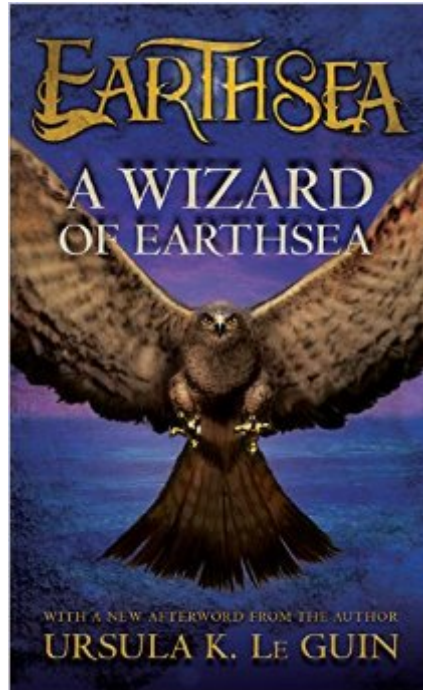


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A Wizard Of Earthsea (The Earthsea Cycle)



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.

Book Information

Series: The Earthsea Cycle (Book 1)

Mass Market Paperback: 320 pages

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Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 4.2 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (734 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #9,218 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends #448 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic #2615 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Ursula Le Guin is the daughter of Alfred Kroeber, an anthropologist, and Theodora Kroeber, a psychologist and writer. It's easy and accurate to say that her parents' interests inform her brilliant writing, and that cultural anthropology and Jungian psychology are at the core of *Wizard of Earthsea* and its three sequels. But the book isn't a treatise. It's a wonderful, well-told story of a young man, Ged, coming of age in a world where words can have the power of magic and dragons are as real as earthquakes. There is nothing didactic about this story; Le Guin's writing is compelling and her characters are vivid: Ogion, the Mage of Silence, whose word had stilled an earthquake; Vetch, who helps Ged on a deadly quest for no reason but friendship; Murre, Vetch's sister; Yevaud, the dragon of Pendor; and Skiorh, possessed by a gebbeth. Earthsea doesn't exist in a vacuum. Le Guin

constructs a deep and textured history, and her characters act in ways that are consistent with that world. She manages the trick of writing a mythic tale without falling into the traps and foibles of sounding like you are trying. The climax is straight from Carl Jung, but you don't need to know Carl Jung from Steve Young to appreciate it. From time to time, religious groups call for this book to be banned from school libraries, claiming it promotes witchcraft. Nonsense. This is a book every teenager should read. It speaks to self-understanding, nothing more. And some feminists criticize Le Guin because Ged is a male character. Again, nonsense, Ged is an archetype, and his gender matters not at all. This is an important book. It's also terrific fun. Highly recommended.

I'm writing this review because JK Rowling's books about the Hogwarts School of Magic reminded me of this, one of the few perfect novels I've ever read. It's not a light-hearted fairy tale, though it is "high fantasy." It's the story of Ged, from his childhood discovery of his wonderful yet terrible magical powers; to his education at the School of Wizardry on Roke Knoll. There he makes a misstep; overstepping his powers, he accidentally lets loose an evil creature from a shadow world. His self-imposed exile, journeys, and eventual maturation and triumph are written with a deft flair for the beauty and wonder of magic; yet Ms. LeGuin is even more masterful in depicting Ged's character: the young high achiever who must finally make his peace with his inner demons. As a child, I loved it for the idea of a school of magic. I grew older, reread it during a dark teenage time, and cried when Ged finally confronted his inner shadow creature. Later, studying anatomy in medical school, I recalled Ged's long days in the Namer's high tower, learning the true names of things; and bent cheerfully to my task. It still bears re-reading to this day. Readers who enjoy Tolkien, JK Rowling, or Alice Miller's "Drama of the Gifted Child" ought particularly to read it; and readers who didn't like "The Left Hand of Darkness" or "The Dispossessed" should give Ms. LeGuin another try, in this, her finest work. . It is one of my favorite novels and I recommend it to you wholeheartedly.

Not only is the "Earthsea" trilogy a wonderful series for adolescents but it also contains profound wisdom for adults seeking their own path to individuation. Rich in timeless myth, the series has the young mage Ged surmount many trials on his way to understanding himself and therein lies the key to his ultimately becoming the Archmage of Roke. Each book in the series has the main story turn on the issue of trust between two people and upon Ged's courage in facing dark issues either within himself or in the environment. Ged is a powerful role for young people developing a sense of their inner integrity and for middle-agers every where beginning to deal with their shadow issues. Of

course there are plenty of dragons, battles, transformations and journeys which can be enjoyed simply as a good storey, but don't pass up the chance to re-read to catch the deeper meaning. This series is too good to be eclipsed in popularity by LOTR and the Chornicles of Narnia, "Earthsea" stands on its own! If I haven't convinced you, please read the essay by Noel Perrin in his book, "A Child's Delight."

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