***A Wizard of Earth Sea***

***Chapter 2***

***Brief 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.

***Brief 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 previous 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.

***Critical Study:***

[Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged) quickly becomes frustrated with [Ogion](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/" \l "Ogion)'s slow pace in teaching. Ogion tells him that spells must wait because Ged has "drawn too much water from that well." Instead, Ogion suggests Ged cultivate patience and learn the true name of things. Ged spends the winter at Ogion's house in Re Albi, learning the Six Hundred Runes of Hardic, the characters of an ancient language.

In the spring Ged often picks herbs in the meadow. One day he meets a girl, whom he knows as the daughter of the lord of Re Albi and who is revealed in [Chapter 7](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/chapter-7-summary/) to be Serret. Serret asks to see Ged's magic, and he calls a falcon to obey him. Serret goads Ged into performing magic he is not ready for. Searching Ogion's books, Ged comes across a spell to summon the dead. Ogion enters in a bright light and dispels "a shapeless clot of shadow darker than the darkness." Ogion warns Ged that such spells are dangerous. Ogion offers Ged the choice to stay in Re Albi or to train in Roke. Ged sets off for Roke, sailing in a ship and enjoying the company of other young men.

As a young man, [Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged) is impulsive, reckless, and impatient. He thinks that he should "enter at once into the mystery and mastery of power." But first, [Ogion](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/" \l "Ogion) has an important basic lesson to teach Ged: "to hear, one must be silent." Naturally, Ged is not ready to learn Ogion's lesson yet, so when Ogion offers to send him to Roke to study at wizard school, Ged jumps at the chance and leaves his mentor.

The events of this chapter foreshadow Ged's chief conflict: reconciling the light and dark within him to defeat his shadow self. Serret is easily able to stoke Ged's pride for her own dark aims, and it is her prompting that causes him to seek the dangerous summoning spell he uses in [Chapter 4](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/chapter-4-summary/). Ged craves glory and does not yet understand the high price of using magic. When the hint of a dark shadow appears in Ogion's house, Ogion is able to dispel it with his bright light. He warns Ged, "never work that spell but in peril of your power and your life." Indeed, when Ged does speak the spell in Chapter 4, he puts his power and his life in danger by loosing his shadow self. Ogion explains that because every magic word "is done either for good, or for evil," one must be wise in how one uses power. Ged does not listen to Ogion but expresses his impatience. Ogion understands that Ged must learn patience the hard way and lets him go.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) thinks that as the prentice of a great mage like [Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion), he will quickly and easily amass power, knowledge, and mastery of his skills—he imagines transforming himself into a bird or deer and running wild and free. Instead, however, his early days with Ogion are boring and nondescript. After four days under Ogion’s tutelage, Ged has not learned a single spell, [name](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names), or rune. Sheepishly, Ged asks Ogion when his apprenticeship will begin; Ogion responds that it has already begun. Ged says he hasn’t learned anything yet, but Ogion retorts that Ged simply hasn’t figured out what Ogion is teaching him. “Manhood,” Ogion warns, “is patience.”

***Analysis Part 1:***

Ged seems to have believed that the moment he went off with Ogion, his education would begin: he would start learning spells, amassing knowledge, and expanding his powers. Ogion, however, is an unorthodox teacher who wants Ged to learn important lessons about patience before he ventures into the practice of magic. A simple man with no desire for glory, fame, or renown, Ogion attempts to show Ged that the simple life is the best life.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion) encourages [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) to learn about everything around him. He doesn’t want Ged to simply learn about plants with magical or medicinal properties, for example—he wants Ged to learn about even ordinary plants, so that he may one day learn those plants’ [true names](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names) and true beings. Ged feels like a fool and begins to resent Ogion, but he nevertheless acts obedient in the hopes that Ogion will soon begin teaching him something that will help him become more powerful. When a rainstorm comes, Ged is shocked at how Ogion allows the rain to fall on them rather than saying a spell to send the weather away. Ged wonders

***Analysis Part 2:***

Ogion clearly has a deep reverence for the natural world—his mission as a mage seems to be to fully understand the world around him without trying to change or manipulate it to his own advantage. Ged, however, doesn’t understand how one could have such great power at their disposal and not use it. Ged’s apprenticeship with Ogion will test both of their patience and the limits of their ability to see through the other’s eyes.

***Summary Part 3:***

After many days of travel, [Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion) and [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) arrive in the village of Re Albi, where Ogion lives. Ogion gives Ged a small sleeping alcove in the west wall of his one-room home, and, as winter arrives, Ged gets to work learning to read and write a set of ancient runes, the Six Hundred Runes of Hardic—Hardic is the tongue spoken throughout the Archipelago of Earthsea. Ged knows that though the work is hard, it will help him become a better master of charms and spells in the long run: Hardic is tied to the Old Speech, the ancient language in which all living and inanimate things are named with their [true names](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names).

***Analysis Part 3:***

Ged undertakes his learning solemnly and reluctantly only because he believes it will further his powers in the future. Ged doesn’t have any particular reverence for the concept of true names: he doesn’t understand the magnitude and responsibility of knowing, accepting, and understanding a thing’s truest essence.

***Summary Part 4:***

Spring arrives, and [Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion) begins sending [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) out each day to gather herbs. Ged takes delight in exploring nature after being cooped up with the Runebook all winter. One day, while foraging in the woods, Ged comes across a [village girl](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/village-girl-serret) whom he knows to be the daughter of the Lord of Re Albi. The girl, recognizing Ged as Ogion’s apprentice, asks him to tell her about sorcery. After Ged tells the girl about his trick that defeated the Kargish warriors, the girl asks Ged to call a falcon down from the sky. He does so, but the bird is skittish and doesn’t stay long.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Ged’s friendship with the village girl represents the first major instance in which he allows himself to become tempted by the desire for power and glory. Ged is so desperate to prove himself to the village girl that he begins to abandon the tenets of restraint and quiet Ogion has spent months trying to instill within him.

***Summary Part 5:***

[The girl](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/village-girl-serret) asks [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) if he can summon the spirits of the dead. Ged, longing to impress her, says he could if he wanted to. She asks him to perform a changing spell and transform himself into an animal. Ged, however, becomes flustered by the girl’s demands, and he makes an excuse to hurry home. Days later, Ged meets the girl in the meadow again and she continues to pressure him to perform a changing spell. When Ged hesitates, she tells him he’s too young after all—and too afraid—to perform such magic. Ged resolves to prove himself to the girl. He tells her to meet him in the meadow the next day and then heads home to peruse some of [Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion)’s ancient Lore-Books.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Ged is frustrated with his inability to impress the village girl, something that comes to a boiling point when she accuses him of being inept and too young. He wants to prove himself to be a powerful individual—and he’s willing to defy logic and lore and even risk his own safety in order to do so.

***Summary Part 6:***

Though [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) struggles to understand the language in the ancient books, he reads on and on. While puzzling his way through one spell in particular, a sharp horror comes over him—yet he cannot move his eyes from the page. When he looks up from the book at last, Ged finds that a darkness has spread through the house. Ged feels terror bind him to his chair. A cold air enters the room. Ged looks over his shoulder and sees a dark, “shapeless clot of shadow” crouching near the door. [The shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) whispers to Ged, but Ged cannot understand what it is saying.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Ged opens up a dangerous Lore-Book and begins reading and speaking things he does not understand. Ged unleashes a terrible power into the room—yet even as he feels full of horror and fear, he cannot stop the powerful forces around him from tempting him further and further into darkness. Ged has disturbed the balance of the universe, though he doesn’t yet recognize the severity of his actions—and will not for many years.

***Summary Part 7:***

[Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion) flings the door open and enters surrounded by a bright white light. He speaks a spell against the darkness and it quickly dissipates. Ogion approaches the terrified [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) and warns him that to work the spell he was reading would be to imperil not just his power, but his life. Ogion reminds Ged that [the girl](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/village-girl-serret) he has been meeting in the woods is the daughter of an enchantress—the girl herself is nearly a witch already. Ogion tells Ged that one can never know what powers another witch, mage, or sorcerer serves—it is clear that the girl, her mother, or both of them wish Ogion ill. “Danger,” Ogion warns, “must surround power as shadow does light.”

***Analysis Part 7:***

Ogion rescues Ged from the darkness and tries not to reprimand him but simply to impress upon his prentice how dangerous power can be. Ged was thoughtless, careless, and self-serving in opening up the Lore-Book—Ogion wants to teach Ged to exercise restraint, thoughtfulness, and balance whenever he attempts magic.

***Summary Part 8:***

[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) says he was forced to turn to the books since [Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion) teaches him nothing. Ogion tenderly says that if Ged wants to leave and seek knowledge somewhere else—like Roke Island, “where all high arts are taught,”—he may go at any time. Ogion says that he knows Ged will learn well whatever he attempts, as Ged’s power is great—greater, Ogion hopes, than Ged’s pride. Ged knows that though he loves Ogion and enjoys their long walks and silent time together, he cannot still his own craving for glory. Ged asks to go to Roke, and several days later, Ogion leads Ged down to the port. Ged is surprised as down at the port, common people kneel before their mage, the man who has saved their island from calamity time and time again with his skills.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Even though Ogion wants to instruct Ged in the way he believes the boy should be taught, he knows that to keep Ged from his desires is a dangerous thing. Ogion, then, supports Ged as Ged decides to pursue greatness, glory, and a faster path to knowledge and power at the School on Roke. As they arrive at the port, however, Ged begins second-guessing his decision when he sees the reverence with which the people of Gont treat Ogion.

***Summary Part 9:***

Ogion seeks passage for [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) on a ship bound for Roke—a ship called the Shadow is sailing soon, and though Ogion does not like the name of the vessel, he nonetheless urges Ged to board and to use his skills in fogweaving as required by the crew. Addressing Ged affectionately as “Sparrowhawk”—the name Ged uses to disguise his [true name](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names)—Ogion bids Ged farewell and hands him a note to deliver to the Warder of the School on Roke.

***Analysis Part 9:***

The name of the ship Ged sails to Roke on is portentous. The Shadow harkens back to when Ged sensed a shadow beckoning him in the corner of the room in Re Albi—his journey to Roke, then, similarly foreshadows a lingering darkness that Ged must be wary of.

***Summary Part 10:***

With that, [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk), who has never been off the isle of Gont—let alone anywhere on the island other than his own village and Re Albi—boards the Shadow, taking in the overwhelming sights and sounds of the port. When the master of the ship realizes Ged cannot summon the winds yet, he orders the boy to find a place out of the way and stay there. Ged makes himself as unobtrusive as possible, and soon, the oarsmen launch the boat from the dock. The ship is crewed by about 70 people—many of them are just a bit older than Ged, and over the course of the journey, they invite him to share their food and jokes (even though they tease him by calling him “Goatherd,” mocking his humble origins.)

***Analysis Part 10:***

On Ged’s journey to Roke, he finds himself fending off taunts from the other crew members. Such teasing will fuel Ged’s desire to prove himself on Roke—and when he encounters similar taunts from his classmates at the School, his need to show everyone around him that he’s more than a “goatherd” will prove dangerous and destructive.

***Summary Part 11:***

The journey takes many days, and the water is very rough. [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) occasionally rows alongside the other oarsmen, especially when the weather requires the crew to split their duties between rowing and baling. The master of the ship again calls on Ged, asking if he can use his powers to point them toward Roke—when Ged says he cannot, the shipmaster admits that they have been blown off course and will likely arrive in the dangerous Hort Town. Ged will have to find his own passage to Roke. Nervous, Ged looks westward, in the direction of Roke, as the ship sails onward—as dusk approaches, Ged spots a light in the distance. He calls out to the shipmaster: they are near Roke after all. The shipmaster turns the boat toward land. As the ship arrives in the bay, the skies clear and the night stars begin to emerge in the sky.

***Analysis Part 12:***

The difficult journey toward Roke symbolizes the difficult transformation Ged is about to undergo as he leaves behind the home he once knew and prepares to start a new chapter of his life. The journey toward the future he wants won’t be easy—but there will be moments of peace, relief, and certainty on the way.

Quotations:

***Quotation 1:***

They knew him and did him honor by the Prince's order and their own will, for ten years ago Ogion had saved the city from earthquake… (2.55)

Ogion might be the most powerful wizard on Gont, and since he's the most powerful wizard on Gont, he has some responsibilities to the people and the island. Most of the time that means that he visits people and heals the sick, but here we learn that he's also cast really powerful spells that have helped everyone.

***Quotation 2:***

"When you know the fourfoil in all its seasons root and leaf and flower, by sight and scent and seed, then you may learn its true name, knowing its being: which is more than its use. What, after all, is the use of you? or of myself? Is Gont Mountain useful, or the Open Sea?" Ogion went on a halfmile or so, and said at last, "To hear, one must be silent." (2.15)

Education is tied up with several of the other issues, like language and identity. That is, in order to cast his spells, Ged needs to learn true names for all the things in the world – he has to understand what they are, not what they're good for. Ogion also reminds Ged that he needs to be a little more patient, which is not exactly Ged's strong suit at school.

***Quotation 3:***

He was as tall and strong as the fifteen-year-olds, and quick to return either a good word or a jeer; so he made his way among them and even that first night began to live as one of them and learn their work. (2.69)

Why is Ged so easy-going around these guys and not around other people, like Serret or Jasper?

***Quotation 4:***

But Ogion let the rain fall where it would. (2.16)

Ged doesn't understand about the Balance until Ogion starts teaching and demonstrating the Balance. Letting the rain fall on him may be a minor example, but it seems pretty powerful to us. After all, if you had the power to keep rain off yourself, wouldn't you want to use it?

***Quotation 5:***

As he read it, puzzling out the runes and symbols one by one, a horror came over him. His eyes were fixed, and he could not lift them till he had finished reading all the spell. (2.40)

Even though Ged is a powerful magician, it's useful to remember that he's not totally in control of the supernatural business. Here, he starts to read a spell that forces him to finish reading it.

***Quotation 6:***

"Have you never thought how danger must surround power as shadow does light? This sorcery is not a game we play for pleasure or for praise. Think of this: that every word, every act of our Art is said and is done either for good, or for evil. Before you speak or do you must know the price that is to pay!" (2.48)

Ogion presents the case for Balance, which is that every action has a consequence. In other words, Ged needs to think before he acts.

***Quotation 7:***

"I would keep you here with me, for what I have is what you lack, but I will not keep you against your will. Now choose between Re Albi and Roke." (2.52)

Right after Ogion gives Ged a little lesson in how choices have consequences, he presents Ged with a serious choice: stay with me or go to Roke. And, of course, Ged chooses incorrectly. But even though Ogion wants to keep Ged with him, he doesn't have the right to make that choice since it's about Ged's life, not his.

***Quotation 8:***

He thought she was mocking him with this question, because the falcon had not fully obeyed his summons. He would not let her mock him. (2.27)

This is definitely part of the problem with pride: if you think you're awesome and others don't, you end up doing things just to prove you're awesome – and some of those things might be dangerous.

***Quotation 9:***

For he hungered to learn, to gain power (2.16)

As we mentioned in "Writing Style," Le Guin comes out and tells us what we need to know about a character. It's like she's saying, "Meet Ged. He wants power." Does Ged sound like a hero here?

***Quotation 10:***

It might seem strange that on an island fifty miles wide, in a village under cliffs that stare out forever on the sea, a child may grow to manhood never having stepped in a boat or dipped his finger in salt water, but so it is. (2.62)

Ged has a very limited view of the world at the beginning of the book – and we mean that both metaphorically (Ged doesn't really understand a lot of things) and literally (Ged hasn't seen much of the world yet)

***Quotation 11:***

The Hardic tongue of the Archipelago, though it has no more magic power in it than any other tongue of men, has its roots in the Old Speech, that language in which things are named with their true names … (2.18)

Here Le Guin lays out some of the rules for how magic works in this universe – it works with true names. What does this say about all the other tongues of men? Like, if there's a language in which things are truly named, does that mean all other languages are untrue or false in some way?