***A Wizard of Earth Sea***

***Chapter 4***

***Summary:***

* Ged at fifteen is a great student but kind of a loner. (Vetch is off studying in the Immanent Grove.)
* He's such a good student that (6) the Master Changer teaches Ged some more powerful magic, so Ged can turn himself into a hawk.
* (The narrator notes that the Master Changer doesn't mean any harm – which is like a huge neon sign saying that harm is totally going to come of this.)
* (7) The Master Summoner teaches, well, summoning; and he reminds Ged how things can easily be unbalanced. (For instance, if you make rain here, you might cause a drought elsewhere.)
* During summer festival time, when Vetch and Jasper are back, there's a feast, which ends as feasts usually do, with Jasper and Ged arguing for real about who has more power.
* Ged turns into a falcon (thanks, Master Changer), but Jasper remains unimpressed. So Ged takes them all out to Roke Knoll where he's going to summon a spirit of the dead.
* Luckily (well, not really), Ged recalls the spell he cast in Ogion's cottage in Chapter 2. He uses that spell to open up a path to the lands of the dead, which sure sounds like a good time.
* It works for a moment, but then a shadow monster comes out and claws Ged's face. Archmage Nemmerle shows up and scares the monster off, but it takes all his magic to manage this.
* Ged lives, but is basically in a coma for a while, while Archmage Nemmerle dies after using up all of his magic. So much for all of that working out.
* The Nine Masters of Roke elect to make Gensher of Way the next Archmage.
* Ged heals slowly, but none of his old classmates recognize him because he seems so weak (not to mention the scar he gained).
* Ged goes back to school on Roke because, well, Gensher tells him that he's only safe on Roke Island – if he goes out, the shadow will possess him and turn him into a horrible monster called a gebbeth. The monster only wants Ged since they're connected.
* And just in case Ged hasn't figured it out, Archmage Gensher notes that what Ged did was quite dumb.
* Ged is behind in his studies now, thanks to that coma, and all the boys leave him alone.
* One night, Vetch shows up to say good-bye now that Vetch is graduating and returning home to Iffish island. But just to cement their friendship, they give each other their true names – Ged and Estarriol – which is even better than writing "BFF" in a yearbook.
* Since Vetch trusts Ged, Ged starts to feel better about himself.
* He applies himself to his studies and wins the scholarship. No, wait, we're thinking about some other story. In this story, Ged passes all his magical tests without killing any more of his teachers.
* He also tries to learn about the shadow monster, but no one knows much about it, and Google hasn't been invented yet.
* When he is eighteen, Ged also learns from (8) The Master Patterner in the Immanent Grove, but no one knows what that guy teaches.
* As his graduation task, Ged has to figure out the name of (9) The Master Doorkeeper. Ged realizes he can't figure it out on his own and so asks the Doorkeeper what his name is. So, maybe the final lesson is something like: feel free to ask questions.
* Ged graduates and sails to Low Torning, which is a town that needs a wizard.

***Brief 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 shadows 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.

***Brief 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 dual. 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.

***Critical Study:***

While [Vetch](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Vetch) and [Jasper](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Jasper) move on to sorcery, [Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged) continues to study in the Great House. He is known to be a quick study, and his fellow students admire him. While studying with the Master Summoner, Ged becomes uneasy reading some of the shadow spells. Later, Ged is with Vetch and Jasper and some other students celebrating the Moon's Night and the Long Dance. Jasper challenges Ged to do real magic, to "summon up a spirit from the dead."

Ged calls the spirit of Elfarran, a woman who died a thousand years before. She appears, but immediately afterward a hideous shadow climbs out of the abyss and attacks Ged. Vetch tries to intervene, but Archmage Nemmerle stops him. Nemmerle closes the tear between worlds. [The shadow](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#The_shadow) flees into their world, and Ged lies in a coma in the healing chamber. Nemmerle dies, his power completely spent. After many months of healing, Ged comes to the new archmage, Gensher. Gensher chastises Ged for his pride. Ged returns to the Isolate Tower, but before he goes, Vetch tells Ged his true name. When he turns 18, Ged finally leaves the school.

With [Vetch](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Vetch) mostly absent from his life, [Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged)'s pride and temper drive him to isolate himself. During this time "he had no friend, and never knew he wanted one." Le [Guin](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/author/) shows how Ged's distinct lack of community is detrimental. It results in Ged internalizing a sense of superiority, which leads to his recklessness. When [Jasper](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Jasper) goads Ged, Vetch can do nothing to convince Ged to keep a cooler head. Ged is driven to prove once and for all that "Jasper was far beneath him." Giving in to his pride has consequences not only for Ged himself but for the entire community. Although Archmage Nemmerle is able to intervene and save Ged's life, he must sacrifice his own to do it, which is a terrible loss for all.

As the new archmage, Gensher, tells Ged, Ged "used [his] power wrongly," loosing a shadow of Ged's arrogance and ignorance. Ged's arrogance prompted him to use power he could not yet control, which is irresponsible. Ged's ignorance played a factor here, too. Had he been further along in his education, he would have understood that as "knowledge widens, ever the way he can follow grows narrower." The truly powerful wizard does not do what he wants but "only and wholly what he *must* do." Despite Ged's rashness however, Archmage Gensher allows him to continue studying at the school. And Vetch tells Ged his (Vetch's) true name, the greatest gift a man can give another man. Vetch's gift is significant in that it proves he trusts Ged, even when Ged has "lost faith in himself." This gift starts Ged on the path to self-healing and his ultimate self-acceptance.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

That spring, as [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) resumes his training at the school, he sees little of [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) and [Jasper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/jasper)—as new sorcerers, they now study with the [Master Patterner](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters) in a secret grove off-limits to prentices. Ged resumes classes with the other Masters, deepening his knowledge of weatherworking, herbalism, and healing. At night, he studies runes on his own. Ged is such an adept pupil that rumors swirl about him throughout the school: some say he has special powers, evidenced by his friendship with the otak, while others say he has been ordained as the next Archmage. Ged ignores his classmates and spends much of his time alone.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Ged is earning a reputation for himself as a powerful young mage, but he refuses to rest on his laurels or give into his classmates’ flattery. Ged still wants more knowledge and more power, and he is determined to keep his head down and learn how to prove himself once and for all.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) is now 15. He begins studying more advanced shaping spells with the [Master Hand](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-master-hand)—the Master even gives Ged advanced books, though he warns Ged not to tell the [Archmage](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-gensher) of the private knowledge he’s passing down to him. Ged begins working with the [Master Summoner](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-master-summoner), who teaches summoning rather than illusion. The Master Summoner makes sure to warn Ged, as the Master Hand once did, that to summon earthly forces is to change the earth itself: such a burden should not be taken lightly. Ged is interested in learning spells to summon the spirits of the dead, but such practices are firmly off-limits. Sometimes Ged’s summoning studies fill him with a dark portent or remind him of the shadows that filled the room back on Re Albi, but he pushes aside his fear.

***Analysis Part 2:***

As Ged delves deeper into his studies than ever before and begins seeking out darker kinds of spells, he alarms his teachers and once again draws their warnings to pay attention to the careful balance of the universe. Ged, however, pushes through his own intuition as he tries to make himself powerful enough to create a grand display that will help him prove himself once and for all. Even though Ged knows that he’s headed down a dark path, he cannot stop himself from the pursuit of power and glory.

***Summary Part 3:***

As spring turns to summer, the school gathers for a large feast to celebrate the full moon. The students celebrate alongside their Masters, the townspeople of Thwil, and farmers and villagers from across the island. The first night of the festival is wild and fun, and on the morning of the second day, the whole town sleeps in. On the second night of the festival, [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk), [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol), [Jasper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/jasper), and several of their fellow students have a picnic and practice illusions beneath the stars. As always, Ged and Jasper find themselves trading  insults disguised as friendly jests. Jasper says he’s sick of hanging around prentices—he wants to be in the company of equals. Ged asks Jasper what sorcerers have that prentices don’t. “Power,” Jasper says. Ged challenges Jasper to a duel, stating he’ll match Jasper’s power.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Jasper and Ged can no longer contain their animosity for one another. Even in the midst of a joyful, happy time, their hatred boils over. Jasper wants to push Ged to the edge—and Ged allows himself to be pushed. Ged has been determined since arriving on Roke to find an outlet for his desire to prove himself: now he has found it, and he is ready to show Jasper what he’s learned.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) reminds the two that duels are forbidden. He urges them to come to their senses, yet [Jasper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/jasper) and [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) remain resolved to prove themselves. Ged transforms himself into a falcon on the spot before reclaiming his human form. Jasper accuses him of casting an illusion, but Vetch insists Ged has mastered true change. Jasper, however, declares himself unimpressed. Vetch urges Ged not to rise to Jasper’s bait, but Jasper asks Ged to follow him to Roke Knoll and show him what Gontish wizards can really do. Ged agrees to go. Jasper says meanly that he’s looking forward to seeing Ged charm some goats. Ged vows that he will raise a spirit from the dead and leaves the courtyard.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Ged allows himself to be so deeply affected by Jasper’s cruel taunts that he puts himself at risk by attempting increasingly dangerous forms of magic. True changes, as Ged’s Masters have warned him, disturb the balance of the universe and must be performed carefully—and on top of that spell, Ged wants to attempt something none of his Masters have even agreed to let him read about. Ged’s pursuit of pride and glory takes him to dangerous places.

***Summary Part 5:***

Up on the grassy, empty knoll, [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) and [Jasper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/jasper) stand several paces away from each other. Ged prepares to perform his summoning—but he no longer cares about impressing Jasper. He simply wants to prove to himself that he has the power to do the unthinkable. Ged announces his intent to call a beautiful maiden of lore. Ged stretches out his arm and begins the summoning spell—the one he read in [Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion)’s book years ago. The others watch as Ged falls to the ground and then rises back up with something between his hands. Ged calls out the name of the legendary maiden. The shapeless mass in his hand splits apart to reveal the form of a woman for just a moment—then, a horrible, shapeless [shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) leaps out of the mass and attacks Ged violently.

***Analysis Part 5:***

In this climactic scene, Ged decides that it’s himself he wants to impress, not Jasper. Ged has believed since his childhood that he is special and destined for greatness—he believes that if he can pull this off, he’ll never have any self-doubt again (and nor will his classmates doubt his absolute power). Ged, however, fails to perform the spell correctly, and he summons forth something he never imagined.Cosmic Balance Theme Icon

***Summary Part 6:***

[Jasper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/jasper) hides his eyes, and [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) alone watches in horror as the faceless, child-sized [shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) tears at [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk)’s flesh. Vetch tries to pull the creature off of Ged, but something stops him from touching it. Suddenly, a bright light takes over the sky; when it dissipates, the shadow is gone. Ged is unbreathing and covered in bloody, gaping wounds—the [Archmage Nemmerle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-nemmerle) is standing over him. Nemmerle touches Ged with his staff, and Ged gasps for air. Nemmerle kneels, weakened. Vetch looks around and realized that other wizards have arrived—the Masters have been drawn to the scene by the strength of Ged’s spell.

***Analysis Part 6:***

The shadow’s violent attack on Ged seems to be the work of a dark creature from another world. As the novel unfolds, however, and it becomes clearer and clearer that Ged has released from within his very soul the darkest part of himself, this scene can be read as Ged’s dark drive for power and domination taking vengeance against the part of him foolish enough to succumb to the pull of glory, pride, and renown.

***Summary Part 7:***

While others from the school arrive to help carry [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) back to school, to the chambers of the [Master Herbal](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters), the [Master Summoner](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-master-summoner) stays on the hill all night keeping watch for the return of the shadow. The creature, however, does not return—it is hiding somewhere out in the world. The Master Herbal tends Ged’s “evil wounds,” which seep flows of black blood. Ged runs a fever, but no spell can cool him down. In another room of the school, the [Archmage Nemmerle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-nemmerle), his power spent after casting out the shadow, lays dying. The other Masters stand over him, mourning his loss but understanding that all lives must come to an end.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Ged’s actions on Roke Knoll reverberate throughout the School, forever changing the fabric of the place Ged calls home. The Masters spoke of the careful balance of the universe for years, but Ged never listens. Now, though, the practical gravity of disturbing the world’s equilibrium is made painfully clear.

***Summary Part 8:***

The next day, the nine Masters gather to choose the next Archmage—they settle on a wizard called [Gensher of Way](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-gensher) who lives far away and send a ship to collect him. [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) knows nothing of this, though—for four weeks, he swims in and out of consciousness, confined to the [Master Herbal](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters)’s chambers as he slowly heals from his terrible wounds. Finally, one autumn day, Ged is well enough to sit up—but he cannot talk, only weep. It takes another season for Ged to recover, and it is not until early spring that Ged is well enough to leave the Master Herbal’s chambers, rejoin his classmates, and greet the new Archmage.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Ged’s wounds, which nearly took his life from him, take a long time to heal. This represents the profundity and violence of what Ged has unleashed upon the world. He is, after all, a talented wizard of great natural-born power—but he has used that power for evil, and as a result the costs of his schoolyard duel are astronomical and unimaginable.

***Summary Part 9:***

Ged’s classmates hardly recognize him—the left side of his face is covered in white scars, and he has grown terribly thin. Ged goes straight to [Archmage Gensher](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-gensher) to swear his loyalty toward him—but when he bends the knee, the Archmage, who knows what Ged did, rejects his offer. Ged asks if he must leave Roke, even if what he wants is to stay, learn, and undo the evil he’s unleashed unto the world. The Archmage insists that if Ged left now, he’d become a gebbeth—a puppet doing the will of [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow). He insists Ged stay on Roke and learn until he gains the strength to fight the shadow, which is surely awaiting him somewhere in the world. Ged admits he has seen the shadow in dreams.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Ged now sees that his actions have severe ramifications. The balance in the universe his masters always spoke of is not some abstract concept—it has real, practical effects. The Archmage isn’t angry with Ged, but at the same time, he wants Ged to understand the gravity of what he’s brought forth into the world. Ged will be safe at school, but beyond the walls of the building, there is no telling what awaits Ged. He will have to figure that out for himself.

***Summary Part 10:***

[The Archmage Gensher](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-gensher) chides [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) for using his power wrongly and spinning a spell without thinking of how it would affect the balance of all things. Worst of all, the Archmage says, Ged was moved to do so by pride and hatred. Now, [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) wants to work its evil through Ged. Ged says he wishes he were dead. The Archmage again chides Ged, recalling how [Nemmerle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-nemmerle) gave his life so that Ged could live. All Ged can do now, the new Archmage says, is study and work as hard as he can.

***Analysis Part 10:***

This passage represents a new struggle within Ged—the struggle between craving the oblivion of death and having to deal with the now-arduous fact of being alive. As long as Ged lives, he knows, he will have to fear the shadow—but Gensher urges Ged not to let pride get the better of him twice. Gensher wants Ged to fight through his uncertainty and fear and find a way to make sure the sacrifices of those who’ve attended to Ged are not in vain.Cosmic Balance Theme Icon

***Summary Part 11:***

As [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) returns to daily life, he notices that [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol) and [Jasper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/jasper) are seemingly gone from the School. He does not attempt to make any new friends and he struggles in his studies, afraid of casting too strong a spell again. In autumn he returns to the Isolate Tower, but this time, he is thrilled rather than full of dread at the prospect.

***Analysis Part 12:***

Ged’s encounter with the shadow fundamentally changes him. He is no longer showy or confident, and he longs for simplicity, isolation, and modesty.

***Summary Part 13:***

 The night before [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) leaves for the tower, [Vetch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/vetch-estarriol), who has been studying at the secretive Immanent Grove, arrives at Ged’s room to wish him good luck—and to return the otak, whom he’s kept watch over while Ged recovered. Vetch urges Ged to come to his homeland, the East Reach, once Ged completes his studies and becomes free, but Ged states he might never be free. Ged asks what is in store for Vetch, and Vetch speaks excitedly of a return to his hometown followed by the search for a job of magery in the “little isles.” If Ged ever needs him, Vetch says, Ged should summon him by his [true name](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names): Estarriol. Ged, too, tells Vetch his true name. Ged knows what a meaningful thing it is to have shared his true name and to have heard Vetch’s.

***Analysis Part 13:***

Though Vetch has proven himself to be a worth, powerful, and levelheaded sorcerer—and thus superior to both Ged and Jasper—he does not have a shred of pride within him. Vetch wants to improve the lives of the people in his hometown and in smaller, more vulnerable isles. He accepts that wizardry is a duty to one’s community rather than the chance to pursue glory, fame, and renown. In entrusting his true name to Ged, Vetch proves that he is ever the loyal, thoughtful, true friend. To share one’s true name is a vulnerable thing, and Ged does not take the gesture lightly. He is in awe of Vetch’s goodness, kindness, and righteousness.

***Summary Part 14:***

The next day—[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk)’s 17th birthday—he sets out for the tower. The journey takes him longer than it once did. He studies at the tower until the end of winter, at which point he returns to the Great House to be made sorcerer. [Archmage Gensher](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-gensher) accepts Ged’s pledge of loyalty and allows him to study higher magic. Ged finds his old skills returning to him. Even while studying the dangerous arts of making and shaping, Ged feels himself learning with ease.

***Analysis Part 15:***

Receiving a kind of blessing from Vetch, studying at the Isolate Tower, and making amends with Gensher allows Ged to accept that in spite of the mistakes he’s made in the past, there are still ways in which he can repair his relationships and begin thinking of a future. He begins to feel less alone and less hopeless.

***Summary part 16:***

Ged searches lore books and asks his Masters about creatures such as [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow)—but there is little record of such creatures in all of history, only a few stories of spirits from the realm of the dead devouring those who summon them. In a conversation with the [Master Summoner](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-master-summoner), the Summoner tells Ged that a mage is not one who can do anything—a mage must follow the increasingly narrow path he can follow, even as he amasses power, until he realizes what the one thing he must do is.

***Analysis Part 16:***

Ged is learning more and more about what his future will look like, and it is very different from the one he imagined for himself. It is clear that Ged’s coming-of-age journey is leading him down a specific path. He is beginning to accept that he may not achieve the glory, fame, and renown he once dreamed of; instead, he may need to undertake a much more personal, arduous journey, one in which there is little glory but much fulfillment.

***Summary Part 17:***

When [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) turns 18, the [Archmage Gensher](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/archmage-gensher) sends him to study with the [Master Patterner](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters) in the hidden Immanent Grove. Little is known of this secretive place where people make and learn complicated magic. At the end of spring, Ged returns to the Great House. At the door, he finds the doormaster he met many years ago when he arrived. He realizes that this man is the ninth master: the [Master Doorkeeper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-doormaster-the-master-doorkeeper). The Master tells Ged he can win his freedom if he discovers and says the Master’s name. Though Ged has learned much during his time on Roke, a mage’s name is nearly impossible to divine.

***Analysis Part 17:***

As Ged begins studying the advanced magic he longed to study, he finds that honing his skills is not about glory or excitement but rather about personal fulfillment and the furthering of one’s knowledge. Ged has become a much more patient person. How he reacts to the Master Doorkeeper’s test is evidence of how much he’s changed and how seriously he’s dedicated himself to setting aside his pride.

***Summary Part 18:***

Ged sits down and thinks for a while about how to do what the [Master Doorkeeper](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-doormaster-the-master-doorkeeper) has demanded. He falls asleep, unable to think of an answer. At last, Ged returns to the Master and tells him that he cannot force or trick the man’s name from him. He is content, he says, to stay and learn from him unless the man will consent to answer a question. The Master urges Ged to ask it. Ged asks the man’s name, and the Master, smiling, says it. Ged repeats it, and the Master lets him in. Ged gathers his things—including his newly earned staff of yew—and leaves the Great House for the last time, heading down to the ship awaiting him in the harbor.

***Analysis Part 18:***

In this scene, Ged again demonstrates that he’s become a much more patient, introspective, and levelheaded person. He is willing to accept that his Masters hold wisdom that he cannot imagine. This makes Ged’s achievements feel more hard-won and fulfilling: when he sits back and listens rather than scheming as to how he can make himself look powerful, smart, or special, he finds his capacity for growth and success much improved.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

To check the ungoverned spell and drive off the shadow from Ged, Nemmerle had spent all his power, and with it his bodily strength was gone. He lay dying. (4.61)

Nemmerle is like the best school principal ever – not only does he make Ged feel comfortable, but he also sacrifices his life so Ged can survive. Now, you might think that's a little excessive of Nemmerle, but, if you think about it, Nemmerle is just fulfilling his duty as caretaker of the students. That's an A+ caretaker, if we've ever seen one.

***Quotation 2:***

The more he learned, the less he would have to fear, until finally in his full power as Wizard he needed fear nothing in the world, nothing at all. (4.5)

Ged has a very particular reason for wanting an education: power. The more he learns, the more powerful he'll be. But notice that Ged isn't thinking about what sort of awesome stuff he'll do with his power – he's thinking that he won't have to fear anything.

***Quotation 3:***

Thus to Ged who had lost faith in himself, Vetch had given that gift only a friend can give, the proof of unshaken, unshakable trust. (4.101)

Vetch's friendship is probably as important as Ged's pride for the plot. That is, it's Ged's pride and rivalry with Jasper that leads Ged into doing dumb things – but then it's Vetch's friendship that keeps Ged from despairing.

***Quotation 4:***

"Rain on Roke may be drouth in Osskil," he said, "and a calm in the East Reach may be storm and ruin in the West, unless you know what you are about." (4.3)

"Drouth" is an old way of saying "drought" – which is to say, a big lack of rain and water. This is the Master Windkey telling Ged about the Balance. If you're counting, this is probably the one-billionth time that someone has told Ged about the Balance. And since we follow Ged, <em>we're</em> also getting the lesson about the Balance. Notice how often teachers tell Ged about this – we might say that this is one lesson that Le Guin really, really wants us all to get.

***Quotation 5:***

It was not a ghost of human man, nor was it a creature of the Old Powers of Earth, and yet it seemed it might have some link with these. In the Matter of the Dragons, which Ged read very closely, there was a tale of an ancient Dragonlord who had come under the sway of one of the Old Powers, a speaking stone that lay in a far northern land. (4.106)

Ged tries to find out about the shadow monster while he's still on Roke, but it falls outside the usual categories – not a human, not a dragon, not even one of the Old Powers. Most of the other supernatural stuff has popped up in other fantasy works, but the shadow monster … not so much. So, in some ways, we're in the same position as Ged – the shadow monster is new to all of us.

***Quotation 6:***

"You thought, as a boy, that a mage is one who can do anything. So I thought, once. So did we all. And the truth is that as a man's real power grows and his knowledge widens, ever the way he can follow grows narrower: until at last he chooses nothing, but does only and wholly what he must do ... " (4.106)

This is the Master Summoner talking to Ged about the limits on their choices. Now, this is only one character talking – and, remember, characters can be wrong – but what Master Summoner says here about the limitations of choice seems to fit in with the rest of the book. That is, Ged has fewer options precisely because he's so powerful and therefore has big responsibilities.

***Quotation 7:***

But for the most part he was all work and pride and temper, and held himself apart. (4.1)

Earlier we heard that Ged as a child was "loud and proud and full of temper," which maps really well onto part of this sentence, about Ged being all "work and pride and temper." Pride is one of Ged's main problems, and he doesn't outgrow it quickly (which is emphasized by the fact that these two sentences seem so similar).

***Quotation 8:***

He knew now that Jasper was far beneath him, had been sent perhaps only to bring him here tonight, no rival but a mere servant of Ged's destiny. (4.42)

Ged has a couple issues around pride. First, he thinks he's great (better than he really is). Second, he needs others to recognize just how great he is. A third issue is brought up in this passage. Here Ged achieves perhaps the purest (and most dangerous) form of pride, seeing everyone else not as people, but as tools in his own epic story.

***Quotation 9:***

"You have 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. And you were moved to do this by pride and by hate. Is it any wonder the result was ruin?" (4.78)

Archmage Gensher lays out the problem for Ged: sure, you're powerful, but you're not totally in control. Plus, being powerful isn't enough – you have to be a little more thoughtful (that is, less of a proud jerk). This might be part of Ged's coming of age.

***Quotation 10:***

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. (4.102)

In <em>A Wizard of Earthsea</em>, coming of age is often an issue of knowing who you are, which is exactly what's going on in this scene. After Ged has been scared (and scarred) by his experience with the shadow monster, Vetch reminds him of who he is, and Ged becomes less fearful.

***Quotation 11:***

"It has no name." (4.78)

Archmage Gensher explains this to Ged about the shadow monster. And if it has no name, the shadow monster is beyond human power. (Or really anyone's power.) Does this line – coming from the Archmage – make the reader lose hope?