



The Birthday of the World: And Other Stories

By Ursula K. Le Guin

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The Birthday of the World: And Other Stories By Ursula K. Le Guin

The recipient of numerous literary prizes, including the National Book Award, the Kafka Award, five Hugo Awards and five Nebula Awards, the renowned writer Ursula K. Le Guin has, in each story and novel, created a provocative, ever-evolving universe filled with diverse worlds and rich characters reminiscent of our earthly selves. Now, in *The Birthday of the World*, this gifted artist returns to these worlds in eight brilliant short works, including a never-before-published novella, each of which probes the essence of humanity.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Deeply concerned with gender, these eight stories, although ostensibly about aliens, are all about ourselves: love, sex, life and alienation are all handled with illuminating grace. Le Guin's overarching theme, the journey, informs her characters as they struggle to come to terms with themselves or their worlds. The journey can be literal, as in "Paradises Lost," set on a generational ship, where the inhabitants, living in a utopia, learn they will land on the planet their ancestors set out to colonize 40 years earlier; and as in "Unchosen Love," where a young man falls in love with someone in another country and must decide if he can build a new life in a new place. Or the journey can be figurative, as in "Coming of Age in Karhide," in which an adolescent in a genderless society enters sexual maturity; and in "Solitude," as outsiders visit and study a planet where the men and women live apart and a young woman seeks to perfect her soul in the only place she knows as home. In "The Birthday of the World," the nature of God is considered as hereditary rulers, literal gods to their subjects, give up their power when new gods aliens come, throwing their culture into chaos. Gender is a constant concern: "The Matter of Seggri" takes place on a planet where women greatly outnumber men, and in "Unchosen Love" and "Mountain Ways," society is based on complex marriage relationships comprising four people. Le Guin handles these difficult topics through her richly drawn characters and her believable worlds. Evocative, richly textured and lyrically written, this collection is a must-read for Le Guin's fans. (Mar. 13)National Book Award, Le Guin published two major books last year, *Tales from Earthsea* and *The Other Wind*.

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From Library Journal

Fans will love these eight new stories.

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Le Guin made her name as a writer of science fiction and fantasy, but—like John le Carré's spy novels, or Larry McMurtry's Westerns—her work transcends the usual limitations of the genre, and this collection is no exception. Some of the imagined worlds here are ancient civilizations governed by sun or sea, and some are highly controlled, synthetic environments floating through space, but all of them offer a stimulating counterpoint to the way we live now. Le Guin appears to have the most fun with her investigations of sex and gender—the ghettoization of men on Seggri, the elaborate marital quartets on the Planet O—but the costs of revolution, religious bliss, and technology are also provocatively explored, and one returns to the current headlines with a fresh awareness of the exotic, provisional nature of human arrangements.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marilyn Leonard:

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