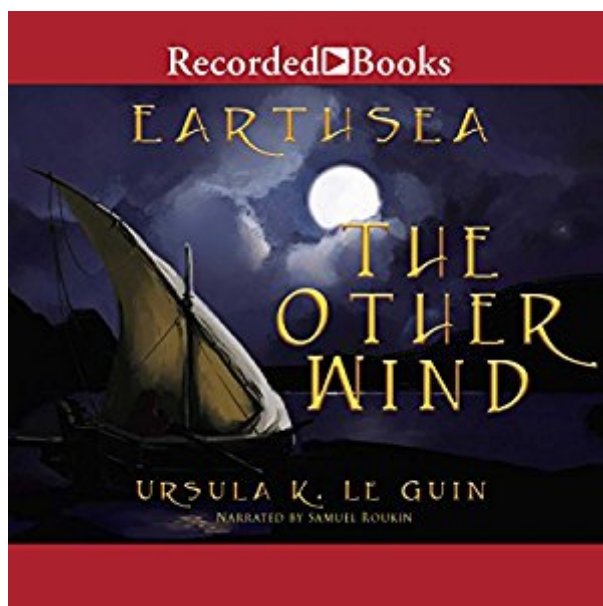


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The Other Wind: The Earthsea Cycle, Book 6



Synopsis

The sorcerer Alder fears sleep. The dead are pulling him to them at night. Through him they may free themselves and invade Earthsea. Alder seeks advice from Ged, once Archmage. Ged tells him to go to Tenar, Tehanu, and the young king at Havnor. They are joined by amber-eyed Irian, a fierce dragon able to assume the shape of a woman. The threat can be confronted only in the Immanent Grove on Roke, the holiest place in the world, and there the king, hero, sage, wizard, and dragon make a last stand. In this final book of the Earthsea Cycle, Le Guin combines her magical fantasy with a profoundly human, earthly, humble touch.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Until I read Ursula K. Le Guin's new novel, "The Other Wind," it hadn't occurred to me that previous volumes left unresolved the fate of the souls in Earthsea's equivalent of Hades, i.e. the Dry Land. These mournful undead played a prominent role in "The Farthest Shore," where the Archmage Ged and his companion, Arren descended into the underworld to battle an evil mage. Ged and Arren returned out of the Dry Land, but left behind those who were neither alive nor truly dead. Who were those shadows of the living? Why were they condemned to lead such miserable half-lives, in which Arren "saw the mother and child who had died together, and they were in the dark land together; but the child did not run, nor did it cry, and the mother did not hold it or ever look at it. And those who had died for love passed each other in the streets." "The Other Wind" debates the riddle of a 'true' death, and reveals how the very existence of the Dry Land threatens the people of Earthsea. Actually there is more debate than action in this latest Le Guin fantasy, but as always she

delivers her message through her complex and likeable characters. There lives the true magic in this series. The reader is first introduced to the plight of the undead through Alder, a recent widower who can magically mend crockery and other mundane items. In a dream, his deceased wife kisses him over the low stone wall that separates the living world from the Dry Land. Subsequent dreams reveal other undead, who beg him to release them from the dark and return them to the land of the living. Alder flees to the Island of Gont, to seek help from the former Archmage. But old Ged used up all of his magic while defeating the Dry Land mage (in "The Farthest Shore") and he counsels Alder to ask for assistance from the new King. At the royal residence on Havnor, Alder meets many characters from previous Earthsea stories: Ged's wife, Tenar who was formerly priestess of the Tombs of Atuan; the burned child, Tehanu who can summon dragons; the dragon, Irien who assumes the shape of a woman; and Arren, the young King himself, companion to Ged on his fateful journey to the Dry Land. King Arren (who now uses his true name, Lebannen) has problems of his own, including rampaging dragons and a heavily veiled princess, foisted off on him by a former enemy who orders the King to marry her. Nevertheless he agrees to help Arren, the sorcerous pot-mender who seems to have acquired the power to destroy the balance between Earthsea's underworld and its realm of the living. The climax to "The Other Wind" takes place on Roke, the island of Mages, where the author ties all of her loose plot devices together--EXCEPT for the prophecy regarding 'The Woman of Gont.' Admittedly the former archmage, Ged offered Alder 'a' solution to the prophecy before the sorcerer left Gont, but it wasn't very satisfying. My hope is that there is time for at least one more Earthsea fantasy --one where the prophecy first revealed in "Tehanu (volume three)" is fully explained.

Quite possibly the best book of the series. Hooked me from start to finish. Very unique series in fantasy. If you're into fantasy, I recommend checking it out.

This was a satisfying end to the Earthsea books for me. It was a grand adventure with unexpected finish to the Earthsea books - I missed Ged the wizard though!

great book series!

A friend told me something about her family a couple of weeks ago, and as a result I re-read the first three Earthsea books and plunged headlong into the next three. I agree with other reviewers who felt a bit jarred by "Tehanu", which seemed to depart almost completely from the path of the first

three books. Still, my curiosity wouldn't let me stop until I had read both remaining volumes. Thank goodness for curiosity! I read the books in chronological order and I am glad I did. I'm not reviewing "Tales from Earthsea" here, so I'll limit my comments to advising other readers to do as I did and read the books in order. "The Other Wind" is beautifully written, and does a wonderful job of bringing the cycle to a place where one can see that life in Earthsea will go on whether or not the author continues to tell the story. Change comes, accepted beliefs are challenged and found to be mistaken, and the truth is a paradox. Maybe that's what makes me love Earthsea so much: dragons and mages are found only in our fantasies, but in LeGuin's hands, they come to life in a way I can fathom, a way that allows me to believe that their world just might really exist. Hmm. Anyhow -- read the book! It's really good.

This book is in my opinion the best in the series yet. The characters are whole and interesting and the story line is compelling.

Over the years, I have read most of Ursula LeGuin's books. I have not read any sci fi since about 1982. Then I used the first three books of the Earth Sea series to write a Master's Thesis on the Psychological and Theological aspects of what was then only a trilogy. Lately, retired and getting a Kindle for my birthday, anniversary and next Christmas, I found the last two of the series. (I had read the fourth book after the Theses.) So it was with great welcome and surprise to read the last two books. It feels like I have known Ursula through her books and was welcoming a long lost friend. This one really hits home as I am getting older and have lost so many friends thru the years. If you have not read any of the first five books in the series, I recommend them to you. In total if you are a fast reader like I am, you could read them easily within five days. Enjoy them all and then think about them for the rest of your life!

Not to repeat from my reviews of the other books in this series, but again, the reader will find him/herself on a journey of personal growth in a world that is threatening to fall apart at its very seams. Those heroes and heroines of stories past come again to face new challenges, and to teach new characters about the world beyond that in which they were raised. Like a pawn in a game of chess, a young woman is sent to live in a country with a language and customs drastically different from her own. If she cannot overcome her own fears and learned inhibitions, war might destroy the world. At the same time, the fate of the world rests on other alliances -long since forgotten- alliances that MUST be remembered and strengthened. The Other Wind yields a satisfying conclusion to one

of my favorite fantasy series. I dare say no more without risking spoilers. If you read and enjoyed A Wizard of Earthsea, don't stop until you've read them all!

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