

The Other Wind Study Guide

The Other Wind by Ursula K. Le Guin

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Plot Summary

In *The Other Wind* by Ursula K. Le Guin, we are presented with a magical tale in the style of mythology in the created world of Earthsea. *The Other Wind* is perhaps the final novel of the Earthsea Saga as the author uses it to conclude all of the previous conflicts and tensions present throughout her books and provide a resolution.

The main narrative of the book concerns itself with the fate of Alder, a humble village sorcerer with the power to mend things by his magic. Every night, Alder is being drawn in his dreams to the low stone wall that separates the lands of the living from the lands of the dead, and there his recently departed wife Lily is calling to him and reaching for him across the wall.

Distressed, and fearing that he has become cursed or some other great evil is about to be unleashed onto the world through him, Alder travelled previous to the story to Roke island, where the Master Patterner of the Immanent Grove then sent him on to see the Archmage Ged or Lord Sparrowhawk of the previous Earthsea books. Ged helps him think about what he must do. He senses a connection between the recent events that are threatening the west of the Archipelago and that the dragons are back and are threatening war with humanity.

During his voyages, Alder meets many great people (the High King Lebannen, the lady Tenar, the dragon-girl Tehanu, and Orm Irian, the dragon-woman); all of whom hold a piece of the puzzle as to what is happening to him and indeed the rest of the world. As he consults with the High King, Alder is just one of King Lebannen's other problems: that the Karg's have sent him a bride who will not speak to him, and that a group of dragons have attacked Havnor island, the home of his own power. Seeing no choice the High King seeks to go to Roke to understand not only why the dragons are so angry with humanity but also what is happening to Alder. On their journey there the story starts to weave together the different strands of information from each character involved as together, at the Immanent grove the party discover an ancient evil that was performed by the wizards and Alder himself sets to Mending it.

The novel primarily focuses on healing, mending, peace, and pride. The motivations and beliefs of each character is challenged as they must overcome their own pride and the divisions which stop them from really understanding each other (just as King Lebannen and the High Princess of the Kargad lands must learn to communicate). Overall, *The Other Wind* acts as a mythological tale extolling the virtues of freedom and peace.



Chapter 1, Mending the Green Pitcher, Pages 1-34

Chapter 1, Mending the Green Pitcher, Pages 1-34 Summary

In the first chapter of *The Other Wind* by Ursula K. Le Guin, we see a ship docking at the small island port of Gont Island, and from it departs a young man who appears to be mistrusted or feared by the sailors behind him (they make the sign to ward against evil as he passes). This man we later find out is the sorcerer Alder who is travelling to Gont on the behest of the Master Patterner (one of the Master Mage's of Roke Island, the school of wizardry) to meet with Lord Sparrowhawk, the Archmage.

Alder comes travels through the poor town and is either harassed or ignored by the simple folk there, until he begins a long journey up into the hills to a small house on the edge of the sea cliffs called the Overfell or the Mage's House where Lord Sparrowhawk lives.

When he finally gets there, he finds that Ged Sparrowhawk, who was once the hero of the Earthsea tales is now a rural smallholder (having lost his magical abilities) who is busy harvesting plums and tending his goats. Almost as soon as he gets there, Alder reveals that he is in dire need and exhausted, Ged lets him fall asleep in the small orchard of his house. That night, after the two men have eaten they retire for the night and Ged is awakened by a dream where he travels to the low stone wall that separates the land of the dead from the lands of the living. He awakens in fear, and feeling that there is a deep grief and wound that he cannot place.

The next day the young sorcerer tells his story to Ged, that he was once in love with a witch named Lily, but she passed away and her death broke his heart. Ever since then he has been dreaming of that low stone wall and his wife calling to him and the dreams have become so real that even now he starts to see them whilst awake and other people shun him and can sense the unnatural dread. Alder reveals that he travelled to Roke the island of wizardry to consult with the wizard, but they would not let him in. Instead, the Master healer (Master Herbal), the Doorkeeper and the Master Summoner came to him. Together they travelled with him to the lands of the dead but could not discover why Alder was being drawn there nor why the dead were being drawn to him. Instead the Master Patterner accepted Alder to come to the Immanent Grove (supposedly the centre of the world) where he found peace for a little while before sending him on to Ged Sparrowhawk, because when he was the Archmage Ged himself had travelled through the lands of the dead and had survived.



Chapter 1, Mending the Green Pitcher, Pages 1-34 Analysis

In the first section of Chapter One, Mending the Green Picture, we are introduced to the lands of Earthsea through the eyes of Alder as he travels by boat to the island of Gont. There is a sense of mystery and dread about him as the author keeps his story mysterious at first, forcing us to question whom this sorcerer is and on what important errand he is on. This heightens the tension and the drama surrounding Alder.

As he makes his way to see Ged, he meets the poor folk of Gont and his character is contrasted, marking him as different from ordinary people. These distinctions are used in part to describe just how different sorcerer's and wizards are from the rest of people - in effect how strange and magical the events of the story will be, but also these distinctions help to paint Alder's character as someone who carries a curse.

When we meet Ged, the old Archmage, his simple lifestyle, surroundings, and straightforward manner are soothing to Alder and to the narrative as his very presence presents a healing alternative to the scary events that are threatening Alder. In doing this we can see the story navigating between the complicated life of Alder and the simple wisdom of Ged. This contrast between complicated and simple, stressful and restful reappears throughout the book and further highlights the tension and the emotional depth of the characters.

Ged himself is eager to listen and to help, but we can sense a certain reservedness about the Archmage as we come to understand that Ged himself wants no part to play in the great events of the world any more, instead seeing wisdom in the simple things such as looking after goats or trying to be a good husband. In a foreshadowing of much later events we can see that actually the character of Ged at the start of the story himself represents the very possibility of Healing and Mending in the story that simple wisdom and honest emotions are the answer to Alder's problems and not deep or confusing magic's.



Chapter 1, Mending the Green Pitcher, Pages 35-55

Chapter 1, Mending the Green Pitcher, Pages 35-55 Summary

After Alder's story in the previous section Ged Sparrowhawk considers everything that he has heard, and tells Alder that he was right to seek his counsel. Alder is confused at what is happening to him, and cannot understand how the dead still want him (when they are supposed to be beyond feelings). Ged informs him that once, when he was a mage he understood the world as the Master Summoner does; thinking that there must be some sort of great magic afoot - but now that he has lived without his powers for many years he understands things the way that the Patterner does - that there are natural things such as love and death and longing which are stronger than even the greatest magic. He does not know what is happening to the sorcerer, but stays up with him that night as he goes to sleep and reassures him when he starts to dream of the low wall by laying a hand on his shoulder.

The very next day Ged sets Alder to the performing of simple tasks; of trying to gather the goats with magic (which doesn't work), and the using of his magical skill to mend a green pitcher which has clumsily been broken. Seeing what must be done, Ged takes Alder to his friend Aunty Moss (one of the first witches to teach Ged himself) and there asks for one of the kittens from a litter that has recently been born. Ged sees that in this matter it is companionship, warmth and friendliness which is keeping Alder safe and away from the lands of the dead - and so Ged gifts the young sorcerer with the young kitten to look after. Ged does this partly out of kindness, and partly because he believes that animals carry with them a sense of freedom (they do not have to decide to do good or evil, they are free from that morality).

At the end of this chapter, Ged reveals that Alder has to go seek King Lebannen and especially the Woman on Gont, his adoptive daughter called Tehanu. This is because Tehanu is strangely able to communicate with dragons and seems to be a part of the great events that are shaping the world.

Chapter 1, Mending the Green Pitcher, Pages 35-55 Analysis

In the second half of the first chapter, we discover Ged's answer to the problems that Alder faces, which is to return to earthiness, warmth and friendliness.

The feeling and mood of this second half of the chapter stands in contrast to the first half; as the second part contains with it natural, physical and homely tasks whereas the



first half considers the ethereal, the strange and the terrifying realms of the dead. The chapter becomes particular more 'earthy' and welcoming with all of the natural and healing associations that come with that as Ged takes Alder to see Aunty Moss - an elderly witch whose house is sanctuary for animals and young things. In a sense Aunty Moss appears to be a mother-earth type figure for the book whom the young hero (Alder) has to go to seek solace and warmth (in the form of the kitten, Tug). In this light, we can then see that the author is using mythological themes to enter the story - giving it that feeling of an essential myth that is timeless and important.



Chapter 2, Palaces, Pages 57- 81

Chapter 2, Palaces, Pages 57- 81 Summary

In the second chapter of *The Other Wind*, Alder the sorcerer is put on another boat leaving Gont port to travel to Havnor to see the King, Ged's wife Tenar and the dragon-girl Tehanu.

His journey this time is filled with a mixture of hope and trepidation as his new companion, the kitten Tug keeps him company and keeps him from dreaming about the lands of the dead. When the fishing boat finally docks at Havnor Great Boat Alder reveals that Ged has given him a letter bearing the Rune of Peace, which gives him admittance to see the king.

Alder goes through many courtiers, ambassadors and guards on his way through the great Palace, looked at and inspected before finally reaching the young King Lebannen, who greets him alone in a simple room. There King Lebannen asks to hear his story and reads out the letter that ged has sent with him; declaring that Alder is somehow caught up in the great events that are troubling the whole world (the return of the dragons to the West), and that he should be allowed to speak to Tehanu the dragon girl. Feeling out of place and strange, Alder settles into his rooms after his audience with the High King.

The narrative then switches to King Lebannen's perspective as it reveals that earlier that day King Lebannen had been arguing with Tenar about the recent envoy from the Kargad lands. It appears that the Kargish now had a new High King who has overthrown the previous God-King and has instituted himself in his place, and, despite continual efforts at peace on behalf of King Lebannen had remained distant until recently. High King Thol has sent his only daughter as a 'present' to King Lebannen, and a message saying that King Lebannen should grace his daughter by setting the Ring of Elfarren (taken from the Tombs of Atuan by Ged and Tenar) on her arm. The implicit message is clear; that Lebannen should marry his daughter, and only then would there be a lasting peace between the Kiargish lands and the Archipelago.

Lebannen feels frustrated and annoyed at this meddling in his life by a distant king, and instantly rejects the idea; especially so when we find out that the Kargish princess can not be seen at all through the long veils that she wears and also speaks no common language that he can understand. Lebannen feels trapped and outmanoeuvred. Distressed, this section ends as we find the young king palming the small black pebble that he took from the lands of the dead when he went through that land with Ged, thinking about the strange message that Alder brings with him.

Chapter 2, Palaces, Pages 57- 81 Analysis

In the second chapter of 'Palaces,' the author radically changes the tone in the story as she allows us to see Havnor and the great court through Alder's and Lebannen's eyes. It



is entirely different from the rural and homely Gont, and represents layers of complication and distrust that the characters must battle through in order to find reconciliation and Mending. This distinction is further brought home by the differences in language and activity of the two chapters; in the way that Alder feels out of place and unsettled the author uses this layer of confusion to describe how human nature is stuck in worry, endless function, role and complication. All of these facets are set in direct opposition to the simple 'earthy' healing of Ged, Aunty Moss and the kitten Tug.

When the story presents a new element; the possible matrimony with the Kargish princess it at first appears obvious that this is impossible as neither side are able to see or speak to each other. Lebannen, we can see is acting somewhat stubborn and spoiled by not even entertaining the idea of getting to know or even like the Kargish princess, whilst the Karg's are using the princess as a bargaining chip.

This failure to communicate (both in actuality as the princess and the king cannot understand each other) and metaphorically (in the way that the princess is shut off from the outside world by her veils) can be seen as one of the main obstacles to the theme of Healing & Mending. What the author is implying through this, is that for the story to even consider healing and reconciliation, all of the characters must at least be able to communicate. The act of communication is also the principle act of Mending, and joining together.



Chapter 2, Palaces, Pages 81- 113

Chapter 2, Palaces, Pages 81- 113 Summary

The second half of the second chapter, Palaces, begins with Tenar (who used to be the high priestess of Hur-at-Hur) as she think about how angry she might become with King Lebannen. She is angry with the young king that he is so disrespectful to the Kargish princess, not realising as she does that the princess probably had no real power in her own lands because she was a woman. Tenar yearns for her simple home life with Ged and Tehanu when they lived on Gont, but has the creeping suspicion that Tehanu will never be returning to their home again. That night she dreams of her time as the priestess of the Kargish, and how the Karg's believed that every spirit is reborn apart from the people of the Archipelago. Her dreams turn to nightmares as she considers that maybe she herself, Ged and all the people she now loves cannot be reborn as they live in the West and fall under the same curse.

The next day Alder is summoned to a private council with Lord Onyx (a wizard of Roke), Segoe (one of King Lebannen's guard captains), Tehanu, Tenar and the king. There he again reveals his story and says to Tehanu that Ged gave him two questions to ask her: who goes across into the lands of the dead (and) can a dragon cross the wall? Tehanu replies that she doesn't know and the conversation turns to the fact that everyone there that night had dreamt of the dead calling to them.

Onyx and Segoe talk about how Tehanu is strange, and that they do not know what to think about the recent incursion of dragons back into the West. Suddenly a guard arrives and announces that a group of dragons have flown to the island of Havnor itself and are burning the farms. King Lebannen immediately convenes his war council, stating that there is nothing that they can do to protect themselves, but that they might be able to parley with them. Deciding that he has to go to at least make an attempt at peace Lebannen takes his council of Tehanu, Onyx and Segoe and leaves by ship to travel up the coast to speak to the dragons.

When Lebannen and his party arrive at the place where the dragons are raiding, they travel inland to where they see a line of forest fires and there a change comes over the fire-scarred girl Tehanu. She rides forward and starts calling out in the Old Speech 'brother, sister' and to their surprise one of the dragons replies, speeding to them and talking to Tehanu. Suddenly the dragon rears up and speeds into the west.

Afterwards, the wizard Onyx asks Tehanu what she has done and what she has said to the dragon, to which Tehanu replies that she asked the dragon whether her father (Kalessin the Eldest dragon) had told them to invade the human lands? The dragon apparently then said that Kalessin and Orm Irian (a woman with the power to turn into a dragon) had left to travel 'on the Other Wind' and that the younger dragons will wait no longer for the return of their ancient lands to them. Tehanu asked the dragon to find this Orm Irian and the dragon agreed.



Chapter 2, Palaces, Pages 81- 113 Analysis

In the second half of Palaces, we see the action starting to take off as suddenly a third piece of the puzzle is added to the story - the invasion of the younger dragons to the Archipelago.

In this section and in this whole chapter the action is displayed through the use of several narratives, allowing the reader to see the events of the plot through several eyes (first we have King Lebannen's appreciation of the supposed insult of High King Thol, and then we see Tenar's appreciation of the injustice done to the powerless princess). This use of the different narratives culminates at the end of the chapter when the girl Tehanu meets her dragon brother. This event is made much stranger and more mysterious by the fact that the author does not use Tehanu as a narrative voice: we do not know what she is really thinking or feeling; thus making her and her actions more alien and more magical.

The discussions by the main characters at the centre of this section foreshadows the events later in the book, as each character considers their dreams and their beliefs about death. When Tenar reveals that the Kargish believe in rebirth and reincarnation we can couple these facts with the mysteries around Tehanu and Orm Irian: people who are at one and the same time dragons and humans. The author builds up the tension and the mystery at the heart of the book by not allowing any particular character to see the whole picture of events, but throwing each character from event to event (especially Alder).

In the appearance of the dragon right at the end of the story, the whole tension and drama of the story escalates as we are shown a vision of these strange, unreal and powerful creatures. The danger that the islands and the characters are in suddenly becomes real and imminent, rather than the spiritual or metaphysical threat represented by the plight of Alder.



Chapter 3, The Dragon Council, Pages 113 - 135

Chapter 3, The Dragon Council, Pages 113 - 135 Summary

In the first half of *The Dragon's Council*, Tenar is watching the *Dolphin* sail off with Lebannen and her adopted daughter Tehanu. Tenar is upset and distressed, even though Tehanu is not her real daughter she is still scared for her safety and that night dreams of all people she has loved. Ged she sees as a hawk-headed man in the Tombs she used to manage, trapped and unable to fly, Tehanu she sees as a vulnerable child underneath a coil of dragons burning towards her from the sky.

The very next day the sense of loneliness surrounds Tenar as she is struck by her own isolation at court. She decides that she will go that day to the Kargish princess, the only other woman at court who is more isolated and distrusted than she is, with the attention of trying to teach her a little Hardic (the language of the Archipelago). When she arrives she finds that the Kargish princess is herself distraught, believing them all to be in mortal danger from the dragons further inland. The princess throws herself at Tenar, hugging her fiercely, and so begins their friendship.

The Kargish princess reveals that her real name is Sesarakh, and that she is scared by these western people and their sorceries from the Archipelago. She was brought up believing that she could be reborn whilst everyone in the west died and did not return to the world, in return for that sacrifice they were given magic. She also believes that the westerners can steal her soul and she will be cursed if she ever becomes married to King Lebannen.

Tenar tries to console Sesarakh, telling her that just as she cannot understand the Westerner's they cannot understand her too, and that misunderstanding is breeding fear. This small step allows Tenar to start teaching her Hardic.

During that day, Alder is also left behind at the palace of Havnor, and he takes to wandering the Palace gardens with his kitten Tug. He feels useless and worried, as if he has brought his curse down on the whole people of Havnor and sits down in the gardens, wondering whether he should just fall asleep and give in to the dreams forever. At this moment, as Alder is half in and half out of the dream world Tenar arrives and revives him, asking him if he is all right. Tenar asks him to remember his wife Lily and talk about his love for her.

Soon after the vessel *The Dolphin* bearing Lebannen, Tehanu, Segoe and Lord Onyx return to Havnor Great Port and Alder and Tenar rush to greet them, fearing the worst. Unexpectedly however, up from the boat strides King Lebannen and his troupe unharmed, declaring that the very next day there will arrive a dragon to Havnor who will



come to parley, and that they have managed for the moment to call a truce with the rampaging dragons.

Chapter 3, The Dragon Council, Pages 113 - 135

Analysis

In the first half of the Dragon Council, we can see the author starting to weave together the different opposing positions represented by the characters, offering the possibility of Healing the divisions that exist between them.

The author does this through the scenes depicting Tenar and the High Priestess Sesarakh. Sesarakh, it turns out, is mortally afraid that the western peoples will steal her soul if they learn her name, and has been taught since a young girl that women should not be seen but be covered in a veil. She even refuses to learn their language at first, because she sees it as another heresy which will cause her to be cursed and never to be reborn. When she meets Tenar she is comforted by this figure of a woman from her own homelands who has managed to live a life beyond the Krgad patriarchal rule, and is confident and strong. As Tenar teaches her that she must at least try and understand Lebannen then there will be the possibility of communication, and from there mending, healing, and reconciliation can be made. Sesarakh has led a closeted, cloistered upbringing, and so is naturally fearful of what is being presented to her in the form of Tenar, but we can also detect that she is jealous of this freedom that Tenar enjoys, and sees that she must step forward, out of her veils and out of her old way of thinking to be able to make peace with the strange people around her.

This whole first half of the Dragon Council encapsulates the possibility of reunion and healing for the characters in the book; as we see Alder sitting in the Palace Gardens, still worried about his fate and mourning his wife it is again Tenar who holds for him the secret for his peace: by acknowledging the loss and his love for his wife, the human comfort that Tenar represents appears to be the balm that Alder really needs (in the same way that he needs the kitten Tug's affection) to be able to heal.



Chapter 3, The Dragon Council, Pages 135 - 157

Chapter 3, The Dragon Council, Pages 135 - 157 Summary

The last half of chapter three, after the successful return of King Lebannen and his party, is concerned with the events of the Dragon Council, where Orm Irian reveals what is really at stake and why the dragons are on the brink of war with the humans.

The Dragon Council is slowly peopled by the King's 100 councillors, all whom we discover are trusted lords, leaders, sages, or merchants from the people of the islands. There they hear the events that happened to the King, and discuss what they should do about the dragons. Some humans claim that they should fight, whilst others that they should look to the wizards of Roke to defend them, and to Alder (who has also been invited) it seems that all of the posturing and announcements made by the great and the good appear to be ineffectual and weak. During the lunchtime recess the inner core (the main characters) go off to eat lunch, where Alder speaks to Tehanu and she seems to be the same as any other normal human girl. King Lebannen asks her if she has considered Ged's questions and she replies that it would seem logical that if no animal can cross the wall of stones into the realms of the dead, and that dragons are animals, then no dragons go to the land of the dead.

Suddenly, as they are discussing, these matters the trumpets sound at the sighting of a great dragon - Orm Irian who has appeared flying to the palace. The King and Tehanu go out to greet her, and Tehanu speaks to her as a sister, another daughter of Kalessin and the dragon turns into her normal human form - the woman named Irian. She is then led into the Dragon Council.

Here she informs the councillors and the king that the young dragons have grown restless; that Kalessin has gone to travel the 'Other Wind' but before he left he told them that they now had a choice: either to fly with him and remain free or to accept the yoke of good and evil, morality and choice (just like the humans had). Irian reveals how Kalessin the Eldest had told them all that once, long ago both dragons and humans were one people, and that every few generations there were still born humans who could turn into dragons or dragons who could turn into humans and the very last of these are Irian and Tehanu. Long ago the humans chose the yoke of morality, whilst dragons the freedom of the air, and now the dragons must decide to either fly with into the west forever, or to remain here with the humans or to dwindle into dumb beasts. Kalessin then left, leaving the dragons to decide.

Since then, Irian went on, the younger dragons have grown restless and now seek to drive the humans out of the islands so that they can remain free but not have to leave forever. When King Lebannen asks her just why the dragons are afraid of the humans



here on the islands (enough to try and drive them out), Irian replies that dragons fear the human's spells of immortality, gesturing to Lord Onyx the wizard.

Onyx the wizard proclaims that they have no spells of immortality and that such a thing would be a heresy, but Irian is adamant and the argument is not resolved until Tehanu speaks up before the entire council and suggests that they go to the Immanent Grove on Roke - the very centre of the world to find out the answer to this mystery.

The King then turns to seek approval from his council, who all give it for him a select band of people to go with Irian to Roke to discover what the wizards are up to and why the dragons fear them so much. When asked whether the dragons will honour this truce Irian is dismissive, saying that it may last for half a year.

Chapter 3, The Dragon Council, Pages 135 - 157

Analysis

The second half of Chapter Three, The Dragon Council is about communication, and about having the courage and integrity to meet our problems head on. It starts with the arrival of Orm Irian, the dragon-woman of Way, who is sister to Tehanu, daughter of Kalessin the eldest dragon and yet also a woman herself. She appears first as a golden dragon to the Palace of Havnor before assuming her human form to take part in the council.

In the first part of this section, we hear from the human councillors, how they have put their faith in arms or in the wizardries of Roke and do not wish to parley with the dragon. This decision is seen as foolish by Alder and we must take it as the object lesson at the heart of this chapter; that we must be able to communicate with our supposed enemies to find the middle ground. What we see holding back this possibility of communication is either sides haughtiness or conservative ways; even Orm Irian (although a protagonist) declares that she cannot stop the younger dragons from their warfare, and that the problem lies at Roke without sympathy, whilst Lord Onyx claims that she is wrong and that the problems lie with the dragons. When Orm Irian reveals that the legends of her people tell her that both dragons and humanity were once one race, there is the possibility of finding a common ground and a common reconciliation between the two species (represented by Tehanu).



Chapter 4, Dolphin, Pages 157 - 180

Chapter 4, Dolphin, Pages 157 - 180 Summary

The story continues in Chapter Four, Dolphin, as High King Lebannen makes his preparations to sail to Roke with his trusted troupe. He elects to take with him the people directly involved (Orm Irian, Tehanu and Alder) as well as his councillors Lord Onyx the wizard, Seppel the Pelnish wizard, Segoe and Tenar to act as a companion to Tehanu.

When Tenar realises that King Lebannen refuses to take the Jigh Priestess Sesarakh with him she is angry, confronting the young king that the matters that they are about to discuss will directly affect not only the people of the Archipelago, but also the people of the Kargad lands. At first King Lebannen refuses again, asking what the point would be to take the priestess if she cannot even understand the language that they are talking in. Tenar disagrees, stating that she has been tutoring the young woman in Hardic, and that the information that Sesarakh has (her own myths and legends of her people) may well have some relevance to the mysteries surrounding Alder, the dragons and the Lands of the Dead.

King Lebannen is frustrated and decides to go to the River House where the High Priestess is staying and talk to her himself, where Sesarakh comes and greets him as an equal. Not quite understanding why he does so, Lebannen decides to invite her on this journey to Roke island.

Meanwhile, Alder the village sorcerer is accompanying Lord Onyx and Seppel as they are talking about the ancient history of magic and the agreement between dragons and humanity at the dawn of time. Alder doesn't quite understand all that is being said and himself is fearful that his actions will lead them and all of Earthsea into danger. When he asks Onyx for help, Onyx turns to Seppel (whose Pelnish wizardry knows more about the matters of life and death than does Roke magic). Seppel is hesitant at first, but relents to try and help the young sorcerer. He then takes Onyx and Alder to a fissure in the ground which, he states, was once sacred to the Old Powers of the Earth, and there, whilst chanting allows the Powers to take from Alder his magical ability of Mending (in so doing it also protects him from dreaming about the Lands of the Dead). Seppel is upset and Onyx is suspicious at this great cost, but Alder at first seems happy at the trade.

Later that day, Tenar is walking in the palace gardens feeling fiercely homesick for her husband Ged and for her home on Gont island, when she runs into Alder offering a kitchen boy the gift of his kitten Tug. Tenar realises that Alder looks much more at ease, and would have made a good father some day if his wife Lily had been allowed to live.



Chapter 4, Dolphin, Pages 157 - 180 Analysis

The first half of Chapter Four, Dolphin concerns itself with the issue of Pride in relation to overcoming our problems. As Lebannen believes that he cannot even talk to Sesarakh he ignorantly states that this matter does not concern her, and it is up to Tenar to change his mind. High King Lebannen must overcome his pride at being wrong and at feeling somewhat manipulated by the people around him to go to the High Priestess and include her in the journey to Roke. When he eventually does do this he is struck by the fact that Sesarakh is actually treating him as an equal, and is strong in herself.

Pride too, plays a part in the decision of Alder to give up his magical gifts in order to find peace. For Alder it is an easy thing to do as he is not a prideful character, but both Seppel and Onyx are shocked by the act and what he has done. It is not until much later that we understand that this act might not have been the best way for Alder to solve his problems.



Chapter 4, Dolphin, Pages 180 - 204

Chapter 4, Dolphin, Pages 180 - 204 Summary

The second half of Chapter Four, Dolphin, concerns itself with the events that start to fall into place whilst on board the vessel as it sails towards Roke island with its band of adventurers.

It begins with Seserakh sitting in the cabin she shares with the other women on board (Tenar, Tehanu and Irian) as she starts to fear feeling seasick. Being an in-lander in a desert country, the High priestess has never travelled or even seen the sea until she was sent to become King Lebannen's wife. She turns to Tenar for help, who scolds her, saying that she is not sick yet (for the sea is calm), but is merely afraid, and that she should take the air above decks and try to have some courage. The High Priestess takes her advice and seats herself with the other women in the open air on the deck, where she sees Irian standing proud and fearless laughing with the High King, Lebannen.

During the journey, we also see Alder who is thinking about the recent events on land and his newly lost powers. He senses their absence, and wondered if he has given something up far greater than just his magical skill as he listens to Seppel and Onyx talk. They speak of an ancient contract which seemed to be made in the depths of time, when humans somehow decided to give something up in order to have something else. It appears from their conversation that they are talking about humanities knowledge of the True Speech, so they had lost a lot of their knowledge of it in favour of knowing how to lie, cheat and say the untrue things that the Old Speech cannot. Thinking about this, Alder asks if a dragon can lie - and the wizards laugh, knowing that it is one of the oldest questions in the world, and that no one knows the answer. Seppel then asks the young sorcerer if he still fears the Dead Realm and Alder reveals that he does, because he never willingly used his magic to go to the Land of the Dead. Seppel the Pelnish wizard is taken aback, wondering why then Alder lost his magic to the Old Powers of the earth, and Alder wonders why the dead cannot be truly free if they have to live in that place forever.

Meanwhile on the voyage, King Lebannen starts to wonder about the Kargad princess, especially as his truest friend Segoe is stating that all the other men are very taken with her. He goes to the women's cabin one night to find them all playing cards and is stunned at their strength and collected beauty. Embarrassed, Lebannen returns to the decks.

The next day however, after a conversation with Tenar in which the older woman reveals that the Kargish Princess wishes to speak to the King but has been scared of becoming seasick, Lebannen summons her to the fore decks where he watches and waits for sight of Roke island. Here he is stunned that the Kargad woman is strong and beautiful, and intelligent as she tells him of the legends of her lands; that there once was a time



when all the people spoke the same language (the humans of the east and the west, and the dragons). However, there was once a great choice made when the humans of the east chose to forget their one language and make a new one so that they could dwell and possess things, whilst the dragons chose to keep their language and be free. The people in the middle - the people of the Archipelago chose to do neither, but learnt a new language and kept the Old Speech, and in so doing chose to dwell and possess things, but also to never let go and never die truly. Considering just what this means, King Lebannen is still mystified by her words and by his sudden feelings for her as the boat sails towards Roke waters.

Chapter 4, Dolphin, Pages 180 - 204 Analysis

In this second half of Chapter four, Dolphins, the author starts to reveal the mystery at the heart of the book; the ancient unity of the dragons and the different human races of the islands, and the ancient choices which they made which set them on their long paths to this day.

The author chooses to give several characters key pieces of the puzzle so that together as we listen to each one we can see that they are coming together to point at a central story. In this way the 'real' events behind the story are echoed by the wizards Onyx and Seppel, and Sesarakh. In Alder we have the weaving of another part of the puzzle - that of death itself and Alder approaches this mystery from a very human perspective. He is the only one at this time in the story who can feel that the division between Life and Death is a wound that needs Healing and Mending. The end of this chapter also concerns itself with the overcoming of ones' Pride (a continuation of the first half of the Dolphin chapter). King Lebannen overcomes his Pride and realizes how badly he has been treating the High Princess of the Kargad lands, and, when he goes to try and speak to her for the first time he is stunned by his own embarrassment and shame (he sees all of the women together as a strong, collective unit and realises how pompous he has been). When he finally realises that Sesarakh has important views of her own (and feelings) the divisions between them start to fall away as Sesarakh takes down her veils and Lebannen sees her as a 'real' person.



Chapter 5, Rejoining, Pages 205 - 223

Chapter 5, Rejoining, Pages 205 - 223 Summary

In Chapter Five, Rejoining, we see the character's travelling with King Lebannen arrive at Roke island and meet with the other Master Wizards there, ready to try and understand the changes that are threatening the world.

The night before the Dolphin docks at Roke port all of the people on the boat are disturbed by strange dreams. Alder dreams of a warm nuzzle trying to awaken him, whilst Seppel the Pelnish wizard dreams that a beautiful woman comes to him and asks him to send someone to her. Lord Onyx dreams that he is bound by tiny white threads so tightly that he cannot move or speak, whilst Tehanu dreams that she is crawling through the earth to a chink of light ahead of her. Sesarakh the Kargish princess dreams that she is walking the forbidden Dragon's Way whilst Tenar dreams that she is still the High Priestess of Atuan and is walking up to the top, forbidden steps of the Tomb. Elsewhere it seems that everyone in Earthsea is troubled and cannot sleep thjat night, as King Lebannen thinks that he is at one of his law courts but that half of his people are starving women and children whom he cannot save. On Gont, Ged Sparrowhawk dreams that he is walking through the School of Roke with useless, heavy black wings hanging limp from his back.

The next morning they dock at Roke Island, to be greeted at the dockside by Brand the Master Summoner (who has become the Master of the School in the Archmage's absence), and Gamble the Master Windkey (in charge of the weather surrounding Roke, and all ships that arrive or leave the island). The Master Summoner extends his greeting to the king but looks suspiciously at the women that he has brought with him, and offers the King the hospitality of the great school of wizardry.

Orm Irian is the first to refuse his gift, saying that she would never step inside the school of Roke again even if offered, and reveals that she has been invited to the Master Patterner's dwelling at the Immanent Grove. Alder too then says that he is not sure that he would be allowed in because of all the dead that he has brought with him, and then Tehanu, Tenar and Seppel all say that they would prefer to stay in the Grove then the overbearing, male-orientated school. The High King Lebannen supports the choices of his party, smoothly asserting that perhaps they should all stay with the Patterner rather than embarrass the School of Roke.

When they arrive at the Immanent Grove (which at first appears to be a stand of trees but then, misleadingly also a whole forest as well, they meet Azver the Master Patterner. He is now an old man, but remembers Orm Irian warmly and greets Sesarakh and Tenar with kindness. When they have all arrived and made camp in the simple hut dwellings there the group begin their conference as the other Masters of the school of Roke appear.



Brand the Master Summoner immediately disputes why the Kargish or the dragons are represented here, stating that the magic's of Roke are sufficient to deal with the dragon threat, and that the dreams of the dead should not bother the other two peoples.

Tehanu, surprisingly is the first to stand against him as she reminds him that the magic of Roke - which is based on the use of the Old Speech is actually the Dragon's own language, and Tenar suddenly finds herself saying that it is the wizards of the west who are doomed and chained to the land: that when they die they go to the dry Lands of the Dead, whereas the Kargad people are the people who are really free, when they die they are released into the world to be reborn.

Just as the argument is about to escalate, the Master Patterner stills all of their angry words and suggests that maybe this is the time that they should go further into the forest and see what they can find out.

Chapter 5, Rejoining, Pages 205 - 223 Analysis

In the first part of Chapter Five, Rejoining, all of the characters start to dream about the bonds that are chaining them, and start to feel the magical net that is holding them down. For some of the characters (Irian, Onyx) this is like a prison from which they cannot escape, and for others (Seserakh, Lebannen) it foreshadows the actions that they must perform in order to make their world whole.

Pride still plays a major theme in this first part of Chapter Five as we meet Brand the summoner, who refuses point blank to accept the validity of the women and the dragons here on this mission, preferring to put his faith in his power and importance. It is only when all of the women and all of the party decide to disagree with him (going instead to the Immanent Grove, and uniting the myths and tales from across Earthsea), does the Summoner begin to see just how wrong he might be.



Chapter 5, Rejoining, Pages 224 - 247

Chapter 5, Rejoining, Pages 224 - 247 Summary

In the second and last part of Chapter Five, Rejoining, we find Alder beginning to drift into a trance as the others talk of the great matters. He feels that he travels through the forest, by Roke Knoll and takes a forgotten path that leads to the low wall of stones and the Lands of the Dead.

Meanwhile the High King, Lebannen asks Seserakh to tell her story of the Kargad lands; that once there was an agreement between all of the peoples of the world; that the dragons would choose the wind and their freedom, and that the humans would choose the yoke, and all the skill of their hands, the things they could make and have ownership over them. Azver the Patterner picks up the tale, that this ancient agreement was broken when the middle people - the sorcerer's of the Archipelago chose to capture the Old Speech and sought the powers of the Dragons, and therefore the Kargish have never trusted the people of the Archipelago.

Then Seppel interrupts, stating that in Pelnish Lore it was once believed that the Old Speech was used to make a paradise, a heaven where all the dead could return to and never feel any pain. Orm Irian agrees that humanity fears death as the dragons do not, they wish to possess life and to never die, making this land of the dead their prison.

The Master Namer of Roke School is the next to add to the discussion: that the True Name of any thing in the Old Speech is their self and that it stays their essential selves even beyond death. The group discuss these matters as the evening deepens, and Orm Irian grows ever angrier as she and Azver realises that this Land of the Dead was actually a part of the realm that belonged to the dragons known as 'The Other Wind' which was beyond the physical realm. They conclude angrily that the Rune Makers, the ancient wizards of Earthsea had used their magical arts of Naming to cast a magical net over the people of the Archipelago that, upon their death, those who knew their True Name would be taken to the Lands of the Dead instead of being released and reborn into the world. This division in the realms of the Dragons in turn lead that land to become dry and dead like a desert, as no new life was allowed to move through there.

At that moment Alder is at the low wall of stones that separates the Lands of the Dead from the Other Wind. Here he sees Tehanu who appears to be brightly on fire and together they start to move the stones of the wall as the dead crowd on the other side. Suddenly Alder is stopped as Brand the Summoner appears and forcibly brings him out of the place and back into his body.

Back in the physical Grove, Alder is lying unconscious (as if dead) and Lebannen asks the Summoner why he did it, and he replies sadly that he did not know, that he was scared.



A strange wind starts to whip into the Grove as the party awaits what they should do, and everyone on Earthsea start to feel how close the dead really are that night. The Master's of Roke are conferring, and Azver says that they should follow Alder's lead, and they all travel through their magical arts to the Low wall of the dead, where they find Alder and Tehanu trying to dismantle the wall. Here at last also comes the Summoner to help them, as well as the Doorkeeper, Master Herbal, Windkey and all the other great magicians of Roke.

Back in the physical world the High Priestess is distressed, as she discovers the body of Lebannen who went into the other realm with Orm Irian, and Tenar cradling the body of Alder. They wonder what they are to do, but Tenar replies that they must 'keep the house' - keep these unconscious and frail men warm and alive whilst they do their deeds.

The low stone wall is finally broken and the dead stream out of the land, and suddenly the 'Other Wind' starts to blow through that place. There all the magicians and heroes see flights of dragons appearing and racing into the land just as the dead fade away into the sunlight. Alder sees his wife Lily, who smiles as he takes her hand and they both fade away to rejoin the world. Tehanu finally turns into her full dragon self and goes with the dragons.

In the final passages of the book the King wakes up to find Seserakh protecting him, and Tenar mourns the death of Alder and the disappearance of Tehanu. In Tenar's voice it is revealed that the High Princess and King Lebannen are finally wed as she makes her way home to her husband Ged, to whom she tells this tale. Even though they are both sad at the loss of Alder and more so their daughter, Ged reassures her that if they ever see her again, she will arrive from the Other Wind that encircles the horizon.

Chapter 5, Rejoining, Pages 224 - 247 Analysis

In this final section of the novel of *The Other Wind* by Ursula Le Guin, we see the theme of Mending becoming the most apparent as she draws all of the story threads to their final, inevitable resolution. The long discussions of the Mages and the other characters echoes that of the Dragon Council earlier in the book, as communication is seen at first as the key to successful reconciliation. It is revealed that all of the characters have an important part to play - whether in making an important point in the discussion or in helping Alder dismantle the low wall of stones. This is also echoing the theme of Healing as each character comes together with their fellows and puts aside their differences.

The biggest changes that we see here is for the character of Brand the Master Summoner, Alder the village sorcerer and Tehanu. Brand finally realises just how wrong he has been when he forcibly tries to stop Alder and in so doing seeing that he is breaking the rules of nature (dragging somebody back to life). For Alder, in the act of dismantling the wall he is actually fulfilling his role as a Mender - and exemplifying one of the messages of the book that you do not need to be a great wizard, king or hero to



have an important part to play. What is important is his depth of feeling for his wife Lily, who he rejoins at last at the end of the book.

The character of Tehanu on the other hand, at the end of the book represents the freedom gained through breaking the wall of stones. She is finally free to turn into what she was always meant to be; a dragon, and is symbolic of the life and spirits returning to the world in their natural state.

The theme of Mending and unification comes again full circle when, right at the very end Tenar rejoins Ged on their smallholding on the island of Gont, where they started from.



Characters

Alder (Hara)

Alder the sorcerer (whose True name is Hara) is a young man who appears at the start of the tale getting off a ship at Gont Port, bidden to go and seek the counsel of the Lord Sparrowhawk by the Master Patterner of Roke.

Alder is a simple sorcerer with the simple gift of being able to mend what was broken. The audience finds out that he once had a wife named Lily who was also a witch who died unexpectedly during childbirth. Just as they had been deeply in love with each other, so it came that Alder's grief was inconsolable. Very soon after that he started to dream of her calling to him from the lands of the dead over the low wall of stones. His dreams became more and more intense until they even threatened him whilst awake, and only the touch of another living thing could give him real rest. Alder takes his disturbing tale to Roke, from there to Ged, and then Lord Sparrowhawk bids him to take it to King Lebannen and Tehanu. Whilst at the court Alder becomes complicit in the great Dragon Council, where they all discover that his dreams were only the beginning of an event that would change the whole of Earthsea altogether.

Alder himself is a simple young man, beset by the grief of losing his wife and child, and torn with humiliation and guilt at endangering those around him by this strange curse of calling the dead. He is honourable yet, but does not feel that he has the courage or really knows what he should do. He feels deeply out of place surrounded by all of these great lords and wizards, and it is when he starts to come out of himself and interact with the events around him we can see that he displays some of the most courage and character development of all of the characters of *The Other Wind*. Alder's tale in particular is a study of loss, love, and hope.

Ged (Lord Sparrowhawk)

The character of Ged (variously called Lord Sparrowhawk, the Archmage, Lord Hawk) was once the principle hero of the Earthsea Saga set before *The Other Wind*. His exploits during those books form the basis of events that lead up to the story of Alder, Tehanu, King Lebannen and Orm Irian.

Ged was once the greatest of all mages in Earthsea, master of the school of wizardry on Roke, and was called the Archmage. During his adventures we understand that he conquered great evil, healing the rift in the world created by another evil sorcerer, brought back to Earthsea the Ring of Elfarran and his lady wife Tenar from the Tomb of Atuan in the Kargad lands, became a dragonlord and himself explored the lands of the dead. That is all done now, and the character of Ged that we see in the story of *The Other Wind* is a taciturn, solemn and practical man who lives in his old masters house on the backwater island of Gont. Ged the Archmage lost all of his magical abilities in the



previous stories, and now, as the Doorkeeper of Roke puts it; "Is Done With Doing." Instead, into his care is the dragon-girl Tehanu (the mysteriously scarred girl who seems to have the ability to talk with dragons), along with his wife Tenar who was once one of the High Priestesses of the Kargad Lands.

When the Master Patterner sends Alder to seek Ged's counsel, both men are at first taken aback (as the Archmage has no power any more), but through Ged's long years of experience, he helps the troubled young sorcerer and sends him to King Lebannen's court with two questions to ask Tehanu. Whilst he himself is not as pivotal a character to the story as he used to be, by answering Ged's questions the group of main protagonists finally understand what is really ailing Alder, why the dead are calling to him and what is ailing all of Earthsea.

As a character in the book, Ged appears as very wise but a stubborn, shadowed man. He has seen many great things and appears to now distrust the grandiosity of magic and fate; instead putting his faith in the simple truths of honesty, honour, friendship and love. By stepping out and away from the story, the author is trying to show Ged's battle with his own humility as he still struggles to come to terms with his now simple life and take pleasure in it.

Tehanu

Tehanu is the young fire-scarred woman who was once the adopted ward of Ged and Tenar, but comes to adopt a new role in the Saga of Earthsea through *The Other Wind*.

In the previous book of the same name, we learn that Tehanu was once a child who belonged to a band of gypsies and bandits, who sought to kill her by throwing her into a fire. Instead she is saved and come to live with Ged and Tenar. At the end of that story it is revealed that she has the ability to call and speak with dragons, and calls the oldest dragon then alive Kalessin, to save her adopted family when attacked. Kalessin calls her his daughter and then leaves.

In this current story, Tehanu is sent to the court of King Lebannen by Ged to see if she can understand why the dragons of the West are again rising up and seeking to invade the human lands. Tehanu manages to speak to the dragons and they call each other brother and sister. We later find out that Tehanu is indeed a dragon who has been reborn as a human, and her strange powers and affinities with the magical creatures is in part explained by this.

As a character in the novel, before Tehanu realises just what she really is, she appears as a very shy, fierce young woman with a half-scarred face and a withered arm. She hates being stared at and treated as if she is different, and her previous sufferings seem to have left her traumatised - unable to speak or look another human in the eye. Through the course of the tale of *The Other Wind* Tehanu realises her strength and gains her confidence, accepting finally who and what she is and becoming proud of it.



Tenar

Tenar is the wife to Ged, and the adoptive mother of Tehanu who lived together on the island of Gont in seclusion before the events of the story.

Tenar was once called Priestess Arha and used to be one of the chief priestesses of the Kargad islands as a girl, but her life was controlled and she was never allowed to do anything other than what the male priests allowed for her. Her trust is gained by Ged (then Archmage of Roke) when he goes on a quest to recover the Ring of Elfarren, which is an ancient armband that hold the Ring of Bonding - a sign of peace and unity that can bring healing to the world. Ged finally recovers the Ring, frees Tenar and many years later they become married.

As a former Karg, Tenar befriends the young princess Sesherrek when she is sent to King Lebannen's court as a gift, and uses her natural ability for compassion and honesty to ease the relationship between them. Tenar herself is a fairly short mature woman with a serious but kind demeanour who is gifted with the ability to be straightforward, honest and compassionate at all times. One of the most well-developed of the characters in *The Other Wind*, Tenar appears to have a well-rounded personality that nevertheless struggles between the simple comforts of home and family and the weighty matter so fate that she must help negotiate.

King Lebannen

King Lebannen is a young man, whom assumed the throne of the High King after being delivered and saved from death by Ged the Archmage in a previous story.

Lebannen himself is noble and straightforward, brave and courteous and a natural leader, but is somewhat at odds with the official nature of his role. In his anger against the machinations of the Kargs he shows that he is still a stubborn young man who hates being backed into a corner or being told what he can and cannot do. As he is surrounded by courtiers and officials, when we finally meet King Lebannen he seems to be a little weary and much more humane than we would expect, as if he is tired of all the courtly intrigue and the necessary bureaucracy of his title.

Irian (Orm Irian)

Orm Irian appears to be a woman who can turn into a dragon, who was the only woman to ever be schooled at Roke by the Master Patterner, the Master Herbal, the Namer and the Doorkeeper. She appears to be a tall, strong woman of strikingly good looks who deals with other people in a friendly but powerful way.

Irian is actually one of the daughters of Kalessin the Eldest dragon (who could take human form) who was born on Peln and later travelled to Roke to discover her true nature. There she also destroyed the Archmage Thorion, who himself was a dead-man



walking, or a person who had died but had clawed his way back from the lands of death through the use of his magical arts. She has now rejoined her dragon family and speaks on their behalf at the Council of Dragons.

Irian is an imposing and proud figure in *The Other Wind*, who feels strongly the injustice done to the Dragons and the horror that the mage's of Roke are committing by keeping the wall between the dead and the living standing. She cares a little for the humans of the archipelago, seems to side with the dragons who are threatening their invasion.

Lord Onyx

Lord Onyx is a wizard of Roke who is one of the High King Lebannen's councillors at Havnor. He takes part in the major events by accompanying the King when he goes to parley with the dragons and seeks to understand what is happening to Alder.

Onyx appears at first to be a 'typical' wizard of Roke; prideful, conservative and haughty. He distrusts women, Orm Irian and later the Pelnish wizard Seppel when they try to convince him that the magic of Roke is causing the problems of the world.

Although not an overtly unkind man, in the story Onyx represents the traditional and somewhat patriarchal view of the world that is standing in the way of real change occurring in Earthsea.

Seppel the Pelnish Wizard

Seppel the Pelnish Wizard is another mage from an entirely different school of magic than that of Roke. The wizards of Paln are feared and mistrusted in the Archipelago because they serve the Old Powers of the Earth, or the dark 'cthoniac' forces of life and death itself which are thought of as dangerous and somewhat heretical. Seppel is also one of the High King's councillors who is summoned to the Dragon Council to speak what he might know of the ways of Dragons and the dead.

During the course of the story, Lord Onyx and Seppel at first are at odds, but gradually come to treat each other with a gathering respect for each other's wisdom in their respective fields; a fact that symbolised the Healing and Mending of the different forms of magic at work in Earthsea. When Alder is about to set sail for Roke it is Onyx who takes him to Seppel, asking the Pelnish wizard if he knew of any power that will keep Alder away from the Lands of the Dead. By courting the old powers of the earth Seppel agrees to help, but manages to take all of Alder's magic away in return for the protection from his dreams. Seppel is aggrieved at this loss, not fully realising what cost the Old Powers of the Earth would have asked.

The growing friendship and the troubles that Seppel and Onyx goes through represent the themes of healing and unification.



Master Patterner

The Master Patterner (True name of Azver) was once a Kargish warrior who, many years ago gave up his homeland to seek the centre of the world; the Immanent Grove. There he learnt about the deep mysteries of the Earth, and the equilibrium at the heart of all things. It is the Master Patterner that first sets the story on its way to a resolution as he asks Alder to seek the advice of Ged the Archmage and then finally accepts all of the characters back to the Grove to seek a way of restoring the balance.

Master Patterner himself is a symbol of unification and harmony for the story. He lives in the only place where all the forces of the Earth and magic are at rest and not in conflict with each other. He himself is a Karg (the traditional enemy of the Archipelago), but has yet managed to marry his own 'barbarian' beliefs with that of the wizards of Roke. In a sense the Master Patterner represents the healing and unification that the whole story is yearning for.

Brand the Master Summoner

The Master Summoner is now leading Roke in the absence of Ged the Archmage. He vigorously opposes Orm Irian, claiming that only Roke magic can defend the Archipelago against the dragons, and that the dragons are the ones at fault.

The Master Summoner believes that the outbreak of the dreams and the threat of the dead breaking the low wall of stones must be some great act of magic, and can only be countered in the same way. He appears to have little compassion for the plight of others, but is rather concerned with his own greatness and the continuance of the state of the world as it is. As this book is also about Change, and things being mended, Brand the Summoner also directly becomes one of the obstacles in the path to reconciliation. By his refusal to even hear the wisdom of the women, Orm Irian and Tehanu the Master Summoner is opposing any chance at Healing.

Seserakh

Seserakh is the King Thol, High King of the Kargad land's daughter, and such high princess of the Kargish. She is sent to King Lebannen as a gift by her father, who seeks to unite the two in a union that will secure a peace between their two nations, and also mean that he (King Thol) has some direct line of power over the High Kingship.

Used as a pawn and treated as inferior all of her life, Seserakh at first fears King Lebannen and the people of the Archipelago, thinking that they will steal her soul if she gives them her true name and she will not be able to be reborn after her body dies. Gradually however, through the friendship of Tenar (who was once High Priestess of Atuan), she begins to learn Hardic (the language of the Archipelago) and becomes braver, casting aside her veils and meeting her responsibilities head-on without

compromising her core beliefs. In the story it is actually Sesarakh who holds the key to the answers that the rest of the characters seek, in the myths of her people the Kargs.

Tug

Tug is the diminutive kitten given to Alder by Aunty Moss (an old friend of Ged's) on Gont. Tug is strong grey kitten, self-reliant, and friendly who keeps Alder safe from his dreams, through constantly staying by him and allowing him to feel the warmth and friendliness of someone nearby at all times.



Objects/Places

The Ring of Elfarren

The Ring of Elfarren is an armband made by one of the ancient High Kings (Morred) for his Queen Elfarren, to join them in marriage. It was lost for many centuries and broken, but was magically healed by Ged and Tenar when Ged rescued her from The Tombs of Atuan. Upon it is inscribed the Rune of Bonding, and is symbolic of Unity, Mending and Wholeness. The fact that King Thol wants his own princess-daughter to wear it is seen as a symbolic invitation for King Lebannen to marry his daughter and Bond together, or unite the Kargad lands and the Archipelago.

Lebannen's Stone

King Lebannen has about his neck in a small drawstring bag at all times a black pebble taken from the mountains of Pain that edge the Land of the Dead. It acts for him as a reminder of his fateful journey there, which was recounted in a previous book with Ged called the Archmage of Earthsea.

Gont

Gont is a fairly large island to the northeast of the Archipelago of Earthsea, where Ged (Lord Sparrowhawk) lives in his old master's house with his wife Tenar and adopted daughter Tehanu, and is also where he was born. Gont is a poor, rural island which is suspicious of strangers and wizards, and is where Alder the young sorcerer is sent by the Master Patterner to seek advice.

Roke

Roke Island is the isle containing the greatest school of wizardry (the Roke School) in Earthsea. Here powerful enough sorcerers and magicians are sent to learn the secrets of the world (but women are never taught, save one who later became Orm Irian).

Roke is the magical and metaphorical centre of the world of the Earthsea books, containing as it does the Immanent Grove and Roke Knoll - the places where the Old Powers of the Earth and the Higher Magic find a balance. It is also the middle ground between east and west - or the people of the west (the dragons) and the east (the humans). Here the wizards try to remember the Old Speech (otherwise called The Words of the Making) which is the 'true language' of the world and within which no lies can be told.

Leading Roke and the school are the nine Masters of magic, generally with one Archmage at their head. During the time of the book Brand the Master Summoner has



become the head of the school in the absence of Ged the Archmage. It is here that Alder first begins his adventures just as the young Ged did many decades ago, and where Alder and the other protagonists return to to resolve their difficulties. As it is the centre of the whole world and the also the symbolic 'middle ground' it in itself becomes a metaphor for the possibility of reconciliation (for the characters need to find a common middle ground before they can understand each other and attempt peace).

The Immanent Grove

The Immanent Grove is a beguiling grove of woods that encamps around Roke Knoll on the island of Roke. It is the place called by Kalessin the Eldest dragon 'the heart of the world' and presumably the very middle point (perhaps the first point) that was created in the mythological cycle of Earthsea. It is a strange place which no one has ever adequately mapped, as all the woods of the world seem to bleed into this one in a magical way, paths shift and trees mysteriously change places.

The Immanent Grove serves as a symbol for possible reconciliation (standing as it does where all the powers of the Earth and Magic meet), and is looked after by the Master Patterner (himself a metaphorical figure of Healing in the book).

The Dry Lands/Lands of the Dead

The Lands of the Dead are a constant setting in the book *The Other Wind* by Ursula le Guin. They are a magical place, only reachable upon death or by other magical creatures (dragons, wizards etc), and it is to here that everyone who was given their True Name in the Old Speech goes to upon their death. It is separated from the world by a low stone wall, which we discover was made by the Rune Maker's to stop the Other Wind, and to separate this realm from the rest of the dragon's kingdoms so that they could have a 'heaven' upon their death. It is here that Lily, the departed wife of Alder has been calling for him, and here that Alder returns to in his dreams every night.

Hur-at-Hur

Hur-at-Hur is the one of the dry, desert islands of the Kargish, and home to the Kargad ruler, High King Thol and his princess daughter Sesarakh. It is a large land and considered 'backward' by most people of the Archipelago, people by fierce raiders and warriors who treat their women like goods.

It is from Hur-at-Hur that Princess Sesarakh is sent, and it is the legends of that land that the princess tells Tenar and the King Lebannen that provides clues to the problems surrounding Alder. Hur-at-Hur is one of the strongest places dedicated to the Old Powers of the Earth, and represents the complete opposite of the islands of the far west; the dragons and the magic of Roke.



The Tombs of Atuan

The Tombs of Atuan was once one of the holiest places in the Kargad lands, and where Tenar was the High priestess in the previous books of the Earthsea Cycle. It is dedicated to the Old Powers of The Earth, or the spirits of blood, death and life. However the Tomb was ruled over by the old God-King of the Kargad lands, who imposed on this religion his own fierce patriarchal views: making Tenar a veritable prisoner and powerless in her position. It is from this tomb that Ged Sparrowhawk retrieved the Ring of Elfarren from where it had been hidden and in so doing rescued Tenar from her yoke of oppression. During the story of *The Other Wind* Tenar dreams often of the Tombs, their strange cave paintings and the terrifying nameless spirits that lurk there as her mind tries to reveal to her the possibility of mending the split between the living and the dead, the Powers of the Earth and the High Magic, the dragons and the humans.

The Sword of Ereth-Akbe

The sword of Ereth-Akbe is the sword of the ancient hero of humanity who slew the great dragon Orm and thus saved all of humanity. King Lebannen himself is supposedly descended from Ereth-Akbe. Now it stands a symbol of the strength of humanity atop the highest tower of the Palace of Havnor.



Themes

Healing & Mending

The Theme of Healing can be seen throughout the story of *The Other Wind*, in the problems that each character must overcome, and in the way that this story itself completes and answers the problems presented in the previous books of the Earthsea cycle.

Healing is present as an immediate and necessary thing through the character of Alder who journeys to the Immanent Grove on Roke (the very centre of the whole world) in order to find peace and rest from his trials. Later too, Ged provides healing for the young sorcerer by giving him the kitten Tug, who acts as a way to mend his broken heart. Alder's character throughout the entire story in fact, can be said to encapsulate this theme entirely. Alder himself is a Mender (a type of sorcerer who can return things to their original state), as was his departed wife Lily. Through the death of Lily we can clearly see that Alder's heart is broken in two; one half now lies across the low stone wall to the lands of the dead (which is a metaphor for the central message of the book). Alder himself cannot really know healing until he has either joined his wife or they are united again in some other way.

The key elements of the story are about Mending that which is broken: the cycle of rebirth has been stopped, and needs healing, just as the dragons have no home to go to, and the lands of Earthsea are sundered between the people of the Archipelago and the Kargish. In this way, the author is trying to use *The Other Wind* as a triumphant 'mending' or reconciliation of the entire Saga of Earthsea.

We see the theme of mending at work in the relationship between King Lebannen and the princess Sesherre, as well as metaphorically in the fire-scarred and timid Tehanu finding her true power and place in the world. The author expresses these greater themes by delving into the personal; the feelings of Alder, the hopes and fears of Seseerakh, the worries of Tenar and lets her characters negotiate these themes on their own.

Pride

Pride is a recurrent theme in the story of *The Other Wind*, and also of the entire Earthsea Cycle of books. In this novel, Le Guin most presents the theme of Pride through the actions of High King Lebannen, Brand the Master Summoner and Lord Onyx (another wizard of Roke).

Pride is seen as a vice and not a virtue in *The Other Wind*. It is Lebannen's pride that is hurt when he feels that he is being pushed into an arranged marriage with Seseerakh, and it is the young man's pride which he must overcome before he can even let himself



talk to the Princess. In this way pride is seen as a divisive force, and so is thus running completely counter to the main theme of the book; that of Mending.

When King Lebannen does indeed finally overcome his own pride, he starts to see the priestess as a 'real' woman, with intelligent thoughts and feelings of her own and he is suddenly struck dumb with shame at his own powerlessness before her. This is symbolic of the old adage 'pride comes before a fall' and it is only when Lebannen has fallen metaphorically and actually in love with the Priestess do the many divisions and barriers also start to fall (the priestesses veil, for instance).

Pride is also a weakness for the many wizards of Roke that populate the story. Just in the way that the sorcerer Alder's character represents Mending we are also reminded that Alder has not been schooled at Roke Island, and so has not been taught how to be stubborn and haughty and self righteous as Lord Onyx has. The growing friendship between Onyx and Seppel also mirrors the overcoming of Pride as Seppel and Onyx are natural enemies, but each begins to see worth in the other, and use their collected knowledge to overcome their prideful ways. The biggest event in the book that symbolises ones' selflessness versus ones' pride is of course the way that the magical masters of the past sought to cheat death by creating the Lands of the dead and in this way hold onto their magical abilities. This act was of course the ultimate pride and thus needs to be overturned before the conflicts within the story can reach their eventual resolution.



Style

Point of View

The narrative Point of View of the book switches from third-person and impersonal point of view to the third-person subjective as the narrative voice looks upon all of the characters and their actions, and then switches to describing their feelings and interior experience of the story. For example we start the story with the image of the sorcerer Alder as he disembarks from the boat (and we see this event from a 'God's eye view') and then the narrator reveals to us the inner apprehensions that the sorcerer is harbouring, and the mistrust of the sailors that he has just left.

This skilful interweaving of the different 'voices' (from impersonal to personal) is used by the author to allow the reader to see the story as a whole and also to interact in a personal way with the characters. As the author reveals the inner fears, hopes and joys of the main protagonists (some more than others) the author creates feelings of empathy for what they are going through which helps the readers to feel more deeply and relate to each one.

The use of this technique reminds us of two things; that as a third person tale the author is essentially presenting a myth or fairy story with that same dream-like quality of grand magical events that may have happened long ago, and also that this tale contains a symphony of voices of many characters. As the author 'dips' into the many character's subjective experiences the author is also allowing her magical world of Earthsea to come alive with many individual's lives.

Setting

The story of *The Other Wind* is set in the Archipelago of Earthsea, mostly the islands of Gont, Havnor and Roke but reminiscences in the story stretch the length and breadth of this magical world from the dusty Kargad lands to the barren Lands of the Dead.

The lands of Earthsea are fairly unique in children's literature in that they are comprised of an archipelago of island-states rather than a large continent. This gives the constant impression of travel, journeying and adventure as the characters have to set sail often to travel from one island realm to another. Set in a fantastical world (roughly equivalent to the Dark Ages) the world of Earthsea is resonant with myths and stories; the islands further out and less travelled to are full of rumours and stories, and not much is known about them. The island of Selidor for instance is known as 'the Dragon's Isle' and few humans have ever dared to go there. This mixing of story and legend gives the whole of the setting an unreal edge, making the magical creatures and events much more believable.

The start of the story of *The Other Wind* is set in Gont, a large rural island which is characterised by its simple crafts of fishing and goat-farming. As the story progresses



the settings become gradually more and more sophisticated and more meaningful as Alder travels from there to the Havnor Great Port and then on to Roke island and the Immanent Grove. In this shift of locations we find the author using the settings to contrast the different ways of life in the islands, and developing the character of Alder (who is the principle traveller through all of this). At first, in the poor island of Gont Alder is more at ease with the simple practicalities of the island and of Ged, Lord Sparrowhawk. Afterwards however Alder is then moved to the citadel palace of Havnor Great Port - the centre of civilisation in the islands and then to Roke and the spiritual centre of the world of Earthsea.

In his travels, Alder's journey also reflects on the previous books in the cycle as he makes the journey that Ged himself made so very long ago in the very first book. In this way, the author is echoing the very first book of the Earthsea cycle and expressing the theme of Mending through her use of Settings.

Language and Meaning

The language used in the book is archaic and simple, used very particularly by the author to create the mood of Earthsea. Character's all speak fairly formally to each other with many references to honour, oaths, courage and destiny: the use of this sort of language informs us immediately that we are actually inside a fairytale as we travel with Alder inside the book.

The language differentiates itself from character to character, place to place as well as each 'type' of character has their own mode of speech. The most formal and correct language comes from the Wizards of Roke and inside the courts of King Lebannen; giving those people and places formality, gravity and presence, reinforcing their worldly power. However the simple speech of Lord Sparrowhawk, Tenar and Alder contrast against these other voices as somehow appearing more straightforward (and therefore more trustworthy and honest).

The choice of Languages in the book is also significant as the author reveals that there is in fact another 'hidden' and 'more true' language called variably Old Speech or High Speech. This is known as the Language of the Making and contains the true, essential words that themselves were the same words used to make the world. A person's name in the Old Speech is their 'true' name, forever individual and encapsulates their selves, just as the word for a pebble in the Old Speech is the 'true' word for a pebble. This distinction becomes vital to the story as the author shows us how words themselves have meaning and power and that truths can be made or revealed out of them if we use them wisely enough.

Structure

The structure of *The Other Wind* by Ursula K. Le Guin is of a novel split into five chapters, each progressing in a straightforward way (no flashbacks or flash-forwards). It starts by following the events as they happen to Alder the sorcerer, but switch from



focussing upon his narrative to then include Ged (Lord Sparrowhawk), and further into the story, the narrative points of view of Tenar and King Lebannen. This use of the structure itself allows each narrative voice to interweave and respond to the one before it, so we see a procession of voices, each filling in the next important actions of the plot. This tactic is used by the author to enhance the themes of Healing and Unity, as it presents the story in part like different people's actions responding, reacting and coming to a place of agreement with the other's around it.

Overall, the structure of the book is simple and traditional, and helps the reader to move between the different settings and places with ease. By setting each chapter around an important event (the meeting of Alder and Ged, the meeting of Alder with the King, and then the sea voyage on the Dolphin etc.), it encourages the reader to see a little of the panoply of the fantastical world of Earthsea; ranging from one of its humblest islands (Gont), to its greatest (Havnor), and to its most magical (Roke), with characters such as Seppel, Irian and Seserakh representing the other far-flung places of the world.



Quotes

"So rest a while. We can talk in the cool of the evening.. There's seldom as much hurry as I used to think there was" (Chapter 1, p. 7).

"If I did some wrong that brought me to that place, or brought my wife there, or the other souls, if I can mend or undo what I did, I will. But I don't know what it is I did" (Chapter 1, p. 29).

"The world's vast and strange, Hara, but no vaster or stranger than our minds are. Think of that sometimes" (Chapter 2, p. 59).

"...I swear by my name that I will destroy Thol and his kingdom before I let him use me as a footstool to his throne" (Chapter 3, p. 71).

"If i marry him I have to give him my name. If he speaks my name, he steals my soul...So they always hide their names. But if he steals my soul, I wont be able to die. I'll have to live forever without a body, a bird that can't fly, and never be reborn" (Chapter 3, p. 126).

"And Kalessin said to them: 'Choose. Come with me to fly on the far side of the world, on the other wind. Or stay and put on the yoke of good and evil. Or dwindle into dumb beasts" (Chapter 3, p, 152).

"'I don't know what I am, mother,' she whispered in her voice that was seldom more than a whisper" (Chapter 4, p. 182).

"The wisest of our mage's have foretold; a great change is upon us. We must join together to learn swhat that change is, its causes, its course, and how we may hope to turn it from conflict and ruin to harmony and peace" (Chapter 5, p. 221).

"I think...that when I die, I can breathe back the breath that made me live. I can give back to the world all that I didn't do" (Chapter 5, p. 231).

"We Broke the world to make it whole" (Chapter 5, p. 246).



Topics for Discussion

What makes Alder an unlikely hero in 'The Other Wind' by Ursula Le Guin? What are his strengths and weaknesses?

How can King Lebannen's and Princess Seserakh's relationship said to be symbolic of the theme of Mending in 'The Other Wind'?

Is the magic of the Archepilego necessarily a bad thing? Should Alder have given his magic away as he does for Seppel?

Why are the Dragons so angry with the humans of Earthsea?

Consider the significance of the character of Tehanu. What does she represent in the novel, and how does her character change towards the end of the novel 'The Other Wind' by Ursula Le Guin?

Consider the growing friendship of Lord Onyx the wizard of Roke and Seppel the Pelnish Wizard in 'The Other Wind.' In what way does it represent the major themes of the book, and, what does each character have to overcome in order to reach their resolution at the end of the novel?

Describe the role that women play in 'The Other Wind' by Ursula Le Guin. Is it a powerful or weak one? Give particular reference to Seserakh's situation. Who can be said to be the 'strongest' woman and why?