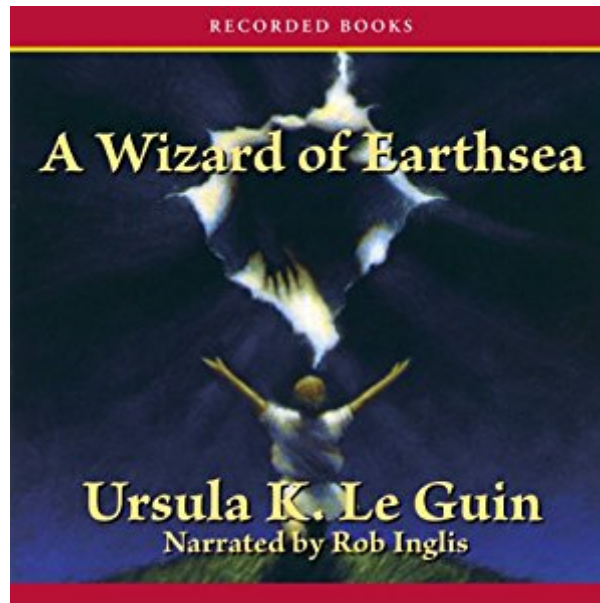




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A Wizard Of Earthsea: The Earthsea Cycle, Book 1



Synopsis

Originally published in 1968, Ursula K. Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea* marks the first of the six now beloved Earthsea titles. Ged was the greatest sorcerer in Earthsea, but in his youth he was the reckless Sparrowhawk. In his hunger for power and knowledge, he tampered with long-held secrets and loosed a terrible shadow upon the world. This is the tumultuous tale of his testing, how he mastered the mighty words of power, tamed an ancient dragon, and crossed death's threshold to restore the balance. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A Wizard of Earthsea follows Sparrowhawk, a young wizard from his experiences with magic as a young boy, to training with a Mage and onto a school of magic. Sparrowhawk's true name is Ged. Ged is very talented, and is prone to showing off, resulting in his summoning of a dark force that harms him several times through the book. Ged eventually realizes that he must face this force and either destroy it or be destroyed. His journeys are documented in this book. The story is good, not terribly deep, but this was written for younger readers.

Third attempt to post this review; first from the Kindle app, two from directly. Is the third time the charm? Great fantasy fare. A good read for people of any age, but there can be no mistaking it was written with younger folks in mind. Of particular pertinence are Le Guinn's observations on perception. A few passages, for effect: "Wait. Manhood is patience. Mastery is nine times

patience." "To light a candle is to cast a shadow . . . "Ged stood still a while, like one who has received great news, and must enlarge his spirit to receive it." "For a word to be spoken," Ged answered slowly, "there must be silence. Before, and after." An enjoyable read, even with slow pacing in a few places. The only real gripe is the editing, or distinct lack thereof, in some sections of the book. There are portions of nearly every chapter that appear as raw text without any check for grammar or punctuation. In the experience of this reviewer, said editing discrepancies seem present only in the Kindle version.

This felt long and slow to me but I imagine to a twelve year old it might be more enjoyable. I think the point of the book was good, but more showing and less telling would have kept my interest more. I had to skim the last half.

I read "A Wizard of Earthsea" the year it was published, just after returning home from my own odyssey as a peace corps volunteer in India. The lyrical language, the adventure upon the open water travelling to the unknown, the voyage to the personal unknown--and perhaps unknowable--all resonated with me. Upon a second reading, it is still a strong and vibrant story, though I became a bit bored with the repeated hopping from one port town to the next and the multiple close calls. I could certainly relate to her descriptions of walking to exhaustion, and pushing oneself to the limits of one's endurance! There was a plot hole which I felt was not sufficiently explained and upon re-reading still feel that it is a bit wobbly, but a minor kvetch for a marvellous book. I thought it very clever of her to introduce the "stubs", the unresolved questions from which other books will take their start, woven into the narrative and not just plugged in at the end. I know it's a YA book, but don't let that description deter you. It's beautiful and enduring, a work of art.

Ursula LeGuin has complained that too much fantasy relies on too many tropes. A Wizard of Earthsea really breaks down a lot of those narrative conventions. What really impressed me about the story is both how simple the plot is and how philosophically deep the underlying resolution of the conflict. There are no grand battles of good versus evil here. A Wizard of Earthsea focuses on a young wizard, Sparrowhawk (a.k.a. Ged) who accidentally releases a Shadow and must right his wrongs. Unlike Harry Potter, Ged is not simply the chosen one who can do no wrong. Rather than fighting some external evil, the entire plot is driven essentially by Ged's mistakes and his quest to right it. At its core, A Wizard of Earthsea is about a young man owning up to his mistakes and owning his darker side. Ged's character really evolves and matures over the course of the novel.

The character takes on significant responsibility for his imperfections. It's a refreshing take on a fantasy story, where too often heroes are unblemished heroes and villains unmitigated evil. LeGuin's narrative style is also interesting. Much of the book is told in third-person with little dialogue or even immediate action. At times, it feels like the type of story that might have been told over a campfire. It'd a very different feel from Tolkien's narration in the Lord of the Rings and perhaps more closely resembles the Silmarillion. Overall, this has become one of my favorite fantasy novels. Definitely worth checking out if you like fantasy and want a more sophisticated take on wizards and dragons.

Ged Sparrowhawk's epic journey across Earthsea represents one of the most-cherished mainstays of high fantasy. A classic in its own right, this book gets credit for much of the heavy lifting necessary to propel fantasy up to its respectable and meaningful niche in modern literature. Geared towards the younger reader, being an easy read, this book nonetheless tells a powerful story with serious and important lessons. Any reader will enjoy this story, and many will be truly inspired. As Ged matures and faces a myriad of challenges in a dangerous (and wonderfully imagined) world, he learns life lessons that we all do at some point on our journey, eventually coming to face hard truths about his own self and about his role in life. *A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA* begs to be read out loud. Simple enough vocabulary spun in a lyrical way gives this story a magical feel. Its on the short list of fantasy books that I picture myself reading to my future kids. Very little violence and no sex means this is a book appropriate for any age. The vivid images and powerful emotion will make a lasting impression on young minds, and the story will teach them positive lessons as well. Very highly recommended for any reader!

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