***A Wizard of Earth Sea***

***Chapter 10***

***Summary:***

### The Open Sea

* Vetch and Ged sail on, trying not to use magic because they're afraid of upsetting the balance.
* All they have to amuse themselves, then, is each other, so they talk.
* They tell stories about people sailing this far. They talk about Vetch's sister. They talk about how they're going to defeat the shadow. And they watch Netflix to their iPads. No, wait – that can't be right.
* They stop off at some islands on their way. They go to Pelimer island, which is nice until the mad sorcerer there starts accusing them of being spies for the snake that's eating the island.
* (Which is funny. In any other book we'd know he's mad. But how can you tell someone is mad in a fantasy book? How do we know that there isn't really a snake eating their island?)
* They stop off at Astowell, called Lastland because it's the farthest land anyone knows about.
* Then they sail out into the open sea, using their magic to make the ship go quickly. They sail for three days, and while Vetch only sees the ocean, Ged sees something magical.
* On the third day, Ged starts to row and the sea turns into sandy land. There's no sound, so we know this land's magical like nobody's business. Also, we know it's magical because it just suddenly appeared out of nowhere.
* Ged walks out over the island and a shadow comes to meet him. As Ged and the shadow walk towards each other, the shadow changes form.
* You might want to take a second look at this section because it's very strange: first, the shadow looks like Ged's dad; then it looks like Jasper; then it looks like Pechvarry if he'd drowned; then it looks like a dragon, maybe; then like Skiorh; then it's "clouded, staring eyes"; and then it's "a fearful face" (10.63). We're not sure what those last two are about.
* Then Ged and the shadow come together and the shadow looks pretty much like it did when Ged loosed it in Chapter 4.
* At the same time, Ged speaks the shadow's name and the shadow speaks Ged's name – and they're the same name. And the same voice. Did your mind just get blown?
* "Ged reached out his hands, dropping his staff, and took hold of his shadow, of the black self that reached out to him. Light and darkness met, and joined, and were one" (10.66).
* Vetch thinks the shadow beat Ged, so he jumps out of the boat to heroically save his friend. Unfortunately, the sandy land has turned back into ocean, so Vetch gets un-heroically drenched.
* Both Vetch and Ged get back into the boat, safe and sound.
* Ged says that he's done what he needed to do: "Ged had neither lost nor won but, naming the shadow of his death with his own name, had made himself whole: a man: who, knowing his whole true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself" (10.73).
* This is just like what the Creation of Ea teaches, that "only in dark the light." (What does that mean? Luckily it's also the epigraph to the book, so we talk about it in "What's Up With the Epigraph?")
* They sail home. (It takes them eight days to get in sight of land again, even though it only took them three days to get out there – and you know why? Magic.)
* They sail all the way back to Vetch's home, and everyone's quite happy to see them. Well, at least Yarrow is happy to see them.
* Then we get a little ending paragraph that tells us that this story gets retold in a few other ways, and how there's no mention of Ged's early adventures in the stories they tell about his later life, when he's a really powerful wizard.
* The end.

***Brief 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 is 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 wizards 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.

***Brief 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.

***Critical Study:***

As they sail toward the shadow, [Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged) laments the experiences he never got to have. After some days at sea they come to the island of Pelimer but do not stay long. They continue, and Ged stays mostly silent. They come to the port of Astowell, which lies "at the edge of all the maps." They are welcomed and stay the night, but Ged rouses [Vetch](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Vetch) before daybreak and says they must hurry. Ged believes the shadow will try to escape him by going too far out beyond land.

Ged raises a magewind to speed their passage. They sail on and on, until there is no sunrise and rain pelts them and soaks them to the bone. After a time the waves seem to still, and they appear to have run aground. Ged walks out of the boat onto sand. He goes toward the shadow, which takes on many faces including those of his father, [Jasper](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Jasper), Pechvarry, and Skiorh. Ged speaks the shadow's name, "Ged," and the two merge. Ged exclaims to Vetch that he is finally free, and the two rejoice. It takes them 16 days to sail back to land. When they return to Iffish, Yarrow runs to greet them.

[Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged) is sure he faces certain doom, and yet he races toward his destiny regardless. By summoning the dead in [Chapter 4](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/chapter-4-summary/), Ged disturbed the natural order of things. According to Taoist principles, when this happens, one must return to the starting point. In Ged's case, to put things right he must face the shadow and his own pride that loosed it in the first place. The faces Ged sees in the shadow are symbolic of various points in his journey. His father represents his neglected youth, [Jasper](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Jasper) represents his unchecked arrogance, Pechvarry represents his failure to know his limits, and Skiorh represents his extreme isolation. Ged comes to understand that all these points of darkness are part of what makes up his whole being and that he would not be who he is without them. Once he accepts that the shadow is his echo, he knows its name—because it is his own name.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

As [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) and [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) make their way across hundreds of miles of stormy seas, stopping on small islands occasionally for supplies and water, Ged refuses to use any spells or enchantments to ease their journey. Both men are full of a cold, heavy foreboding, and neither wants to use magic and upset the careful balance that allows them to sail forth at all. Ged steers their course toward the outermost fringes of the Reach. Vetch warns him that beyond this point, there are no lands at all—only the open sea. In this part of the world, Vetch says, there are things that haven’t been named.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Though Ged has, in the past, ignored both the careful balance of the universe and the need to internalize reverence for the natural world, now, he is mindful of both these things. He wants for this journey to go well, and he fears acting in the thoughtless, headstrong, power-hungry way he did earlier in his journey.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) laments that he is going forth to meet his fate without having seen so much of the Archipelago. He talks longingly of all the places he still wants to go. He berates his foolish younger self for trading the light of the world “for a shadow.” The only thing that brings Ged comfort is his thoughts of [Yarrow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/yarrow). He tells [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) how much he admires his whip-smart sister, who is like an uncatchable minnow. Vetch smiles and says that Yarrow’s [true name](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names) is Kest—“minnow” in the Old Speech.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Ged is still a young man—but he recognizes already just how foolhardy he was as a youth, and how much energy he wasted trying to become powerful. Ged is angry with himself for having sealed his fate at such a young age, but he remains hopeful that he will be able to return to the light soon.

***Summary Part 3:***

The pair sail through treacherous weather and dark nights—[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) realizes that it is shortly after Sunreturn, an unlucky time for travelers. Nevertheless, he holds their course steady. After refilling their stores of water on a strange, remote island, the two continue on. [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) questions whether Ged has them on the right path, but Ged says only that he is drawn to the shadow like iron to a magnet. The two of them occasionally discuss how they might figure out [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow)’s [true name](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names), but even after trading stories of great wizards’ remarkable deeds, Ged settles on the idea that “to hear, one must be silent.”

***Analysis Part 3:***

Ged knows that he will need an impossibly strong kind of magic to defeat the shadow—and while he accepts that the answer to besting it lies in learning its true name, he wants to take a gentler, more sage approach to discovering that name. Ged has too often rushed headfirst into a dangerous situation or created more trouble for himself by overestimating his abilities; now, he wants to respect the magnitude of what he’s dealing with and let the answers come to him naturally.

***Summary Part 4:***

Soon, [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) and [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) come to the last island in the Archipelago for food and a night’s rest. Beyond here, Vetch warns, there is only ocean. Ged, however, believes there are perhaps lands undiscovered. Ged is suddenly seized in the middle of the night by a premonition that they are moving too slowly—[the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) is threatening to escape from them. They must leave now, he says, and head east—if Ged loses the shadow, he, too, is lost.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Ged knows that his fate is bound to the shadow, and he is not willing to risk it all because of a desire for comfort or even a fear of the unknown. Ged knows what he must do and he is determined to see this mission through.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) and [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) sail onward, and, at last, Ged summons a wind to carry their ship eastward. Ged speaks little except to ask Vetch, after their noon meal, whether he believes that there are undiscovered lands. Vetch says he’s afraid that if the two of them sail too far, they will fall off the edge of the world. Ged does not respond to Vetch’s jest. They sail through the night, and, the next day, they encounter heavy rain. Ged continues summoning the winds—yet he worries that if they stray too far from the Archipelago, his powers will weaken.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Ged and Vetch’s journey is a long and difficult one. It is made all the more fraught and arduous by the fact that they are sailing into unknown territory—so far from the Archipelago, Ged has no idea what rules or enchantments might exist. Still, however, Ged stays the course, determined to see his conflict with the shadow through to the end.Duty and Destiny Theme Icon

***Summary Part 6:***

The next day, [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) questions whether [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) is perhaps being led into a trap—[the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow), Vetch points out, does not hunger or weaken, while they themselves do. Ged insists that they are nearly caught up with the creature. They continue sailing onward, sped by Ged’s winds, and Ged begins seeing a “dark vision” along the horizon. Suddenly, one afternoon, Ged stops the wind and orders Vetch to put down the sails. Ged clearly sees something—yet Vetch cannot see it. Still, he follows his companion’s orders. It soon becomes clear that Ged believes they have arrived in a bay, but Vetch cannot see the sand their boat seems to arrive upon.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Ged has chased his shadow across the sea for days and days, refusing to heed Vetch’s warnings about walking into a trap or being deliberately jerked around. Now, as Ged senses the shadow’s presence, he realizes that he was right all along—the shadow has been drawing him somewhere specific in order to confront him.

***Summary Part 7:***

Once the ship is aground—even though [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) cannot see what land they may or may not have come to—Vetch and [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) both become aware of a strange stillness on the sea and in the air. Vetch steps out of the boat seemingly into the sea. As Ged walks forward, though, Vetch can see that it is indeed sand his friend walks upon. Ged’s staff begins to glow faintly as he walks on. Soon, Ged becomes aware of [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) coming toward him across the sand.

***Analysis Part 7:***

The shadow has led Ged to the ends of the earth, but now there is nowhere left to run. The strange enchantment Ged and Vetch come upon may be the work of the shadow, but Le Guin leaves much of Ged’s final struggle with the shadow ambiguous. The specifics and optics of their showdown are not important—what is essential is that Ged at last recognizes exactly what he must do to defeat the shadow and reclaim ownership of his life.

***Summary Part 8:***

As [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) approaches, [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) finds that the shadow has taken the form of his [father](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters). Stunned, he blinks, and finds that it takes the form of [Jasper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/jasper). As Ged raises his staff to better see the shadow, it takes the form of [Pechvarry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/pechvarry). Ged continues forward toward the shadow as it continues shifting shape. Ged lifts his staff and it brightens intensely. The shadow casts off its false forms and once again becomes a strange, dark creature. As Ged and the shadow come face to face, Ged speaks the shadow’s [true name](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names) to it: Ged. The shadow says the same thing back. Ged takes hold of his other self. Light and darkness meet.

***Analysis Part 8:***

In Ged’s climactic final encounter with the shadow, he at last realizes that the shadow’s true name is his own. In other words, the shadow is and always has been the darkest part of himself. By accepting this facet of his own personality, Ged is able to absorb it. There is no light without darkness, and as the shadow and Ged at last rejoin as one, Le Guin invokes the power of the universe’s perfect—yet often incomprehensible—sense of equilibrium. Ged’s coming-of-age tale is at last complete: he has understood the truth of who he is.

***Summary Part 9:***

Vetch hurries to help [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk), fearing his friend is overpowered, yet he finds himself unable to move through the sand Ged walks upon with ease. Vetch hurries back to the boat. As he gets in, he realizes he has lost sight of Ged. He looks around and at last sees his friend flailing in the waves—the sand is gone. Vetch rows over to Ged and hauls him back onto the boat. Ged is frightened and exhausted. He clutches his staff and doesn’t speak for a long time. Vetch begins sailing back from whence they came.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Vetch came along on this journey to help his friend, and here, he proves that he is willing to risk everything for Ged’s safety. Vetch is a selfless, devoted person who sees duty to others as a fundamental cornerstone of his life.

***Summary Part 10:***

That night, as [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) spies the new moon in the sky, he declares at last: “It is done. It is over.” Ged begins to laugh. He declares that he is whole, free, and healed. As [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) looks carefully upon his friend, he sees that it is true: Ged has not lost or won; he has simply made himself complete by [naming](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names) the shadow and understanding his “whole true self.” Ged, Vetch knows, cannot be used or possessed any longer by any entity but himself. Vetch sings an old, happy song aloud as he sails westward.

***Analysis Part 10:***

The shadow was always the darkest part of Ged—and this passage makes clear that now that Ged has accepted this fact, he is able to be “whole” once again. Ged’s coming-of-age journey is thus complete. As a young man, he was easily swayed by the pursuit of power and the desire to prove himself to others. Now, however, having accepted the truth of who he is, he is beholden to no one but himself. Ged fully understands his complex nature now, and he is no longer in conflict with himself as he once was.

***Summary Part 11:***

After over a fortnight of sailing and using enchantments to sweeten the seawater and catch fish to eat, [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) and [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) find land again. The weather is calm and steady, and both men delight in the songs of seabirds and the sights of the great cliffs that surround them as they return to the Archipelago. Soon, they are back on Iffish. After docking their boat, they wind through the streets of town toward Vetch’s house, where [Yarrow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/yarrow), joyful, is waiting to meet them.

***Analysis part 11:***

As Ged’s journey comes to an end, he is not alone as he long feared he would be. Instead, he is surrounded by friends who love, see, and celebrate him. Ged is able to begin enjoying his life again now that the threat of the shadow has been removed—he understands who he truly is, and this allows him to show his true self to the others in his life, too.

***Summary part 12:***

No song remains of [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk)’s encounter with [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow)—the very song [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) promised to write and sing. However, there is an enduring tale of a boat that ran aground on the open sea. The song varies from isle to isle: some say it was Vetch who steered the boat, while others say it was two humble fishermen. In the Deed of Ged, the lore dedicated to Ged’s legacy, no line even mentions his encounter with the shadow—even though many of his great accomplishments, including his return to Roke, his encounter with more dragons, and his ascendancy to Archmage of the Archipelago all have a place in the song.

***Analysis Part 12:***

The final passage of the novel proves that Ged’s journey throughout the story was never about pride, glory, or fame. This journey has been an intensely personal one, necessary even though in the scope of things it brings no additional pride or glory upon Ged’s name. This final passage hints that though Ged will ultimately achieve the greatness he once imagined for himself in his youth, this early, private adventure is perhaps the most important part of his entire story. The thankless, personal, quiet parts of a person’s life, Le Guin suggests, are the most important.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

Aloud and clearly, breaking that old silence, Ged spoke the shadow's name and in the same moment the shadow spoke without lips or tongue, saying the same word: "Ged." And the two voices were one voice. (10.65)

We have a whole section to discuss what's up with this ending (yes, you know which section we're referring to) – and we're still not sure about it. But one thing is clear: when Ged and the shadow monster speak their name, that speaking somehow undoes their unnatural separation and they become one. Can we imagine this ending happening without the use of language?

***Quotation 2:***

And he began to see the truth, that Ged had neither lost nor won but, naming the shadow of his death with his own name, had made himself whole: a man: who, knowing his whole true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself, (10.73)

This may be one of the best descriptions of coming of age we've ever read. It's not about growing older (because older doesn't necessarily mean smarter), and it's not about going through terrible experiences. Instead, in this book, it seems like Ged has come of age when he accepts his shadow.

***Quotation 3:***

But in the Deed of Ged nothing is told of that voyage nor of Ged's meeting with the shadow, before ever he sailed the Dragon's Run unscathed, or brought back the Ring of Erreth-Akbe from the Tombs of Atuan to Havnor, or came at last to Roke once more, as Archmage of all the islands of the world. (10.77)

We heard something very like this in the first paragraph of the book – a list of all the great things that Ged will accomplish. But now we hear the list again after we've seen Ged struggle with his power and his pride and his duty. Does that change the way we read this list of accomplishments?

***Quotation 4:***

Vetch asked no question about their course, knowing that Ged did not choose it but went as he must go. (10.3)

Once again, we have the issue of choice presented directly to us: Ged doesn't seem to choose, but does only what he has to do. It seems as if Le Guin wants us to reconsider the way that we think about choice – because sometimes Ged seems more heroic when he's <em>not</em> choosing, doesn't he?

***Quotation 5:***

The sea had turned to sand, shadowy, unstirred. Nothing moved in the dark sky or on that dry unreal ground that went on and on into gathering darkness all around the boat as far as eye could see. (10.58)

In <em>A Wizard of Earthsea</em>, we see supernatural monsters and spells and people crossing over into the land of the dead. But here we also see the ocean turning into land. Does it get any more supernatural than ocean becoming land? (We might also make a connection between this scene and the <em>Creation of Ea</em>, the song that tells how Segoy made the islands rise out of the ocean.)

***Quotation 6:***

On the course on which they were embarked, the saying of the least spell might change chance and move the balance of power and of doom: for they went now toward the very center of that balance, toward the place where light and darkness meet. Those who travel thus say no word carelessly. (10.1)

Notice that the question of balance and spells often takes for granted the idea that spells may interfere with the Balance. But why couldn't it be the other way? Would it be possible to imagine this section written as if spells were important to maintaining the Balance?

***Quotation 7:***

Rage and despair filled him, and he sprang out on the sand to help his friend or die with him, and ran towards that small fading glimmer of light in the empty dusk of the dry land. (10.67)

Well, maybe this is the best proof that Vetch is best friends with Ged. And this isn't the first time that Vetch ran <em>toward</em> danger rather than away from it. (Check out 4.54, when Ged is attacked by the shadow monster: "Vetch alone ran forward to his friend.") We may not have to ask our friends to face life-and-death situations like this, but it's sure nice to know that they're there for you if you ever have to.

***Quotation 8:***

"I'd rather not," said Vetch – "that is a disagreeable part of the world, they say, full of bones and portents." (10.8)

What does this have to do with education? Well, Ged and Vetch are both highly educated (for Earthsea) – not only do they know magic but they can also read, which is a skill that's probably as rare as magic. But still, notice that Vetch and Ged are interested in stories, and Ged doesn't want to sail somewhere because of stories "they say." This is a nice reminder of the world they live in, with its emphasis on oral culture and storytelling.