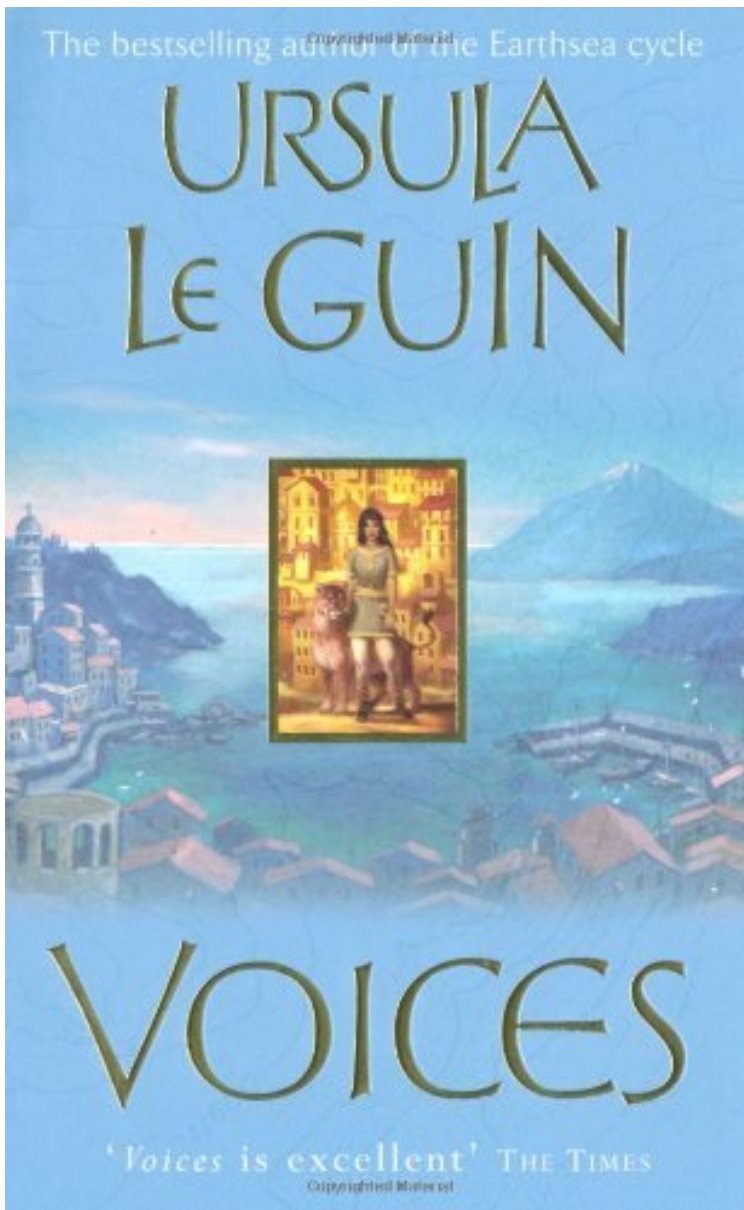


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Voices



Par Ursula K. LeGuin
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurMemer is a child of rape; when the Alds took the beautiful city of Ansul, they desecrated or destroyed everything of beauty. The Waylord they imprisoned and tortured for years until finally he is freed to return to his home. Though crippled, he is not destroyed. His life still has purpose. Memer is the daughter of his House, the daughter of his heart.The Alds, a people who love war, cannot and will not read: they believe that in words lie demons that will destroy the world. All the city's libraries, the great treasure trove of knowledge of ages past, are burned, except for those few volumes secreted inthe Waylord's hidden room.But times are changing. Gry Barre of Roddmant and Orrec Caspro of Caspromant

have arrived in the city. Orrec is a story-teller, the most famous of all: he has the gift of making. His wife Gry's gift is that of calling; she walks with a half-lion who both frightens and fascinates the Aids. This is Memer's story, and Gry's and Orrec's, and it is the story of a conquered people craving freedom. From School Library Journal Starred. Grade 7 Up. The year Memer was born, a foreign army overthrew her city's elected government, declared the written word demonic, and destroyed every book it could find. Seventeen years later, possession of books is still punishable by death, and Memer and her mentor, the Waylord, are the protectors of a hidden library and the intermediaries of an oracle within it. At the invitation of the head of the occupying forces, Orrec the poet and storyteller and his wife Gry visit the city, and their arrival catalyzes the end of the occupation and the renewed prominence of Memer's extended family. Some readers will recognize Orrec and Gry from Le Guin's *Gifts* (Harcourt, 2004), although *Voices* stands entirely on its own. Filled with thought-provoking parallels to our own world, this political saga adeptly shows some pragmatic reasons why a war might end: growing personal connections between an occupying army and a local populace, changes in leadership and dimming of religious fervor within an invading nation, the expense of maintaining a distant garrison, and the recognition by two parties of shared economic goals better served by cooperation than oppression. While her prose is simple and unadorned, Le Guin's superior narrative voice and storytelling power make even small moments ring with truth, and often with beauty. Beth Wright, Fletcher Free Library, Burlington, VT Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Booklist Gr. 7-10. *Le Guin's new book pairs organically with its companion novel Gifts* (2004), echoing themes of revenge, family legacies, personal morality, and a humanistic magic redolent more of earthy mysteries than flashy sorcery. Seventeen-year-old Memer, a "siege brat" resentful of the invaders who raped her mother and left her hometown "a broken city of ruins, hunger, and fear," dreams of one day delivering vengeance. Then Orrec and Gry arrive--the same teens who fled the Uplands in *Gifts*, now worldly, grown up, and, in Orrec's case, renowned as a Maker of stories. Orrec's tale spinning begins to erode the boundaries between the conquered and the conquerors, confronting Memer with decisions that temper her childhood dogmatism and press her to a deeper understanding of her mystical birthright. Readers who look to fantasy for traditional epic quests may consider this novel too contained, but the relevance of the slowly festering conflict between occupying and occupied cultures cannot be missed, and the author's understated writing flows as unstintingly as ever. One final note: the photo-collage jacket portrait of a dark-skinned girl is to be applauded, celebrating the diversity long present in Le Guin's fantasy but too infrequently evident on the covers of her books. Jennifer Mattson Copyright American Library Association.

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