

A Wizard of Earthsea Study Guide

A Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula K. Le Guin

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Plot Summary

"A Wizard of Earthsea" by Ursula Le Guin is a world-renowned young adult fantasy novel which revolves around Ged, a young wizard of Earthsea. This book is part of Le Guin's Earthsea series which has won various literary awards. "A Wizard of Earthsea" was awarded the Lewis Carroll Shelf award.

The story begins in Ged's childhood and follows him through his journey to become a wizard and his quest to defeat the evil shadow creature he accidentally unleashes into the world.

The novel starts with Ged in his village on the island of Gont. Ged is the son of a widower bronze-smith, and his mother died when he was not even a year old. Early in his life, Ged's aunt realizes he possesses the power to be a great wizard and begins teaching him what she knows of magic. Eventually, the Mage of Re Albi comes to Ged's village and takes him as an apprentice, to teach him all he can about sorcery. Ged's pride and impatience led him to leave his master Ogion, the Mage of Re Albi, and instead to learn his wizardry at the school in Roke.

While at the school in Roke, Ged blossoms, becoming one of the best students in the school. Again, his pride and arrogance cause strife and competition between him and his fellow students, specifically an older student named Jasper. One night, while trying to show Jasper up, Ged attempts a spirit-summoning spell beyond his skill level. He cannot control the spell and lets loose an evil shadow creature that attacks him. In order to save Ged from the shadow, the Archmage (the head of the school) sacrifices his life. It takes Ged months to recover physically from the shadow attack but much longer for him to recover emotionally.

Ged finishes his time at Roke, learning all he can in order to keep him safe from the shadow which he knows is constantly searching for him, trying to find him to possess him and take his life force. Upon earning his wizard staff, Ged leaves to become the wizard for the township of Low Torning on a nearby isle which needs protection from dragons.

In Low Torning Ged comes face to face with the shadow while he is trying to save the life of a local child. Although Ged escapes from the shadow, he knows he must leave Low Torning for his safety and the safety of the people there. But before he leaves he must take care of the dragons that are a danger to the people, so Ged sets off for the Isle of Pendor. On Pendor, Ged kills several of the young dragons before he finally gets to speak with the elder dragon. Ged gets the elder dragon to agree never to fly west to Low Torning or the Archipelago and thus ensures the safety of the people.

Once Low Torning is safe Ged starts his journey. He bounces between many places eventually making his way to Osskil where he has heard of a sword that might help him defeat his shadow. On Osskil, he is attacked once more by the shadow that has taken possession of his travel companion's body. Ged flees again and comes to safety at the



Court of Terrenon. At the Court of Terrenon, Ged meets Serret, the Lady of the Court. He soon discovers the Court holds an ancient stone with a dark spirit in it and Serret has lured him to the court to use his powers to control the stone. Serret wants Ged to become a slave to the stone and to her. He flees the court and ends up back on Gont in the village of his old master Ogion.

Ogion finds Ged and takes care of him for a few days. Ogion reassures Ged telling him he is strong enough to conquer the shadow but he must become the hunter not the hunted. With the advice of his true master, Ged leaves Gont to pursue his shadow.

Ged's hunt leads him to Iffish, the island where his school friend Vetch is from. While on the island, Ged runs into Vetch who convinces Ged to stay with him. Ged meets Vetch's sister Yarrow, who he very much enjoys, and Vetch's younger brother Murre, whose easy life Ged envies. Once Ged has told Vetch of all his recent struggles and his quest to hunt the shadow, Vetch decides to join Ged on this journey. Together the two friends leave Iffish toward the Open Sea in pursuit of the shadow.

Ged and Vetch travel past the Outer Reaches, farther into the Open Sea than any other person has travelled. Eventually, they stop when they have reached a seemingly invisible land that only Ged can see. On this invisible island, Ged faces his shadow. He speaks the shadow's true name which is the only way to control the shadow. The name Ged speaks is his own and at once the shadow and Ged join together to become one. Vetch is horrified, thinking his friend has become possessed by the shadow. As soon as Ged and his shadow are united, the balance of the earth is restored and the invisible island disappears, becoming the sea once again. Vetch and the dazed Ged make their way back to Earthsea. When Ged finally speaks, he tells Vetch everything has been restored, he is a whole man again and his wound is healed. After a few more days of travel, Vetch and Ged make it back to Iffish where they find Yarrow waiting for them.



Chapter 1

Summary

The narrator tells the story of the birth and early days of a young boy named Duny. Duny's mother dies soon after he is born, leaving him to be raised by his father, a loveless bronze-smith, and his aunt, the village witch. When he is just seven years old, Duny hears his aunt say something in a strange language to a goat to prompt the goat to move. Later Duny tries saying the same funny language to a herd of goats. He does not know what he is saying but the goats listen to him and follow him. At first he thinks it is funny but soon he is frightened by the goats. His aunt sees the goats under Duny's spell and realizes he has the power. She tells Duny she can help him learn more spells and he is intrigued.

Soon, Duny learns spells giving him power over birds and animals. The children of his village begin calling him Sparrowhawk because he was often found with a bird of prey on his shoulder. By the age of twelve, Duny has learned most everything his aunt knows about sorcery.

Not long after, the Northern lands are attacked by the Kargs. Many people in Duny's village run into the ravines to hide, including his aunt. Duny stays in the village with his father and the villagers who have chosen to fight the Kargs. As the morning breaks, Duny and the villagers see the Karg army approaching. Knowing they do not have enough men to stand a chance, Duny has an idea: he will try the fogweaving spell.

Duny begins chanting the spell and interweaving it with a spell of concealment around the village. It works. The Kargs cannot see the village and Duny tells his father to lead them up to the High Fall. The villagers taunt the Kargs and get the invaders to chase them through the dense fog and right off the high cliff's edge. The Kargs that do not get lured to the cliff are soon attacked by the villagers who look ghost-like in the mist. Soon all the Kargs are running, trying to make their getaway from the bewitched village.

Duny is found back in the village unable to speak or hear or see. His aunt, who has returned from her hiding place, tells the villagers Duny has overspent his powers and she does not have the power to heal him. A few days later, a man comes into the village from the northern forests; he is a wizard. The wizard heads to Duny's house and touches the boy's head. Duny awakens; he can see again and is hungry.

The man, Ogion the great Mage of Re Albi, tells Duny's father and aunt Duny will grow up to be someone great and he has come to the village to give Duny his real name. The Mage tells Duny's father Duny must receive his name soon and leaves.

On the day Duny turns thirteen, Ogion returns to the village. Duny's passage ceremony occurs. His old name is removed and Ogion gives Duny his new name: Ged. When the



feast and celebration is over, Ged gathered his belongings, said good-bye to the villagers, and set off with Ogion.

Analysis

The first chapter introduces the reader to the main character—a boy named Duny who becomes a great wizard known as Ged. An unknown narrator tells the beginning of Ged's story, focusing on his birth and childhood. The setting of the story is also referenced; the reader is introduced to various lands and peoples such as the Northern Reach which includes Gont, Ged's village, and the Kargs and their lands.

The main plot of the story has begun in these first chapters. The reader learns right away there is something different about Duny. He is a wizard, and not just any common wizard but one destined to be someone great. Duny embraces his powers and seems to be ready to learn more. By the end of the first chapter, a great wizard known as Origen has taken Duny, now named Ged, away to have Ged be his apprentice and learn all he has to offer about sorcery.

Discussion Question 1

Describe Ged's humble beginnings as Duny. What sets him apart from all others? What clues and facts about him indicate that he is destined for greatness?

Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of the name "Sparrowhawk"? Why does it matter concerning the character of Ged?

Discussion Question 3

Why do the Kargs attack Ged's village? How do they respond? How does Ged save the day?

Vocabulary

grim, thriving, scarp, rhyme, huddled, bellowing, fragrant, sidelong, ignorance, enchantment, summoned, dubious, rubbish, pleasantries, looting, plundered, lamenting, sockets, horde, avail, incantation, writhing, lunging, straggled



Chapter 2

Summary

The first few days pass and nothing seems to be happening. As they travel like beggars, Ged gets more and more impatient until he finally asks Ogion when his teaching will begin. Ogion lets Ged know he is already teaching Ged but he is just not understanding what is being taught. Ogion tells Ged to be patient. Ged begins to wonder what Ogion can teach him that any other sorcerer cannot and is frustrated because Ogion does not do any spells in front of him.

Finally, they arrive at Re Albi, Ogion's home. Ged spends the winter learning the Hardic language, the language which comes from the Old Speechwritten when the world was first created. But still, no spells are used. When the spring comes, Ged often goes into the wilderness to explore and collect herbs for Ogion. One day while he is out exploring, Ged runs into the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi and she asks him about sorcery.

The girl asks Ged to change himself into another image but then says maybe he is too young to do it. Ged tells her to meet him in the meadow the next day and goes back to Ogion's hut and began looking through lore-books for changing spells. As he is reading the books Ged comes across a spell for raising spirits. Soon he realizes the hut has grown dark and he sees a spirit in the corner, reaching for him. Just then, Ogion arrives and drives the spirit away. He then begins questioning Ged about the spell. Ged tells Ogion he was looking for a changing spell and tells Ogion about the girl he met in the meadow.

Ogion tells Ged that the girl is a witch and her mother is an enchantress. He tells Ged the enchantress does not serve the same powers he serves and tells Ged all sorcery is done either for good or for evil. Ogion then tells Ged he does not have to stay if he does not want to, he can go to the school in Roke instead, but he must decide now to stay in Re Albi or to leave and learn somewhere else. Although he loves Ogion, he is not sure he has the patience for the way he teaches. Ged decides to go to Roke and learn his sorcery there. A few days later they head for the harbor where Ged boards a ship called Shadow heading out for the Inmost Sea.

The ship begins heading past various lands as they make their way toward Roke. As they travel, Ged finds he fits in well with the crew and even helps with tasks like rowing. Soon the ship hits a storm and the crew is not sure they can make it to Roke Island. Ged is told he may have to find his way to Roke from Hort Town, a lawless place. As they push on, Ged spots a light to the west that is Roke Island. He tells the captain he sees Roke but no one else can seem to see it. Although not sure he is correct, the captain decides to trust Ged and the ship heads toward the light.



Analysis

Ged has made a life-changing decision to leave his village and go with Ogion to learn sorcery. Soon it becomes apparent Ogion's idea of sorcery is not what Ged has previously experienced with his aunt. Ogion does not use his magic as often as Ged thinks he should. It is obvious to both Ged and the reader Ogion is a wise wizard but this does not stop Ged from getting frustrated with his master and trying to move ahead of this teaching.

Ged also meets a girl his age who is the daughter of an enchantress. Although Ged does not particularly like this girl his pride leaves him wanting her admiration. When he tells Ogion about this young girl, Ogion gives him a warning about her mother and the magic she deals with.

When Ged meddles in magic beyond his understanding, Ogion confronts him. Ged is faced with another potentially life-changing choice: stay with his master and learn sorcery the way Ogion chooses to teach it or go to the school on the Island of Roke and learn there. It is unclear whether or not the school in Roke is a good place but in the end, Ged's ambition and pride lead him to choose Roke.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Ogion the one who decides to train Ged? How does Ged react to Ogion taking so long to begin his training? Why?

Discussion Question 2

Why is it so important for Ged to learn the Hardic language? Why does Ogion teach Ged the language, but no spells? How does Ged feel about this?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ged ultimately abandon training with Ogion for Roke? Is this a sound decision? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

gradually, apprenticeship, resentment, blundering, alcove, marvels, waded, glum, summon, mockingly, merrily, disdainfully, crouching, mortally, murmured, hearth, bewildered, radiance, precipices, dialects, lapping, hurlyburly, tumult



Chapter 3

Summary

Ged arrives in Roke and asks some townspeople where he can find the Warden of the School on Roke. Each time he asks a new townspeople for direction, they respond with a riddle-like answer leaving Ged with no more information than when he started. Finally he knocks on a door and the person answering tells him he has found the school. Ged tries, unsuccessfully, to enter the door. The doorkeeper asks Ged for his name.

Although it is not the norm to say one's own name unless it is a life or death situation, Ged tells the doorkeeper his name and at last, he can enter.

Ged is left alone waiting in the innermost room of the House of Wise. Suddenly, there is a man in the room with him, the Archmage Nemmerle. Ged reads the letter Ogion has given him to the Archmage. The letter states Ged will be the greatest wizard of Gont. The Archmage mumbles in a strange language and then all at once the Archmage tells Ged to run along. And just as quickly as he appeared, he disappears, leaving Ged alone.

A young man named Jasper appears and tells Ged he is there to show him around the school and answer any questions Ged might have. Ged tells Jasper he is called Sparrowhawk. Jasper shows Ged through the Room of Shelves and Hearth Hall, to Ged's new bedroom in the South Tower and finally to the dining hall where Ged sees a hundred or so young men eating including a young man named Vetch.

After their meal, Jasper and Vetch take Ged into the nearby town of Thwil to get Ged acquainted with the village. The people and the village, so close to sorcery, seem strange to Ged. The villagers talk in riddles and do not seem bothered or affected by seeing magic. Finally the boys make it to Roke Knoll where Jasper asks Ged to show them some magic. The boys show them their magic but Ged tells them he won't do magic because sorcery is not a game to Gontish sorcerers. Later that night Vetch visits Ged in his room and they talk about Gont and Vetch's home in the East Reach. Ged learns Vetch will soon be made sorcerer. From that night on Vetch and Ged are friends.

Soon Ged is throwing himself into his studies. Ged learns fast and soon becomes one of the best students. One day Ged asks his favorite teacher, Master Hand, how to make a Changing spell stick so when he changes a rock into a diamond it will remain a diamond forever. Master Hand tells Ged it can be done but not until he knows what is good and what is evil because changing the true nature of something, even something as small as a rock, changes the world. Changing something permanently, changing its true name, can be very dangerous. Soon after this conversation with his Master, Ged has another run-in with Jasper. Their discussion leaves Ged more determined than ever to show Jasper up.



When the winter comes, Ged is sent to Isolate Tower where he lives by himself with Master Namer and learns to master the sea. After a year, Ged is sent back to the school. On his way back he falls asleep and when he wakes up he finds an otak sleeping in his cloak. Although they are dangerous beasts, Ged speaks the otak's true name and asks it if it wants to come with him. With the otak on his shoulder Ged returns to the school and sees his friend Vetch.

That night the Lord and Lady of O visit the school and many of the young pupils are entranced by the Lady's beauty, including Ged. Jasper does tricks of illusion for the Lady who pleads for him to come back to O-tokne with her and the Lord. Everyone is amused by Jasper except for Ged; envious, he tells himself he could have evoked a better illusion than Jasper.

Analysis

Ged has made it to the School and Roke. Almost immediately upon his arrival he creates a rival—Jasper. From the moment they meet there seems to be a tension between Jasper and Ged. Because Jasper is the son of a Lord, Ged feels Jasper is always looking down on him, mocking him. As time goes on the rivalry only seems to deepen, especially since Jasper is one of the only students in the school that does not seem to be in awe of Ged and his quick mastery of magic.

During his time at the school both Masters Hand and Namer give important warnings to Ged. He is taught valuable lesson of the deep power and danger of magic, of the responsibility a wizard has when using magic. Ged is told he must know the difference between good and evil before certain, very powerful, magic can be done. It is not clear whether or not these lessons and warnings actually resonate with him.

Almost immediately upon his return to the school from this time with Master Namer, Ged find himself annoyed with, even envious of, Jasper. It seems all his learning about evil and darkness cannot yet help Ged manage his feelings of anger, jealousy and pride.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Jasper position himself as a rival to Ged? How does Ged view Jasper?

Discussion Question 2

Why do the people and the village of Roke seem so strange to Ged? Is he correct in this view? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 3

Why does Master Hand caution Ged about changing things, especially based on their true nature? What are the potential consequences of this?

Vocabulary

huddling, vain, scoffing, quavered, leached, runes, portents, strutted, disdainful, refectory, withered, quench, haughtily, bolstering, corridor, humiliate, brindle, tampered, merriment



Chapter 4

Summary

In the spring, Ged continues with his studies while Vetch and Jasper, who are now sorcerers, are in the Immanet Grove studying with Master Patterner. Ged continues to learn quickly and rumors go around the school that the master thinks he is the quickest students ever to attend the school. With Vetch gone, Ged mostly keeps to himself and his studies. Although he is only fifteen, Ged's abilities soon lead Master Changer to give him private lessons during which he teaches Ged about the true Spells of Shaping. Master Changer tells Ged how to truly change something into another but also warns him of the danger of such changing. And soon, Master Changer begins not only to tell Ged about changing but teaches Ged the Great Spells of Changing. The Archmage is never told of these secret lessons.

Ged is also learning about the balance of magic from Master Summoner, Master Summoner teaches his pupils to use only some spells when in need because of the way such magic use changes the world. Ged tries to ask the Master about raising spirits of the dead and unseen but the Master is silent, making Ged feel uneasy. As time goes on, Ged finds there are certain runes in books that seem familiar to him and certain parts of summoning spells he does not like to say. These runes and spell phrases seem to make Ged uneasy and make him think of shadows in a dark room that are reaching for him. But every time those thoughts come into Ged's head he pushes them out considering them ignorance and tells himself that once he has learned everything, he will have nothing to fear at all.

That summer the school comes together to celebrate the Moon's Night and the Long Dance. There are two days of celebration. The village of Thwil celebrates as well and the streets are full of music and singing and eventually stories about various lands and dragons are chanted. When the chanting finishes, the Long Dance begins. On every island of the Archipelago the Long Dance took place. The next day a group of students, including Ged, Vetch, and Jasper, bring their supper out into the courtyard of the school for their own private feast. Together they ate and celebrated and conjured spells.

In the midst of the fun, Jasper gets frustrated and wants to leave for company he feels is more appropriate than the prentices. At this comment, Ged and Jasper start to argue. Ged tells Jasper he is just as powerful as Jasper is and challenges him to a duel. Vetch tries to put an end to things but then Jasper causes more trouble. After more tricks and mockery between the boys, Jasper challenges Ged to go to Roke Knoll with him and show what he can do and Ged accepts. Ged asks Jasper what he would like to see and flippantly Jasper tells Ged he can raise a dead spirit. Ged says he will and heads for the Knoll.

On the hill Ged feels no more anger or envy toward Jasper, instead he feels certain of his power. Ged tells Jasper he will call the spirit of Elfarran, a woman who died a



thousand years ago. Ged begins speaking the spell he read two years before in Ogion's house. For a moment the spirit of a woman appears; she is tall, beautiful and has a sad, fearful look on her face. But right after that, the spirit turns into a bright light. The light grows and seems to become a tear in the fabric of the world. Suddenly a dark shadow rips through the light and lunges toward Ged's face.

Everyone runs or hides except for Vetch who comes to Ged's aid. The shadow is attacking Ged. Vetch tries to help but he is suddenly bound, unable to move. Then everything goes back to normal, the light is gone and the shadow is gone—the Archmage Nemmerle is there, and has mended the night. Nemmerle then turns his attention to Ged, muttering something. Ged gasps for breath, and is alive. At that moment the other Masters begin to arrive and carry Ged to the Master Herbal.

Although the shadow had fled from the Archmage it was still free out there in the world. Back in the school Nemmerle lay dying. The spell he had to invoke to save Ged and repair the damage had been too much for the Archmage. The next day the mages gather and choose their new Archmage—Gensher of Way.

Ged spends the rest of the summer blind, deaf, and mute, unaware of what has happened to Nemmerle. One day in autumn, Ged awakens and he can see. More time passes and come winter, Ged begins to speak. Finally, come spring Ged is released from the care of Master Herbal. Ged has changed. His face is scarred and his demeanor is no longer strong and proud but weak and hesitant. Ged is told to go swear his loyalty to the Archmage. The new Archmage tells Ged he cannot accept his fealty because he does not know what Ged is. The Archmage tells Ged he cannot leave Roke because if he does, the shadow will find him and possess him. He must stay and gain the knowledge and wisdom needed to defend himself from the evil. The Archmage continues, telling Ged that although he is strong and powerful he created a spell he had no control over and he did it in hate. And now Evil wants to work through Ged and they are connected.

Soon Ged was back to his studies but all his time lost put him with the younger students. Spells no longer came easily to him. The night before Ged is to leave for another stay at the Immanent Tower, Vetch comes to return Hoeg to him. Vetch is returning home and tells Ged that when he is free there will be a place waiting for him at Vetch's home. They tell each other their true names and Vetch leaves. Ged feels honored Vetch has trusted him enough to tell Ged his true name, because by doing so, Vetch has shown his trust in Ged.

That winter Ged is made a sorcerer and the Archmage accepts his fealty this time. Next Ged starts learning the high arts. Ged tried to learn what he could about the shadow and beasts like it. There were hints here and there about it—it was not the ghost of a man but it was closely tied to the Old Powers.

After he turns eighteen, Ged is sent to the Immanent Grove to work with Master Patterner. When Ged returns from his time in the Grove he is met at the doorway of the school by the doorkeeper. The man is the ninth master, Master Doorkeeper. He tells



Ged he can earn his freedom by telling the Master his own name. At first Ged is stumped, as a Mage's name is one of the hardest secrets to crack. Ged sits under a tree and contemplates what to do. Finally he returns to the Master Doorkeeper. Ged tells the Master he is not strong enough to take the name from the Master or wise enough to trick the name from the Master but he does have a question for him—what is his name? At this the Master replies with his true name and Ged earns his freedom. Ged leaves the school headed for Low Torning, a township in need of a sorcerer.

Analysis

The rivalry between Jasper and Ged comes to a head in this chapter. The chapter starts off positively with a celebration. But soon, even in the midst of the joyous occasion, Jasper and Ged's enmity flares up. Jasper mocks Ged when Ged challenges him to a duel. Ged's pride causes him to take on a spell to raise the spirit of the dead even though he cannot yet control such a spell. Although Ged knows he is powerful enough to do the spell he does not have the wisdom or humility to admit this spell is still beyond him and seems to forget all the warnings of the masters, mainly that magic causes great affects in the world.

The spell is successful at first but quickly goes terribly wrong. Along with the spirit, Ged has let loose an evil shadow. The first consequence of this spell is the shadow attacking Ged, an attack that will take him months to recover from. The second consequence of the spell is the death of the Archmage who spends all his bodily strength correcting the damage Ged's spell has caused and saving Ged's life.

Once he has recovered, Ged learns he will never be safe from the shadow. His pride has been his ultimate downfall. He will continue to study and become a sorcerer but he will have to live the rest of his life knowing the shadow is out there and will try to come after him to possess him.

The masters are not certain what the shadow is but the Master Summoner does tell Ged he knows only a great power could have summoned such a thing and perhaps only one voice—Ged's voice.

Throughout all this, Vetch remains a true friend to Ged. Right before he leaves to return to his home, Vetch comes to visit Ged. Vetch tells Ged his true name, Estarriol. Ged is honored by the display of trust and friendship. Men, especially sorcerers, share their true names with very few people; some do not share their true names with anyone. In turn, Ged shares his true name with Vetch.

After much hard work, Ged is made sorcerer and earns his freedom from the school. He sets off to start a new season of life as the sorcerer to the township of Low Torning.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Ged challenge Jasper to a duel? What is the outcome of this challenge?



Discussion Question 2

What is the terror of the shadow that Ged has unleashed, especially to himself? What, if anything, can Ged do about it?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Vetch befriend -and remain a true friend to -Ged? Why does Vetch share his true name with Ged? Why do so few wizards share their true name with other men?

Vocabulary

disguised, stern, somber, fathomless, pupils, shrill, frolic, procession, balked, astonishment, opportunity, intervene, hesitated, spindle, sallow, quivering, tolling, lithe, fealty, haggard, unwittingly, pallet, perilous, portents, devious, ruse



Chapter 5

Summary

Ged makes his way to the township of Low Torning which is located in the Ninety Isles. Like most of the townships in the Ninety Isles, Low Torning is made of ten to twenty islets. It looks out across the sea at Pendor, the dragon isle. Ged is welcomed to his new home in the township.

Normally wizards trained at Roke would go somewhere more glamorous than the humble Low Torning but recently dragons had begun to spawn on Pendor and the township had begged Roke for a wizard to help them protect their villages, families, and animals. Ged knows going to Low Torning will not be glamorous but he no longer seeks fame and fortune as he once did and he even doubts his strength and power. Rather, it is the dragons that draw Ged to Low Torning. He has grown up hearing about them and has studied them at school and is now excited to see them.

At first life is nice and quiet for Ged in Low Torning. He acts as a healer and weatherworker for the villagers and all the while there is no sight of dragons. Ged soon meets Petchverry, a boatmaker from a nearby inlet and they form a friendship. The following autumn Petchverry's son becomes ill and Petchverry comes to ask Ged to save his son. As the boy lies dying in his arms, Ged sends his spirit out to bring the boy's back. He calls out the boy's true name and is transported to another place.

Soon Ged realizes he has followed the dying boy too far into another realm. Ged turns back and has to fight for every step to get back to life. As he is walking he spots the shadow and although the shadow can barely be seen, Ged can hear it whispering to him. The shadow is standing near the wall that separates the land of the living from that of the dead; the shadow stands on the living side and Ged on the side of the dead. Summoning all this strength, Ged leaps over the wall back to the land of the living. A bright light bursts open and then Ged cannot see anything.

Back in the hut Petchverry thinks Ged is dead but the local witch thinks he is ill. Ged is taken back to his home, cold and lifeless, and left in the care of the old witch. Back in his own home Ged recovers. Ged realizes the otak's licking has brought him back to the land of the living by touching him and calling his spirit back.

The incident with the shadow leaves Ged very afraid; he realizes the shadow waiting for him is darkness itself. From that time on every time Ged thinks or dreams of the shadow he is left with a cold dread. After some time like this Ged decides he has had enough, he will not live in fear of this shadow. He must leave Low Torning because the shadow knows he is there, but Ged knows leaving will put those he leaves in danger of the dragons.



Ged decides he must go to Pendor and rid the isle of dragons. When he reaches the shores of Pendor, Ged calls out to the oldest dragon on the isle. Ged takes care of the first three younger dragons easily. Soon three more come and attack. Ged uses a changing spell to turn himself into a dragon. He manages to defeat two and wound the third. Ged calls out again to the dragons. Within moments Ged spots the Dragon of Pendor. The oldest of the dragons, the Dragon of Pendor can speak and knows an ancient form of dragon sorcery. The Dragon of Pendor asks Ged if he would like to come ashore and see the rest of the dragons. Ged refuses knowing a dragon cannot be held to its word.

The dragon continues by asking Ged if he would like help to fight the shadow. Ged is dumbstruck by the dragon's knowledge of the shadow. The dragon tells Ged he might be able to give him the shadow's true name and by doing so, Ged can control it. He tells Ged if he waits long enough on the isle, the shadow will come.

Still weary of the dragon, Ged tells him he did not come to play games but to strike a deal—the dragons must promise never to fly east of Pendor and Ged will not harm them. Ged then tells the Dragon he knows the Dragon's true name, Yevaud. Yevaud tries to offer Ged safety by tempting him with the name of the shadow once more. But knowing he can hold the dragons only to one bargain at a time, Ged refuses. Finally the old Dragon gives in and swears to leave the Archipelago alone, including Low Torning.

Analysis

Ged is no longer the wizard he used to be. Even though Low Torning is a small, relatively peaceful place both Ged and the Archmage know he will never be completely safe outside of the school. Initially, all is well in Low Torning and Ged enjoys the simple life there. His pride is no longer a factor as he does humble work below his station of a wizard. Ged even reaches out and begins to make friends.

But before long Ged is reminded of the danger constantly surrounding him. While trying to save the life of his close friend's son, Ged passes into the world of the dead and the shadow finds him. Even though Ged gets away and makes it back to the world of the living, he knows the shadow now knows where he is and it is only a matter of time before it comes for him.

After some time living in fear and trying to conceal himself with magic, Ged decides he can no longer handle this life and he must leave Low Torning. Ged's personal growth can be seen in the fact he cannot in good conscience leave Low Torning without handling their dragon situation; he is putting the life of the township above his own safety.

Ged decides, out of necessity, that he must head over to Pendor to confront the dragons so he can leave Low Torning and know it is safe. Even though Ged knows this mission is dangerous, he is glad the danger is being brought upon him of his own will and all the fear that once filled him turns into a fierceness, a readiness for action.



Ged handles the first few dragons easily and eventually the Pendor Dragon, the leader, comes to him. In the past the old Ged would have acted in arrogance, perhaps without a plan. But again Ged shows his maturity; he has prepared and studied and is ready for this encounter knowing he needs as much help as he can get to defeat the Pendor Dragon.

The dragon uses his wiles and tries to trick Ged but Ged recognizes this and refuses to fall prey to the dragons' temptations, even when the dragon tells Ged he will tell him the true name of the shadow. Ged tells the dragon he will leave the dragon alone and then tells the dragon his true name. Once the dragon realizes Ged knows his true name, he agrees to Ged's request never to fly to the Archipelago again. With this acquiescence, Ged ensures Low Torning will now be safe from the dragons.

Discussion Question 1

How does Ged respond to doing work that he once considered beneath him while in the town of Low Torning? How do the people there receive Ged? Why?

Discussion Question 2

What mission does Ged undertake when setting out for Pendor? Is Ged successful?

Discussion Question 3

Why does the great Dragon of Pendor attempt to trick Ged? What does the dragon use to his advantage in the attempt to trick Ged? Why does Ged see through the Dragon's trick?

Vocabulary

chafed, baffled, townships, ailments, scaled, jetty, pondering, hesitantly, scanted, constellations, pallet, instinctive, unscathed, cowardice, moorage, folly, smothered, prow, ashen, baneful, roiled, talons, perilous, loosed, winced, malice



Chapter 6

Summary

Ged returns to Low Torning to let them know they are safe from the dragons before he leaves the township. The town rejoices and celebrates and soon people from other islands are singing the story of Sparrowhawk and the dragons. That night Ged is happy, thoughts of the shadow far from his mind. The next day Ged gathers his few belongings and heads out from Low Torning on a boat with a few local fishermen.

When the boat is more than halfway to Roke, they run into bad weather. Ged reluctantly uses the magewind to move the ship ahead but the further the ship goes the weaker the wind gets. Suddenly Ged tells the captain to turn the ship around and drop him off at the island of Serd. Ged has realized the Roke wind-master is causing the weather problem because of Ged, because of the shadow that follows him. The wind was there to keep danger from the Isle of the Wise.

As he settled into an inn on Serd, Ged knows the shadow is near. Serd is far enough from Low Torning that no one there knows him or has heard of his feat with the dragons. That night Ged lies in bed trying to figure out his next move but none of his plans seem to be possible. None of his plans could keep him from the inevitability of the shadow who was seeking him, seeking to take his body and life. That night Ged decides he must go wherever fate leads him.

The next morning Ged heads to the port and takes the first ship leaving—the ship is headed to Havnor. Beyond this trip, Ged has nothing planned. He does not know what he will do once he gets to Havnor. The ship stops at the port of Orrimy and Ged goes ashore. While in the town, Ged meets a stranger. The stranger asks Ged what he fears and then tells Ged that he is not the shadow. The stranger, an old man, tells Ged he does not know him but he thinks they were destined to meet. He tells Ged to go to the Court of Terrenon in Osskil; there he can get a sword that will help him fight the shadow. Ged tries to figure out what this man is, if the stranger means to help or harm him. The stranger tells Ged that he is a traveller from Osskil and then leaves him.

After his run-in with the stranger, Ged makes a sudden decision and heads back to the port looking for a ship heading north. He asks to join a ship headed to Osskil. The master of the ship lets Ged join but only after he offers to row. Aboard the ship Ged has a run-in with one of the crewmembers named Skiorah. The man is harassing Ged. Another crew member steps in and says something to Skiorah in Osskilian which causes Skiorah to turn away. As he turns away, Ged sees something change in his face. It is as though, for a brief instance, something is inside Skiorah, using him to watch Ged. The minute Ged sees this change, it goes away and Ged tries to tell himself he is just seeing things. But from that moment on, Ged avoids Skiorah.



After some time the ship makes it to Osskil. On shore, Skiorah overhears Ged asking a stranger for guidance to the Court at Terrenon and tells Ged he knows where it is and is heading that direction. Although Ged has no desire to travel with Skiorah, he realizes he is in a strange land and does not know the language so he agrees to follow Skiorah. After walking hours in the snow, it is beginning to get dark. Ged asks Skiorah how much further to the Court. When Skiorah replies he does not sound like a man, but a beast. Without turning, the beastly voice speaks Ged's true name and Ged is rendered helpless, unable to change his form or summon help.

Ged swings his staff and his Skiorah's body instantly crumples to the ground. Immediately the shadow leaves the body and comes at Ged. Ged fights the shadow with this staff, turns, and runs without looking back. Ged runs and fights the urge to stop. Eventually he hears a voice calling to him and sees a pale light ahead of him. Ged heads toward a gate, the shadow at his heels, and with his last bit of strength, Ged pushes himself through the door. As he turns to shut the door and lock out the shadow, Ged begins to lose consciousness. He feels someone catching him and then all is dark.

Analysis

From the moment Ged sets off from Low Torning he is faced with challenges. Sensing the evil that hunts Ged, the charms of Roke that repel evil keep Ged from reaching the island. He is forced to come up with a new plan, which is to have no plan at all. Ged decides to simply follow chance and hopes his lack of a plan will throw the shadow off.

When a stranger approaches him in Orrimy and seems to know all about Ged, including the shadow that follows him, Ged changes his course yet again and heads to Osskil. On the ship to Osskil, Ged meets Skiorah, a crewman who leaves Ged feeling uneasy. Ged tries his best to avoid Skiorah while on the ship but cannot avoid him once ashore in Osskil as Skiorah seems to be the only person who knows how to get to the Court of Terrenon, where Ged is headed to find a sword with which to fight the shadow. It turns out all of Ged's doubts about Skiorah are legitimate when, after hours of walking, Skiorah becomes possessed by the shadow.

The shadow uses Ged's true name, leaving him unable to use magic and making him rely on his physical strength for survival. Ged fights off the shadow and wills himself on until he reaches a gate and a glowing light. Once again, Ged has fought off the shadow and is left in the darkness.

Discussion Question 1

What plans does Ged contemplate in order to escape the shadow? Why does he realize these plans will all fail?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Ged agree to travel with Skiorah? What terrifying truth does Ged come to realize about Skiorah?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ged catch a ship headed for Havnor? Does he have any specific plans beyond Havnor? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

counsel, baffled, subtle, averted, reproach, slain, malodorous, veered, jibing, sodden, feeble, hospitality, pallet, perilous, grope, ponderous, veils, dominion, irresolute, cruel, plodded, billowing, threshold



Chapter 7

Summary

Ged wakes up in a grand room. He is dressed in a silk tunic, like a lord. He begins to feel the ache throughout his body and sees his burned hand has been dressed with bandages. He calls to the otak but nothing happens. Then, the door opens and a beautiful woman comes in. She calls him Sparrowhawk and asks him if he remembers her. But Ged doesn't remember her. The lady tells Ged he is in the Court of Terrenon. She tells Ged that he can rest in the court and regain his strength and power.

The lady, who is called Serret, leads Ged from his room, through the tower, and eventually to her husband, the Lord Bendersek, who tells Ged he can stay as long as he would like. As Serret speaks, Ged notices she not only speaks Osskillian but Hardic with an accent of Gont, his home.

Ged does not feel the threat or presence of the shadow while he is in the Court of Terrenon. But he also feels like he cannot think clearly. He notices no one comes or goes to the tower and wonders what it was that brought him here—chance? Something more? There is a cold in the Court that chills Ged's bones. It seems to fill his heart with shame that he was defeated by the shadow and forced to run away. The shame soon turns to weariness. Ged leaves his room only rarely. When he does not want to be alone anymore, Serret keeps him company.

Ged is baffled by her beauty. He also notices she does not seem happy; she does not smile or laugh. He feels sorry for her being locked away in the Court with a husband three times her age. He tries to cheer her up with conversation. He asks her about the Terrenon jewel the court is named after and she takes him to see it.

Serret leads Ged deep into the secret tunnels of the court until finally they come to a small, empty cell. The jewel is set in the floor as the foundingstone of the tower. An old, terrible spirit is housed in the stone. Ged realizes Serret does not know enough about the stone to fear it as she should. Serret tells Ged the stone was made when the world itself was made. She says the stone has a voice; it can speak of the things that were, are and will be.

Serret tells Ged it might tell him how to defeat his enemy but Ged tells Serret he will not speak to the spirit trapped in the stone. He tells her it has been locked away in this tower in the middle of nowhere because of the evil it can do. Serret tells Ged she has touched the stone and talked to it and it has done her no harm.

The next day Ged finds Serret to apologize. She tells Ged he sees much, but perhaps not everything. She tells him there are types of sorcery they do not teach in Roke. She tells him there are powers at work in Osskil that cannot be controlled with the Hardic language. A weaker man should be afraid of these powers, but not Ged. She tells him



he was born to control the stone and that is why he is there. She tells Ged the stone spoke of his coming, and it has been waiting for him. Whoever controls the stone, can have power over their own destiny, over their enemies, and more! Ged tells Serret he does not have the power she thinks he does. He tells her the Old Powers are not for men to use and he cannot help her.

Serret tells Ged she was the one who sent the stranger to speak with him in Orrimy. She tells him only dark can defeat dark. Serret says the stone will tell Ged the shadow's true name. She tells Ged there is no catch or price he will have to pay, and the stone will be his slave. Suddenly Ged feels his mind and eyes clear. He tells Serret only light can defeat the dark. He realizes he has been drawn here by Serret and Lord Bendersek. They had saved him from the shadow so they could use him as a slave to the stone.

The Lord tells Serret she has been a disloyal wife and he knew she could not lure Ged into her plan. He attempts to put a spell on her to disfigure her but before he can, Ged steps in and stops him, using magic. Ged and Serret run before the Lord's servants come after them. They run out of the gates which only Ged can see through the spell of concealment the Lord had placed on them. Her appearance seemed to change as they passed through the gates. She was still beautiful but suddenly Ged knew who she was—the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi whom he had met when he was living with Ogion.

Now, out of the court, Ged senses the shadow again. Serret tells Ged to change his appearance and points to the creatures climbing out of the tower coming after them. Serret then changes herself into a bird and flies away. But Ged picks up a blade of grass and creates a new wizard staff from it. As the creatures attack Ged he uses the staff to fight them off before he turns into a hawk. They fight with one another until Ged heads out over the sea; the creatures do not follow because they are made of the Old Powers and cannot leave their own isle.

Still in the form of a hawk, Ged flies to Ogion. Ogion brings the hawk into the house and then begins to weave a spell. When he is done, he whispers Ged's true name. Ged appears back in his true form, weak and tired. Ogion knows Ged has been in hawk form for so long he cannot speak so he puts Ged to bed.

Three days later, Ged speaks to Ogion. He tells Ogion he has no strength against the shadow. Ged tells Ogion he has come for counsel. Ogion tells Ged there is no safe place for him and warns against his transforming again. He then tells Ged he must turn back; he must hunt down that which hunts him.

Ged tells Ogion he is Ged's true master. Ogion leaves and when he returns he has a piece of yew with him. He sits and works on it for hours and when he is finished, Ogion presents the yew staff to Ged. It is Ged's new wizard's staff. The next morning Ogion wakes up and Ged is gone. All that is left is a note that says "Master, I go hunting."



Analysis

The plot continues to evolve as Ged continues his journey. Somehow he has managed to escape the clutches of the shadow again but this time he had help from Serret, the Lady of the Court of Terrenon. Things have changed for Ged. He feels he is powerless, Hoeg has died, and the longer he stays in the Court of Terrenon, the more depressed and hopeless he feels.

The only brightness in his life at this time is the beautiful Lady of Terrenon. One evening, the Lady leads Ged to a power stone hidden deep within the court. She wants him to touch it but Ged knows the thing is evil, and there is an ancient spirit trapped in the stone that gives it its power. Ged refuses to touch the stone. The next day the Lady once again tries to get Ged to use the stone.

She tries to appeal to Ged's fear of the shadow, telling him the stone's power can defeat the shadow. She tells him only he can control the stone and it will have to serve him and together she and Ged can rule. She tries to appeal to his pride as well, telling Ged he will be mightier even than the Archmage.

Suddenly, Ged feels like his eyes have been opened. He realizes he has been lured to the Court by the Lady to use the stone. He also realizes the Lady's intentions are not to have him defeat the shadow but to have the shadow take over Ged after he has become a slave to the stone—then the powerful shadow would be the stone's slave and the Lady's slave.

This is the second time something has attempted to take control of Ged—first the shadow not the stone—and both times, Ged has kept the evil at bay. Once Ged realizes why he has been brought to the Court, the Lord decides he has had enough of his wife's tricks and of Ged and sets the Servants of the Stone, winged beasts from the Old Powers, on them both.

When Ged and Serret make it out of the courts of Terrenon, Ged realizes she is the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi, where he lived with Ogion. She is the one Ogion had warned him about so many years ago. Serret then transforms into a bird and flies away but Ged chooses to fight and transforms himself into a great hawk. He fights off the Servants of the Stone and flies across the sea eventually landing at Gont where he finds Ogion.

Ogion brings Ged back to his home and lets him recover. When Ged has recovered and can speak again, he tells Ogion about the shadow and how he feels helpless against it. Ogion tells Ged he does have the power to fight it. He tells Ged there is no safe place to hide from it and he believes Ged should go after it—he should hunt which hunts him. Ged comes to realize even though he has trained at Roke, his true master is and always was Ogion. The next morning Ged takes his master's advice and heads off after the shadow.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Serret, Lady of the Court of Terronon, come to Ged's assistance? What are her motivations?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Serret so insistent that Ged touch the power stone that is hidden deep within the court? What does Ged come to realize about the stone, and about Serret?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ged accept Ogion as his true master? Why does Ogion come back for Ged? What does Ogion encourage Ged to do?

Vocabulary

crimson, coverlet, salved, dour, thrice, remote, tapestried, merriment, covetous, cavernous, corridors, disdain, musingly, wholly, foresight, bewildered, scruples, cunning, stammering, driveling, trodden, ungainly, defiant, emanations, gaunt, peril, sulking, brooding



Chapter 8

Summary

Ged heads to the Port of Gont. Ged learns no boats will be leaving the Port of Gont because Sunreturn is nearing. Although Ged wishes he could remain in Gont, he knows he cannot and sets off along the coast. He comes to a small village where he searches for and finds someone who is selling a boat. The boat is barely seaworthy but Ged buys it. Using both tools and magic, Ged patches-up the boat. Using his wizard staff as the mast, Ged creates a sail of spells and sets off.

He sets his course back to the north from where he had just come. He had no plan but to retrace the course that brought him to Gont. As he travels, Ged hopes if he must meet the shadow he can do so on the sea. He thinks even if death is what comes of his meeting up with the shadow, if they meet on the sea then perhaps he can drag the shadow down into the sea depths with him and kill them both.

As the boat continues forward in the grey, bleak weather, Ged feels the presence of the shadow and wonders what it is waiting for. Suddenly he shouts to the shadow to come to him there on the boat in the middle of the sea. After a few moments of silent waiting, Ged sees the shadow. Ged sees the shadow now has a form that slightly resembles a man. Because it is still day, the shadow is partially blinded and Ged sees it before it sees him. Ged cannot tell if the shadow is moving toward him but he now knows it has seen him. Dread and fear fill Ged. Ged calls the wind to drive his boat toward the shadow and as it nears, the shadow flees.

Ged follows the shadow. The shadow begins to look less like a man and more like shadow as it makes its way towards Gont. Ged continues to follow the shadow but it seems to be getting farther and farther from him. A storm comes through the sea as Ged chases the shadow and soon he has lost all sight of the shadow in the rain. By now Ged realizes he must be south of Gont but he cannot be sure where he is. Just then the shadow appears again and leads Ged on another chase. But soon his little boat is smashed on the rocks. Ged is tossed into the sea and tries to fight his way to a nearby sand beach. He washes ashore with the wizard staff still in his hands.

By the time Ged gets up off the beach it is night. He is cold and beaten and soaking wet. As he alights with his staff he realizes he has not crashed on an island but a small reef. As he walks he sees a little hut and goes into it. Inside he finds two people, one an old man with white hair. The people in the hut look terrified and Ged tries to speak with them and explain he does not mean them any harm. He realizes they speak Kargish, a language he does not know. Ged eats and drinks and tries to figure out where he has landed. He spends the next three nights on the little reef trying to recover. All the time Ged is there, the people fear him; they have not seen other men in many years.



Ged gets to rebuilding his boat from what little remaining wood he can find. While he works, the old woman watches him. The old lady brings Ged a gift, an old child's dress with the symbol of the God-Brothers of the Kargard Empire on it in pearls. The old lady smiles and then pulls out a small bit of metal and gives it to Ged. Ged thinks it is possible the old man and woman are from a royal house of the Kargard Empire and may have been left out on this rock by some tyrant years ago when they were just children. He feels a deep pity for the man and woman.

Ged tries to tell the old couple he will take them anywhere they like but the refuse to leave their little strip of rock. So to repay them for their kindness, Ged sets a spell on the one little well that they use so the brackish water will be clear and clean and sweet from then on. Then Ged sets back out to sea. Ged knows he must hunt the shadow now by luck, not knowing where it has gone. He also knows now he is the hunter, not the hunted; Ogion had been right, the shadow could not draw his power as long as he was the hunter.

Ged keeps his course set to the southeast. Ged does not get much sleep that night as he must focus on all the charms and spells holding his small boat together. In the morning Ged sees a strange looking land he is approaching. He believes he must be in the East Reach now. There are no beaches on the island, just steep cliffs. The wind drives his little boat into a sound leading into a narrow sea-lane through the island. Ged is unsure and feels the shadow may have led him here into a trap. He follows the sea-lane, the cliffs of the islands rising around him and shutting out the light of the day. When he runs to the end of the inlet Ged is sure he has fallen into a trap. He turns the boat around. Suddenly he feels a chilling fear and looking over his shoulder he sees the shadow is behind him in the little boat.

Ged chooses to attack the shadow. Magic cannot save him now, Ged must rely on his physical strength. Ged reaches for the shadow and suddenly goes blind. In an instant he can see again and he catches a glimpse of the shadow stretched over him. It only covered him for an instant before it recoiled and disappeared like smoke clearing.

Ged only has a moment to recover before he must tend to the boat and work on the spells holding it together. A third time Ged and the shadow have met and touched. This third time leaves Ged weary, fearless but also joyless. Ged realizes he has formed a bond with the shadow, one that can be broken only by his death. He knows until their final meeting, he will never have rest. Ged sails on until he reaches the Hands. He goes to a small village where he is treated kindly by the people there and is given a place to sleep.

Analysis

Even though the thought of facing the shadow terrifies Ged, he knows he must go after it. Within a few short days Ged runs into the shadow twice and both times it leads him into traps—first it strands him on a barren reef and the second time it leads him into a dangerous inlet deep in one of the islands of the East Reach. After his third run-in with



the shadow Ged is no longer afraid but he is also no longer hopeful. He realizes chasing after the shadow is not the answer to his problem. He will never be free of the shadow as long as he lives; the only way to put an end to their chase is death. Ged knows as long as he lives he will not find peace because he and the shadow are connected and in a constant tug-of-war with one another.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Ged challenge the shadow while at sea? What does he hope to gain from a confrontation with a shadow at that time?

Discussion Question 2

What realization does Ged come to about the battle between himself and the shadow? What does this mean for Ged?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ged believe he has formed a bond with the shadow? What is the only way to break this bond?

Vocabulary

carven, venture, dour, omitting, herring, instability, mournful, summon, lisped, moors, scud, pursuit, tattering, pallor, veered, buoyant, halting, doggedly, whimpering, brackish, bodice, impalpable, barbaric, cogent, gnarled, recoiled, hospitable



Chapter 9

Summary

Ged is in the village of West Hand preparing a boat. He buys the boat, named Lookfar, from an old man and for payment Ged heals the man's eyes. Ged's power began to come back to him the few days he was in the village and he did many other spells for the people there. Ged enjoys his time with the people in West Hand. When Ged leaves, he heads southward after the shadow because he knows that is where it has gone.

Ged's first stop is in the port of Vemish. Here the local wizard tells Ged of a man, who somewhat resembles Ged, who had just passed through their village. The villagers feared this unknown man because he had not arrived on any boat and did not cast a shadow as he walked. With that, Ged leaves the island.

The next port Ged stops at is in the little village of Ismay on the island of Iffish. At a local inn, Ged is told the island shares a wizard from the school of Roke who has been given his staff from the Archmage himself, and so Ged is told he is not needed on that island. Ged does not think the East Reach is nearly as hospitable as he had come to expect according to his friend Vetch who was from Iffish in the East Reach. Ged thought the people seemed friendly enough but he also thought they must sense he was set apart from them, cut off. Ged knows he should not stay in Ismay but he is tired of travelling on the cold sea. So he tells himself he will stay just one night. The next morning Ged walks through the village watching the villagers and life that passed there as someone on the outside. His heart is heavy and he is sad. As he walks he hears a familiar voice—it is Vetch. He goes up to Vetch who throws up his own staff as though warding off a threat. Ged quietly tells Vetch it is himself.

When Vetch realizes it is Ged, he hugs his friend. Vetch tells Ged he saw him in Iffish three days before in the village of Quor. Ged tells his friend he could not have seen Ged three days ago because he arrived on Iffish just one day ago. Vetch tells Ged he called after the man that looked like Ged but the man did not answer and when Vetch followed him, he disappeared. Vetch says although Ged has come in darkness he is glad to see him and he invites Ged to come home with him and his sister. Vetch then introduced Ged to his sister Yarrow. Yarrow is about 14 years-old with dark eyes. She is slight and thin. On her arm sits a harrekki.

Ged learns Vetch is the wizard of the entire island of Iffish but he lives in the village of Ismay with his sister and youngest brother. His home is large and strong. Ged looks at Vetch's home and life and feels that is how a man should live. Vetch asks Ged what his journey is and Ged tells him everything. When Ged is done talking Vetch tells him he will join the journey.

Ged tells Vetch he will not join him, the fight is not his. Vetch acknowledges the quest is indeed Ged's but, he says, someone should be there in case Ged fails. Someone needs



to be able to warn the Archipelago if Ged should lose to the shadow; and if Ged defeats it, then someone should be there to help spread the story of his victory. Ged gives into his friend's request to join him.

Ged then asks about Jasper and learns he never earned his wizard's staff but left the school to serve as the sorcerer on the Island of O. Ged tells Vetch he fears he has no strength to defeat the shadow but might be destined to chase it from land to land endlessly. Vetch tells Ged he believes fear is a lie. But Vetch does tell Ged it worries him the shadow can walk around in a shape similar to Ged's. They discuss why the shadow can take his form in the East Reach but not in the Archipelago? Why did it use Ged's true name on Osskil but nowhere else? Ged tells Vetch he is bound to the evil thing. As long as he goes after the shadow it cannot possess him but he cannot catch it either. The only way he can destroy it is to discover its true name.

Ged stays with Yarrow and Vetch's brother Murre as Vetch travels around the island tying up loose ends before they leave. At nineteen, Murre is the same age as Ged, but is very different. They watch each other with some envy. Yarrow becomes less shy around Ged and begins asking him many questions about sorcery and spell working, which he answers. Yarrow asks Ged if he will stay for a while in Ismay with them once he and Vetch return from their journey. Ged says he will if he can. Ged leaves and Murre tells Yarrow he is under a curse. Yarrow tells Murre she thinks Ged's voyage will lead him to death but he still goes. When Vetch returns the two wizards set off in Lookfar as Yarrow watches from the dock.

Analysis

Ged is feeling hopeless as he continues to travel after the shadow. His travels lead him to Iffish, his friend Vetch's home. Ged stays in the village of Ismay although he knows he shouldn't. Watching the villagers, he feels sad that their lives are so different from his own. He feels cut off from other people. He runs into his friend Vetch and stays at his home where he meets Vetch's sister Yarrow and brother Murre.

Ged envies Murre and his simple, privileged life. At the same time, Murre envies Ged because he is a wizard who has faced battles as a hero. Ged enjoys Yarrow's company and it seems perhaps his feelings toward her could easily turn romantic if he had time to stay with her.

But Ged knows he must get back to his journey. Vetch will be joining him in his quest to defeat the shadow. Deep down Ged is sure in defeating the shadow he will lose his life.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Vetch agree to join Ged on his journey? Is this a wise decision, especially given that Vetch is the only wizard for the entire island on which he lives? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 2

What does Ged fear may happen when he defeats the shadow? Why does this appear to be the case?

Discussion Question 3

What does Ged learn about Jasper? How does Ged react to the news? Why?

Vocabulary

caulked, gallantly, shrewd, prow, scrawny, askance, temerity, vast, mutton, sedate, ancestral, idled, decorously, homely, entreated, seize, awry, vapor, cruel, wholly, comely, halt, perch, reproach, dwindles



Chapter 10

Summary

As they travel, Ged is unwilling to use his own magic on little things and is unwilling to let Vetch use his powers knowing the smallest spell can throw off the balance and they need to be careful as they are journeying to the place where darkness and light meet.

Soon they come to the fringes of the Reach where even the greatest traders from the Archipelago have yet to travel. Ged tells Vetch their journey may take them to the South Reach, where men do not go. Ged tells Vetch of the tales of the Raft-Folk of the South Reach who live their lives out at sea and only come to land once a year for wood for their rafts. He tells Vetch he would like to see the Raft-villages but Vetch would prefer to avoid the South Reach if possible. Ged tells Vetch how he wishes he could have seen all the lands in the Archipelago but instead, he must go where the shadow goes.

As they travel, Ged thinks about Yarrow—she is not like anyone he has ever met. Ged tells Vetch his sister reminds him of a minnow, defenseless but impossible to catch. Vetch tells Ged her true name is Kest, which means minnow in the Old Speech. Vetch tells Ged he knows her name is safe with him, especially since Ged knew it before Vetch even told him. Soon they come to Astowell, also known as Lastland. According to all their maps and charts, only sea comes after Astowell. But Ged thinks the people on the island might know of further lands more than the two travelers. Ged then seems to go into a kind of trance and begins saying things that do not quite make sense. When he snaps out of the trance, he doesn't remember anything he had said.

The people of Astowell are a little frightened of the two wizards when they first arrive, as they are not used to travelers coming to the island. Almost immediately though, their fears pass and the people welcome Vetch and Ged and begin to ask them all sorts of questions. The people have never seen a man from the Archipelago, so Ged is quite a sight to them. They also do not have a sorcerer or wizard on this island. Eventually, Ged asks the chief (the Isle-man) of the island what lies beyond them. The Isle-man tells Ged the sea is all that lies beyond Astowell.

The next morning Ged wakes Vetch before dawn, telling him they must leave. Ged says they have stayed too long and he has lost the shadow. He tells Vetch they must head eastward. They leave on the first day of Fallows, which is an unlucky time for travelers. As they travel Ged asks Vetch if he believes there is only sea beyond the Outer Reaches or if, like some, he thinks there may be other lands out there. Vetch tells him he thinks they will find only sea beyond the Outer Reaches, and those who have left to search for farther lands have never returned and no one from a distant land has ever appeared in the Archipelago.

Vetch tries to calm the winds as they travel but being so far from his land, it does not work. Suddenly Vetch begins to wonder what power, if any, Ged and he will be left with



the farther out into the sea they head. Vetch asks Ged if perhaps the shadow is tricking them again by leading them so far out to sea. But Ged tells Vetch they are nearing their target.

The longer they travel on the sea the more Vetch wonders at how Ged's powers can be so strong while his feel so weak and scattered. Ged sits at the front of the boat and watches. He sees a dark vision Vetch cannot see. Although they are traveling together, Ged is heading somewhere different than Vetch. He is driving into a realm where there is no east or west, no sun or stars.

Suddenly Ged stands up and stops the magewind telling Vetch to remove the sail. Ged begins to row. Vetch does not know why Ged was rowing but that is because he does not see what Ged sees. Ged rows the boat into calm waters like those near land. Vetch can see a darkness growing in Ged's eyes. Ged seems to be steering them through channels that only he can see. Vetch tries a Revelation spell but nothing appears. Ged stops and the boat feels as though it has gone aground but all Vetch sees is the endless sea.

Ged stands up, grabbing his wizard's staff, and steps off the boat into what looks like the sea but he does not sink. A light glows from the staff, leading Ged through the deep darkness. Soon Ged sees a faint shadow coming towards him. As it gets closer to Ged, he can see the shadow has a shape and a face. It is Jasper's face. The shape then changes to Pechvarry's face. Still Ged walks towards the shadow. The thing then looks like Skiorah's face and then like a horrible face unlike man or animal. Ged holds up his staff as its light burns so brightly it frightens the shadow.

The shadow moves towards Ged until they are face to face. Ged speaks the name of the shadow at the exact same time the shadow speaks. Both of them say the same word, "Ged." Ged reaches for the shadow and the two become one. From his spot on the boat, it seems to Vetch Ged has been defeated by the shadow. He leaps out of the boat to try and help Ged but as he lands in the sand, he begins to sink. Then suddenly, the world is restored, rebalanced, and Vetch find himself in the sea. Vetch can see nothing else but the boat and the empty sea. Finally he spots Ged and pulls him aboard the ship. Ged says nothing but huddles near the mast of the boat as Vetch sets the boat on a course northwestward.

Finally, Ged stands up and, using Vetch's true name, tells him it is over, that he has done it. Ged says he has healed the wound and is whole once more. Until that moment Vetch is not sure if the person in the boat with him is truly Ged but once he hears Ged speak, his doubts are put to rest. Ged has not won or lost, but has put himself back together.

No person has ever returned from a trip so far into the Open Sea as Estarriol and Ged's journey. They make their way back to Iffish. They make their way back through Ismay to Estarriol's home, where Yarrow greets them, crying with joy.



Analysis

The story reaches the climax of the plot in this chapter. Ged and Vetch are traveling to the ends of the known world in search of the shadow. Although Vetch asks him on two different occasions if he is sure they are heading in the right direction, Ged continues to drive them out into the sea past the Outer Reaches.

Ged sees what Vetch cannot—the darkness ahead of them. They eventually hit land in the middle of the sea, past any other known land, but only Ged can see the land. Vetch watches as Ged steps out of the boat and seems to walk on water. On this invisible land Ged comes face to face with the shadow. He speaks its true name, Ged. With this, Ged and the shadow become one and the balance of the world is restored. Vetch realizes this quest Ged was on was a quest to make himself whole. There can only be light in darkness and Ged needed the shadow to be a whole man.

As the two friends return to Earthsea, Ged can feel the joy of life coming back to him. They return to Ismay together, just as Yarrow has predicted.

Discussion Question 1

Why do so few men -even the bravest -venture into the South Reach? Why do Ged and Vetch set a course for the South Reach?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Ged venture onto land that only he can see, but that Vetch cannot? Why is it that only Ged can see the land?

Discussion Question 3

How does Ged confront the shadow? What is the truth about the shadow? What does this mean for Ged?

Vocabulary

commonest, foreboding, perilous, fringes, wryly, haste, contrary, commotion, courteously, baneful, pinnacled, wattle, solemn, cairn, gallantly, portent, cleaved, prow, abyss, diminishing, pallid, writhed, floundered, remembrance



Characters

Ged

Ged, also known as Sparrowhawk, is the main character and principal protagonist of the novel "A Wizard of Earthsea" by Ursula K. Le Guin. The son of a widower bronze-smith, he is a young, powerful man whom many believe will become the most powerful wizard in the world. Intensely desperate to show his power, Ged falls prey to pride. While a young student at school, Ged engages in a duel with his rival, Jasper, and releases a shadow beast into the world when a spell he performs goes wrong. Ged must then go on a dangerous quest to make himself whole and restore balance to the earth.

Archmage Nemmerle

The Archmage Nemmerle is the head wizard at the school in Roke. He sacrifices himself to save Ged when Ged releases an evil shadow beast into the world.

Jasper

Jasper is a student at the school in Roke. He is older than Ged but the two of them develop a relationship of competition and strife throughout their time in school. Jasper is the person who challenges Ged to do a spell that results in the releasing of the shadow and the death of the Archmage. Jasper later leaves school without securing his wizarding wand to become the sorcerer of the Island of O.

Vetch

Vetch is a student at the school in Roke and Ged's truest friend. Once he receives his wizard staff, Vetch returns to his home in Iffish where he is reunited with Ged many years later. Vetch welcomes Ged into his home and accompanies him on the end of his quest to defeat the shadow.

Hoeg

Hoeg is an otak. He becomes Ged's pet for many years until he is killed during a scuffle with the shadow on the island of Osskil.

Shadow

The shadow, also referred to as gebbeth, is an evil, shapeless creature let loose into the world by Ged when he attempts a spell beyond his years. The shadow seeks Ged and



seeks to control him. At first the shadow chases after Ged but eventually, Ged begins to hunt the shadow. In the end, the shadow and Ged are joined as one. The shadow is actually a darker part of Ged, and must itself be controlled in order to bring about balance to the world.

Serret

Serret is the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi and his sorceress wife. She herself is a sorceress. Serret first meets Ged when they are both just children and is later reunited with him in the Court of Terrenon, where she is the Lady of the Court. Serret is a misled, evil woman who desires to use Ged as a slave to a power stone.

Lord Bendersek

The Lord Bendersek is an elderly man who is the Lord of the Court of Terrenon and the husband of Serret. He chases both Serret and Ged out of the Court and tries to kill them but does not succeed.

Pechvarry

Pechvarry is a fisherman in the township of Low Torning. He and Ged become friends and he teaches Ged about working a boat. Pechvarry's son becomes ill and he asks Ged to save him but Ged cannot save the child.

Skiorah

Skiorah is an Osskillian Ged meets on a ship to Osskil. He is hostile toward Ged on the ship but becomes Ged's travel companion once on the island. Skiorah becomes possessed by the shadow and tries to attack Ged but does not succeed in overtaking him.

Yarrow

Yarrow is the younger sister of Vetch. She and Ged meet when he comes to Iffish and they develop a close relationship that seems romantic.

Murre

Murre is the younger brother of Vetch. He is the same age as Ged and envies the life that Ged has created for himself.



Symbols and Symbolism

Earthsea

Earthsea is the known world for the people of the Archipelago and all the Outer Reaches. It is made up of the islands of the North, South, West, and East Reaches and the Kargad Islands.

Gont

Gont is an island in the Archipelago. It is the home of Ged and his master Ogion, and the land from which Ged travels to train and become a wizard.

Archipelago

The Archipelago is a series of islands made of Gont, Roke, Havnor, and several other islands. Each island is overseen by one or more wizards.

Ten Elders

Ten Elders is the village where Ogion lives in the realm of Re Albi. It is where he brings Ged to begin training.

Thwil

Thwil is the village just outside the school in Roke. It is a place that Ged and the other students visit often during their time at the school.

Kargad Empire

The four great lands that lie between the Northern and Eastern lands: Karego-At, Atuan, Hur-at-Hur, Atnini.

Old Speech

Old Speech is the language the dragons speak. It is the language spoken by Segoy when he creates the islands of the world. This language is where magic comes from because these words are the “true names” of all things in existence.



Hardic

Hardic is an old language, and is the common language of the Archipelago and the language Ged speaks growing up.

Roke

Roke, also called the Isle of Wise, is the island where the school for wizards is located. It is constantly protected from evil by the spells and charms of the Master Wizards who live there at the school.

Low Torning

Low Torning is a small township that Ged goes to when he first leaves school. Here, Ged acts as the township's wizard. The people are happy to receive Ged. After a run-in with the shadow, Ged knows he must leave Low Torning for the safety of its people.

Court of Terrenon

The Court of Terrnon is located on the island of Osskil. It is in the middle of nowhere and is built on an ancient, powerful stone that has an evil spirit trapped in it. Ged is lured to the Court of Terrenon by the lady of the court who wants to use him as a slave to control the stone.

Pendor

Pendor is an isle near Low Torning. No humans live there because dragons have overrun the land. Ged goes to Pendor to destroy the dragons and keep them from causing any harm to Low Torning and the rest of the Archipelago.

Lookfar

Lookfar is the second boat Ged outfits to sail. He buys it from an old fisherman who asks Ged to name the vessel Lookfar after he has his sight restored by Ged.

Harrekki

An harrekki is a small dragon like creature that lives on the island of Iffish. Yarrow keeps an harrekki as a pet.

Settings

Earthsea is the main setting of the novel "A Wizard of Earthsea" by Ursula K. Le Guin. Earthsea is a place of many lands, islands, which are in turn full of numerous areas, regions, villages, towns, and peoples. Earthsea is a magical world, where wizards, sorcerers, and those gifted with magic interact, influence, assist, or even seek to hurt and control others. There is good magic and dark magic in Earthsea, and the two are constantly at war with one another. Ogion reminds Ged that he must always strive towards the good.



Themes and Motifs

Good and Evil

The theme of good and evil can be found throughout the novel "The Wizard of Earthsea" by Ursula K. Le Guin. Good and evil can be found in everyday life in every place, but it takes on an especial meaning in magic. The wizards speak of this as lightness and darkness—one cannot exist without the other. Taken together, balance is brought into the world by way of an eternal struggle between light and dark, and good and evil.

The clearest example of good and evil in the novel can be seen through Ged and the shadow. For Ged, the evil comes into his life through his pride and arrogance and comes to being as the shadow. Once the shadow is introduced in the story, the readers sees a now good or light Ged in a constant battle with the shadow, both trying to overcome the other. In the end, Ged realizes the shadow is part of him and instead of trying to defeat it outright, he brings the shadow back to him, defeating the shadow by making himself whole once again.

Others are not so lucky in their struggle against evil. Le Guin presents the portrait of Serret, a stunningly beautiful woman who seems to have everything in life she could possibly want, but Ged recognizes that there is something eating away at her internally, perhaps at her soul. He comes to discover that Serret has fallen to evil, who leans toward the darkness, and wishes to let evil control her life.

Friendship

Friendship is a major theme in the novel "A Wizard of Earthsea" by Ursula K. Le Guin. Friendship occurs in two primary ways: that of personal friendship, and that of mentor friendship. Ged experiences both kinds of friendship for different reasons, and with different people.

Personal friendship occurs primarily between Ged and Vetch. The two take a quick liking to one another, finding they share many things in common, and both aspire to be good and great wizards. Throughout the novel, Ged and Vetch watch out for one another, protect one another, and encourage one another. Indeed, the greatest act of friendship Vetch demonstrates toward Ged is when Vetch voluntarily leaves his home, position, and safety in order to help Ged track down and destroy the shadow that has plagued Ged since school.

Professional friendship occurs between Ged and Ogion. Originally, Ogion intends on training Vetch, but Vetch, proud and impatient, decides to go to a wizarding school instead. Yet, over time, Ged comes to realize that Ogion will always be his master trainer, and comes to respect Ogion immensely, seeking his advice and thoughts.



Indeed, Ogion has come to care for the boy in a fatherly way, and tends to Ged as he recovers from injury. It is Ogion who encourages Ged to go after the shadow.

Pride

Pride is a major underlying theme in the novel "A Wizard of Earthsea" by Ursula K. Le Guin. Pride involves high opinions of oneself and one's qualities, capabilities, or aspects of one's life. Pride is often a terrible thing, especially when it is undeserved, unearned, or inflated. Pride affects both Ged and Serret through the course of the novel.

When the novel begins, Ged is proud to the point of excess, perhaps even hubris. He desires to be a powerful wizard, and to try his hand at wizarding. As such, he grows impatient with Ogion's lessons, and attends a wizarding school instead. There, his pride gets the best of him by causing him to challenge Jasper to a duel, during which time the excessively proud Ged attempts a spell beyond his wisdom and his years. It causes a shadow form self of Ged to be manifested in the world, which Ged must then devote years to destroying.

Pride is also a major detriment to Serret, who has embraced the darkness and evil magic in her life. A beautiful woman with everything she could seemingly want, Serret still wants more. The love of power can be interpreted from her love of evil and her desire to let evil shape her life. The love of power can be seen in her attempt to seduce Ged with darkness by way of the stone in the court. Yet, Serret does not seem to understand the corrosive nature of evil, for she is too proud to admit the truth, seeking out even more evil instead.



Styles

Point of View

Ursula K. Le Guin's novel "A Wizard of Earthsea" is written in the third-person limited omniscient narrative. This allows the narrator to relate the story to the reader, divulging certain information to the reader only as appropriate. For example, the reader never knows exactly when the shadow will appear or manifest itself, such as in the case of Skiorah; however, the reader is made fully aware of all of Ged's thoughts, ideas, and plans -even the ones that do not work out. The limited-omniscient allows the narrator to build suspense in the plot, but also allows the reader a wealth of information about Earthsea and its environs. This is especially important due to the fantastical setting of the novel, and allows the reader to be fully enmeshed in the world rather than an unknowing observer.

Language and Meaning

Ursula K. Le Guin employs simple and straightforward language in her novel "A Wizard of Earthsea" for various reasons. First, the novel is geared toward young adults, so it is only fitting that the language be reflective of the intended audience. Secondly, the simple language also makes navigating the world of Earthsea far easier for the reader, for the world of Earthsea employs names, ideas, and words that are uncommon in the everyday life of the reader. This is then coupled with the point of view (see previous section) that enables the reader to understand these names, ideas, and words common to Earthsea by way of explanation through the narrative and through the plot as it evolves.

Structure

Ursula K. Le Guin divides her novel "A Wizard of Earthsea" into ten chronological, linear chapters. Each chapter revolves around specific incidents in Ged's life, and some chapters are years apart from one another. This is common among young adult novels, for the simplified structure of chronological, linear chapters allows the reader to pay attention to the plot and read through the book unhindered. This is especially important given that the setting of the novel, Earthsea, is full of places, people, customs, and different languages that will all be new to the reader.



Quotes

Nor will this boy be a common man," the other answered. (chapter 1 paragraph 15)

Ogion went on half a mile or so, and said at last, "To hear, one must be silent.
-- Ogion (chapter 2)

That night, and always from then on, he offered and gave Ged friendship, a sure and open friendship which Ged could not help but return. (chapter 3)

Ged's pride would not be slighted or condescended to. He swore to prove to Jasper, and all the rest of them among whom Jasper was something of a leader, how great his power really was—someday. (chapter 3)

The more he learned, the less he would have to fear, until finally in his full power as a Wizard he needed fear nothing in the world, nothing at all. (chapter 4)

Then the sallow oval between Ged's arms grew bright. It widened and spread, a rent in the darkness of the earth and the night, a ripping open of the fabric of the world. Through it blazed a terrible brightness. And through that bright misshapen breach clambered something like a clot of black shadow, quick and hideous, and it leapt straight out at Ged's face. (chapter 4)

You have a great power inborn in you, and you used that power wrongly, to work a spell over which you had no control, not knowing how that spell affects the balance of light and dark, life and death, good and evil. (chapter 4)

It was a great gift that Vetch had given him, the knowledge of his true name. (chapter 4)

From that time forth he believed that the wise man is the one who never sets himself apart from other living things, whether they have speech or not, and in later years he strove long to learn what can be learned, in silence, from the eyes of animals, the flight of birds, the great slow gestures of trees. (chapter 5)

He would not suffer this helpless waiting, this sitting trapped on a little island muttering useless spells of lock and ward. (chapter 5)

It was past bearing. He must trust chance, and run wherever chance took him. (chapter 6)

Just as he turned Ged saw a change in his face, a slurring and shifting of the features, as if for a moment something had changed him, used him, looking out through his eyes sidelong at Ged. (chapter 6)

And in Ged's heart a cold shame settled also and would not be dislodged, as he thought always how he had faced his enemy and been defeated and had run. (chapter 7)



Ged's eyes cleared, and his mind. He looked down at Serret. "It is light that defeats dark," he said stammering,-- "light. (chapter 7)

In the cold dawn when Ogion awoke, Ged was gone. Only he had left in wizardly fashion a message of silver-scrawled runes on the hearthstone, that faded as Ogion read them: "Master, I go hunting. (chapter 7)

And all at once he shouted out aloud, "I am here, I Ged the Sparrowhawk, and I summon my shadow! (chapter 8)

But the hut is gone, and the storms of many winters have left no sign of the two that lived out their lives there and died alone. (chapter 8)

Wizards so not meet by chance, lad," said Vetch. "And after all, as you said yourself, I was with you at the beginning of your journey. It is right that I should follow you to the end. (chapter 9)

I think this voyage he is on leads him to his death," the girl said, "and he fears that, yet he goes on. (chapter 9)

Still they ran with that ceaseless, light, terrible swiftness over the sea, and Vetch wondered at Ged's power that could hold so strong a magewind hour after hour, here on the Open Sea where Vetch felt his own power all weakened and astray. (chapter 10)

Estariol," he said, "look, it is done. It is over." He laughed. "The wound is healed," he said, "I am whole, I am free." Then he bent over and hid his face in his arms, weeping like a boy. (chapter 10)