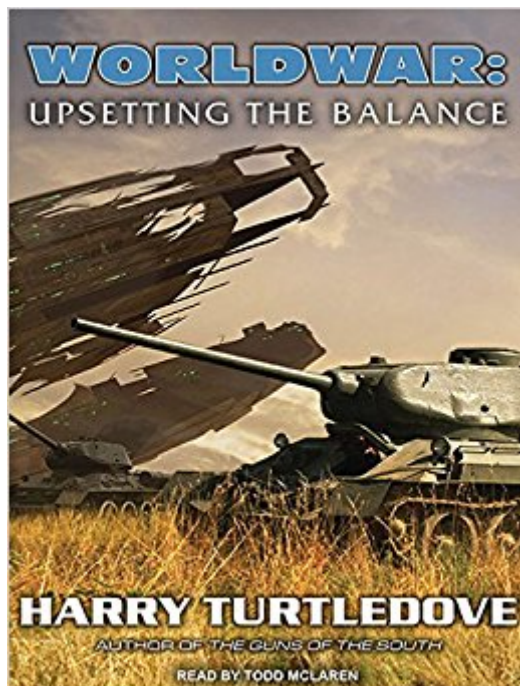


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Worldwar: Upsetting The Balance



Synopsis

Communist China, Japan, Nazi Germany, the United States: they began World War II as mortal enemies. But suddenly their only hope for survival-never mind victory-was to unite to stop a mighty foe: one whose frightening technology appeared invincible. Far worse beings than the Nazis were loose. From Warsaw to Moscow to China's enemy-occupied Forbidden City, the nations of the world had been forced into an uneasy alliance since humanity began its struggle against overwhelming odds. In Britain and Germany, where the banshee wail of hostile jets screamed across the land, caches of once-forbidden weapons were unearthed, and unthinkable tactics were employed against the enemy. Brilliantly innovative military strategists confronted challenges unprecedented in the history of warfare. Even as lack of fuel forced people back to horse and carriage, physicists worked feverishly to create the first atomic bombs-with horrifying results. City after city joined the radioactive pyre as the planet erupted in fiery ruins. Yet the crisis continued-on land, sea, and in the air-as humanity writhed in global combat. The tactics of daredevil guerrillas everywhere became increasingly ingenious against a superior foe whose desperate retaliation would grow ever more fearsome. No one had ever put the United States, or the world, in such deadly danger. But if the carnage and annihilation ever stopped, would there be any pieces to pick up?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Turtledove exhibits his genuine feel for crafting believable answers to historical 'what ifs.'" ---Library Journal

What got me about the Worldwar series wasn't the aliens. It wasn't the warfare (though Harry's really good at it--I especially love the tanks). It wasn't even the fact that he'd turned history on its ear in a big way. No, it was the people. If they were historical figures, like Josef Stalin, or Adolf Hitler, or Omar Bradley, he really brought them back to life. But even they took a back seat to Harry's original characters--the soldiers, the civilians, the resistance members, the spies. Whether they were American or Russian or British or Chinese, he made me care about them, about their lives and their loves. And he made me care a lot about their deaths--the kind of deaths that happen in war. He made the most out of cultural juxtaposition, when a Polish Jew had to fight alongside a Nazi, or a British officer found himself in a tumultuous affair with a female Russian pilot (and sharpshooter--whoosh). These were the real people, They took a science fiction alternate history and elevated it to a new level. The result is a terrific adventure.

--Steve Saffel,
Senior Editor --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

I'm not much for alien invasion stories but do enjoy alternative histories. So it was with some hesitation that I started this 4 volume series. As it turned out, the alien invaders were made into an interesting plot device for an implausible yet somehow engaging story that goes on, through the 4 books, for over 2,000 pages. I cannot believe I read the whole series, especially given how bad the writing really is. The style is intensely repetitive in both narrative and vocabulary. The characters rarely rise above the level of cardboard cutouts. For as many pages as these books go, it's amazing how little information there really is about many of the characters, how the innumerable parallel plot lines first began, who the invaders are, how they found Earth, how they got here, how many of them there were, where they landed, and what they did on the Earth outside of the main battle areas (which, conveniently, are mostly the battlefields of World War II), and how the governments of the

various countries continued to function while they were being carved up. And yet, despite all these shortcomings, I raced through all 4 books because, well, it's not a bad yarn. As it turns out, the author did another series after this one, set about 20 years into the future, and then at least one other book set some years after that, to create a multi-generational saga. However, I don't think I could force my way through a whole other series of such bad writing. The good news, however, is that Turtledove's style is so repetitive that I can probably skip to the very last book and find out everything I need to know about the years in between. Maybe I'll do that when I have the time and patience to read another long, badly written novel, and the curiosity to find out what finally happened at the end of this shaggy dog story.

C'mon. You're not starting with this one. The only thing you're looking for is if the quality of the series is staying constant. If anything, it's a little better. As characters die, the narrative grows more streamlined. In addition, characters who seemed like they were by the wayside are growing in power and influence. So it's a good read. One note. In the back half of the book, one of the characters basically becomes a Stephen King protagonist. It's really weird. Not bad, just weird.

To start, I greatly enjoyed this book as with its predecessors, despite the simplistic writing, great lack of world leaders' presence in the pages, and often repetitive subplot statements. Little has changed in most of the war, until the Lizards invade Britain. In typical Turtledove fashion, this happens suddenly and with almost no forewarning to the reader. But this I can forgive in seeing the intent of letting the readers feel the same sudden horror and realization as the characters when discovering they are being invaded. The Britons resort to using mustard gas to fantastically lethal effectiveness, leading the Germans to use their own stockpiles of gasses far more lethal and efficient than mustard gas on the Lizards. For me, some subplots bore me endlessly, such as Nieh Ho-Ting and Liu Han in China, Jens Larssen in America, David Goldfarb and Moishe Russie in Britain, but most are interesting, including a development in which Ussmak is forced to reveal his ginger addiction in order to save his landcruiser captain Nejas, or Ttomalss's attempts to raise Liu Han's baby by himself, which is very much touching and cute. And if you notice I mention being bored with some of the human stories and greatly intrigued by some of the Lizard stories, you're a step ahead of me, or you've seen what I've seen and agree with me: Something in this story, from book 1 on, is missing. Something is not explained or supported. Something does not add up, some piece of this masterful puzzle is missing, which without, could cause the whole story to fall apart: Why does humanity hate the Lizards so vehemently? Every human character on every other

page rants and raves about how evil and how awful and how much cold furious personal hatred they have for the Lizards, and how horrifying the Lizards are and how the ENTIRE EARTH should sooner be destroyed than let the Lizards win the war, or how Jews and Nazis, or Nazis and Soviets, or Chinese and Japanese would sooner join forces and help one another than have the Lizards around. And yet through all Turtledove's descriptions of the Lizards and their actions, they are shown to be more benevolent and merciful than any human empire in the history of mankind, as well as the most benevolent and merciful of sides in this conflict short only of the Americans and Britons. Lizards are appalled to a vast degree at images of Nazi concentration camps, causing them to show a vast degree of latitude and benevolence to the Jews liberated from the ghettos. Lizards never abuse their captives or conquered---in fact, the Jews in the ghettos are fed far better, given more freedoms, and more status in the eyes of the Race; the only malnourishment is due to the world-wide shock the Lizard invasion has caused on the local economic infrastructures. The Lizards are very generous to their human prisoners, and NEVER torture any of them. The only sides in this conflict I can see easily fighting the Lizards to the death would be the Americans and Britons for freedom; I could just as easily envision the Nazis or the Soviets or the Chinese or even the Japanese (as they have an empire and emperor-worship, same as the Race) allying with the Lizards to help quash the worldwide resistance in exchange for great power over the defeated lands. Even with a great suspension of disbelief, absolutely nothing in Turtledove's writing convinces me (or seemingly tries to convince me) that the Jews, who have been brutally mistreated, worked to death, and murdered by the Nazis, would so grudgingly fight alongside them, because the Lizards had the audacity to feed them and arm them and protect them and strip them of some freedoms they never had under the Nazis to begin with. Nothing in the writing convinces me that the Chinese, who suffered among the worst war crimes in history at the hands of the Japanese (the Rape of Nanking comes to mind, as well as the gruesome "experimentations" of Unit 731 and others) would so easily cease fighting the Japanese to fight off the Lizards, who by the writing have seemingly done nothing serious to Chinese lands compared to the Germans or Americans. In fact, aside from the three nuclear bombs dropped on Berlin, Washington D.C., and Tokyo respectively, the Lizards have done nothing to warrant such vehement hatred from almost unanimously the entire human race---and the nukes were only used in the heat of war. Maybe I'm wrong, but I still find this impossible to get over. Compared to what the Nazis did with their concentration camps and Gestapo, the Soviets with their gulags and NKVD, the Japanese with their mass-rapes and murders, I can't imagine the Lizards being anything more than just an obligatory foe not nearly fearsome enough to stop most of the in-species fighting already taking place before they arrived.

Excellent series, and excellent book!

Great series

The action and intrigue among the earthers and aliens is pretty good. But, I find myself skipping page after page when the author writes about the interpersonal relationships between lovers. He's not a romance novelist. So, I skip all those pages and I don't seem to miss a thing. The books make complete sense, and are fun to read, without the bedroom scenes.

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