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ursula k. le guin



four ways to  
forgiveness

STORIES

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## Four Ways to Forgiveness

*Ursula K. Le Guin*

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# Four Ways to Forgiveness

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## **Four Ways to Forgiveness** Ursula K. Le Guin

At the far end of our universe, on the twin planets of Werel and Yeowe, all humankind is divided into "assets" and "owners," tradition and liberation are at war, and freedom takes many forms. Here is a society as complex and troubled as any on our world, peopled with unforgettable characters struggling to become fully human. For the disgraced revolutionary Abberkam, the callow "space brat" Solly, the haughty soldier Teyeo, and the Ekumen historian and Hainish exile Havzhiva, freedom and duty both begin in the heart, and success as well as failure has its costs.

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Betrayals

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A Man of the People

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Notes on Werel and Yeowe

In this stunning collection of four intimately interconnected novellas, Ursula K. Le Guin returns to the great themes that have made her one of America's most honored and respected authors.

## **Four Ways to Forgiveness Details**

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# From Reader Review Four Ways to Forgiveness for online ebook

## Linda Robinson says

This book was on the list from the Worlds Beyond Worlds Symposium, must-reads or would love to see as a film. Didn't know 'til just now that it was a number in the Hainish cycle. Doesn't read that on the book, but it's in the universe. This is a collection of 4 novellas intertwined with characters and locations in the system that includes planet Yeowe and planet Werel. The titles are Betrayals, Forgiveness Day, A Man of the People, and A Woman's Liberation. These are fiction along with a keen study of what it means to be free. Le Guin is a genius in swirling together stories that ask the reader to be involved, to choose, to evaluate settled knowledge and turn it on its ear. Not think. Rethink. Feel what that tastes like. Empty your brain, start over and lean into looking at freedom in a different way. Understand how easy it is to have freedom taken from you, and be afraid. Would I have the courage to fight to the death to be and remain free? Would I have the brains to comprehend how much freedom I actually have or how to get it back if its gift is lost? Great storytelling. I liked the cover on this edition so much, too. (Danilo Ducak, artist) The four figures are windswept, a nod to the setting of Betrayals and an artistic note on how tenuous freedom can be.

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## Sezgi says

Ba???lanma Günü ve Bir Kad?n?n Kurtulu?u hikâyeleri cidden harikaydı? di?er iki hikâye ise kitab? uzatma sebebim. O kadar sık?ld?m ve okumak istemedim ki o bölümleri kitab? bitirmem baya zaman aldı. Le Guin'in konu bulmada sık?nt? ya?amad???n? Uçu?tan Uçu?a'y? okurken fark etmi?tim ama bu kitapta biraz hayal k?r?kl??? ya?ad?m. Yine de sevdi'im iki hikâye o kadar iyiydi ki di?erlerini yok saymama yetti de arttı? bile. Bir Kad?n?n Kurtulu?u'nda olaylar?n geli?imi ve sonuç hikâye de?il de roman olarak yaz?lsa harika olurdu çünkü Kurtulu? Sava???n?n detaylar?n? okuyabilirdik. Mücadelenin nas?l ba?ar?ya ula?t??? biraz yavan kalm?? Belki yazar bilerek buraya bir merak unsuru b?rakm??t?r bilemiyorum.

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## Basia says

Along with Lathe of Heaven, one of my most favorite works by her.

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## Alexandra says

There is just no denying it: Ursula le Guin is one of the greatest writers of the last 50 years (at least), and I firmly believe that the only reason she does not get more recognition for her commentary on race, politics, and - especially - gender - is because she sets much of that discussion off world. But, as I've mentioned before, this makes the discussion both easier to read - it's not my society being critiqued! - and harder-hitting, because when we see our faults in aliens... it hurts more, somehow. Or maybe that's just le Guin's genius.

So. Here we have four interconnected short stories (although if we're being technical I think the last two are probably closer to novellas). We have two planets, Werel and Yeowe. Yeowe was uninhabited until the

Owners on Werel decided to start mining and farming it, for which they used the labour of their assets. Yes, Werel is a slave-owning society, and a capitalist one (I see what you did there, le Guin - very nice indeed - Marx needs a little chastising sometimes). And within the hierarchy of owner/owned there's a gender hierarchy as well, with women being firmly the lowest section of each caste. Sounding familiar? Well yes, except that here lovely onyx skin is the most prized, and the paler you are - the more 'dusty' - the more obvious your slave status.

Me, I'm one of the palest of the pale whitefellas around. No way can I presume to comment on how people of colour would react to this inversion. For myself, I'll admit that reading the derogatory term 'dusty' did not at first make sense (I thought it was referring to them living in the dirt and dust); and while it was uncomfortable in the context of slave/free, it's awesome to read stories wherein black is desirable and beautiful... and it's not a big deal.

The four stories all deal with the same basic issue and time: the consequences of a revolt of the 'assets' on Yeowe against the Corporation who owned them: consequences for the Owners and the assets, for men and women, and for the alien Ekumen observers (this fits into le Guin's Hainish cycle). For me, while revolutions are interesting and all, it's the aftermath that's really the meat of history. What difference does it actually make? How long do changes take and how long do they hang around? Changing the world is one thing; changing attitudes and desires and beliefs quite another.

The first story, "Betrayals," is set some time after the Liberation, in a nowhere town on Yeowe. It's the story that has least to do with the Liberation itself, although it comes about as a result of it. It's a tale of two old people - and how refreshing is that? - dealing with being old, and the changes in their world, and how frustrating the world can be when you're not able or allowed to make big changes yourself any more... but you can still make small ones, that do make a difference. Bitterness and growth and love. Also gossip, and the downfall of heroes.

"Forgiveness Day" comes first from the perspective of a 'space brat' - a worldly (hmm, or not; she doesn't really have a world) woman of the Ekumen sent to Werel to act as an observer there. Being an observer on tight-knit, inward-facing and closed-mouth Werel was always going to be a difficult task, but having a woman in that position - going out, rather than staying in the beza (woman's side); her own property, rather than a man's; speaking to men as their equal - is yet another kettle of proverbial. Solly deals with it rather bullishly, which is perfectly fair and understandable. What puts le Guin at the pinnacle is that she writes Solly completely sympathetically for maybe a quarter? of the story, and then relates the next section from the perspective of Teyeo, her bodyguard, of whom Solly has a very dim view but who again comes across as immensely sympathetic, and casts some shade on Solly; and then the rest is the two of them in rather a pickle. It's a commanding story of attitudes and cultural perspectives, and change in the face of necessity. It also starts opening up Werel society to the reader, giving hints and clues about how and why it works, which while not making it likeable begins to make it comprehensible.

"A Man of the People" begins on Hain, with a young boy growing up in a sheltered, insular pueblo... who eventually gets impatient with the local knowledge available and longs for something bigger. Nearly half of the story takes place on Hain as Havzhida learns about universal knowledge and eventually becomes a member of the Hainish delegation to Yeowe. While the previous story showed Werel from an outsider's perspective, seeing Yeowe post-Liberation from such a view is revealing too, not least because the gender hierarchy has been replicated. The rhetoric of freedom, of liberation, is a complex one, and le Guin makes some offerings on how to understand it in this and the next story in particular. I think this story is my favourite, at least partly because it shows how power doesn't have to come from violence, and subversion doesn't have to involve deceit. And the characters are wonderful and varied, and Havzhida is a willing observer - not insistent on participation where that might not be appropriate. Which is something that some

activists might do well to understand.

Finally, "A Woman's Liberation" is probably the most difficult to read of the lot. The first is post-Liberation Yeowe, so at least the theory of freedom is present; the second is Werel, where there is no freedom for 'assets' but Solly and Teyeo move freely (mostly); the third is post-Liberation Yeowe too, with Havzhida moving freely and women beginning to do so. "A Woman's Liberation," though, is from the perspective of a bondswoman - an asset - on Werel. She is thus doubly bonded, doubly enslaved, both to her Owner and to the men of her caste. This makes for a sometimes-painful reading experience - not gratuitous, not unnecessary, but painful nonetheless. Things do change, as the name suggests, but le Guin does not hide the fact that changing official status is difficult, and indeed is only one step in losing the 'slave-mind'. Rakam is a glorious character who grows and struggles and is unrelentingly honest with the reader. She's inspirational.

These stories are complex and challenging and absorbing and frustrating because they do not fill in all of the gaps. By the end a general sweep of the history and society of Werel and Yeowe has been revealed, but there is so much more that could be written! This is one of the peculiar gifts of le Guin, I think - she does not tell us everything. Only what we need to know. Which is about liberation, and freedom, and individuality, and community, and love.

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## **Rodney says**

I am torn to pieces.

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## **Kate says**

"At the far end of the universe, on the twin planets of Werel and Yeowe, all humankind is divided into 'assets' and 'owners', tradition and liberation are at war, and freedom takes many forms. Here is a society as complex and troubled as any on our world, peopled with unforgettable characters struggling to become fully human. For the disgraced revolutionary Abberkam, the callow 'space brat' Solly, the haughty soldier Teyeo, and the Ekuman historian and Hainish exile Havzhiva, freedom and duty both beting in the heart, and success as well as failure has its costs.

"In this stunning collection of four intimately interconnected novellas, Ursula K. Le Guin returns to the great themes that have made her one of America's most honored and respected authors."

~~back cover

I'm a huge and loyal Ursula Le Guin fan, and several of her works are on my "Desert Island List." But this one is not among them. I was disappointed in these novellas. It felt as though she was trying to recapture the glory of the Earthsea trilogy, while at the same time using the plot and the characters to illustrate a vital but tired point: how dehumanizing slavery is, for both slaves and owners. The "awakening" of several of the characters also seemed stale and already overworked to me, and the stories provided no new insights into human behavior or clever new societies as window dressing and backdrop.

Her writing is flawless, as always. But the vehicle was unworthy of the craftsmanship.

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## **Emily says**

Four Ways to Forgiveness contains four novella set on the planet Werel and its colony planet, Yeowe. Werel has a violent and oppressive history and although having become technologically quite advance, the practice of slavery is still the basis of their society.

The first story is set on Yeowe following their War of Liberation and features an old woman and her relationship with a former Chief of the revolution. This story seems mostly to serve as exposition and a commentary on how elders are treated in the burgeoning free era.

Next, we follow an Ekumenical sub-envoy and her struggles with the extremely misogynistic practices in place on Werel. She is trying to bring enlightenment and is treated alternately like a man and a precocious child, but just wants to be seen as an independent woman. This is difficult for the Werelians to deal with.

The third story begins on Hain, which is nice because of all the talk so far in this series of the Hainish and the Ekumen having originated there, none of the action has ever been set there. It is interesting to note that there are still some “backwards” and “rural” areas of Hain. It is not the enlightened utopia I had come to think of judging by its description and the characters in other books who are from there. The narrator of this tale begins life in a rural area and grows to be an Envoy to Werel. His early life and training period are quite interesting and his adventures on Werel serve to tie some threads together from the first two stories.

This Envoy will also appear in our fourth story, which is presented as a memoir of a woman who is born in slavery on Werel, but because of some very fortunate events is able to participate in a Werelian slave-revolt, learn to read, write and teach, and finally end up on Yeowe helping to continue the revolution and enlightenment there.

The themes throughout are, of course, forgiveness, as well as how two people from different walks of life can find love together. Each of these stories features a set of very unlikely lovers, often of different planets of origin, who find common ground. This could be applied as a metaphor for mixed-race relations here in America (or even on Planet Earth). The other main theme is feminism. The revolution on Yeowe originated in the women’s camp, but after liberation, women are still treated as property, often with less power than they had as slaves. The message seems to be that many men need to have someone to oppress in order to feel powerful, even if they have been oppressed themselves and know how that feels. Of course, as the society grows and becomes more “civilized” the genders need to be treated more equally. This is also a comment on Earthly societal norms.

LeGuin has long been a pioneer of feminist science fiction. She is adept at spinning an engaging tale that stands alone on its own merit, as well as presenting an underlying message that is almost sneaky in the way it inhabits the readers mind and (hopefully!) transforms the reader’s attitudes on the subject.

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## **Ken-ichi says**

If you've ever thought, as I never have, that Ursula Le Guin would write fantastically wonderful romance, may I present this book. The four stories depict a society emerging from slavery and dealing with its initial political and sexual repercussions and reiterations, but the love stories at the heart of each are both hopeful and beautiful. That said, there's definitely a weird tension between Le Guin's artificial society of Werel and

American slavery (or at least how it's been depicted in fiction). You could argue that science fiction is a space to explore different sides of issues like slavery without being bound to our own specific history with those issues, but slavery's kind of a big one, and to me, slavery on Werel felt a bit tame compared to what we know about slavery in America. Le Guin mentions horrors, but didn't manage to make me feel them. Maybe that's a failing on my part. A Woman's Liberation was particularly vexing for me, because the protagonist, Rakam seems oddly unscarred by her past as a sex slave. Growing beyond a history like that is perhaps impossible to explore satisfactorily in a short story, and maybe I've just become too accustomed to stories about harm that's truly indelible, but her forgiveness didn't feel quite as earned to me as the others, even though her story is the longest and most directly addresses slavery. Again, the fault is probably my own.

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### **Effie says**

Το βιβλίο αυτό αποτελείται από 4 διηγήματα τα οποία διαπραγματεύονται την ίδια ιδέα. Την απελευθέρωση. Την απελευθέρωση της γυναίκας και των υπδουλων ανθρωπων. Οι ιστορίες επικεντρώνονται στους πλανήτες Βερλ και Γεοβ? όπου υπάρχει ακόμα δουλεα και οι γυνακες θεωρούνται κτματα των αντρν. Πως πντα, οι ηρωδες της Le Guin ενα δυναμικς, ανεξρτητες και ασυμββαστες. Δε δχονται να υποταχθν σε καννν και μχονται για την ιστητα και τα δικαιματ τους. Και φυσικ αγαπνε με πθος! Μχρι τρα η Le Guin ενα η μνη συγγραφας που χει καταφρει να με κνει να ευχαριστηθ love story επειδ ενα η μνη που χει γρψει για γυνακες με τις οποες μπορ να ταυτιστ?.

Κτι εξσου υπροχο στις ιστορίες αυτές αλλ? και γενικ? στα βιβλ?α της Le Guin ενα τι πντα υπρχουν lgbt χαρακτρες και σε αρκετς περιπτσεις μας ταξιδει σε πολιτισμο? που σε κποιες περιπτσεις οι ομφυλες σχσεις θεωρνται περισσ?τερο αποδκτες απ? τις ετερ?φυλες.

Μακρ? να παραδειγματζονταν ?λοι οι συγγραφες απ? τον τροπο που χρειζεται τους χαρακτρες της. ?χουμε πξει στους ματσ? ντρακλες και τις αδ?ναμες γυναικο?λες.

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### **Jeffrey E says**

There is a reason Le Guin is considered one of the greats. This book is a shining example of how elegant and powerful her writing can be. Highly recommended.

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### **Elena says**

Four interconnected love stories between people from different and difficult backgrounds. All of them end up finding their way to -don't say forgiveness. don't...- to forgiveness, which clearly consists in an understanding partner and an useful occupation. It's settled in many planets, but it's mainly about one, Yeowe, that joins the narrative advantages of having just freed itself from a colonial, pro-slavery regime and being ruled by chauvinistic assholes. Luckily, none of the characters are native of wherever they end up finding their particular brand of happiness. It's manicheistic; all things Ekumen are very likely to be good, and all things patriot are probably bad. I don't mind. There probably is much to be gained of the contact of others, specially if they are older, academically better and have a working peaceful system of govern, but I'm

a worried about how the ideology at work might translate in real life.

The stories are slow to pick up, and end on the satisfying natural conclusion wholly invented by fiction. Frankly, slavery and male chauvinism are rather tired themes, specially on this planet with no history. It has to rediscover all from scratch. On the good side:

(view spoiler)

The first story's characters are old people, and the orthodoxally interesting part of their lives is over. Is that politically incorrect? The fact is that the only thing going on is the romance; and it's a fairly common one, contrived by the oldest, really really old, ancient, tricks in the book.

(view spoiler)

I might have found it sweet, but it info dumped me to boredom. I might have liked the male protagonist, only I didn't, because I don't have pity to spare for corrupt politicians. And she was strong and independent, but only by omission, because we didn't know that much about her. On the whole, it's a shame, because I'm usually a sucker for willful old people.

I did care for the main character of the third one, but the story focused on his relationships with women and glossed over his involvement in the feminist movements of Yeowe. I find that I enjoy reading about a man who chooses to defend the rights of women. I would object if he created the movement, but he's just willing to participate, and it's curiously moving.

The fourth one... happens... and its plot is very contrived and the main character is a bit too perfect and I should have skipped it, even though it's the longest.

The second story I liked. It was about two people made enemies by their upbringing, their experience, their beliefs, and most of all their temperament, locked up in one room, but who can *think*. It's about how difficult it is to understand one another, and it's a love story between flawed grown ups whose flaws are also their virtues. They dislike, then love each other for the same reasons.

There also seems to be some thinking about personal semi philosophical concepts and individual mottos, specially for the male characters: hold fast to the one noble thing, global and regional truths, and I can't remember the others (or even if there were any) but it's a great way to build a distinct character in a story so short and so focused in sci-fi's social problems.

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## **Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says**

Four (actually five now, in the edition I read) interlocking novellas by Ursula Le Guin, exploring the history of two planets, Werel and Yeowe, with an entrenched culture of slavery based largely on race. Here it's the black race that has enslaved the whites, although after a few thousand years of slaves being used and raped, many of the slaves are as dark-skinned as their masters.

When the Hainish spacefaring race rediscovers Werel, which they populated millions of years ago, the interactions between the master race on Werel and the Hainish envoys lead to all kinds of unforeseen consequences. Le Guin explores those events through the eyes of five different characters, including a female slave and three visiting envoys. Le Guin's anthropological version of science fiction is amazingly insightful and often deeply disturbing, but well worth reading.



Review to come. I received a free copy of this collection from the publisher for review, as part of the Library of America collection, Ursula K. Le Guin: Hainish Novels and Stories

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## Bahar says

Ursula K. LeGuin öyle bir yazar ki, her okuduğunuzda sizi yeniden ve yeniden aşırtmay? ba?ar?yor, ve dürtmeyi ve dü?ündürmeyi... Yar? saçma bir bilim kurgu hikaye gibi ba?layan bir öykü-roman sonunda sizi özgürlük, kad?nl?k, kölelik, farklı olmak, a?k, hayatlar döngüsü konusunda sorularla ba?ba?a b?rakarak bitiyor... Her defas?nda "iyi ki okumu?um" diyerek bitiyor, tekrar ve tekrar...

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## Stuart says

### Four Ways to Forgiveness: Slavery, oppression, revolution, and redemption

Originally posted at Fantasy Literature

Ursula K. Le Guin is hardly afraid to tackle difficult topics. In fact, she delves into them with a fearless but controlled approach that forces us to look at painful subjects we may prefer not to. This time she is going straight for the jugular, exploring the sensitive subjects of freedom, slavery, oppression, sexual politics, and revolution. In the wrong hands this could easily become a heavy-handed polemic that might be unreadable.

However, Le Guin is far too skilled a writer to wield a cudgel — instead, she uses her scalpel to peel away layer after layer of ingrained societal norms as she explores just how human societies are affected by these topics, and leaving no side free of sin but shows how even the slavers victimize themselves as they indoctrinate their own children into the system. There are no purely evil people in her stories, but much cruel and unthinking behavior.

As with her other Hainish stories, in **Four Ways to Forgiveness** she uses the Envoys of the advanced space-faring Ekumen as the neutral observers of the more primitive native societies, determined to not take sides but forced to by circumstances. In these stories Envoys get kidnapped, tortured, and otherwise dragged into messy situations. In the end, we see just how cruel, damaging, and irrational slavery is, symbolized by reversing the usual pattern of our world with darker-skinned people enslaving lighter-skinned people.

**Four Ways to Forgiveness** introduces a pair of worlds named Werel and Yeowe. Werel was first to be populated by the Hainish in antiquity, and many generations later when the Hainish come back in contact, they discover that the Werelians have a firmly entrenched system of slavery. In fact, the shock of encountering these space-faring “aliens” prompts the Werelians to colonize the planet of Yeowe using an-all male population of slaves (which they label “assets”).

Though later female slaves are sent to join them, they have already developed an extremely masculine hierarchical and homosexual society, and the women are placed at the bottom of it. What is both surprising and upsetting is that even after the light-skinned Yeowe slaves stage a successful revolution, the women still find that their status of subservience does not change as much as hoped.

There are a lot of unpleasant and brutal scenes in **Four Ways to Forgiveness** — Le Guin really forces the reader to face the ugliness of societies built around oppression and abuse those unable to defend themselves.

In the case of slaves, both men and women are abused and treated inhumanly, whereas among both slaves and slavers, women are victimized by men. The cycle of oppression leaves its psychological scars deep in people's minds for generations. Approaching the issue from numerous angles, we see how it affects every individual in the story.

Eventually, each story comes to some form of resolution or rapprochement, and oftentimes individuals of very different backgrounds come to understand and even love others. While this can be properly labeled "understanding" or "empathizing," I was a bit hard-put to identify "forgiveness" in an overt form in some cases. That would imply a victim forgiving a victimizer, I would think, and that didn't seem to always be the case. Perhaps other readers can interpret the book's title better than I can.

Of note, there is another story set in the same world of Werel and Yeowe called "Old Music and the Slave Women," which fits very much into the same framework of the other stories and belongs together with them. It can be found in **The Found and the Lost: The Collected Novellas of Ursula K. Le Guin**, along with three of the stories from **Four Ways to Forgiveness**, "Forgiveness Day," "A Man of the People," and "A Woman's Liberation." The first story, "Betrayals", can be found in **The Unreal and the Real: The Selected Short Stories of Ursula K. Le Guin**.

I listened to the audiobook versions of both available from Recorded Books, with *The Found and the Lost* narrated by Alyssa Bresnahan and Jefferson Mays, and *The Unreal and the Real* narrated by Tandy Cronyn. All do an excellent job as Le Guin's stories are perfectly suited for reading aloud. The narrators' voices are strong, direct, and passionate, and the characters and dialogue take center stage, reflecting Le Guin's love of story-telling and poetry.

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### Josephine Ensign says

This book completely sucked me in and I basically read it in one sitting. I had forgotten what an amazing writer Le Guin is, having read *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed* during my early teenage 'sci-fi phase.' I stumbled into this book of hers by a happy mistake, ordering it up along with tons of other library books in my current research on forgiveness. She deals with complex issues of racism and sexism, power and oppression, forgiveness and anger in a mesmerizing, completely absorbing way. This makes me want to read (and re-read) all of the books in her Hainish Cycle. A favorite quote for the ending of the book: "What is one man's and one woman's love and desire, against the history of two worlds, the great revolutions of our lifetimes, the hope, the unending cruelty of our species? A little thing. But a key is a little thing, next to the door it opens. If you lose the key, the door may never be unlocked. It is in our bodies that we lose or begin our freedom, in our bodies that we accept or end slavery."

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### Glaiza says

<https://paperwanderer.wordpress.com/2...>

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### Tatiana says

Writing this review is hard, simply because I don't think I am equipped to adequately relay Ursula K. Le

Guin's genius. She is one of the cleverest writers I have ever come across and her anthropological science fiction never ceases to amaze and distress me.

Of course, at the core of every sci-fi novel lies an alien world. The one depicted in this collection of 4 interconnected novellas is particularly gruesome IMO. This collection of stories is about slavery, freedom, and women's liberation. But even more, it is about understanding and forgiveness. Le Guin makes it possible: to understand and forgive a disgraced leader of the the War of Liberation who is accused of embezzlement and debauchery; for a Werelian officer, disgusted by a female representative's of Ekumen (the Envoy) childishness and loose behavior, and the Envoy, turned off by the officer's uptight, proprietary behavior towards her, to understand each other and fall in love with the very qualities they had thought off-putting; for a representative of a better, more peaceful world, to come to understand how a refusal of newly freed men to allow their women the same freedoms can be justifiable.

There are many profound things touched upon in this book: the destructive, alienating nature of slavery; the futility of just giving people freedom when they never dared to want it and never fully understood it; that freedom begins with sexual freedom, a freedom within our bodies; the wrongness of simply bringing one's ideas of liberty to force upon people without understanding the people's culture, no matter how right and humane these ideas are. I think Le Guin articulates the last argument very well in this quote:

*"You can't change anything from the outside in. Standing apart, looking down, talking the overview, you see pattern. What's wrong, what's missing. You want to fix it. But you can't patch it. You have to be in it, weaving it. You have to be part of the weaving."*

Truly, there are so many things that I loved about these 4 stories, I can't quite express it. Le Guin brings often under-appreciated genre of science fiction to a whole new level. I am in awe of her talent.

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## **Zübeyir says**

Kitap, yazar'ın kurguladığı "Hainish Cycle" adlı verilen kurgusal evrendeki birbirine çok yakın ve sömürü eli kileri olan Werel ve Yeowe adındaki gezegenlerde geçen dört uzun hikayeden oluşuyor. Hikayeler birbirinden bağımsız gibi görünse de dolaylı bağlantılar da mevcut. Le Guin bu kurgusal gezegenleri yine sadece bir fon olarak kullanarak, sosyal meselelere yoğunlaşıyor. Hiç de hoş olmayan beğeniyet inkişafımızda alegorik bir tarzda resmederek, eleştiriyor aslında.

Le Guin külliyatında en üst sınıflarda konumlandırabileceğimiz bir kitap bu. Hikayeler özgün, akıcı ve düşündürücü. Kitabın Çiğdem Erkal'ın çevirimi olması da bizim açımızdan büyük bir şans.

Ancak okuyacaklara tavsiyem önce kitabın sonundaki "Werel ve Yeowe Hakkında Notlar" bölümünü okumaları. Bu bölüm, kitabın oluşturan dört hikayenin geçtiği Werel ve Yeowe gezegenlerinin sosyokültürel yapıları hakkında genel bir bilgilendirme sunuyor. Direkt hikayelerle bağlantı kurmak zor olabiliyor.

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## **Ryan says**

Quintessential Le Guin. It's apparently part of the Hainish cycle, which I have never read. This seems like

the "Tales from Earthsea" of the Hainish cycle: it's a collection of short stories that easily stand alone, but are part of the same universe as other books, and it's, most likely, the best book in the lot. I've heard, anyway, that people don't get that excited about the Hainish books, so I assume this one may stand out.

It's four, tangential stories that surround a slave rebellion and a war for independence. Le Guin beautifully and articulately (with her anthropologist's lens) describes the tension of different cultures trying to understand each other: local truths for each culture that conflict each other, but are all still equally true. She delves deep into the feelings of hatred, confusion, disgust, and possible empathy and love that can take place across these borders.

She focuses on specific kinds of relationships: slave and owner, colonized and colonizer, between generations, and, of course, between genders. Le Guin argues that all relationships across cultures are akin to the sexual relationship between two people, and that all larger freedoms begin with the freedom of one's own body. Having a sexual relationship is akin to crossing a border between nations, between cultures, and all the same issues of colonialism, of oppression and freedom, are manifest.

It's classic Le Guin. An amazing feat of anthropology, as well as just heartwrenchingly beautiful and human. She manages to address huge sociological issues, and the intimate lives of lovers, seamlessly, with gorgeous detail that all rings very true.

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**Kat Kennedy says**

[image error]

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