block. I turned and ran back up the thousand feet to the clean air and the living wind. Though I didn't know it, the seed of The Moon of Gomrath had been planted then and there.

It's more than fifty years since that happened. But every time I go to Errwood, at any season, on the stone table there are always fresh flowers, to this day.

Notes by Alan Garner

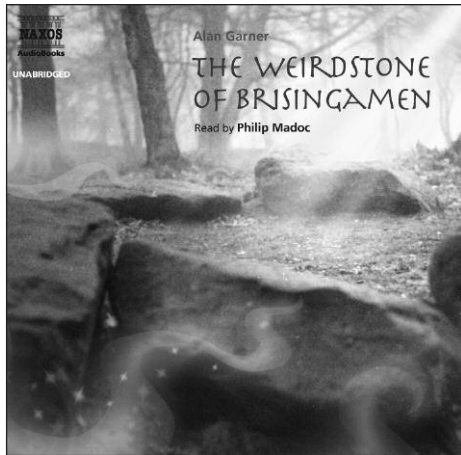
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The Weirdstone of Brisingamen

(Garner)

Read by Philip Madoc

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Alan Garner

THE MOON OF GOMRATH

Read by **Philip Madoc**

Colin and Susan, who had been swept into the world of magic by the evil Morrigan as told in *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, are not safe from her revenge. A meeting with the Elf Lord in the woods on the Edge leads them back to Fundindelve and the wizard, Cadellin. The elves need Susan's bracelet of power, and against the advice of Cadellin she gives it to them. Without it she is in such danger that the only chance to save her is for Colin to invoke the Old Magic. He does so, but this unleashes an uncontrollable force, Garanhir the Hunter.

The siege of Errwood, Susan's single-handed fight with the Morrigan, and her final blast on the horn of Angharad Goldenhand are the climax of this haunting tale.



Philip Madoc

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