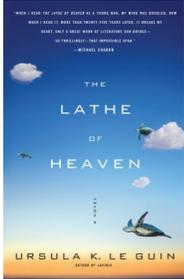


# Books by the Stack



## **The Lathe of Heaven by Ursula K. Le Guin**

George Orr discovers that his dreams possess the remarkable ability to change the world, and when he falls into the hands of a power-mad psychiatrist, he counters by dreaming up a perfect world that can overcome his nightmares.

**Why you'll like it:** *Science fiction classic. Thought-provoking. Leisurely paced.*

**About the Author:** Ursula K. Le Guin was born Ursula Kroeber in 1932. She received a bachelor's degree from Radcliffe College in 1951 and a master's degree from Columbia University in 1952. She won a Fulbright fellowship in 1953 to study in Paris, where she met and married Charles Le Guin. Her books include Rocannon's World, the Earthsea series, The Left Hand of Darkness, The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia, The Lathe of Heaven, Four Ways to Forgiveness, and The Telling. She died on January 22, 2018 at the age of 88. (Bowker Author Biography)

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What role do the quotes play throughout the novel? Which was your favorite? Which quote, if any, do you think encapsulates the main theme of the novel?
2. Do you think 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 you 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 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 does this tension and its inherent power struggle get resolved? In the end, who is 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. What do you think the world would have looked like in *The Lathe of Heaven* if Dr. Haber had been able to achieve his goal? How would the world have changed if his dream had been effective and not

destructive? Would you want to live in that world? Why or why not?

**11.** How different would the novel be without Heather LeLache? What would it look like if it were told from her point of view? How does her character introduce the issue of race, and how does Ursula LeGuin deal with that difficult topic?

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

**13.** Can you find reality in a dream?

*(Questions provided by readinggroupguides.com)*



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