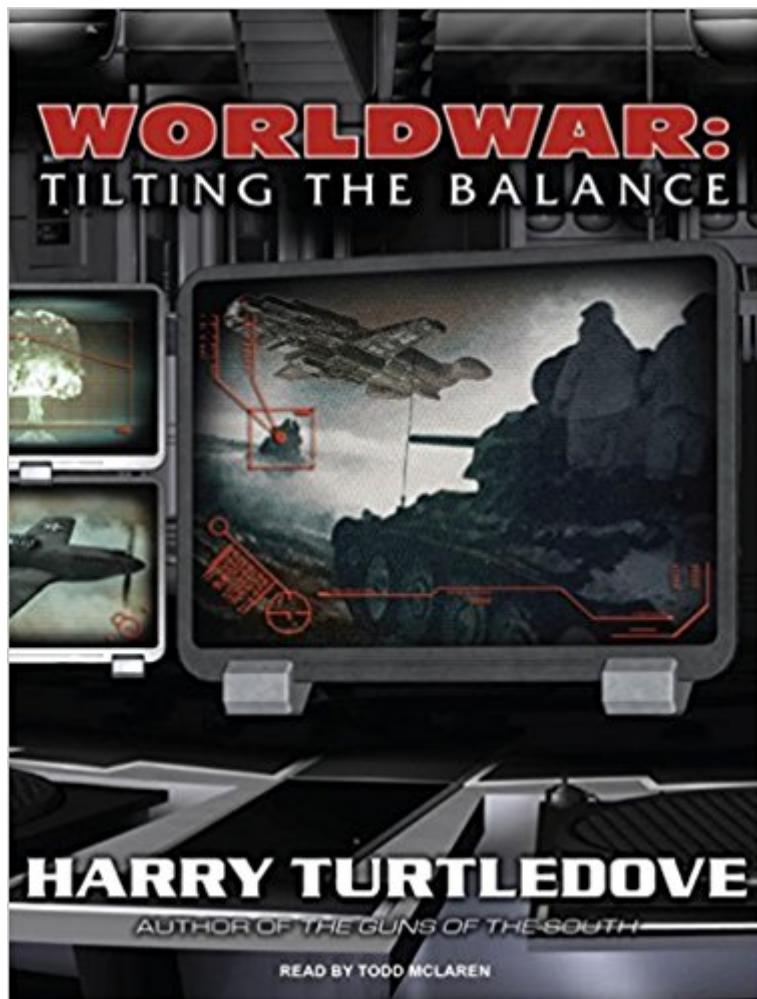


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Worldwar: Tilting The Balance



Synopsis

No one could stop them-not Stalin, not Togo, not Churchill, not Roosevelt... The invaders had cut the United States virtually in half at the Mississippi, vaporized Washington, D.C., devastated much of Europe, and held large parts of the Soviet Union under their thumb. But humanity would not give up so easily. The new world allies were ruthless at finding their foe's weaknesses and exploiting them. Whether delivering supplies in tiny biplanes to partisans across the vast steppes of Russia, working furiously to understand the enemy's captured radar in England, or battling house to house on the streets of Chicago, humankind would never give up. Yet no one could say when the hellish inferno of death would stop being a war of conquest and turn into a war of survival-the very survival of the planet...

Book Information

Series: Worldwar (Book 2)

Audio CD

Publisher: Tantor Audio; Unabridged CD edition (October 20, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1400113954

ISBN-13: 978-1400113958

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.6 x 5.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 69 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #8,151,594 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (T) > Turtledove, Harry #2016 in Books > Books on CD > History > Military #5089 in Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction

Customer Reviews

World War II screeched to a halt as great military powers scrambled to meet an even deadlier foe, armed with formidable technology that made victory seem inevitable. The menace worsens in this, the second novel in the four-book alternate-history saga that Booklist called "possibly the most ambitious in the subgenre's history and definitely the work of one of alternate history's authentic modern masters." --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

The second volume of Turtledove's Worldwar series (after *Worldwar: In the Balance*), an alternate-history saga in which lizard-like aliens invade Earth during WWII, quickly bogs down. As

the plot moves among the huge cast of characters, including many historical figures (Ribbentrop, Roosevelt, Zhukov), and as Turtledove meticulously describes various tanks, planes and guns, readers will realize that they, too, must suffer for the author's research. And none of that homework has bred any subtlety: good people have good sex, while corrupt people suffer appropriate retribution. National and ethnic stereotypes abound, too: the British are more capable than they seem; the Germans are keen mechanics; most Americans, of course, are paragons. There are exceptions, of course-a few interesting lizards and a peace-talking Chinese woman-but it isn't hard to figure out which world leader will "tilt the balance" by using the first human-made atomic bomb. With so much attention paid to the machinery of war and the machinery of history, Turtledove rarely engages the subtleties of character, resulting in a novel that, despite offering its share of mind candy, never makes its many intrigues sufficiently gripping. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

This is a very enjoyable theoretical sci-fi series, but it is not without its share of problems. I won't bother listing the things I liked or what's great about the series, because if you're reading reviews of Book 2 it probably means you've already read Book 1 and know whether or not you like the books. In short, if you liked Book 1, get Book 2, because it advances the story well. I think the biggest problem I have with the series is that the Lizards are put across as technologically advanced and very intelligent, but they seem to pick the dumbest course of action in any given circumstance. Why did they land a ship full of nuclear weapons down on the planet's surface where it could be attacked and detonated? Why are they crossing the Russian Steppes and fighting there instead of going someplace tactically useful? If they have heat-seeking missiles and use them to blow up planes and tanks that are hidden, why don't they use them to blow up power plants and generators to cut off all electrical production, thus cutting off any hope of production capabilities the humans have? It just seems that in every situation, the humans triumph due to "ingenuity" that comes across more as unbelievable luck as often as not, while the Lizards lose ships, weapons, men, tanks, and whatever else because they make gross tactical errors. Twenty thousand years of history taught them that attrition-based warfare is still the best way to take over an ENTIRE PLANET? I'm not a military man or a strategist, but if I arrived at an alien planet to conquer it and found half of it busy fighting itself, I don't think I'd jump in there and start fighting. Why attack every place at once, when you can focus your efforts on the places that aren't already at war, leaving the battlegrounds to continually weaken themselves? I honestly expected that aliens with interstellar travel technology would have better tactics than throwing bodies at their enemies with a handful of tanks, helicopters, and air strikes

sprinkled in - and that's to say nothing of their lack of weapons ingenuity. If they'd gotten to Earth sixty years later, they'd have gotten their collective tail-stumps kicked in. I think what it basically boils down to is that the books give me the impression that the humans win every battle but the Lizards are somehow winning the war. When baseball players are taking out tanks with bottles of alcohol and a simple rifle is good enough to take down a jet fighter, it makes me wonder why we don't resort to using rubber bands and paper clips to fight. It doesn't really add up at this point, but the books are enjoyable so I'm going to see how Book 3 goes. Hopefully we start to see some of this Balance that keeps getting mentioned in the book titles, because for the moment, it simply looks like the Lizards are going to lose by virtue of running out of weapons and ammo before they run out of bodies. P.S. - one other serious problem is that quite a few of the characters are becoming unlikable. When a book flips from viewpoint to viewpoint, making some of the characters unlikable tempts people to put the book down for the night or actually skip sections when those characters come around.

I read the first in the series and found it moderately enjoyable. That was enough to give the second book a try. I understand Turtledove is a big name in SciFi, but from reading these two works, I'm not sure why. The characters are very flat, and the plot is ... what plot? Oh yeah, somebody forgot the plot. The various characters plod through various challenges that are loosely linked sometimes. That's about all. The overall concept of the book is great. World building is very good. But that won't induce me to read the final book, especially with the amount of typos in this one. I'll look up the book descriptions online. That proved more interesting than reading the first book.

A very excellent continuation of the series. This is a second book of a 4 (8?) book series dealing with the what if scenario of aliens invading during world war 2. Yes you could skip the first book but I wouldn't recommend it as this book picks up right where the first lets off. The only reason it got four instead of five stars is that it does sometimes seem to slow to a crawl but I guess even all out interplanetary war can't be non stop action.

I was really torn between giving this four stars and five, since I won't let me rate it 4.5 when it is a solid 4.5. The story in the first continues, even longer, and with really little development save for just the bare minimal progress for humanity, due simply to supply issues for the Lizards. The Bad: Turtledove's writing is still amateurish as in the first one, but thankfully there aren't as many instances of its showing. Like another reviewer complained, Turtledove also isn't keen on too much subtlety in the subplots; in much the same vein of TNA's Eric Young and Don West with their almost

inadvertantly comical bashing-us-over-the-head with "Rellik, that's Killer spelled backwards", Turtledove regurgitates the same summarization of subplots over and over and over again to a point where we just wish something would happen to change the same old story; Ludmilla's pants attempting to be penetrated by Schultz and NKVD guy who's name I forgot, Ussmak's complaining about his crappy ginger-laced prior crew and his love for his new crew, Atvar's bitterness towards Straha's uppitiness, etcetera. The Good: The story progresses far more efficiently with regards to the war in general being basically a stalemate, with major minor actions going on on both sides, and the focus being a race to adapting Lizard technology---jets, radar, and nuclear weapons... Every time I read from the Race's perspective, I bitterly complain with them, the savageness of the Japanese on their prisoner (whose name I forgot), the German panzers being so damn incessant and brutalizing the Race's landcruisers no matter how many losses they sustain. And when I read from Humanity's perspective, I gripe over the seeming punctuous accuracy of Lizard tanks and artillery, the irritation of their constant air barrages, and their clarity in radar and satellite that makes Humans the equivalent of the lowest of Gallic barbarians trying to fight Caesar's legions. There's a definitely more realistic and mature tone to this edition rather than the first, where main characters die suddenly in the heat of action where the first book had lead you to view these characters as invincible---for one, Bobby Fiore, gunned down while assaulting a Lizard stronghold in Shanghai, Lucille Potter, with the top of her head sheared off by an artillery shell right in front of Mutt Daniels, even Drefsab, our favorite junkie Lizard. As with the first, high-ranking leaders are very scarce, with Winston Churchill making what can only be called a cameo appearance at an RAF research camp, Franklin Roosevelt checking on Brigadier General Leslie Groves at the Met Lab in Denver, and Joseph Stalin pushing hard for the use of Soviet Russia's first nuclear bomb. And at the end of the book, Stalin gets his way... The final words of the book are clear indication that the pace of the war is going to shift in the last book... the Soviets haved nuked a major Lizard invasion force. What now? Straha asks Fleetlord Atvar. Atvar can only say, "I don't know"...

Fantastic book series. I like the alternating persons narration style, as it bounces you around the world so you can see the effects of the war in various countries. One thing that's odd is the punctuation. There's tons of random commas thrown in at unnecessary times. I have to assume it was a quirk in translating this older book into a Kindle format, but it's a little jarring. Not enough to stop me from reading!

Excellent series, and excellent book!

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