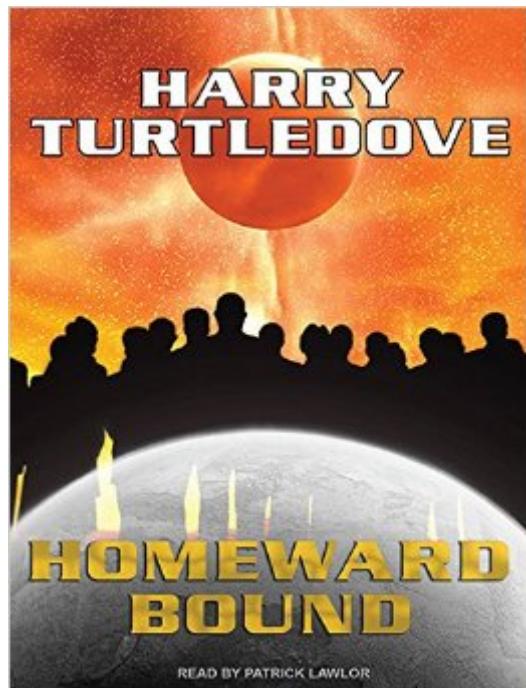


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Homeward Bound



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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed the series as a whole. It's a fascinating premise: aliens invade in the middle of WWII, and the warring nations must put aside their differences in order to confront the new threat. Also, after several books of humans playing catch up with the alien invaders, it was satisfying to see them pull ahead technologically. But having said that, this book has serious flaws. Turtledove is, I am saddened to admit, apparently devolving as a writer. Look at his first major work, the "Videssos Cycle" and you will see good pacing; good plotting; memorable, colorful characters; rich detail; and a host of other virtues. Look at his more recent work, and you will see signs of a more slipshod approach to each project. Perhaps this is because he is churning out a lot more books these days, and quality is suffering at the hands of quantity. Perhaps also, having achieved critical success and gained a following, his editors are less inclined to make changes to his work than they were when he was an unknown newcomer. This book was more or less good. It wasn't great. And that's a pity, for greatness is something this author is quite capable of. Some details just don't ring true at all. Throughout this whole series, he's had humans meekly accept the appellation "Big Uglies" -- a clearly derogatory term -- from the Race. Nowhere to you see humans stand up and declare that that is a derogatory and insulting name, and they find it unacceptable -- even when humans are grown powerful enough to insist upon respectful treatment.

This is one of those books which some people love and others absolutely hate. For me it deserved five stars but there will be other readers, some of whom enjoyed the first few books in the series, for whom even one star would be too many. "Homeward Bound" is the eighth and probably final book in the series which begins with an alien invasion of earth in the middle of World War II. The full sequence is WORLDWAR Quartet, starting in 1942: warring human nations forced to unite against lizardlike Aliens from Tau Ceti 2. Worldwar: In the Balance Worldwar: Tilting the Balance Worldwar: Upsetting the Balance Worldwar: Striking the Balance COLONISATION Trilogy, starting about 1962: twenty years after the initial alien attack a second fleet full of colonists arrives, touching off a further round of intrigue and war. Colonisation: Second contact Colonisation: Down to earth Colonisation: aftershocks HOMEWARD BOUND: in 2031 an American spaceship arrives at Tau Ceti to pay the aliens a return visit ... The first thing to understand about this book to decide whether you would be one of those who love it or one of those who hate it, is that the "Alternative History" element is very small indeed. Most of the action happens in 2031, seventy years after the alien invasion, and very few historical figures are recognisable. There are a few little touches relating to real people - I caught references to Henry Kissinger ("The Doctor"), James Dean (no car crash, he lived to old age) and

Matt Damon. And one of the comic touches in the book is a "lizard" (e.g. Tau Cetan) policeman who is clearly a parody of Lieutenant Columbo. But essentially this is a novel of alien contact, not alternative history.

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