

COLLECTION 1

# Ourselves and Others

**Background** Best known for her fantasy works *The Books of Earthsea* series, **Ursula K. Le Guin** has been writing most of her life. She has written in a variety of genres, including science fiction and poetry. Growing up in Berkeley, California, Le Guin was inspired by her father, who was a writer himself. For Le Guin, writers and readers, working together, make literature meaningful: "Readers, after all, are making the world with you. You give them the material, but it's the readers who build that world in their own minds."



# The Wife's Story

Short Story by Ursula K. Le Guin

CLOSE READ  
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–31, begin to collect and cite text evidence.

- Underline text that describes the husband.
- Circle language that hints that something bad is going to happen.
- In the margin, list the events in the narrator's story in the order in which they occur.

10 **H**e was a good husband, a good father. I don't understand it. I don't believe in it. I don't believe that it happened. I saw it happen but it isn't true. It can't be. He was always gentle. If you'd have seen him playing with the children, anybody who saw him with the children would have known that there wasn't any bad in him, not one mean bone. When I first met him he was still living with his mother, over near Spring Lake, and I used to see them together, the mother and the sons, and think that any young fellow that was that nice with his family must be one worth knowing. Then one time when I was walking in the woods I met him by himself coming back from a hunting trip. He hadn't got any game at all, not so much as a field mouse, but he wasn't cast down about it. He was just larking along enjoying the morning air. That's one of the things I first loved about him. He didn't take things hard, he didn't grouch and whine when things didn't go his way. So we got to talking that day. And I guess things moved

“Always it happens  
in the dark of the  
moon.”

and he gets up because he can't sleep, and goes out into the glaring sun, and goes off all alone—drawn to find those like him.

And it may be so, because my husband would do that. I'd half **rouse** and say, "Where you going to?" and he'd say, "Oh, hunting, be back this evening," and it wasn't like him, even his voice was different. But I'd be so sleepy, and not wanting to wake the kids, and he was so good and responsible, it was no call of mine to go asking "Why?" and "Where?" and all like that.

**rouse:**

So it happened that way maybe three times or four. He'd come back late, and worn out, and pretty near cross for one so sweet-tempered—not wanting to talk about it. I figured everybody got to bust out now and then, and nagging never helped anything. But it did begin to worry me. Not so much that he went, but that he come back so tired and strange. Even, he smelled strange. It made my hair stand up on end. I could not endure it and I said, "What is that—those smells on you? All over you!" And he said, "I don't know," real short, and made like he was sleeping. But he went down when he thought I wasn't noticing, and washed and washed himself. But those smells stayed in his hair, and in our bed, for days.

And then the awful thing. I don't find it easy to tell about this. I want to cry when I have to bring it to my mind. Our youngest, the little one, my baby, she turned from her father. Just overnight. He come in and she got scared-looking, stiff, with her eyes wide, and then she begun to cry and try to hide behind me. She didn't yet talk plain but she was saying over and over, "Make it go away! Make it go away!"

4. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 43–58. How has the narrator's relationship with her husband changed? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.



He stood up then on two legs. I saw him, I had to see him, my own dear love, turned into the hateful one.

I couldn't move, but as I crouched there in the passage staring out into the day I was trembling and shaking with a growl that burst out into a crazy, awful howling. A grief howl and a terror howl and a calling howl.

100 And the others heard it, even sleeping, and woke up.

It stared and peered, that thing my husband had turned into, and shoved its face up to the entrance of our house. I was still bound by mortal fear, but behind me the children had waked up, and the baby was whimpering. The mother anger come into me then, and I snarled and crept forward.

110 The man thing looked around. It had no gun, like the ones from the man places do. But it picked up a heavy fallen tree branch in its long white foot, and shoved the end of that down into our house, at me. I snapped the end of it in my teeth and started to force my way out, because I knew the man would kill our children if it could. But my sister was already coming. I saw her running at the man with her head low and her mane high and her eyes yellow as the winter sun. It turned on her and raised up that branch to hit her. But I come out of the doorway, mad with the mother anger, and the others all were coming answering my call, the whole pack gathering, there in that blind glare and heat of the sun at noon.

The man looked round at us and yelled out loud, and **brandished** the branch it held. Then it broke and ran, heading for the cleared fields and lowlands, down the mountainside. It ran, on two legs, leaping and weaving, and we followed it.

**brandished:**

7. ◀ REREAD Reread lines 88–100. What transformation has taken place? What assumptions had you made about the characters that had to be changed? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

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8. ▶ READ As you read lines 101–131, underline text that describes changes in the narrator's feelings toward her husband.

**Background** As people around the world discovered the atrocities committed against millions of innocent people in World War II, many wanted to create a universal statement of human rights. With the formation of the United Nations in 1945, this became a possibility. With guidance from the UN and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights, such a document was formulated, and adopted on December 10, 1948. Following is the Preamble to the Declaration, which consists of a series of statements beginning “Whereas . . . .” These statements provide a rationale for the Declaration; that is, they say why such a Declaration is necessary.



from the  
**Universal Declaration  
of Human Rights**

Public Document by the UN Commission on Human Rights

CLOSE READ  
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–13, begin to collect and cite text evidence.
  - Underline what conditions are necessary for “freedom, justice, and peace.”
  - Circle the text that describes the biggest goal of the people of the world.

**W**hereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and **inalienable** rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

inalienable:

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

- 10 **10** Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

2. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 9–11. In the margin, explain what will happen without protection of human rights.

**Background** Aung San Suu Kyi is the chairperson of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). She was placed under house arrest for opposing the military government shortly before she received a majority of votes in Myanmar's 1990 general election. In 1991, she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her commitment to nonviolence, but was unable to accept the prize until 2012, after spending 15 years under house arrest. In 2012, Aung San Suu Kyi topped the Foreign Policy list of the Top 100 Global Thinkers. The following excerpt is from a speech she wrote during her time as a political prisoner.

from  
**Towards a  
True Refuge**



Speech by Aung San Suu Kyi

**CLOSE READ**  
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–16, begin to collect and cite text evidence.

- Underline Suu Kyi's idea of the "greatest threats to global security."
- Circle words describing things that do not lead to global security, or "true refuge."

It is perfectly natural that all people should wish for a secure refuge. It is unfortunate that in spite of strong evidence to the contrary, so many still act as though security would be guaranteed if they fortified themselves with an abundance of material possessions. The greatest threats to global security today come not from the economic deficiencies of the poorest nations but from religious, racial (or tribal) and political **dissensions** raging in those regions where principles and practices which could reconcile the diverse instincts and aspirations of mankind have been ignored, repressed or distorted. Man-made disasters are made by dominant individuals and cliques which refuse to move beyond the autistic<sup>1</sup> confines of **partisan** interest. An eminent development economist has observed that the best defense against famine is an accountable government. It makes little political or economic sense to give aid without trying to address the circumstances that render aid ineffectual. No amount of material goods

**dissensions:**

**partisan:**

<sup>1</sup> **autistic:** in this context, "self-centered."



During the Cold War the iniquities of ruthless governments and armed groups were condoned for ideological reasons. The results have been far from happy. Although there is greater emphasis on justice and human rights today, there are still ardent advocates in favor of giving priority to political and economic **expediency**—increasingly the latter. It is the old argument: achieve economic success and all else will follow. But even long-affluent societies are plagued by formidable social ills which have provoked deep anxieties about the future. And newly rich nations appear to be spending a significant portion of their wealth on arms and armies. Clearly there is no inherent link between greater prosperity and greater security and peace—or even the expectation of greater peace. Both prosperity and peace are necessary for the happiness of mankind, the one to alleviate suffering, the other to promote tranquility. Only policies that place equal importance on both will make a truly richer world, one in which men can enjoy *chantha*<sup>2</sup> of the body and of the mind. The drive for economic progress needs to be tempered with an awareness of the dangers of greed and selfishness which so easily lead to narrowness and inhumanity. If peoples and nations cultivate a generous spirit which welcomes the happiness of others as an enhancement of the happiness of the self, many seemingly insoluble problems would prove less **intractable**.

**expediency:**

**intractable:**

Those who have worked with refugees are in the best position to know that when people have been stripped of all their material supports, there only remain to sustain them the values of their cultural and spiritual inheritance. A tradition of sharing instilled by age-old beliefs in the joy of giving and the sanctity of compassion will move a homeless destitute to press a portion of his meager ration on strangers with all the grace and delight of one who has ample riches to dispense. On the other hand, predatory traits honed by a long-established habit of yielding to “every urge

<sup>2</sup> *chantha*: prosperity and general happiness.

4. ◀ REREAD Reread lines 36–47. Think about Suu Kyi’s choice of words here. How would you describe her tone in this paragraph?

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5. ▶ READ As you read lines 48–92, underline sentences in which the author both presents solutions and provides evidence.