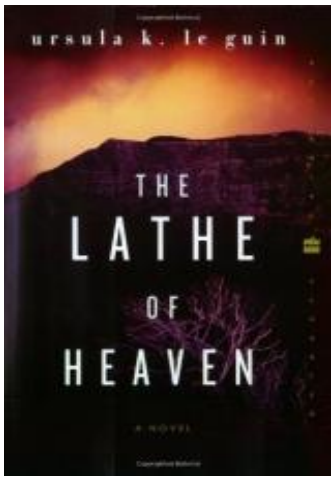
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Lathe of Heaven

by Ursula Le Guin



About the Book

We have all, at one time or another, heard the phrase, "Sleeping your life away," and laughed at its absurdity. But what if, upon waking, you are faced with the horrific truth that your life, as it existed the night before, is no longer. In its place is the abstraction of a dream ... your dream.

For George Orr, the effect of his dreams on the world around him is truly more significant than anyone realizes. An insignificant man in a futuristic Earth, Orr has the unwanted power of being able to change the course of world events not only in the future, but back to the very beginning.

Orr has been placed on Voluntary Therapy under the care of Dr. Haber, a distinguished therapist and creator of the Dream Augmentor. At first desiring to help Orr and make the world better, Haber is soon obsessed with the dreaming power and wants it for his own. But with each one of Orr's dreams, things worsen. Millions of people are killed, all races are wiped, and the Aliens land.

Realizing that this world is of his making, for better of for worse, Orr must search within to find the strength to battle Haber and survive in his ever-changing world. A dark tale of an uncontrollable power, **The Lathe of Heaven** is a masterful rendering of humanity and the powers that corrupt.

Discussion Guide

1. What role do the quotes play throughout the novel? Which was your favorite? Why? Which quote, if any, do you think encapsulates the main theme of the novel?

2. Do you think that George has found a way to stop his dreams at the end? Does the importance lie in his ability to control the dreams or to exterminate them?

3. What would you do if you could change the world by dreaming? What would be your first dream? Would it be a power you would want to keep?

4. As much as his world changes around him, Orr was still able to remain true to his core being. How important do you think this stability is to the outcome? Was his therapy helpful in this aspect?

5. The main tension throughout the novel is that between Orr and his therapist Dr. Haber. How do this tension and its inherent power struggle get resolved? In the end who is the stronger?

6. Heather LeLache is the main female character throughout the novel. How does her character change, both in her view of Orr as well as her view of the world she lives in? Why is she the only character who is, effectively, reborn?

7. How does Dr. Haber plan to use Orr's power? Why is he destroyed by his own plans in the end? What is his never-ending dream/nightmare?

8. Which of Orr's many worlds would you feel comfortable living in?

9. Despite the changes that wreak havoc upon Orr's world, there are a few elements that remain constant. What are they and why do you think they are important?

10. Why do you think the aliens are the only ones who can save Orr? What do the aliens represent in his mind?

11. Can you find reality in a dream?

Author Bio

A multiple award-winning author, editor, and anthologist, Ursula K. LeGuin was born in 1929 in Berkeley, California -- the daughter of writer Theodora Kroeber and anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber. She went to Radcliffe College, did graduate work at Columbia University and attained a 1953 Fulbright Fellowship. Le Guin married historian Charles A. Le Guin and has three children and three grandchildren. She has lived in Portland, Oregon since 1958.

Throughout her illustrious literary career -- 19 novels, short stories in nine collections, two volumes of translation, 13 books for children, three collections of essays, and numerous honorary degrees, teaching posts, and awards -- Le Guin has held to the highest standards in her writing, taking risks that would bring great rewards and praise from her contemporaries.

Having received countless awards -- a National Book Award, five Hugo Awards, five Nebula Awards, the Kafka Award, a Pushcart Prize, the Howard Vursell Award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the L.A. Times Robert Kirsch Award to name a few -- Le Guin has also had three of her books become finalists for the American Book Award

and the Pulitzer Prize.

Le Guin's first major work of science fiction, **The Left Hand of Darkness**, propelled her instantly to the forefront of her field. Since then, she has used the context of her work to delve into such issues as gender roles, morality, and the individual's ordinary grief. Working in so many forms -- from poetry and prose to screenplays and voice text for recordings -- Le Guin has transformed the genre in which she works countless times over. An intensely private figure like many of her characters, Le continues to create her fantastical worlds for all ages.

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