



A profound novel of magic and sorcery presenting the journey of a 'wild, thriving weed' of a boy who ultimately becomes one of 'the greatest' men, a dragonlord and an Archmage. If you want a gripping story that unleashes questions about the nature of a person and a people then this is a must! There are mature ideas up for discussion here, ones which both boys and girls will enjoy reading about and contemplating.



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The island of Gont, a single mountain that lifts its peak a mile above the storm-racked Northeast Sea, is a land famous for wizards.





Overview for teachers

Context

About the author

The intensely private, and sometime political, Ursula Kroeber Le Guin was born in 1929 into a highly educated household; her father, Alfred Kroeber, was one of America's leading anthropologists studying the "wrecks of cultures, the ruins of languages, smashed by a monoculture". Her mother, Theodora Kroeber, was a writer and shared her husband's anthropological interest - so it is no surprise that an anthropological influence should show itself in *A Wizard of Earthsea*.

Born and raised in Berkley, California, Le Guin loved literature from a young age and was determined to become a writer, submitting her first piece to a magazine before she became a teenager. Although this was rejected, it did not deter her and she continued to write until finally finding a genre which suited her voice: science fiction and fantasy. *A Wizard of Earthsea* was published in 1968 and has never been out of print. It remains her most successful piece of work, selling millions of copies worldwide. It was a groundbreaking work of fantasy since it lacks whimsy, its characters are human and non-white and it internalises the psychological journey of a person.

Le Guin has lived in Portland, Oregon, since 1958 with her husband, the historian, Charles Le Guin.



What's the story about?

Duny, or Sparrowhawk, is a motherless wild young boy who lives on the Isle of Gont in the Earthsea archipelago. Through impudence and accident, he discovers he has the power of sorcery and after casting a fog-gathering spell that saves his village from a savage attack by white marauders, he becomes an apprentice to the mage, Ogion the Silent. Ogion tells the boy his 'true name' - Ged - and endeavours to teach him the value and meaning of his great power. Ged, though, is young and naive and 'loud and proud and full of temper' and is easily goaded into using his power for shallow ostentatious means, with terrible and tormenting consequences. Foreshadowing later more terrifying events, Ged, challenged by the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi (who is later revealed to be a witch), attempts to cast an unfamiliar powerful spell that calls up the dead. Instead he conjures '...a shapeless clot of shadow darker than the darkness' that whispers to Ged and is dispelled only by the appearance of Ogion and the literal and symbolic light he carries. Given a choice to stay with Ogion or go to the School for Wizards on Roke, Ged chooses the latter. Even though he realises he loves Ogion, his thirst and impatience for doing rather than being rules him.

At Roke he meets a loyal friend in Vetch (true name Estarriol) and his nemesis, Jasper. Learning quickly, but growing in pride and resentful envy, Ged once again submits to the challenge of another and, in attempting to prove he is 'superior' to Jasper, conjures up the dead - this time successfully, but at a great cost to himself and others. Ged wholly unleashes the 'shadow' which attacks him, scarring him physically, psychologically and emotionally, this time saved from death by the intervention of the Archmage Nemmerle who dies shortly afterwards, his powers and strength expired in helping the boy.

Humbled and racked with guilt, Ged changes - becoming silent, withdrawn and less sure of himself. After gaining his wizard's staff, he is assigned by the new Archmage to go to an island without status but where he is needed. In atonement and humility, Ged willingly accepts. Whilst on the island he is befriended by Pechvarry. However, he fails to save his son from death, something Pechvarry, in his grief, uncharitably reminds Ged of after he defeats the dragon that threatened the small island. Fearing the shadow that hounds him and becoming increasingly beset by paranoia, Ged leaves and tries to return to Roke, hoping for safety, but he is repelled by mage-created storms, so heads to Oskill instead where further trials and losses await him.

Running away from the 'shadow' once more and nearly a broken man, Ged returns to Gont and to Ogion who wisely informs him that he has shown massive strength in his actions and that the only way to defeat the 'shadow' is to learn its true name and turn from the hunted to the hunter. In doing this, Ged soon realises the 'shadow' now fears him and, journeying with his friend Vetch, he sails into uncharted waters where he confronts the 'shadow', speaking its true name - Ged. The two embrace and Ged is able to return master of himself, finally knowing and recognising who he is.

Themes to look out for

- Equilibrium - balance
- Power
- Light/darkness
- Friendship
- Knowledge
- Nature

Literary techniques

Presentation of character is achieved through

- What the character says
- What the character does
- What other characters say about them
- How other characters react to them
- How they are described in the narrative



Characters

As the central character, Ged is complex while the others around him remain simple, unexplored portraits - ensuring the focus is on Ged throughout.

Ged (Duny/Sparrowhawk)

Fallible and flawed, Ged, the hero of the novel, is an exploration of how a great man came to be. The story follows him from a boy to a young man as he begins life on the pastoral island of Gont, his father a dour bronzesmith who gives him little attention. Though he is not a bad person, Ged's undisciplined temperament provides an ideal basis in which his arrogance, pride, willfulness, impatience, envy and resentment can flourish. These qualities threaten to define Ged as he easily gives in to the tricks of the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi and later Jasper, manifested in the 'shadow' he unleashes and which pursues him. However, he is also a boy with love in his heart and a conscience - a quality recognised by others - but his guilt over his role in the death of the Archmage Nemmarie, his failure to save a young boy from death and the death of Otak coupled with his growing fear of the 'shadow' (or his darker side) also threaten to destroy him as he falls into despair.

The novel depicts a man struggling to come to terms with who he is and struggling to master the power behind the darker side of his nature as he matures from boy to man. He does learn though, later rejecting tempting offers by various characters to reveal the true name of the 'darkness' that haunts him. He gave away his powers cheaply before, he will not do it again. By turning to those he loves and who love him, he helps to build his strength in finally confronting, recognising and embracing who is.

Through this complex character Le Guin is able to explore the co-existence of good and evil that lives in everyone, whether we let evil master us or we master evil is a matter of our own consent.

Vetch (Estarriol)

A fellow student at the School for Wizards on Roke, Vetch, representing balance, is a straightforward soul, a good person without pride and ambition. He is a devoted friend to Ged, acting as a signpost to the reader that Ged, despite his pride and arrogance, is worth befriending. It is also worth noting that both Vetch and his sister's name, Yarrow, are both common wild flowers (humble in their origins and outlook like the characters) symbolising improvement and cure respectively.

Jasper

Jasper, of noble birth, is an anti-hero who taunts and unearths the worst in Ged at the School for Wizards. In some respects he is not too dissimilar to Ged, both share an envious and proud nature, but unlike Ged, Jasper is portrayed as a loveless character failing to reach his potential as he willingly relinquishes the wizard's staff in exchange for the position of Lady O's sorcerer: submitting to desire, status and wealth.

Otak

Otak is an innocent, small animal that is completely devoted to Ged, his unconditional love helping Ged's recovery after he unleashed the 'shadow'. His futile inferred murder at the hands of those at the Court of Terranon encapsulates all that is evil and Ged rages against it, almost losing his life in the process. This is the nadir of the story for Ged as he has lost his most beloved companion and now feels completely alone.

Ogion

Ged's first teacher on the island of Gont, Ogion is as 'tough as a hound', a quiet and contemplative mage who attempts to teach Ged about the nature and responsibilities of power. Ged loves him, but rejects him in favour of the more dynamic atmosphere at Roke. However, he later returns to the sagacious Ogion, admitting his foolishness and acknowledging that Ogion is his 'true master'. Ogion's paternal love for Ged is evident; he shows him how strong he has been and it is his wise words and presence that ultimately save Ged, urging him to hunt the shadow and discover its true name.

Serrat (daughter of Lord of Re Albi)

Along with Jasper and the Dragon, Serrat is another manifestation that attempts to lure Ged into easily giving away his powers. Tricked by her as a young boy, he is once again tempted by her beauty and the comfort of the castle, but resists - showing his growing strength, wisdom and mastery over himself.

Setting

The setting can

- Be a backdrop to the action
- Reflect characters' experiences
- Symbolise ideas the author wishes to convey
- Have its own culture and values
- Cause conflict and distress



Earthsea

Set in a quasi real-world, pre-industrial and deep in time, each sheltered island in the Earthsea archipelago has its own peculiar set of people, customs, habits and songs. As Ged voyages around the islands we get to know the archipelago through his eyes; some of the islands have houses made of wattle, while others are made of stone; some are friendly, while others are suspicious; some are rich in plant-life while others are bleak and snow-covered. Using an archipelago setting allows Le Guin to present a micro-world of ideas regarding the anthropological beginnings of man and the impact they have on one another - including undiscovered tribes - while Ged's sailing into the 'open seas', not even included in any of the maps in the book, symbolically shows not only Ged's brave journey into the unknown, but mankind's seemingly heroic need for constant exploration and discovery.

Narrative techniques

Written in the third person, the omniscient narrator adopts the carefully balanced poetic rhythms of a medieval or folklore storyteller in the oral tradition. Formal and informative, she tells the reader at the very outset of the novel that Ged is a great man, letting you know that the focus of this novel is on how he started out. The narrator is an honest one, bluntly showcasing Ged's imperfections, though she is not without sympathy and understanding of the frailties of people. For example, Ged is described as being 'wild...[and] loud and proud and full of temper...' though '...there was no-one to bring the child up in tenderness' highlighting that Ged is not necessarily to blame for becoming the 'thriving weed' that he is.

Sometimes the narrator prefers not to tell, opting instead to either present a situation or provide ambivalent or ironic comment. For example, in Chapter 4 when the young Master Changer surreptitiously teaches Ged Spells of Shaping '...without the knowledge of the Archmage, and unwisely...' she tacks on the ambivalent comment at the end of the sentence '...yet he meant no harm...'. It is up to the reader to decide whether the narrator forgives the young Master Changer, his own youth and inexperience getting the better of him, or whether she is condemning him, his thoughtless actions enabling later dangerous events.

Structure

Structure is the order or pattern in which a novel is put together and should

- Maintain the interest of the reader
- Move the action from one episode to the next
- Arouse a reader's interest in character or situation
- Create a moment of crisis
- Create expectation or surprise



Following the tradition of great oral storytelling, this briskly-paced yet thought-provoking novel begins with an introductory two paragraphs inviting the reader to settle down and listen to the story of a great man called Ged from Gont. Afterwards, it follows a simple linear structure as the story follows Ged from a wild young boy, to a humbled, fearful young man before finally confronting his fears and becoming master of himself. The story ends with an epilogue, the storyteller back in the present, telling the reader that what they have just read has no substantial evidence, nothing written down in history only 'a few scraps of legend, carried like driftwood from isle to isle over the long years'. Le Guin is acknowledging the morphing nature of stories, shaped and redefined by others through time.

Language

When reading *A Wizard of Earthsea* you feel that each word has been carefully chosen, so taut and respectful to her subject is her style. Although Ged and Earthsea are of her imagination, Le Guin strives to capture the authentic voice of an oral storyteller, a tradition now almost lost in the age of print. Proper nouns abound even for the names of herbs; in Ged's aunt's home there hung '...mint and moly and thyme, yarrow and rushwash and paramal, kingsfoil, clovensfoot, tansy and bay...'. She does mix up real and fantasy herbs though, perhaps to assert the idea of a sense of loss.

Le Guin captures the voice of a traditional storyteller with the lyrical quality of her language, one example being her use of alliteration. For instance, in Chapter 1 the Vale is on fire, '...the Vale all hazed and re-streaked with fires where fields ready for harvest had been set ablaze, and orchards burned, the fruit roasting on the blazing boughs, and barns and farmhouses smouldered in ruin'. The alliterative sounds of 'b' and 'f' brings alive the popping, flickering and whipping sounds of the fire, making it more alive and resonant for the reader, whilst the long vowel sounds have a grave and mournful quality that reflect the narrator's sorrowful attitude towards the destruction taking place at the hands of man.

Another way Le Guin succeeds in capturing the voice of the traditional tale-teller is through her manipulation of sentence structure. Her use of latinized word order creates a sense of archaism, that suggests this is a tale told long ago. For example, when she describes the Dragon of Pendor as 'Lean as a hound he was...', the information to be stressed appears at the beginning of the sentence rather than the more modern phrasing of subject first.

Sometimes her sentences are punctuated with commas before the conjunction 'and' for example when Ged meets his shadow Le Guin states, 'Light and darkness met, and joined, and were one.' This technique allows the writer to list, but putting equal emphasis upon each item, slowing down the pace, placing a sense of earnestness upon each action. She is telling the reader that each action is important: read and ponder.

Although Le Guin uses long, complex and lyrical sentences, repeating ideas for emphasis, they are more often than not punctuated by short, simple sentences for dramatic effect. For instance, when Ged meets his 'shadow' at Osskil 'He ran.' One simple, instinctive action encapsulates all the terror, fear, despair and lack of courage Ged has at this point of the story; no more needs to be explained.

Special feature

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is where the author uses details in the narrative to prepare the reader for later events



Foreshadowing helps to create intrigue and build tension in a novel; the reader eagerly, though slightly uncomfortably, waiting for the events to unfurl. In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, we know from the beginning that Ged is 'wild' and not in control of his temper so the reader is already alerted to Ged's weaknesses. What we don't know at this point is how those weaknesses will hurt him or others. The dark consequences of his meeting with the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi are only curtailed by the fortunate appearance of Ogion, but this event foreshadows Ged's inability to master himself when confronted by those who challenge him. So when Ged meets Jasper, a character who is clearly a rival to Ged, it is only a matter of time before the anticipated clash. So, once again, easily antagonised and acting in pride, temper and hate, he uses his powers inappropriately and without thought. This time though the consequences are considerably worse since he has grown more powerful and there is no Ogion to save him.

Another way Le Guin foreshadows is through the use of the colour red as portent of danger or a sign of testing difficulties ahead. Some examples include: the master boatman who takes Ged to Roke is wearing a red cloak - the place he unleashes the 'shadow'; the flowers outside Ged's house on the Isle of Low Tarning are red - here he is unable to save Pechvarry's son (the child also has 'redfever'); the dragons of Pendor are 'red-lit'; Ged views a 'broad red light' moments before a man in grey approaches him and tells him to go to the Court of Terrenon - a place where he has to overcome temptation once more, as well as coping with the heartbreaking death of his beloved Otak; Yarrow looks through a 'red flame' as she recognises Ged's fear of death in his crusade to catch the shadow and finally, as Ged journeys to meet the shadow at the end of the novel, the direction he is heading for 'grew red'.

Sometimes the foreshadowing is more explicit, for example, at the beginning of Chapter 10, as Vetch and Ged sail to meet the shadow, they 'both had felt a heavy foreboding, cold as that winter wind. Haven, harbour, peace, safety, all that was behind'. Le Guin packs her literary pistol while the reader waits, in suspense, for the trigger to be pulled.





Activities for children

Before reading

Ideas for getting started

Engaging with the world of the novel

Secrets and spells

Find out about wizardry and sorcery.

What are dragons and what are their origins?

What was life like for pre-industrial civilisations? Do they still exist in the world today?

What are the traditions behind oral storytelling?

Debate

How easy is it to overcome evil?

How does someone become 'great'?

What influences have made you the person you are?

How much control do you have over your decisions and actions?

What does it mean to be wise? How do you become wise?

What is true power?

Why are cultures different?

What is fear? Why do people fear different things?

Pictures and objects

Take a blank piece of paper and write the title 'How I see myself' at the top. Be very honest and think about all the characteristics you possess. Draw symbols or picture to represent these qualities. For example, if you think you are full of rage you might draw a red, burning fire or if you are easily scared you might decide to draw a trembling mouse. Now look at each characteristic and decide how each one might be a strength or a weakness...or both. Does your partner agree with your ideas about yourself? Discuss!

Facts

What is a mage?

What is an archipelago?

What is a ravine and a valley?

What is anthropology?

What is fealty?

Find 10 facts about Ursula Le Guin.

During reading

Stopping places

Developing understanding of narrative and literary techniques



Read to the end of Chapter 1 *Warriors in the Mist*

Focus on...

- Introduction to Ged and his world



Things to discuss

Character: How is Ged presented?

What was your opinion of his aunt? What did you think of the way she used her powers of witchcraft?

How were the Kargs presented?

What were the differences between the two armies?

Setting: What kind of world does Ged live in? Does it remind you of any place or any time from history?

Structure: Le Guin informs you in the second paragraph of the opening chapter that the person you are about to read about became someone great. How does this affect the way you view the character when you are introduced to him as a boy?

What do you think the story of his power over the goats tells you about him? How might this story be a forewarning?

Language: There are lots of references to the proper names of herbs when the author describes the inside of Ged's aunt home. Why do you think she chose to do this?

The author uses the alliterative 'b' and 'f' when describing the Vale alight with fire. What does the repetition of these letters suggest about the flames and their effect?

Story: Have you been surprised by anything you have read so far? What do you think is going to happen next?

You could...

Discuss Le Guin's presentation of the battle scene. What atmosphere was created? How did you feel reading it? Why was the grey fog 'writhing'? What was the most horrific image?

2

Read to the end of Chapter 3 *The School for Wizards*

Focus on...

- The presentation of Ged
- The presentation of Jasper and Vetch
- The presentation of the shadow
- How the idea of magic is presented
- The presentation of the archipelago



Things to discuss

Character: What do you think of Ged in this section? Is he someone you would like to be friends with? What are his weaknesses? What do you expect will become of him?

What did you think of his decision to leave Ogion? Did he do the right thing? What would you have done in his place? How do you think Ogion felt by Ged's decision to leave him?

How is Ogion presented? Would you like to be like him? What did you think Ogion was trying to teach Ged? Do you expect to see Ogion again in the novel?

What did you think of the daughter of Lord of Re Albi? What was her role in the novel? What did she reveal about Ged? Do you expect to meet her again in the novel?

Who or what do you think the creature is that Ged has inadvertently summoned up? How are Vetch and Jasper presented? How does Ged compare to Jasper? Why do you think Jasper is in the novel?

How would you describe Ged and Jasper's relationship? How do you anticipate their relationship developing?

Setting: What are your impressions of the places and people in the archipelago so far? Do they remind you of anywhere? Make notes of all the places Ged visits and their unique characteristics.

What do you think of the school? Does Ged fit in there?

In what time period do you think the story is set?

Language: There is a very long sentence in Chapter 2 describing the port of Gont - almost a paragraph. What effect does this have on the presentation of the port?

The reader not only gets a sense of place, but the long sentence reflects the noise and ceaseless activity which is all very different and new to Ged.

Theme: What do you think Le Guin is trying to say about the idea of magic? And about Power?

Why do you think the boat was called 'Shadow'? What might it be foreshadowing?

You could...

Get into pairs and act out the parting of Ged and Ogion. Try to show what is really going through their minds at what must have been a very emotional experience for them both.



3

Read to the end of Chapter 4 *The Loosing of the Shadow*

Focus on...

- The presentation of Ged
- The presentation of the Shadow
- Language used in the release of the Shadow



Things to discuss

Character: How did you feel when the shadow was released? Where were you in the story at that point? Describe how you felt towards Ged before, during and afterwards. What do you think he was feeling when he 'hid his scarred face in his hands and wept'? Do you have any sympathy for him?

How would you describe the new Archmage Gensher's attitude to Ged? Why do you think he initially wouldn't accept his fealty?

How has Ged changed by the end of this section? What's your response to the change? How do you expect him to develop?

Language: When Jasper speaks to Ged, his words 'sounded plain and clear as steel coming out of a sheath'. How would you describe his language and what does it suggest about Jasper?

Setting: The school celebrates the 'Moon's Night and the Long Dance'. What do the rituals and songs suggest about the place?

Theme: What do you think Le Guin is trying to say about a person's actions when she states, '...a calm in the East Reach may be storm and ruin in the West, unless you know what you are about...'?

You could...

Consider the atmosphere of the novel just before, during and after the release of the shadow. What words or phrases did you find particularly scary or moving?

4

Read to the end of Chapter 7 *The Hawk's Flight*

Focus on...

- The development of Ged
- Emotional response to character, setting and events



Things to discuss

Character: What changes do you perceive in Ged? How do you feel about him now? What do you think he is trying to defeat? Do you think he will succeed? How? Do you want him to succeed? Why?

Have you ever felt how Ged feels?

How is the dragon presented?

How is Lady Serrat presented? Why do you think she is associated with the colours silver and white?

How did you feel when she died?

How are the dragon and Lady Serrat similar in their treatment of Ged and how do they differ?

Ged could have easily learnt the name of the 'shadow' from both the dragon and Serrat. Why do you think Ged didn't give in to temptation? What might have happened had he given in?

How do you think Ged's Otak died? How did you feel about his death? What were your emotions towards the other characters at this point?

Setting: What is your impression of the Court of Terrenon? Is it a good place to be? Why?

Themes: What do you think Le Guin is trying to say about the nature of fear?

Structure: Why do we never learn what happened to Ged between Chapter 6 and Chapter 7? What do you think happened?

Story: What was the most moving moment for you during this section? What was the scariest part of this section and why?





Read to the end of the novel

Focus on...

- How the novel ends
- Your response to the novel as a whole



Things to discuss

Character: How does Le Guin's portrayal of wizards differ from any others you may have come across?

At what point in the novel did you feel you could relate to Ged the most?

How did Ged's ambitions change?

Do you think he is a better person at the end of the novel than he was at the beginning? Why?

We learn from Vetch that Jasper never 'won his staff'. What does this say about Jasper?

What do you think of Vetch's unwavering loyalty to Ged?

Why do you think Ged inspires such love and loyalty from Vetch and Ogion?

Why do you think Ged sees the images of people he knew in the figure of the darkness? And why those people?

Now you have finished the novel, what do you think the 'shadow' was after all?

Settings: How important was the setting to the story?

Why do you think Le Guin chose an archipelago as the setting for the novel? And why a pre-industrial society?

Why do you think she chose the name Earthsea?

How is the natural world presented in the novel? What importance does it have?

Symbolism: The colour red is mentioned frequently in the novel. What might it symbolise?

Birds are a recurring motif in the novel. What do you think they might symbolise?

Themes: How do you think good and evil are presented?

Is evil portrayed in the same way throughout the novel, for example is the evil of the stone and the shadow the same?

What do you think the novel is trying to suggest about the nature of evil?

Story: Did you like the way the story ended?

Do you think it was a completely happy ending?

What was your opinion of the epilogue at the end? How did it affect what you had just read?

There are three more Earthsea books that follow on from this. What do you think they might be about?

Were you surprised by anything in the novel?

How typical is this story of the fantasy genre? How does it differ to other fantasy stories you may have read?

*Only in silence the word,
only in dark the light,
only in dying life:
bright the hawk's flight
on the empty sky.*

- The Creation of Éa



After reading

Create & imagine

Developing a personal response to the novel

Facing fears

Ged struggles with his fear in the novel, but gains a greater understanding of himself and gains peace when he confronts it. Think about yourself and your relationship with fear. What do you fear? Can you remember the first time you felt fear? Have you become more or less fearful the older you have got? Are you 'hunted' or 'the hunter' of fear? Have you overcome any fears - if so, how? Write an article or prepare a talk about facing fears.

Foreshadowing

Write a short story that uses foreshadowing techniques to prepare the reader for a dramatic scene ahead. You might choose to do this by mentioning a significant colour, as Le Guin does with the colour red. Or you could create a sense of foreboding by describing a change in the weather conditions, heralding a dramatic moment. Experiment with different techniques and share your finished work with others to gain feedback on the effectiveness of your writing.



Fireside legends

In groups, think of a legendary person or event that has happened in your lifetime and tell their or its story orally. You cannot at any time write anything down. Think about what you will say and how you will say it - you can make things up if you want to! How will you get your audience to remember it so that they can carry the story on - think about the use of dance, song and drama? Afterwards consider what you did make up and why. Do you think others in the past might have done the same? Try retelling someone else's story - what did you remember, alter, forget? Why might someone deliberately change part of a story?

The league of wizards

Compare the power of some popular wizards, such as Harry Potter or Merlin, with Ged. Identify their strengths and weaknesses, similarities and differences, and collect opinions and personal preferences from friends and family. Present in a league table format and decide, through informed debate, who should be the leading wizard!



Memorable quotes

As their eyes met, a bird sang aloud in the branches of the tree. In that moment Ged understood the singing of the bird, and the language of the water falling in the basin of the fountain, and the shape of the clouds, and the beginning and end of the wind that stirred the leaves: it seemed to him that he himself was a word spoken by the sunlight.

He saw that in this dusty and fathomless matter of learning the true name of each place, thing and being, the power he wanted lay like a jewel at the bottom of a dry well.

Under his feet he felt the hillroots going down and down into the dark, and over his head he saw the dry, far fires of the stars. Between, all things were to his order, to command. He stood at the centre of the world.

And through the bright misshapen breach clambered something like a clot of black shadow, quick and hideous, and it leaped straight out at Ged's face.

All the years and places of his brief broken life came within mind's reach and made a whole again. He knew once more, at last, after this long, bitter, wasted time, who he was and where he was.

The hunger of a dragon is hard to wake, but slow to sate.

But Ged went on, falconwinged, falcon-mad, like an unfalling arrow, like an unforgotten thought, over the Osskil Sea and eastward into the wind of winter and the night.

In the terrible solitude of the winter sea Ged stood and saw the thing he feared.

'I was too much in haste, and now have no time left. I traded all the sunlight and the cities and the distant lands for a handful of power, for a shadow, for the dark.'

But it is one thing to read about dragons and another to meet them.

It is very hard for evil to take hold of the unconsenting soul.

I had forgotten how much light there is in the world, till you gave it back to me.

From that time forth he believed that the wise man is 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.

But need alone is not enough to set power free: there must be knowledge.

Ogion went on a halfmile or so, and said at last, 'Go hear, one must be silent'.

Go light a candle is to cast a shadow...



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