



Worlds of Exile and Illusion: Three Complete Novels of the Hainish Series in One Volume--Rocannon's World; Planet of Exile; City of Illusions

By Ursula K. Le Guin

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Editorial Review

Review

"Le Guin writes in quiet, straightforward sentences about people who feel they are being torn apart by massive forces in society--technological, political, economic--and who fight courageously to remain whole."
The New York Times Book Review

"As good as any contemporary at creating worlds, imaginary or our own...Le Guin writes with painstaking intelligence. Her characters are complex and haunting, and her writing is remarkable for its sinewy grace."
Time Magazine

About the Author

Ursula K. Le Guin is widely seen as one of the greatest SF writers in the history of the genre. She has won both the Hugo and Nebula Awards on several occasions, as well as many other honors and prizes.

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PART ONE: The Starlord

I

So ends the first part of the legend; and all of it is true. Now for some facts, which are equally true, from the *League Handbook for Galactic Area Eight*.

* * *

Number 62: FOMALHAUT II.

Type AE--Carbon Life. An iron-core planet, diameter 6600 miles, with heavy oxygen-rich atmosphere.

Revolution: 800 Earthdays 8 hrs. 11 min. 42 sec. Rotation: 29 hrs. 51 min. 02 sec. Mean distance from sun 3.2 AU, orbital eccentricity slight. Obliquity of ecliptic 27° 20' 20" causing marked seasonal change.

Gravity .86 Standard.

Four major landmasses, Northwest, Southwest, East and Antarctic Continents, occupy 38% of planetary surface.

Four satellites (types Perner, Loklik, R-2 and Phobos). The Companion of Fomalhaut is visible as a superbright star.

Nearest League World: New South Georgia, capital Kerguelen (7.88 lt. yrs.).

History: The planet was charted by the Elieson Expedition in 202, robot-probed in 218.

First Geographical Survey, 235-6. Director: J. Kiolaf. The major landmasses were surveyed by air (see maps 3114-a, b, c, 3115-a, b.). Landings, geological and biological studies and HILF contacts were made only on East and Northwest Continents (see description of intelligent species below).

Technological Enhancement Mission to Species I-A, 252-4. Director: J. Kiolaf (Northwest Continent only.)

Control and Taxation Missions to Species I-A and II were carried out under auspices of the Area Foundation in Kerguelen, N.S.Ga., in 254, 258, 262, 266, 270; in 275 the planet was placed under Interdict by the

Allworld HILF Authority, pending more adequate study of its intelligent species.

First Ethnographic Survey, 321. Director: G. Rocannon.

* * *

A high tree of blinding white grew quickly, soundlessly up the sky from behind South Ridge. Guards on the towers of Hallan Castle cried out, striking bronze on bronze. Their small voices and clangor of warning were swallowed by the roar of sound, the hammerstroke of wind, the staggering of the forest.

Mogien of Hallan met his guest the Starlord on the run, heading for the flightcourt of the castle. "Was your ship behind South Ridge, Starlord?"

Very white in the face, but quiet-voiced as usual, the other said, "It was."

"Come with me." Mogien took his guest on the postillion saddle of the windsteed that waited ready saddled in the flightcourt. Down the thousand steps, across the Chasmbridge, off over the sloping forests of the domain of Hallan the steed flew like a gray leaf on the wind.

As it crossed over South Ridge the riders saw smoke rise blue through the level gold lances of the first sunlight. A forest fire was fizzling out among damp, cool thickets in the streambed of the mountainside. Suddenly beneath them a hole dropped away in the side of the hills, a black pit filled with smoking black dust. At the edge of the wide circle of annihilation lay trees burnt to long smears of charcoal, all pointing their fallen tops away from the pit of blackness.

The young Lord of Hallan held his gray steed steady on the updraft from the wrecked valley and stared down, saying nothing. There were old tales from his grandfather's and great-grandfather's time of the first coming of the Starlords, how they had burnt away hills and made the sea boil with their terrible weapons, and with the threat of those weapons had forced all the Lords of Angien to pledge them fealty and tribute. For the first time now Mogien believed those tales. His breath was stuck in his throat for a second. "Your ship was..."

"The ship was here. I was to meet the others here, today. Lord Mogien, tell your people to avoid this place. For a while. Till after the rains, next coldyear."

"A spell?"

"A poison. Rain will rid the land of it." The Starlord's voice was still quiet, but he was looking down, and all at once he began to speak again, not to Mogien but to that black pit beneath them, now striped with the bright early sunlight. Mogien understood no word he said, for he spoke in his own tongue, the speech of the Starlords; and there was no man now in Angien or all the world who spoke that tongue.

The young Angya checked his nervous mount. Behind him the Starlord drew a deep breath and said, "Let's go back to Hallan. There is nothing here..."

The steed wheeled over the smoking slopes. "Lord Rokanan, if your people are at war now among the stars, I pledge in your defense the swords of Hallan!"

"I thank you, Lord Mogien," said the Starlord, clinging to the saddle, the wind of their flight whipping at his bowed graying head.

The long day passed. The night wind gusted at the casements of his room in the tower of Hallan Castle, making the fire in the wide hearth flicker. Coldyear was nearly over; the restlessness of spring was in the wind. When he raised his head he smelled the sweet musty fragrance of grass tapestries hung on the walls and the sweet fresh fragrance of night in the forests outside. He spoke into his transmitter once more:

"Rocannon here. This is Rocannon. Can you answer?" He listened to the silence of the receiver a long time, then once more tried ship frequency: "Rocannon here..." When he noticed how low he was speaking, almost whispering, he stopped and cut off the set. They were dead, all fourteen of them, his companions and his friends. They had all been on Fomalhaut II for half one of the planet's long years, and it had been time for them to confer and compare notes. So Smate and his crew had come around from East Continent, and picked up the Antarctic crew on the way, and ended up back here to meet with Rocannon, the Director of the First Ethnographic Survey, the man who had brought them all here. And now they were dead.

And their work--all their notes, pictures, tapes, all that would have justified their death to them--that was all gone too, blown to dust with them, wasted with them.

Rocannon turned on his radio again to Emergency frequency; but he did not pick up the transmitter. To call was only to tell the enemy that there was a survivor. He sat still. When a resounding knock came at his door he said in the strange tongue he would have to speak from now on, "Come in!"

In strode the young Lord of Hallan, Mogien, who had been his best informant for the culture and mores of Species II, and who now controlled his fate. Mogien was very tall, like all his people, bright-haired and dark-skinned, his handsome face schooled to a stern calm through which sometimes broke the lightning of powerful emotions: anger, ambition, joy. He was followed by his Olgior servant Raho, who set down a yellow flask and two cups on a chest, poured the cups full, and withdrew. The heir of Hallan spoke: "I would drink with you, Starlord."

"And my kin with yours and our sons together, Lord," replied the ethnologist, who had not lived on nine different exotic planets without learning the value of good manners. He and Mogien raised their wooden cups bound with silver and drank.

"The wordbox," Mogien said, looking at the radio, "it will not speak again?"

"Not with my friends' voices."

Mogien's walnut-dark face showed no feeling, but he said, "Lord Rokanan, the weapon that killed them, this is beyond all imagining."

"The League of All Worlds keeps such weapons for use in the War To Come. Not against our own worlds."

"Is this the War, then?"

"I think not. Yaddam, whom you knew, was staying with the ship; he would have heard news of that on the ansible in the ship, and radioed me at once. There would have been warning. This must be a rebellion against the League. There was rebellion brewing on a world called Faraday when I left Kerguelen, and by sun's time that was nine years ago."

"This little wordbox cannot speak to the City Kerguelen?"

"No; and even if it did, it would take the words eight years to go there, and the answer eight years to come back to me." Rocannon spoke with his usual grave and simple politeness, but his voice was a little dull as he explained his exile. "You remember the ansible, the machine I showed you in the ship, which can speak instantly to other worlds, with no loss of years--it was that that they were after, I expect. It was only bad luck that my friends were all at the ship with it. Without it I can do nothing."

"But if your kinfolk, your friends, in the City Kerguelen, call you on the ansible, and there is no answer, will they not come to see--" Mogien saw the answer as Rocannon said it:

"In eight years...."

When he had shown Mogien over the Survey ship, and shown him the instantaneous transmitter, the ansible, Rocannon had told him also about the new kind of ship that could go from one star to another in no time at all.

"Was the ship that killed your friends an FTL?" inquired the Angyar warlord.

"No. It was manned. There are enemies here, on this world, now."

This became clear to Mogien when he recalled that Rocannon had told him that living creatures could not ride the FTL ships and live; they were used only as robot-bombers, weapons that could appear and strike and vanish all within a moment. It was a queer story, but no queerer than the story Mogien knew to be true: that, though the kind of ship Rocannon had come here on took years and years to ride the night between the worlds, those years to the men in the ship seemed only a few hours. In the City Kerguelen on the star Forrosul this man Rocannon had spoken to Semley of Hallan and given her the jewel Eye of the Sea, nearly half a hundred years ago. Semley who had lived sixteen years in...

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