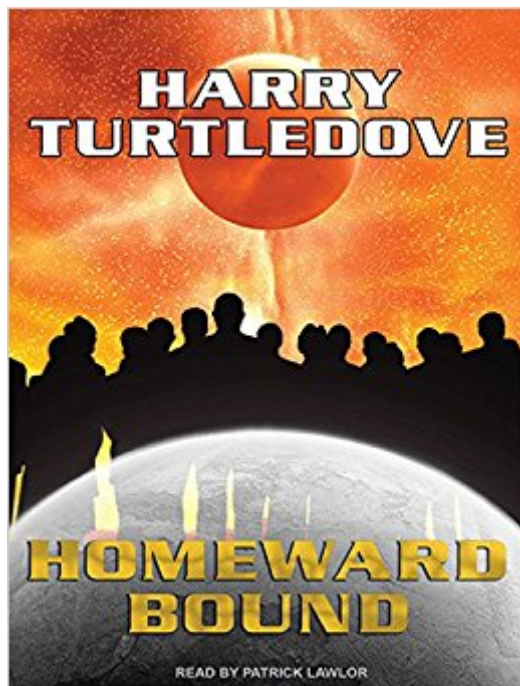


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Homeward Bound



Synopsis

With his epic novels of alternate history, Harry Turtledove shares a stunning vision of what might have been-and what might still be-if one moment in history were changed. In the Worldwar and Colonization series, an ancient, highly advanced alien species found itself locked in a bitter struggle with a distant, rebellious planet: Earth. For those defending the Earth, this all-out war for survival supercharged human technology, made friends of foes, and turned allies into bitter enemies. For the aliens known as the Race, the conflict has yielded dire consequences. Mankind has developed nuclear technology years ahead of schedule, forcing the invaders to accept an uneasy truce with nations that possess the technology to defend themselves. But it is the Americans, with their primitive inventiveness, who discover a way to launch themselves through distant space-and reach the Race's home planet itself. Now-in the twenty-first century-a few daring men and women embark upon a journey no human has made before. Warriors, diplomats, traitors, and exiles-the humans who arrive in the place called Home find themselves genuine strangers on a strange world and at the center of a flash point with terrifying potential. For their arrival on the alien home world may drive the enemy to make the ultimate decision-to annihilate an entire planet, rather than allow the human contagion to spread. It may be that nothing can deter them from this course. With its extraordinary cast of characters-human, nonhuman, and some in between-Homeward Bound is a fascinating contemplation of cultures, armies, and individuals in collision. From the man whom USA Today has called "the leading author of alternate history," this is a novel of vision, adventure, and constant, astounding surprise.

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Customer Reviews

Alternate-history maestro Turtledove's conclusion to his Worldwar and Colonization sagas, about how lizard-like aliens known as the Race invaded Earth during WWII and were fought to a stalemate by the major Allied and Axis combatants, lacks the vividly described battle scenes of its predecessors, but more than compensates by closely examining the Race's culture and society. While the Race have colonized much of Earth, they're amazed by the human ability to adapt to change. (The aliens' probe some 600 years earlier led them to expect they'd be facing armored knights.) When an American starship makes the trip to Home, the Race's planet of origin, the lizards fear the loss of their technological dominance and decide to annihilate Earth, their colony included... The question of how much common ground exists between the lizards and humans wouldn't have been out of place in old issues of *Astounding*. The author dramatizes the old "nature versus nurture" argument through the moving stories of a human woman raised from birth by the lizards and of two aliens raised as humans. Fans will be pleased that room remains for a sequel. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Turtledove brings the saga of the Lizards (the Race) and the Tosevites (Big Uglies, or humans) to a resounding and massive conclusion. The human race has developed a starship, and early in the book, it appears in the skies of Home. That sets the Race by the ears (well, it would if they had any), and their respect for and fear of the Tosevites' rate of change and technological ingenuity has them waiting for the other shoe to drop, though they don't wear shoes. [...] Turtledove keeps the story from becoming too convoluted by focusing on Sam Yeager, successful diplomat in spite of himself, and his family, and on Kassquit, the human baby raised as a Lizard, and thereby produces not only a more coherent narrative but also tours de force of characterization. Which is not to say that the book is free of japes, wordplay, and such odd devices as an aging Matt Damon in a pornographic historical epic, all of which reassure the reader that this is indeed a case of Turtledove in full cry. The whole saga, begun in the Worldwar series and continued in the Colonization trilogy, may not quite equal Turtledove's alternate America books, but it certainly ranks as something few other writers would have attempted and even fewer would have brought off so well. Roland Green Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I will start by quickly saying that I agree with the assessment that most negative reviews of this book

have. For it being the conclusion of an 8-book series, it lacks much of any sense of tension or climax. Certainly nothing that compares to what occurs in the Worldwar portion of the series. For something that was to tie up the Colonization series, a couple of those plot lines aren't even mentioned, while a couple others receive a few sentences of summaries. So if you're looking for a nicely tied up bow to the series, you'll be disappointed right from the start. The rest of the book is basically a travelogue of the Race's planet, Home, with a plot that repeats itself over and over again, until Turtledove decides to call it a day. Americans demand equal footing with the Lizards. Lizards disagree, and get increasingly uncomfortable with the realization that they are getting surpassed by humans. Similar conversations take place repeatedly regarding both points, until something happens to interrupt the broken record, there's a sort of short epilogue, and that's the end of the series. My main issue is with the characters, and specifically the humans. Minor spoilers from this book and the prior Colonization books follow. The so-called diplomatic team is hilariously undiplomatic, being stereotypical Ugly Americans at times to drive home the attitudes that they should be treated as equals. They frequently argue with local Lizards, who are portrayed as clueless about just how equal the Americans feel they should be treated. Each time I was left thinking about how horribly undiplomatic these people were. They also do precious little diplomacy. Instead taking field trips, and only occasionally being useful in talks with the ambassador. There's not even any great sense of depth to the talks. They usually boil down to: "think there will be a war?" "I hope not, but I don't see how it doesn't happen." Interstellar political intrigue, this is not. It was well into the book before I even got a sense of the specialties of three of the members. While the other two only seemed to be there because one was the son of the ambassador, and the other his daughter-in-law, who's job it was to hold a seventy-year grudge with the Lizard-raised woman who had a fling with her husband before they were technically exclusive. Oh, and to be interested in shopping and fashion. Seriously, I had to check the publication date to make sure that such a female stereotype was still being written in the 21st Century. We also have a pilot, who seventy years earlier (thirty or forty from their perspective), deceived his way onto another ship, and who has NEVER heard the end of it since then, despite apparently an exemplary career as a valued member of the crew. His superior officer continues to threaten him with missions to either get him into major trouble, or with outright killing him, while both other pilots also bring up in a negative light that one incident decades earlier that led him to be a great asset to have around. It makes zero sense, but in true Turtledove fashion, it's repeated many times over the book, just in case we forgot that he tricked his way onboard another ship a long time ago, and then only

accepted placement on the new ship because he gets the feeling he'll be killed by the powers that be if he doesn't. Which makes even less sense. And then there's the main character, Sam Yeager. The man in the Worldwar series whose love of sci-fi stories reasonably makes him a bit more open to the concept of invading aliens from another planet than other people of the early 1940's. By the time of the Colonization series, he's now one of the best human experts of Lizards. Or so we're told repeatedly. He mainly uses this ability to catfish them on their online chat boards. Something no one else is capable of doing. Except half of Tinder users. He spends the rest of his time repeatedly poking around highly classified US systems that he's not authorized to view, despite specific orders not to. In return, the US government court marshals him, strips him of his access, and throws him in jail. Nah, I'm kidding. Despite them knowing that what he's looking for could endanger the entire country, they decide to give him a really important research project, have a few chats with the president, and make several ham-fisted attempts to kill him, designed to fail, but convince him to give up looking. Naturally, he doesn't stop. He finds the info, and it eventually leads to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans, and the president killing himself. That's when the government court marshals him and throws him in prison for the rest of his life. Nope, just kidding. The Lizards think he's awesome, so the government doesn't do anything. And now, fast forward about 15 years. Yeager is in his 70's. He could be forced to retire, and go run out the clock on his life, never to bother the government again. But wait! Instead, they convince him to go into cryo-sleep, so they can keep him around a few more decades and ship him off to be part of the most important diplomatic mission of the history of humankind. And he gets the impression that he either needs to accept, or he'll wind up dead. Yes, the government still wants him dead for what he did, but has waited until he's of an age where coming down with the flu could do it for them to threaten him with either that or being the backup diplomat that could decide the fate of the planet. Sure, those two options make total sense. Naturally, what makes even more sense, is that SIXTY YEARS LATER, surprise, the government still wants to get rid of him. Apparently the fact that no one in the government was alive at the time of his infamous incident, let alone all that old when he went on ice and for all intents and purposes, disappeared, matters that much. You're required to carry a grudge against some guy you only read about in history books as part of your government oath of office, and attempt to find the most lame way to stick it to him that you can come up with. I suppose this might be the result of Turtledove's writing style of incessantly repeating the same plot points over and over again. This is a series that stretches over about 90 years of time. Things that a reasonable

person would get over after a year or two, Turtledove brings up every time you return to that character. So maybe he forgot that he was talking about things that happened decades ago to the characters. In any event, it became too crippling of an issue for me to enjoy this final chapter of the series. Characters, most of whom have the depth of a cardboard cutout, just rehash the same issues over and over again, while Turtledove spends page upon page circling the plot to come in for a landing, perhaps aiming more for a page count than reasonable story. So with that, an eight book saga comes to an end. One that I really wished I had stopped at once the Worldwar series ended.

A great final novel for the War World/Colonization sets of novels. Unlike some of the earlier novels in the series this one focuses on a much smaller cast of characters making it a very enjoyable read. We get one main viewpoint from the War World series who made it through all the prior novels and one viewpoint from the Colonization series that was introduced in the first book of the second set of novels.

I greatly enjoyed the other books in their series but this one was a disappointment. My comments are similar to others I read. Several points are beat to death to the extreme. The story restates several conversations over and over with different participants. Usually, it's the Lizards talking about their superiority, or how they never change and humans do. There were several times where the Lizards discussed a specific piece of technological advancement the humans were making but all that amounted to every time was restating it was big but we don't know much more. That caused the story to plod along at a very slow pace. Maybe that was an attempt to underscore the perspective of the Lizards and how slowly their society evolved but if that was the intent it was not a very good one. I don't recall the other books moving at such a slow pace. I did finish the book but considered putting it away. Also, no real conclusions were reached in the book. A few on the interpersonal level but nothing on the scale you'd expect when dealing with interstellar travel. The story did really wrap up, it just kinda stopped/ I assume that's a set up for another book.

I have to say that I have greatly enjoyed this series. Having read the entire series perhaps 15 times, I tend to disagree with the complaints lodged by other reviewers. My only complaint concerns the lack of a volume or two to follow "Homeward Bound". There are a lot of loose threads remaining which would make a fine set of concluding works. I would like to see one volume where the lizards on Earth go back to their world and stay there along with a nice population of humans in an improved society. Of course a volume in which the people from the various human nations on Earth

actual evolve to work together for a true common good would be nice, but that would perhaps be a bit too skittish even for science fiction. FWIW and YMMV. Cheers.

I don't know why this one has so many negative reviews, this was the first Turtledove book I ever read and compared to the rest of his series, this one is the best one. Sure, there's a lot of dialogue, but the imagination and the situation here is superb. The lizards are indeed fascinating people, so are the big uglies. It's true that Harry does love to write really long books, and at times this is repetitive, however, that's his style. There are plenty of writers who give you 400 pages, and thanks to eBooks, 200 pages, even 100 pages. If you're in a hurry, go read them. But if you have the time to immerse yourself in the planet of the Race i.e. Home, then by all means go ahead and read it. By the way, that book cover is erroneous, the Race breathes O₂ just like the rest of us, so why would there be a man wearing a spacesuit?

Great story and unlike so many authors who write a series of books Turtledove does not succumb to the crutch of filling pages retelling what was in previous books. So many authors pad later books in a series with unneeded rehashing as if the reader had never picked up the earlier books in the first place.

Excellent series, and excellent book!

This is the final of 8 books that are tied together. Each is an illuminating read about the way different species might interact. The WW II setting creates an alternative future that expands the imagination. Highly recommended!

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