



Earthsong

Suzette Haden Elgin , Julie Vedder (Foreword)

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In *Earthsong*, the trilogy's long-awaited finale, the Aliens have abandoned Earth, taking their technologies with them and plunging the planet into economic and ecological disaster. Devastated, the women decide to take their failed Láadan project back underground, desperately seeking guidance from their long-dead foremothers. The women discover an ingenious solution to the problem of human violence and seek to spread their knowledge—but has their final solution come too late?

Earthsong Details

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Author : Suzette Haden Elgin , Julie Vedder (Foreword)

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From Reader Review Earthsong for online ebook

Emma Peel says

An amazing end to the trilogy and a firm statement about the politics of the patriarchy.

Adam Walker says

I loved and re-read Native Tongue and enjoyed Judas Rose, but this book just went to the Land of the Stupid People and camped out there. I find it very disappointing when a good author like S.H.E. does that. I have the same issue with Orson Scott Card's Ender stories -- First book BRILLIANT, second book great, then Children of the Mind heads for the Land of the Stupid People at warp 10! Laadan is such an interesting language that it was very disappointing to see how shabbily everything was done in this last book of the series.

Nuno Ribeiro says

This is the most generous and ambitious book of the trilogy. A happy surprise that comes and gives meaning to the series. The premise seems to be taken to its extreme, in a utopian fashion. While reading it, it felt at times strange and unconvincing. but it was definitely worth reading.

The thought-experiment underlying the series was really interesting, maybe even unique. Since it was meant to be wider than the scope of fiction. Elgin set out to launch "Láadan", her constructed language potentially better suited to express women's perceptions, into the world, the real world.

It is an inspiring case where the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and feminism meet, using fiction as a weapon of reality, not an adversary.

Lindig says

Aaargh! Whole premise of first two books summarily dropped in favor of airy-fairy method of communication. Most irritating!

Elena L. says

3,5

Jess says

I enjoyed the "soaps" more than the plot. I don't know what I expected, but something more like either the 1st or 2nd would've been more acceptable to me.

Kelly Wagner says

When I first read this trilogy, the whole thing was great, I loved all of it. But on re-reading, this volume doesn't wear nearly as well as the other two - and all of them seem sort of dated. The idealization of American Indians, even the men, seems out of place, and the fact that the whole series pretty much assumes that the United States is the only country that counts, and that others don't exist or automatically follow the US's lead on everything, grates on me more now than it did 20 years ago. While the series as a whole still has some good points, and the story in the first two volumes is still fairly coherent, they're not as good as they used to be, and the disjointedness of the third volume in particular just grates.

Lisa Schmeiser says

I freely admit that the first time I read this book -- badly jetlagged -- I was all, "And now she's gone off the reservation." But a second reading shows that this is the most subtle and brilliant installment in the Native Tongue series, because Haden points out the challenges of trying to reform a society even as external factors shape it beyond recognition over hundreds of years -- all through monkeying with the basic conventions of narrative to point out how fragmented and incoherent intention can be, no matter how clearly people try to communicate it.

Riah says

I loved Native Tongue, the first book in this trilogy, but the second two books weren't nearly as strong. This one is centered around a really interesting idea, focused on music instead of language, but the time span of the book is so long (literally hundreds of years) that it's just centered on the idea without any real characters with arcs. I was also disappointed that the preface was an explanation of how the story got told, from outside the world of the story, where the prefaces of the first two books were from within the universe of the story. Ultimately, I don't regret having read the second two, but I'd recommend that others read the first book and stop there.

Jan M says

While I still see the great writing of Suzette, I must admit this book broke my heart. The previous two have some hope for the males and indeed some males acted with common sense in the second one. However, in this one the idea that males are somehow unable to think beyond their "innate programming" which is so

inferior to females made me hurt. I do not believe this and the author (or some commentator who helped publish this) does put into her notes how this may seem dated with the changes in society since the time it was written. To me this proves the point. I do believe that there are differences between men and women but I also believe that a hell of a lot of those are cultural. When society changes so do the actions of males and females. Just look at our disgust of the treatment of females in other parts of the world; the practice of female genital mutilation, wearing of burkhas so not even your children can recognize you and the stoning of women who commit adultery. They are but a few examples of how we are different here in the United States and Europe, and how the appearance of females in more and more "male" positions is common place and accepted.

Beyond this the story dealt with solving the ancient problem of starvation was very interesting. While I squirm at the idea (I like the act of eating and filling the tummy) I did like the way such a task was so monumental the change in society. I fear I must take umbrage, though, at the idea that we must fundamentally change the human race in order to make "utopia". One man's utopia is another man's hell. Anything that is forced and to such a fundamental change seems poorly thought out. Instead I think the Founding Fathers had a better idea. Stay as much out of human endeavors as possible without having chaos and leave the rest to the citizenry. I think that requires massive education (not indoctrination, education) and with the internet we are now capable of that. Societal standards set- learn to read and write your language and two others, math to calculus, logic, history (in bare bones way to prevent indoctrination-memorize), geography and geology and biology, chemistry, etc. What a kick in the pants that would make. Can you imagine? Instead of secrecy and forcing change. Whoa, enough of the venting.

I finished and it didn't get better. I would not recommend this book, just the previous two.

Megan Bell says

The different cover artist for first printing of this third book in the Native Tongue trilogy should have been a clue. Earthsong diverges from the first two in both form and content and feels like a completely different book. My theory is Elgin had given up on Laadan becoming popular in use by the time she wrote Earthsong and shifted direction, hence the audiosynthesis plot line. Earthsong still has a lot to say about humanity, activism, and change and is a worthwhile read, but it requires a shift in mindset.

Blythe says

I would rate the entire trilogy a 5/5 stars, but wanted to be clear that the first book was my favorite. What I liked about the trilogy as a whole was its unique presentation of the scale and scope of change, and from a distinctly female gaze and perspective. So often strong women are just masculine females, probably who have been raped. This is nothing like that, nor does it even approach that narrative style. Only a few women are so important that they are consistently named, but mostly it's about making slow, meandering change over generations, with the satisfaction of results only going to the reader who can actually see it. The scale and scope are illustrated in the myriad of vignettes of Terran men and women throughout Terra and the galaxy over a lengthy timeline, with only a few connecting into anything like a story. The third book took me by surprise by straying from the linguistic element and becoming even more broad in the timeline, but it also was the most firm in its indictment of human violence. But certainly the lesson was clear: The problem is fundamental and the change will be incremental. But it is absolutely worth it.

Jackson Matthews says

Whether it was Suzette Elgin who ran out of steam or me, this book was not as enjoyable as the first two. Perhaps that is because it is easier to make a plan than to implement it?

Amy says

[the situation has improved from the previous two books-- there was a mention in this book that women were given human rights back again! I suppose I thought it would keep getting worse until the end of this book. I was also glad to see some of the men evolving too (hide spoiler)]

Iria says

Uhm... A triloxía ten unha premisa interesante e a desta terceira parte pode gustarlles axs anti-especistas en particular, mais pésalle ben o tempo (é feminismo da segunda onda). Trátase dun feminismo pacífico, binarista, esencialista de xénero, teocéntrico, USAcéntrico e -aínda que loita contra o capitalismo máis atroz- fica nun capitalismo amable.
