Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

1. What is Gont?

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

1. What work do the Gontishmen do?

The Gontishmen have gone forth to serve the Lords of the Archipelago in their cities as wizard or mage, or looking for adventure to wander working magic from isle to isle of all Earthsea.

1. What is Deed of Ged?

Deed of Ged is a tale of the time before Sparrowhawk became famous. Sparrowhawk, some say, is the greatest voyager who in his day became both the dragon lord and Archmage. It is about his life which is told in many songs.

1. Describe the island of Gont.

It is a single mountain island that lifts its peak a mile above the storm-racked Northeast Sea. It is a land famous for wizards. There is a lonely village named Ten Alders which is located on the mountain at the head of the Northward Vale. Below the village there are pastures and plough lands of the Vale slope downward below level towards the sea and the other towns lie on the bends of the River Ar. Above the village, there lies only forest that rises ridge behind ridge to the stone and snow of the heights.

1. Describe Ged.

Ged bore a different name as a child. It was Duny. It was given to him by his mother. She only gave him this name and birth for she died before he was a year old. As there was no one to bring him up in tenderness, he grew wild like a thriving weed. He was a tall and quick boy, loud and proud, full of temper. With the other children of his village he herded goats on the steep meadows above the river springs and when he was strong enough to push and pull long bellow-sleeves, his father made him work as a smith’s boy, at a high cost in lows and whippings.

1. Why wasn’t there any work to be got out of Duny?

There was not much work to be got of Duny because he was always off and away; roaming deep in the forest, swimming in the pools of the River Ar or climbing by cliff and scarp to the heights above the forest from which he could see the sea.

1. How was the witch related to Duny? What did she do for Duny?

The witch was a sister of Duny’s dead mother who lived in the village. She had done what was needful for him as a baby, but she had business of her own and once he could look after himself at all she paid no more heed to him.

1. What happened one day when Duny was seven years old?

One day when they boy was seven years old, untaught and knowing nothing of the arts and powers that are in the world, he heard his aunt crying out words to a goat which had jumped up on to the thatch of a hut and would not come down but it came jumping when she cried aa certain rhyme to it.

1. What happened the immediate next day when the goats had climbed up on the roof?

The next day herding the long-haired goats on the meadows of High Fall, Duny shouted to them the words he had heard not knowing their use or meaning or what kind of words they were.

1. What was the rhyme? What happened after yelling the rhyme?

The rhyme was ‘Noth Hierth malk man hiolk han merth han’! He yelled the rhyme aloud and the goats came to him. They come very quickly all of them together not making any sound. They looked at him out of the dark slot in their yellow eyes.

1. What happened when Duny shouted the rhyme again?

When Duny shouted the rhyme again, the rhyme gave him power over the goats. They came closer, crowding and pushing round him. All at once he felt afraid of their thick, ridged horns and their strange eyes and their strange silence. He tried to get free of them and to run away.

1. How did the goats react to the second calling of the rhyme?

The goats ran with Duny keeping in a knot around him, and so they came charging down into the village at last, all the goats going huddled together as if a rope were pulled tight round them and the boy in the midst of them weeping and bellowing.

1. How did the villagers react to the second calling of the rhyme? What did the aunt do?

The villagers ran from their houses to swear at the goats and laugh at the boy. Among them came the boy’s aunt, who did not laugh. She said a word to the goats and the beasts began to bleat and browse and wander freed from the spell.

1. Where did the witch take Duny? Describe the place.

The witch took Duny into her hut where she lived alone and she let no child enter there usually and the children feared the place. It was low and dusky, windowless fragrant with herbs that hung drying from the crosspole of the roof, mint and moly and thyme, yarrow and rushwash and paramal, kingsfoil, clovenfoot, tansy and bay.

1. What did the witch ask Duny and what did she understand?

The witch asked Duny what he had said to the goats and if he knew what the rhyme was. When she found that he knew nothing and yet had spell bound the goats to come to him and follow him then she saw that he must have in him the makings of the power.

1. What did she decide to teach him, under what condition?

The witch decided to teach him and she looked at him with a new eye. She praised him and told she might teach him rhymes he would like better such as the word that makes snail look out of its shell, or the name that calls a falcon down from the sky. She was willing to teach him the rhymes under one condition that was never to tell it to the other children.

1. How was the witch going to keep the secrets of the craft away from the others? Was Duny fine with the idea?

In order to keep the secrets of the craft away from the others the witch decided to bind Duny’s promise. She said that his tongue will be stilled until she chooses to unbind it and even then though he could speak he won’t be able to speak the word that she would teach him where another person can hear it.

1. How was the first ‘rhyme’ taught to Duny? Describe the scene.

Duny sat still while aunt bound back her uncombed hair and knotted the belt of her dress and sat cross-legged throwing handfuls of leaves into the firepit, so that a smoke spread and filled the darkness of the hut. She began to sing. Her voice changed sometimes to low or high as if another voice sang through her and the singing went on and on until the boy did not know if he waked or slept and all the while the witch’s old black dog that never barked sat by him with eyes red from the smoke. The witch spoke to Duny in a tongue he did not understand and made him say with her certain rhymes and words until the enchantment came on him and held him still.

1. What did the witch do to test the spell? What happened next?

the witch to test the spell asked Duny to speak. The boy could not speak but he laughed. Then his aunt was a little afraid of his strength for this was as strong a spell she knew how to weave; she had tried not only to gain control of his speech and silence but to bind him at the same time to service in the craft of sorcery. Yet even as the spekk bound him he had laughed. She said nothing. She threw clear water on the fire till the smoke cleared away and gave the boy water to drink and when the air was clear and he could speak again she taught him the true name of the falcon, the falcon that must come.

1. What happened as a result of calling the falcons to come?

The wild falcons stooped down to him from the wind when he summoned them by name, lighting with a thunder of wings on his wrist like the hunting-birds of a prince, then he hungered to know more such names and came to his aunt begging to learn the name of the sparrowhawk and the osprey and the eagle. To earn the words of power he did all the witch asked of him and learned of her all she taught, though not all of it was pleasant to do or know.

1. How was the witch different from the actual wizards?

The witch wasn’t a black sorceress or she never meddled with the high arts of traffic with Old Powers; being an ignorant woman among ignorant folk she often used her crafts to foolish and dubious ends. She knew nothing of the Balance and the Patter which the true wizard knows and serves, and which keep him from using his spells unless real need demands. She had a spell for every circumstance, and was forever weaving charms. Much of her lore was mere rubbish and humbug, nor did she know the true spells from the false. She knew many curses and was better at causing sickness, perhaps, than at curing it. Like any village witch she could brew up a love-potion but there were other, uglier brews she made to serve men’s jealousy and hate. Such practices however she kept from her young prentice, and as far as she was able she taught him honest craft.

1. Was the initial magery of Duny different from the witch? Justify.

At first all his pleasure in the art magic was childlike the power it gave him over bird and beast and the knowledge of these. And indeed that pleasure stayed with him all his life. Seeing him in the high pastures often with a bird of prey about him, the other children called him Sparrowhawk and so he came by the name that he kept in later life as his use-name, when his true name was not known.

1. What happened as a result of learning magery?

The witch praised Duny and the children of the village began to fear him and he himself was sure that very soon he would become great among men so he went on from word to word and from spell to spell with the witch till he was twelve years old.

1. What all was taught by the witch?

She had taught him all her lore in herbals and healing and all she knew of the crafts of finding binding mending unsealing and revealing. What she knew of chanters’ tales and the great Deeds she had sung to him and all the words of the True Speech that she had learned from the sorcerer that taught her, she taught again to Duny. And from weatherworkers and wandering jugglers who went from town to town of the Northward Vale and the East Forest he had learned various tricks and pleasantries, spells of Illusion. It was with one of these light spells that he first proved the great power that was in him.

1. Describe the Kargad empire.

In those days the Kargad Empire was strong which included the four great lands that lie between the Northern and the Eastern Reaches: Karego-At, Atuan, Hur-at-Hur and Atnini. The tongue they spoke there was not like any spoken in the Archipelago or the other Reaches. They were savage people, white-skinned, yellow haired and fierce, liking the sight of blood and the smell of burning towns.

1. Which place did the Kargad Empire attack a year earlier to the village of Ten Alders? How did the Gontishmen react to this news?

The Kargs had attacked the Torikles and the strong island Torheven. They raided in great force in fleets of red-sailed ships. The Gontishmen were busy with their piracy and paid small heed to the woes of the other lands.

1. What happened to the island of Spevy? Which was the next target?

After the island of Spevy fell to the Kargs, they were looted and laid waste. Its people were taken slaves. Even after a year the isle was in ruins. The next target was Gont.

1. How did the Kargs attack the Gont?

The Kargs came in thirty great longships to East Port. They fought through that town, took it, burned it; leaving their ships under guard at the mouth of the River Ar they went up the Vale wrecking and looting, slaughtering cattle and men. Later they split into bands which plundered where it chose.

1. Describe the state of Ten Alders after the Karg attack.

Smoke darkened the eastern sky, those people who climbed the High Fall looked down the Vale which looked hazed and red-streaked with fires where fields ready for harvest had been set ablaze, and orchards burned, the fruit roasting on the blazing boughs and barns and farmhouses smouldered in run. Some villagers fled up the ravines and had in the forest and some made ready to fight for their lives, and some did neither but stood about lamenting.

1. What did the witch do after the Kargs attacked? What did Duny’s father do?

The witch fled from the place and hid alone in a cave up on the Kapperding Scarp and sealed the cave-mouth with spells. Duny’s father the bronzesmith was one who stayed for he would leave his smelting-pit and forge where he had worked for fifty years. All that night he laboured beating up what ready metal he had there into spearpoints, and others worked with him binding these to the handles of hoes and rakes, as there was no time to make sockets and shaft them properly.

1. Why there had been no weapons in the village?

There had been no weapons in the village except for the hunting bows and short knives for the mountain folk of Gont were not warlike. They were not famous as warriors but they were known to be goat-thieves, sea-pirates and wizards.

1. How was Duny on the morning of the attack? Why?

On the morning of the attack, Duny was tired. He had worked all night at the forge-bellows, pushing and pulling the two long sleeves of goat-hide that fed the fire with a blast of air. His arms ached and trembled so much from that work that he could not hold out the spear he had chosen. He did not know how he would fight or how he could be of any good to himself or the villagers.

1. What was Duny rattled about?

Duny was rattled about the way he would die, spitted on the Kargish lance while still being a boy and he would go into the dark land without ever having known his own name; his true name as a man.

1. What thought did he get when he saw his own hands? What did Duny realise eventually?

As he saw his own thin arms, he raged at his weakness yet he knew his strength. He knew there was power in him but he wished if he knew how to use it. He sought among all the spells he knew for some device that might give him and his companions an advantage or at least a chance. Duny realised eventually that it is not just the need that is enough to set power free, there has to be knowledge too.

1. Describe the band of warriors.

The band of the warriors were armoured with bronze helmets and greaves and breast plates of heavy leather and shields of wood and bronze and armed with swords and the long Kargish lance. They came in a plumed, clanking, straggling line near enough already that their white faces could be seen and the words of their jargon heard as they shouted to one another. In this band of invading horde there were about a hundred men which is not many but in the village there were only eighteen men and boys.

1. What did Duny do as the Kargs approached? Who had taught him the spell?

Duny realised that he knew a spell that might avail him. An old weatherworker of the Vale, seeking to win the boy as prentice, had taught him several charms. One of those was called fogweaving. It was a binding spell that gathers the mists together for a while in one place; with it one skilled in illusion can shape the mist into fair ghostly seemings which last a little and fade away. Unfortunately the boy had no such skill, however his intent was different and he had the strength to turn the spell to his own ends.

1. How did Duny cast a spell? Who came when he was doing so? How did he react?

Duny very rapidly and aloud named the places and the boundaried of the village and then spoke the fogweaving charm but in among its words enlaced the words of a spell of concealment and last he cried the word that set the magic going. As he was doing so, his father coming up behind him struck him hard on the side of the head knocking him right down and told him to be still. He called Duny a fool whose blattering mouth should be shut if he couldn’t fight.

1. What was the state of Duny after casting the spell?

Duny’s head hurt from his father’s blow and the working of the doubled incantation had drained his strength. He stood wraithlike.

1. What did Duny’s father do after realising what his son had done?

After realising what Duny had done, Duny’s father ran at once noiselessly knowing every fence and corner of the village to find the others and tell them what to do.

1. Describe the first and second round of attack on the Kargs
2. The tanner sent a couple of boys skipping right under the Karg’s noses taunting and yelling and vanishing again like smoke into smoke.
3. The older men creeping behind fences and running from house to house came close to the other side and sent a volley of arrows and spears at the warriors who stood all in a bunch.
4. What happened as a result of the first and second round of attack?

One Karg fell writhing with a spear still warm from its forging, right through his body and the others were arrow bitten and all enraged. They charged forward then to hew down the puny attackers but found only the fog about them and full of voices. They followed the voices, stabbing ahead into the mist with their great plumed bloodstained lances. They came up the length of the street shouting and they never knew they had run right through the village as the empty huts and houses loomed and disappeared again in the writhing grey fog. The villagers ran scattering most of them keeping well ahead since they knew the ground; but some boys or old men were slow. The Kargs stumbling on them drove their lances or hacked with their swords yelling their war-cry and the names of their White Gods.

1. What happened when some of the Kargs understood that the land had grown rough underfoot?

Some of the band stopped but others pressed right on, seeking the phantom village following dim wavering shapes that fled just out of reach before them. All the mist had come alive with these fleeing forms, dodging, flickering, fading on every side.

1. What did one of the Kargs’ group do? What happened next?

One group of the Kargs chased the wraiths straight to the High Fall, the cliff’s edge above the springs of Ar and the shapes they pursued ran out on the air and vanished in thinning mist, while the pursuers fell screaming through fog and sudden sunlight a hundred feet sheer to the shallow pools among the rocks. Those who came behind and did not fall stood at the cliff’s edge, listening.

1. How did the Kargs react to this?

The Kargs were scared and they started seeking one another. They all gathered on the hillside and yet there were wraiths and ghost shapes among them and other shapes that ran and stabbed from behind with spear or knife and vanished again. The Kargs began to run all of them downhill, stumbling, silent until all at once they ran out from the grey blind mist and saw the river and the ravines below the village all bare and bright in morning sunlight. Then they stopped gathering together and looked back. Two or three stragglers came from the wall of wavering writhing grey lay blank across the path, hiding all that lay behind it. They were lunging and stumbling along with their long lances rocking on their shoulders. The Kargs were so scared that they didn’t even look back more than once and all of them went down in haste, away from the enchanted place.

1. What happened at the Northward Vale?

At Northward Vale those warriors got their fill of fighting. The towns of East forest from Ovark to the coast, had gathered their men and sent them against the invaders of Gont. Band after Band they came down from the hills and that day and the next the Kargs were harried back down to the beaches above East Port where they found their ships burnt. The Kargs fought with their backs to the sea and every man of them was killed. The sands of Armouth were brown with blood until the tide came in.

1. What happened the next morning on the High Fall?

The next morning on the High Fall, the dank grey fog had clung a while and then suddenly it blew and drifted and melted away. Every Gontishman stood up in the windy brightness of the morning and looked around him wondering. A dead Karg lay with yellow hair long loose and bloody. And also the village tanner killed in the battle like a king.

1. What was the scenario down in the village?

The house that had been set afire still blazed. The Gontishmen ran to put the fire out since their battle had been won. In the street near the great yew they found Duny standing by himself, bearing no hurt but speechless and stupid like one stunned.

1. Did the villagers know what Duny had done? What did they do next?

The villagers knew what Duny had done and they led him into his father’s house and went calling for the witch to come down out of her cave and heal the lad who had saved their lives and their property.

1. What loss was incurred by the Gontish?

There were four villagers killed including the tanner and one house was burnt.

1. What happened to Duny?

Duny was not hurt due to any weapon but he would not speak nor eat nor sleep, he seemed not to hear what was said to him, not to see those who came to see him. He had overspent his power but she had no art to help him.

1. How did his fame spread wide?

The fame of his magery spread everywhere. The story of the lad who wove the fog and scared off Kargish swordsmen with a mess of shadows was told all down the Northward Vale and in the East Forest, and high on the mountain and over mountain even in the Great Pont of Gont.

1. Who came on the fifth day of the slaughter?

On the fifth day of the slaughter, at Armouth a stranger came into Ten Alders village, a man neither young nor old, who came cloaked and bareheaded lightly carrying a great staff of oak that was as tall as himself. He did not come up the course of the Ar like most people, but down, out of the forests of the higher mountainside. The village goodwives saw well that he was a wizard and when told them that he was a healall, they brought him straight to the smith’s house.

1. What happened when the visitor came to smith’ house? How did the visitor cure Duny? What was smith’s reaction?

When the visitor came to smith’s house, all were sent except the boy’s father and the aunt. The stranger stopped above the cot where Duny lay staring into the dark and did no more than lay his hand on the boy’s forehead and touch his lips once. Duny saw up slowly looking about him. In a little while he spoke and strength and hunger began to come back into him. They gave him a little to drink and eat, and he lay back again always watching the stranger with dark wondering eyes.

1. What purpose did the visitor give regarding his visit?

The smith told the man that he wasn’t a common man. The visitor replied that even his boy will not be a common man. The visitor tells him that the tale of his deed with the fog has come to Re Albi, which is his home. He had come there to give him his name if as he had not yet made his passage into manhood.

1. What did the witch whisper in the ears of the smith?

The witch answers her brother that he was surely be the Mage of Re Albi, Ogion the Silent, that one who tamed the earthquake.

1. What did the visitor tell the smith before leaving?

The visitor told the smith before leaving that he should be named soon for he needs his name. He further tells that he has other business and that he would come back there for the day they would choose. If it is fit then he would take Duny with him. And if Duny proves apt, then the visitor would keep him as prentice or see to it that he is schooled as fits his gifts. he further adds that it is dangerous to keep the mind dark of the mageborn.

1. Who came on the thirteenth birthday?

On the thirteenth birthday the visitor, Ogion returned to the village from his rovings over Gont Mountain and the ceremony of Passage was held.

1. How did Duny become Ged?

The witch took from the boy his name Duny, the name his mother had given him as a baby. Nameless and naked he walked into the cold springs of the Ar where it rises among rocks under the high cliffs. As he entered the water clouds crossed the sun’s face and great shadow slid and mingled over the water of the pool about him. He crossed to the far bank, shuddering with cold but walking slow and erect as he should through that ice living water. As he came to the bank Ogion waiting reached out his hand and clasping the boy’s arm whispered to him his true name: Ged.

1. Describe how the Gonts were enjoying the feast.

The feasting was far from over and all the villagers were making merry with plenty to eat and beer to drink and chanter from down the Vale singing the Deed of the Dragonlords.

1. Describe Ged’s farewell.

When the entire Gont was celebrating, the mage spoke in his quiet voice to Ged: ‘Come, lad. Bid your people farewell and leave them feasting. He said a farewell to them all the people he knew in all the people he knew in all the world and looked aout once at the village that straggled and huddled there under the cliffs, over the river-springs. Then he set off with his new master through the steep slanting forests of the mountain isle, through the leaves and shadows of bright autumn.

1. What were the things that Ged carried with him?

Ged fetched what he had to carry which was the good bronze knife his father had forged for him and a leather coat the tanner’s widow had cut down to his size and an alder-stick his aunt had becharmed for him’; that was all that he owned besides his shirt and breeches.