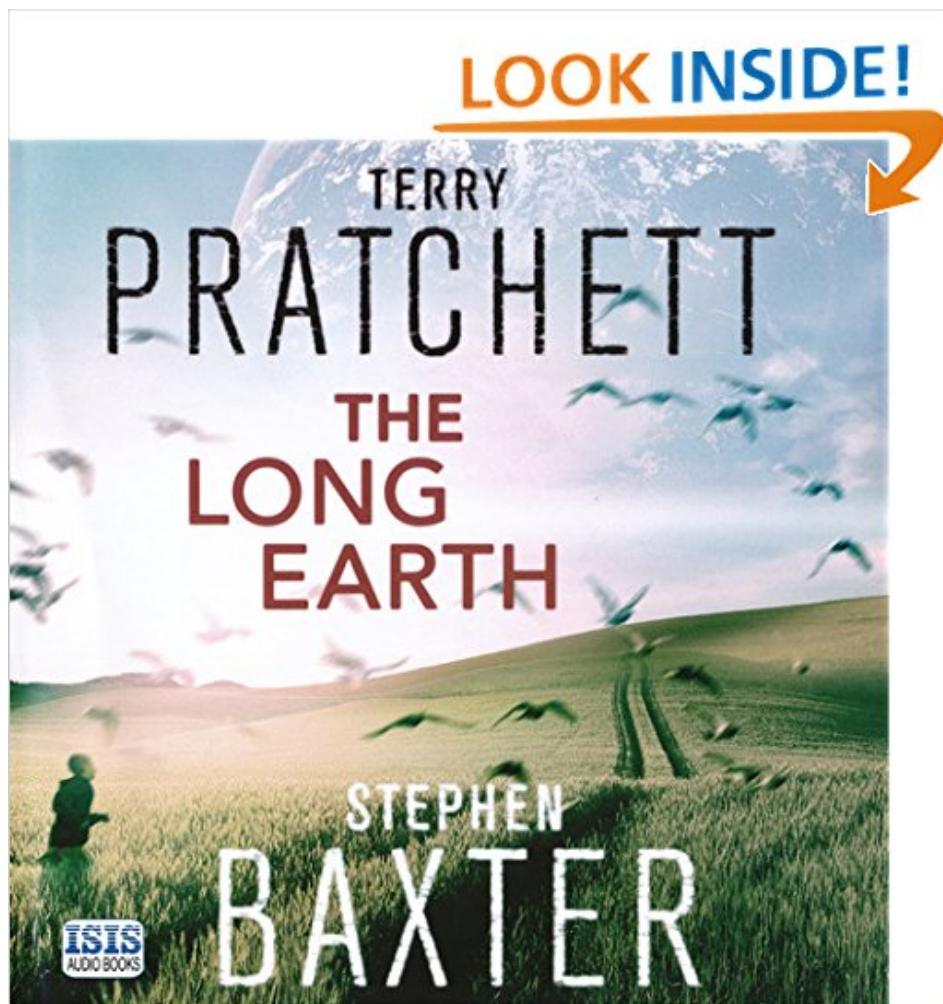


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The Long Earth



Synopsis

An unmissable milestone for fans of Sir Terry Pratchett: the first SF novel in over three decades in which the visionary inventor of Discworld has created a new universe of tantalizing possibilities—•a series of parallel “Earths” with doorways leading to adventure, intrigue, excitement, and an escape into the furthest reaches of the imagination. The Long Earth, written with award-winning novelist Stephen Baxter, author of Stone Spring, Ark, and Floodwill, captivate science fiction fans of all stripes, readers of Kurt Vonnegut, Douglas Adams, and Carl Hiaasen, and anyone who enjoyed the Terry Pratchett/Neil Gaiman collaboration Good Omens. The Long Earth is an adventure of the highest order—and an unforgettable read. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Stay tuned for the next episode of a very old-fashioned sf quest yarn (think Jules Verne and 2001) that, since Pratchett is involved, is crammed with scientifically informed amusement.” (Booklist) “In this thought-provoking collaboration, Pratchett (the Discworld series) and Baxter (Stone Spring) create an infinity of worlds to explore.” (Publishers Weekly) “The Long Earth is a brilliant Science Fiction collaboration with Stephen Baxter: a love letter to all Pratchett fans, readers, and lovers of wonder everywhere.” (io9) “The writing is elegant and witty...The worlds of the Long Earth are all richly rendered, and even the walk-on characters are deftly imagined—and the potential seems endless not just for the characters, but for Pratchett and Baxter as well.”

(Tor.com) "The Long Earth is the solid start of a series with infinite potential." (Shelf Awareness) --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

The possibilities are endless. (Just be careful what you wish for. . . .) 1916: The Western Front. Private Percy Blakeney wakes up. He is lying on fresh spring grass. He can hear birdsong and the wind in the leaves. Where have the mud, blood, and blasted landscape of no-man's-land gone? For that matter, where has Percy gone? 2015: Madison, Wisconsin. Police officer Monica Jansson is exploring the burned-out home of a reclusive "some say mad, others allege dangerous" scientist who seems to have vanished. Sifting through the wreckage, Jansson finds a curious gadget: a box containing some rudimentary wiring, a three-way switch, and . . . a potato. It is the prototype of an invention that will change the way humankind views the world forever. The first novel in an exciting new collaboration between Discworld® creator Terry Pratchett and the acclaimed SF writer Stephen Baxter, *The Long Earth* transports readers to an infinity of new worlds. All it takes is a single step. . . . --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Take Terry Pratchett, known for the Discworld stories which are uniformly good to superb, full of dry, satirical wit and almost always with a point to make. Take Stephen Baxter, known for his thoughtful, in depth hard SF. Put them together and you get.... Eh. In truth there is very little Pratchett in this book. There is none of his humor or insight. The hard SciFi was equally disappointing. There are many MANY exciting and fascinating concepts that would have made this pure awesomeness. Believable machine intelligence. Multiple Earths which diverge in physical and biological evolution the further you get from home Earth (Datum Earth in the story). Multiple sapient intelligences springing from differing roots. None of which are explored. There are interactions between humans and non-humans. None of THAT is explored either. There are conflicts between the humans that can visit the parallel Earths and those who cannot. Not explored. There is a world-ending threat. Not explored. There is endless potential here for further stories based on the universe, but this one does nothing except showcase the place. Even the explosion of a pocket nuke in a major urban center is a so-what event. There is a mish-mash of fantasy/occult and hard scifi - both of which I like, but neither of which dominates the story and neither of which, again, is explored. I know there were a lot of good concepts in this book and you can't explore them all, but for goodness sake explore SOMETHING. Just when you think this might get good, it wanders off onto another tangent or back to a character that is so utterly colorless you couldn't care less about them. Tell me how human

society is affected by the "trolls" (one of the species encountered, and the most interesting). Or how troll society is affected by the humans. How the machine sees us and what the implications of it's existence are. There are economic dislocations on datum earth. Tell me about them. Even the big ending is blah. The world ending threat turns out to be not that much of a threat after all. The book just... stops. Sad and unsatisfying. Not recommended unless you just HAVE to have everything with either of these authors names on it.

Being a fan of both Pratchett and Baxter, I expected this to be the perfect summer novel for me. Sadly, I was disappointed. The basic concept is fascinating and there are many, many hooks in this book that could each be expanded into great novels. I'd love to hear more about the interaction of settlers to the step worlds with the Trolls. Or more about the Joker worlds. About the Gap. The dinosaur people(!!). The shire-like step-wise Seattle. Many other things are brought up and dropped, like the religious and social problems arising from the step worlds. The social unrest in the Datum world. The results of near-limitless resources on the economy across all the worlds. The far-stepwise worlds with their wildly different ecology. The Gap! All of these things are brought up in a mere 350 pages and nothing is ever picked up and developed. And then there is the plain absence of any plot. The main characters float quite literally through a magical world with only the faintest interaction with any of the fascinating details. Some interesting characters are introduced to never be seen again until the very end, when in a mere dozen pages a vague political undercurrent is being turned into the destruction of a major city with a nuclear weapon. Yes. We spend 90% of the novel in fantasy-territory parallel worlds with barely a hint of plot, and then at the very end it's suddenly Tom Clancy stuff. Oh and the characters. Oh my. So we have a young man and woman meet as the only people on whole parallel worlds, both with unique abilities and basically near-stranded in the most fascinating place one could imagine, and their interaction with each other is about as electric as if they are commuters on the same bus. Their companion is the most advanced AI ever built, and it is generously being used to get our human main characters out of any possible danger at the flick of a switch. There is no sense of danger, no emotion, certainly no love and no awe and wonder in these characters. TL;DR: Plotless with weak characters. Expected far more of these authors. Regretted spending money on the hardcover. Oh, and if this is supposed to be the start of some sort of series or franchise as the exceedingly weak ending suggests, I'd have welcomed a bit of a hint. I bought this under the impression it is a full novel with some sort of resolution and tied-down ending.

Some of the science may be a bit rough, as where it states near the beginning that on each Earth the constellations and positions of planets remain the same, only to prove otherwise as the story progresses. Yet there were some interesting parts, especially the use of the nuns to present a counterpoint opinion to that of the robotic factoids. The ending was somewhat of a letdown, as it is a series book, which is often so dedicated to getting you ready for the next story in the sequence that it fails to satisfy in the current resolve.

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