***A Wizard of Earth Sea***

***Chapter 6***

***Summary:***

### Hunted

* The people of Low Torning throw Ged a party for defeating the dragons, but he's got work elsewhere. Well, OK, he has time for a party first. But then Ged sails away.
* Ged tries to get to Roke, but it's protected by a magical wind that keeps bad things away, which is a nice kick in the pants for Ged.
* Ged gets dropped off on the island of Serd and starts getting a little paranoid – the shadow monster might have taken over any of these people around him. (OK, we'd be paranoid too, then.) So he decides to take the dragon's advice and keep on running.
* Side note: luckily, wizards don't often have to pay for a ticket – "A wizard's staff is passport and payment on most ships" (6.24).
* Ged takes a ship to Havnor, but stops over on Orrimy. (And now would be a good time to take a look at the [**map of Earthsea on Le Guin's website**](http://www.ursulakleguin.com/EarthseaMaps/index.html) or at the front of your book).
* On Orrimy, a strange man in grey tells Ged that he should go to the Court of the Terrenon on the island of Osskil because there's an anti-shadow sword there. Ged remembers that Archmage Nemmerle's pet raven said "Terrenon" too (see 3.25) – and if a bird and a strange man say the same thing, you should listen.
* Ged isn't sure about this guy – he seems like a sorcerer, but doesn't have a staff – but it's not like he has better things to do.
* So Ged gets on a ship to Osskil. Since the captain is a magician, Ged goes as a regular rower. Unfortunately, it's not a happy ship, like the Shadow that took him to Gont was. In fact, there's one particularly un-fun and unfriendly guy here named Skiorh.
* When they arrive at Osskil, Ged's not thrilled to learn that Skiorh is going by the Court of the Terrenon and will gladly walk with Ged that way.
* After a long walk, it turns out that Skiorh is actually possessed by the shadow monster, which is a great relief – now we don't have to guess where the shadow monster is anymore. And now we know why he's just so un-fun.
* Unfortunately, the shadow monster calls Ged by his true name, which means that Ged can't do magic. Instead, Ged runs away.
* Ged runs and runs. He runs up a hill (vaguely reminding us of Ged's experience in Chapter 5, when he tries to save Pechvarry's son) towards a house with an open door.
* Right before he passes out, Ged makes it through a door and into the light. (Which, if you're counting, makes four times that Ged has fallen into a coma.)

***Brief Summary:***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***Brief Analysis:***

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

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

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

***Critical Study:***

The fishermen of Low Torning are immensely grateful to [Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged) for securing their safety. Only Pechvarry has some reproach because Ged was able to tame a dragon but not save his son. Ged tries to sail back to Roke but finds he cannot because of a protection spell around the island, so he goes to Serd instead. However, he is too afraid to stay in Serd because he feels the presence of the shadow. So he sails on, ending up in Orrimy. There, Ged meets a man in gray who tells him to go to the Court of Terrenon. Ged is frightened of the man and boards a boat, becoming an oarsman for ten days. Finally, he lands at the port of Neshum, and one of the oarsmen, Skiorh, offers to show him the way to Terrenon. They walk for a long time and finally Skiorh calls out Ged's true name, revealing himself to be the shadow. They fight, and then Ged runs. As his strength wanes, Ged falls through a door.

In this chapter [Ged](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/character-analysis/#Ged) goes from the warm safety of community to the cold fear of extreme isolation. This progression dramatically underscores Le [Guin](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Wizard-of-Earthsea/author/)'s theme of the importance of maintaining a connection to other living things. The night that Ged returns to Low Torning is joyous in its celebration of community. The "brightness of those fires of thanksgiving" is enough to keep the shadow at bay. But Ged cannot stay, because he would be a danger to the fishermen, and Pechvarry does not seem to be able to forgive him for not saving his son.

Ged tries to return to his community in Roke but cannot, forced instead to remain among men who make him feel "exposed, defenseless." Skiorh is one such man, and the shadow uses him as a vehicle to trick Ged into complete isolation so it can have a better chance of overpowering him. As Ged walks on and on beside the disguised shadow, "caution and intention [are] dulled in him." Ged's only connection to his community is the otak, and when the otak stirs in Ged's pocket, it awakens a "vague fear" in him. At this point Ged realizes he has been tricked, and it is nearly too late. He cannot successfully fight off the shadow, and both his fate and the otak's are uncertain.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

As [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) sails eastward back to the Archipelago, he feels a renewed fear of [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow). He has no idea what to do or where to go in order to escape it, and so he decides to return to Low Torning and report on his encounter with [Yevaud](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/yevaud-the-dragon-of-pendor). As Ged returns to the island and tells the Isle-Men of what’s transpired, the people of Low Torning rejoice. They turn Ged’s deeds into a chant, the Song of the Sparrowhawk, and the whole island celebrates late into the night. The evening is joyful, but in the morning, Ged’s old fear returns. He knows he must leave the island. As he says farewell to [Pechvarry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/pechvarry), he feels guilty over having been unable to save the man’s son—even though he was able to conquer an island of dragons.

***Analysis Part 1:***

As the people of Low Torning toast and feast Ged and sing of his power and accomplishments, Ged refuses to let himself be sucked in. He doesn’t feel proud or especially glorified about what he’s done—saving the isle from the dragons was his duty, and he has completed it humbly. Ged knows that he cannot rest on his laurels—there is still danger, conflict, and a serious trial ahead of him.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) and several boatmen from Low Torning set out on the journey back to Roke. The trip takes several days, and though Ged is anxious, his sailing-mates are still proud and triumphant, rejoicing in the victory over the dragons. As the boat approaches Roke, a strong wind batters the vessel. Ged casts a spell to push the boat through the storm, but it is of no use. Ged realizes that the wind blows against him only. He urges his crew to turn back to the nearby isle of Serd and leave him there—he tells his men the conflict is between him and his shadow.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Ged wanted to sail to Roke in order to secure safety for himself—but when he realizes that his presence on Roke would threaten the people of the island, he turns back without a second thought. The Roke-wind blows against threats to the isle, and Ged realizes that the enchantment must sense that the shadow, bound to him, is near.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) passes an anxious night at an inn on Serd, considering where he might run next. He knows that though [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow) has no physical substance, once it catches up with him, it will pull strength and life from him. He can sense nothing but doom ahead of him and feels he cannot drop his guard even for a second lest the shadow try to trick him by inhabiting the body of another. At dawn, Ged resolves to turn to chance. He goes down to the harbor and boards a galley bound for the Great Port at Havnor. From there, he thinks, he might return to Gont and seek out [Ogion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ogion).

***Analysis Part 3:***

Ged doesn’t feel equipped to fight the shadow—he doesn’t even know where to begin when it comes to figuring out how the creature operates. Rather than move ahead blindly and bullishly, Ged decides to consult those wiser than him. This demonstrates that he’s grown in terms of humility, patience, and the desire for knowledge and informed decisions rather than thoughtless action.

***Summary Part 4:***

While making port in the town of Orrimy, [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) finds himself being followed by a cloaked man as he makes his way through the streets. The stranger tells Ged he senses his fear—though the stranger doesn’t know Ged, he says, he thinks their meeting must not be a chance thing. He has heard stories of a scarred man who must fight his way through darkness. He urges Ged to go to the Court of the Terrenon in Osskil—there, he will find a sword with which to fight the shadows. Ged is afraid to trust the man, yet after the stranger departs, Ged hurries to the harbor and begs passage on a thin longship bound for the north. He offers himself as an oarsman, since the ship already has a weatherworker on board.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Ged’s encounter with this mysterious stranger is suspect, but Ged is so desperate for answers that he takes the unknown man at his word. This shows that Ged, in his fight against pride and the desire for power and action, has perhaps swung too far in the other direction. Ged is still coming of age and still learning how to do what’s best.

***Summary Part 5:***

The journey is long and taxing, yet [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) grows accustomed to the work within a few days. Osskil, the land he is bound for, is a faraway place whose wizardry is different than that practiced on Roke. Gold is prized there highly, and the people of Osskil are often divided in pursuit of it. The pale-skinned northernmen shun Ged for his “red” skin, and even his status as a wizard wins him no goodwill or high regard. Ged keeps to himself for most of the journey, but one day, a man called [Skiorh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/skiorh) taunts Ged’s pet otak. When another oarsmen stands up for Ged, Skiorh scowls and turns toward the man—Ged sees Skiorh’s features blur and shift for a moment, and he becomes suspicious of the man. For the rest of the journey he avoids Skiorh when he can.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Again, Ged finds himself feeling slightly perturbed and uncomfortable on the journey to Osskil—a part of him senses, on some level, that something nefarious is afoot. Ged, however, is so desperate to get to Osskil and find the answers he seeks that he pushes aside his intuition.

***Summary Part 6:***

At last, the longboat arrives in the harbor of Osskil. [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) begins asking directions to the Court of the Terrenon—[Skiorh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/skiorh), overhearing him, says he is on his way there and offers to lead Ged the rest of the way. Ged is not excited by the prospect of traveling with the shady Skiorh, but not knowing the language of this land, he feels he has no other choice. He draws up the hood of his cloak and begins following the man through the moors beyond the harbor.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Ged feels alone and trapped on Osskil rather than closer to answers and enlightenment. He’s all but forced to follow Skiorh deep into the lands ahead, even though there is a part of him that deeply distrusts the man.

***Summary Part 7:***

After a day of walking, [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) is exhausted, yet [Skiorh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/skiorh) insists they are not far. The weakened Ged follows Skiorh through darkness and snow, asking him periodically how much longer they have to go. One time, when Skiorh turns around to tell Ged they are near, his voice sounds like the voice of a beast. Ged stops and calls Skiorh’s name. When Skiorh turns around, Ged sees that there is no face beneath Skiorh’s hood. Ged realizes Skiorh has been turned into a gebbeth—a puppet—by [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow), but it is too late. Skiorh calls out Ged’s [true name](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/symbols/true-names) and Ged is prevented from casting any transformation or summoning. Ged realizes that his shadow has come for him.

***Analysis Part 7:***

The horrific realization that Ged’s shadow has lured him to Osskil and entrapped him all alone fills Ged with terror and fear. Ged suppressed his intuition and now must face off against his shadow alone, defenseless, and in a strange land. The shadow has been able to manipulate a stranger into carrying out its bidding, and in so doing has completely corrupted that individual. This demonstrates the delicate nature of the cosmic balance in the world of Earthsea and suggests that anyone can be transformed into a shred of their former self by the world’s dark forces.

***Summary Part 8:***

The gebbeth advances on [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk), and Ged strikes out with his staff. He hits the form of the cloak to the ground, but it rises once again and tries to get hold of him as it did on Roke Knoll the first night it came into the world. Ged seizes an opportunity to run from [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow), but it follows him at a quick pace. The shadow calls Ged’s name again and again, but Ged continues forward in spite of his fear and exhaustion.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Ged knows he can’t defeat the shadow in combat—his only choice is to run. Ged has been running from his shadow for a long time now, and though he knows this pattern must stop, he’s left with no other options in this moment.

***Summary Part 9:***

As [Ged](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/ged-duny-sparrowhawk) reaches a slope, he struggles his way up and soon senses a light before him and a voice urging him to come toward it. The light grows and soon Ged sees a gateway. He stops running and the gebbeth catches him by his cloak. Ged struggles from [the shadow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-wizard-of-earthsea/characters/the-shadow)’s grasp and goes through the lighted door—yet he cannot shut the door on the gebbeth. As Ged struggles with the last of his strength, he feels himself fade out of consciousness.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Darkness and light are opposing forces, and though others have hinted to Ged about the need for balance between the two, this scene shows the practical ways in which oppositional forces leveraged against one another can shift the balance of the universe.

Quotations:

***Quotation 1:***

Before Ged could speak spell or summon power, the gebbeth spoke, saying in its hoarse voice, "Ged!" (6.73)

This is one of the clues that the shadow monster is really a part of Ged: only a few people know Ged's true name, and one of those people is Ged himself. This is also an important moment since language is being used against Ged (in the same way that he used it against Yevaud in Chapter 5).

***Quotation 2:***

et to Ged wandering through the streets those ponderous mansions seemed like veils, behind which lay an empty dark; and people who passed him, intent on their business, seemed not real men but voiceless shadows of men. (6.27)

It seems like Ged has changed from naïve country boy to a super cynical guy who can see into the real way things are. (He's like the guy who, when you show him something nice, starts talking about how there are all these hidden flaws that only <em>he</em> knows about because he's seen it all before.) We might be tempted to say that, in coming of age, Ged has swung a little too far the other way.

***Quotation 3:***

But little by little, though Ged kept up the spell, the magewind slackened, growing feebler, until the ship seemed to hang still on the waves for a minute, her sail drooping, amid all the tumult of the rain and gale. (6.11)

Ged's magical power is not enough to face the magical power of the Nine Masters and their spells. If we were riding high on Ged's triumph over Yevaud the dragon, here we're faced with another situation in which Ged isn't powerful enough.

***Quotation 4:***

Ged most often faces human power (and some dragon power, which isn't totally different), but here he comes up against something totally different. We've heard little hints about the Old Powers before, but here Ged faces it and eventually escapes it.

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***Quotation 5:***

The next day, though they would have kept him gladly the rest of his life to praise and boast of, he left the house on the hill, with no baggage but his books, his staff, and the otak riding on his shoulder. (6.5)

Then again, maybe the townspeople aren't so wrong about Ged being humble. He could stay in Low Torning now that he defeated the dragon and people would tell him how great he is. But he has something more important than his pride right now – his fear of the shadow.

***Quotation 6:***

All night he tried to choose his way, to plan where he should go, what he should do: but each choice, each plan was blocked by a foreboding of doom. (6.21)

Facing the doom of the shadow monster, Ged feels as if he can't choose any direction. With the benefit of hindsight, we could say that the problem is that Ged is overlooking the right choice – he has to hunt the shadow, not run away from it. As in other situations, there's one right choice, which must feel to the character as if there's no choice at all.

***Quotation 7:***

Just as he turned Ged saw a change in his face, a slurring and shifting of the features, as if for a moment something had changed him, used him, looking out through his eyes sidelong at Ged. (6.60)

We confess that we love when Le Guin describes someone's face as "slurring," which is a word we only use when describing someone who's slurring his or her words. Using it to describe a face blurs the line a bit between stuff and words – which is part of the supernatural in this world.

***Quotation 8:***

There was no such comradeship among this crew as he had found aboard <em>Shadow</em> when he first went to Roke. (6.54)

What can we learn about friendship from this scene? It seems as if friendship requires a certain amount of equality. In other words, you can't be friends with your boss (if you're an employee) or your master (if you're a slave), and if you're an employee, you can't be friends with a slave. Do you agree with that, though?

***Quotation 9:***

"You are from Roke," he answered. "The wizards of Roke give a dark name to wizardries other than their own." (6.40)

As we learn later, this guy is actually a liar – he's an ex-wizard who's been taken over by the Stone or by Serret. (It's not exactly clear.) But what a moment this is, because we don't know if he's right. After all, we're not from Earthsea, so there might be other magic traditions besides the school on Roke. For a moment, Ged's uncertainty about magic on Earthsea matches our own uncertainty.