



Homeward Bound

Harry Turtledove

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The twentieth century was awash in war. World powers were pouring men and machines onto the killing fields of Europe. Then, in one dramatic stroke, a divided planet was changed forever. An alien race attacked Earth, and for every nation, every human being, new battle lines were drawn.

HOMEWARD BOUND

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 novelist USA Today calls “the leading author of alternate history,” this is a novel of vision, adventure, and constant, astounding surprise.

Homeward Bound Details

Date : Published December 27th 2005 by Del Rey (first published December 28th 2004)

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Author : Harry Turtledove

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From Reader Review Homeward Bound for online ebook

Adam Vanderlip says

This book series will always have a big place in my heart and I was very sad to finish it. The book spends way too much time with two characters who make moldy jokes that would have been old 50 years ago, but at least the author doesn't spend every second page reminding you the lizards like the temperature warmer like in previous books. Most importantly, Turtledove managed to create an entire race and culture of aliens without them being one dimensional metaphors for humanity and for that he deserves praise.

Steven Bragg says

This book is about the dislocations that occur between species, and between people who are separated by time and/or space. The author does a good job of creating consistent characters, and his dialog flows smoothly. However, the story meanders to a considerable extent - in fact, it sometimes appears that the author does not care a great deal about pacing or moving the story forward at all, and instead prefers to embark on a lengthy piece of dialog that may diverge from the story.

In short, the book is an acceptable read, but is overly long.

Lisa says

Very long and tedious. Too much detail in repetitive conversations. Very slow moving. No real plot. An interesting story line that could have been much better had there actually been some sort of climax in the story.

Neil says

Thoughts while reading:

It is amusing/funny/boring how often the author starts off a novel with some member of the Race [usually Atvar] pulling up pictures from when their probe explored the Earth [Tosev-3] way back when and took images from the time of the knights and the Crusades and whatnot. Enough, already! We get it! They were shocked when they got here'!

I know it's a pet peeve, but I do wish the artists who created the covers would have 'drawn' the Lizards 'correctly' for the artwork. The Lizards are described as having eyes/heads like a chameleon, but the covers that show the Lizards show them as looking more like an upright iguana than a chameleon.

The first chapter was a broken batch of sequences that take place across an extended period of time. The author would have been better off [and the reader better served] if the author had included time-frame references before each section. But that is my opinion.

It is kind of 'funny' how after thirty to seventy years Karen is still jealous/insecure in regard to Kassquit.

Hopefully the book gets better as it progresses - it has been a while since I last read it. The author is *still* repeating a lot of information unnecessarily throughout the course of the first few chapters or so. It is well past old at this point. Maybe the author does not remember what he has written and so repeats himself as a result? He does have a lot of 'stuff' going on in his book[s].

"With our Mart you can build a Wall around the world." Really? The Lizards have a Walmart on their Home planet? Maybe Walmart really *is* taking over.....

The description about Major Frank Coffey was kind of interesting/humorous: "...*Major Coffey, who was the color of coffee with not much cream*" [p. 83]. Not sure why, but it took me a minute on this one.

Had to finally look up 'brachiated/brachiation' due to the author's obsessive use of the word in this novel and the last two. I learned something new today! [And it does *not* mean what I thought it meant, which explains my confusion whenever I came across this word. hahahah]

"Did you feel anything?"

"Yes.....Not vertigo. What vertigo would feel like if it felt vertigo, maybe." I do so appreciate some of his verbiage in his books, how he spins words together to make memorable phrases.

It moved at a decent pace, once you got past the first couple of chapters. The first chapter is devoted to various crew members being put on ice, as it were. The next two thirds of the book involve the crew of the good ship *Admiral Peary* arriving at Home and attempting to ensure peace between the US of A and the Empire. The Lizards are naturally antsy(view spoiler). Then SOMETHING BIG HAPPENS and changes the dynamic[s] of the overtures for peace. Obviously, peaceful co-existence is obtained, and then SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENS before the crew can return safely to Earth.

It was a good ending to the series. I enjoyed it overall. Some of the characters seemed stuck in time in some aspects [like Karen still being jealous of Kassquit nearly seventy years later], but it did seem to have decent character development of a good portion of the characters.

There was another couple on the 'ambassadorial team' sent to the surface of Home, but they did not seem to have much impact [either good or bad] in terms of the story, so I'm not sure why they were included [unless it was merely to give the party more members].

The interactions of Atvar and Straha were still hilarious to read. They have long been a thorn in each other's sides for a long time, and it was enjoyable to see the rivalry continue in this novel.

The whole 'issue' over what Sam Yeager did in the *Aftershocks* novel seemed contrived and unneeded. I realize it allowed the author to add almost one hundred pages of exposition that was not really necessary to the overarching theme of the story, but I had the sense of "Really? Really?!? You honestly felt the need to go there?" while reading this part of the book. Perhaps institutional memory lasts longer than I realize, but it just seemed to drag the whole story out longer than it needed to be.

I did like how the author included tidbits about other empires/powers back on Earth throughout the course of the book. It was like he was tying up the loose ends from his *Colonization* series. At the same time, I did enjoy learning what had happened during the intervening time between the second series and this book. (view spoiler)

Nichelle Nichols made it into the book! That was a nice touch on the part of the author, I thought.

I also found it funny that Matt Damon and *Saving Private Ryan* made it into the book as well [although not necessarily because Matt Damon was in *Saving Private Renfelli*].

It was an interesting book, I think. I felt like the author tried to delve more into philosophical viewpoints in this novel than he had previously. I also think that it worked, on the one hand. At the same time, I almost wish he had gone a bit 'deeper' with his discussions throughout the book. Sometimes it felt like he was on the cusp of something and he moved on instead of digging deeper. At the same time, at almost six hundred pages, it was long enough as it was. Maybe he would have been better off to make it into duology or something. He could have; he could have ended the first novel at the two-thirds point when THE BIG THING HAPPENED and made it the 'cliffhanger' leading into the second novel. That might have worked better, because the last one-third of the novel felt fast and forced, like he realized he was running out of space/pages to say what he wanted to say, so he crammed as much as he could into what little was left.

I did find it hilarious that the talks had to stop until the Race's mating season was over. That was pretty funny.

This book has the least amount of 'action' in it of the eight books in the series. It is mostly exposition. People talking a lot does get kind of old.

I think one of the better 'sub-plots' of the book involved discussion about members of the Race who traveled a lot in cryosleep. Members who are 'displaced in time' because of cryosleep have formed their own sub-community in the Empire because they can no longer relate to the rest of the general population, and the general population does not attempt to relate to them. I did like these discussions in the book; I felt it added something the author could have expanded upon had he chosen to write more than one novel to wrap up the series.

I also enjoyed the Lizards' discussion (view spoiler).

Overall, it was a good book and I enjoyed it.

Jacob says

Not a great end to the series, but not terrible either. If Sam Yeager had been the main character throughout, rather just another character who gradually grew in importance, it would have been a more satisfying finale. Would've been nice if a few more of the dangling threads had been wrapped up.

The book, and thus series as whole, has an interesting premise, but ends up being more character driven than plot driven. Which wouldn't be so bad except the story is spread across too many characters to grow very attached to any of them. And most of them are pretty two dimensional anyway.

Basically it's a Turtledove book with the same failings and strengths seen in his other writings

Alex says

VOTO INTERO CICLO DELLA COLONIZZAZIONE: 3

Decisamente meno riuscito del ciclo precedente, del quale costituisce il naturale prosieguo, soprattutto a causa del quarto libro, che è senza dubbio un tentativo molto mal riuscito di allungare inutilmente il brodo, andando a costituire un infelice concentrato di noia mortale. Assolutamente da evitare, dunque, a differenza dei primi due, che senza dubbio meriterebbero un voto migliore, se non fosse che la media generale viene abbassata drasticamente da una valutazione assolutamente negativa che attribuisco al capitolo conclusivo. Interessanti alcune scelte narrative e la descrizione dello sviluppo sociologico degli alieni invasori, i quali vengono inevitabilmente influenzati dalla mentalità terrestre, soprattutto di quei paesi indipendenti che sono riusciti a resistere all'invasione e a mantenere inviolati i propri confini.

Peccato per l'ultimo libro, conclusione maldestra e infelice di un ciclo senza il quale meriterebbe almeno di essere equiparato al precedente.

Stardreamer says

I enjoyed the book and it was very enjoyable to at last see Home and the Empire's culture up close. I did feel though that the story would have benefited with a little less length and a clearer indication of where the future was heading. Things just end without tying up the major questions. Several other reviews indicate this book is the end of the series, if so I am disappointed at where we are left.

Sharon says

Havn't read the rest of the series but this one was fine as a stand alone. Interesting concept that if aliens invade we would eventually emulate speech and looks and they would become closer to humans in thought and habit. Youngsters bought up from opposite races turned out disturbed and frustrated because they could never be one thing or another. More a story of displacement in time and planets.

Not rivetingly exciting with little action more interaction. the earlier books in the series would presumably have been the action novels.

Kyle says

This was a partially satisfying conclusion to the series. I read them over the course of about a decade, so I was a little hazy on past details, but Turtledove does his usual good job of reminding the reader (again and again) of what has gone before.

In a way, this represents the best and worst of Turtledove. On the bad side, he's got the big cavalcade of characters his recent books seem to have become, each going through the same events (often using what feels like the same boilerplate descriptions).

Luckily, Turtledove plays with a bit more sci-fi than he usually does, and creates some interesting questions and dilemmas (that he doesn't really resolve).

Though I've got mixed feelings about it after reading it, I will attest (and my wife will complain) that I did

not really put it down during the week I was reading it. That's probably worth something.

Richard says

I read the eight books in the series straight thru and they were consistent. The story and sub-stories all tied up and the series ended? on a hopeful?? note.

The question marks leave room for additions to the series and maybe a caution that the human race will be taking our peccadillos with us where ever we spread.

Just as Clarke capped his Odyssey series with "3001", I would like to see how the differing factions fare a thousand years hence.

A good read.

Kallierose says

I'm not sure why this isn't included in the "Colonization" series because it's really just a continuation of the story and the final piece in the series. Unlike other books in this series, this one focuses on a much smaller range of characters (primarily the Yeagers and a few members of the Race) and I did miss having closure for a lot of the characters we met during the first three books. But overall the ending was properly satisfying.

Robert Lent says

After I read the book, I didn't realize that it was the final book in the series. The loose ends weren't resolved. You could infer how things were going to go, but I had expected the last book to resolve them. I enjoyed the series, and did enjoy this book though. Some people say that we should use our own imagination when we read a book, and not expect to have things resolved. I disagree, I am paying to use the author's imagination, if I had wanted to use my own imagination, I would have written the book myself. However, you can figure out where things are likely to go. If you've read and enjoyed the other books, I think you will enjoy this one.

Falbs says

Normally I don't enjoy 'alternate history' type of books, but this one was fun. Not because of the alternate history, but because of the civilization and habits of the aliens involved. It also does a pretty good examination of some of the positives of what it means to be human. There are some rather grating characters and some of the dialogue is weak, but the ideas are there to make it worth reading.

Corey Peters says

Well, it was good to finally close this out. It's taken almost a year to read these 8 500+ page books, and while it was a good idea and the series had some great characters, but all in all, I was quite disappointed. Lame

dialogue, excessive pointless exposition, contrived plot points...I honestly can't recommend it.

John says

The last of the series - but not the best one - I like turtledove, but sometimes even the best are not quite the best.
