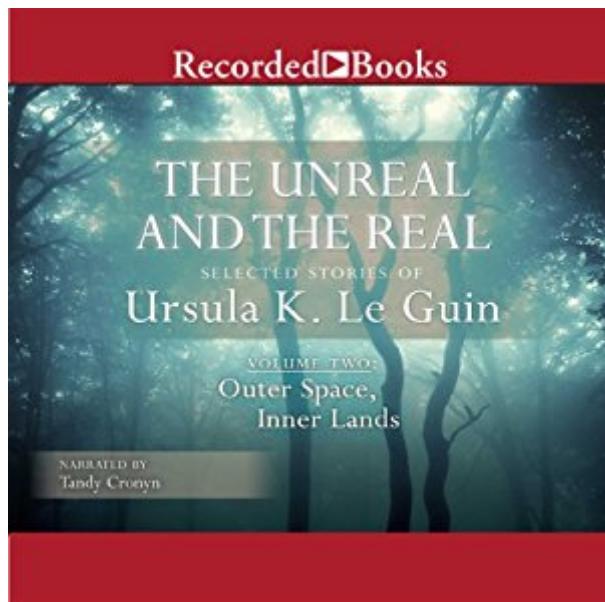


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The Unreal And The Real: Selected Stories Of Ursula K. Le Guin, Volume Two: Outer Space, Inner Lands



Synopsis

Outer Space, Inner Lands includes many of the best known Ursula K. Le Guin nonrealistic stories (such as "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," "Semley's Necklace," and "She Unnames Them") which have shaped the way many listeners see the world. She gives voice to the voiceless, hope to the outsider, and speaks truth to power - all the time maintaining her independence and sense of humor. Companion volume Where on Earth explores Le Guin's satirical, risky, political and experimental earthbound stories. Both volumes include new introductions by the author.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the second volume of "The Real and the Unread: Selected Stories of Ursula K. Le Guin." The first book, "Where on Earth," contains her more "mundane" stories. This book contains stories that are more clearly fantasy or science fiction. Le Guin fans may balk at the distinction; I can only answer that it is the one the author makes in the introduction. This collection serves as both an effective introduction to Le Guin's work and a reminder to longtime readers of what we enjoy about her style. Her best short science fiction reads like ethnography written by a careful observer of alien cultures. They are made convincing by the details, personalities, and author/protagonist reactions included and sometimes by what is not overtly included but feels present by implication, extension or closure. Four of these stories stand out for me, but please read them all. "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is perhaps the author's best-known story and deservedly so. It is a heavy-handed morality tale that

works as intended even though its intent is crystal clear. It reads a little like it might have been written down by a folklorist who only later realized its worth. "Mazes" is a first contact story told from the point of view of a captured alien. It is persuaded to perform a number of intelligence tests while its human captors attempt to communicate. Frustration ensues. "The Matter of Seggri" is presented as excerpts from various official and personal documents written while a native planetary culture is exposed to the knowledge and values of a spacefaring civilization. These narratives track societal changes in gender roles and the personal impact of these changes. "The Author of the Acacia Seeds" begins with careful anthropological investigation of records left behind by an insect, including cautions about the speculative nature of this work. We then see other researchers apply this interpretive framework to other literature-producing organisms. These stories are imaginative, richly textured, and enjoyable. I recommend you devote some quality time to them.

So glad Ursula selected the stories herself (she described her selection processes in the intro) and included only her own favorites. I have read some of the stories before, including the very famous: "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" as well as the not so famous stories like "The Shobies' Story." It has my all time favorite story, "Solitude," in it; but that honored place may be displaced by a new story (to me) I just read, "the Poacher." I am delighted that she has picked some not so well known stories so we'll have a chance to see these hidden treasures. True to all her stories, these stories here will make you think, will shock you out of your complacency, will teleport you temporarily to worlds that are so strange and yet so familiar. I bought the Kindle version of this two volume set, because I ran out of space on my book shelves; but now I wish I have hard copies because I know I'll be going back to read and re-read many of the stories.

Ursula K. LeGuin is one of my favorite authors and this collection did not disappoint. I had only read one of the stories before, but had forgotten the ending. These are typical short stories in that many have dour or mixed endings, while others have exultant endings. If you don't like tragedies these stories may not be for you, but if you like inventive stories about strange societies these will fit the bill. While many of these societies may seem off the wall a little reading of anthropology can make them fit in with human possibilities. Some stories may actually qualify as long short stories while there are some of only a few pages. Most have good character development. A large number fit in with her other Hainish stories, and a couple really make more sense if you have read "The Left Hand of Darkness"

Good anthology...I had expected it to be a little more 'tecky" but wow! Incredable concepts for short stories. Always a fan.

I love Le Guin. She's one of my favorite authors if not even my most favorite. Some of the stories in this collection left me feeling like "huh?" I felt kind of flat afterwards wondering what was the point. Other stories many of which I'd read before are superb. So it is a mixed bag.

I loved this set it stories. All totally different and unique, except for their shared effect of immersing you in an alternate reality, from which experience returning to your everyday life makes you question its validity and its hold on your senses and thoughts.

I don't have much to add to UKL's praise. She is such an imaginative, creative, and deep-diving author. This collection of stories include many that I had never before read. Some were slow to get going, but still well worth reading. Others grabbed me immediately.

This new set of selected stories by the author is a gift to those of us who have been following her work for over 40 years and have longed to have a definitive set of the short stories. This would be a great set of volumes to use in teaching literary form and techniques.

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