



Things Fall Apart

Harry Turtledove

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An explosion of incalculable magnitude in Yellowstone Park propelled lava and ash across the landscape and into the atmosphere, forever altering the climate of the entire continent. Nothing grows from the tainted soil. Stalled and stilled machines function only as statuary.

People have been scraping by on the excess food and goods produced before the eruption. But supplies are running low. Natural resources are dwindling. And former police officer Colin Ferguson knows that time is running out for his family—and for humanity....

Things Fall Apart Details

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From Reader Review Things Fall Apart for online ebook

Cristobal says

Repetitive, pointless and full of unlikable people. I was rooting for the corrupt boyfriend and the deteriorating weather.

Timothy Hoffman says

Good conclusion (?) to the series. The series actually could continue if the author ever wishes to do so, but this leaves the characters in a good place but without major unresolved issues beyond life itself. Very interesting premise from the first book in the series to the third surrounding how the detonation of the world's largest super volcano would effect lives, mostly focusing on the US.

Andrea says

I wanted something to read and seeing this new at the library picked it up. End of the world dystopian type stories are a guilty pleasure of mine. The concept of the story is interesting, a major volcanic eruption in Yellowstone from a previously though dormant volcano, causes major upheavals in environmental and thus societal climes. I have a bad habit of finishing a book even when I am doubtful of why??? The beginning is much better then the ending though. Most of the characters are unlikeable and my biggest complaint is that the author is not very convincing about the difficulty of living in a post eruption world. He describes shortages of food and then in the same paragraph has characters whining about waiting 20 minutes for a bus taking an hour long public transit commute when driving they could have done it in 20 minutes. Okay!

Welcome to public transit. That happens everyday in major cities.

I may go back and read the first of the series hoping it will be better. I am a glutton for punishment.

Theresa says

Let me apologize at the beginning. I did not like this book. I liked the first two, but most of this book is just the post-eruption day to day lives of the characters from the previous books. No real action or story thread. But since I'd already read the first two books, I slogged through this one.

Through most of the book there's not a whole lot going on. The main character seems to be Colin and his family. Other events: the new police Chief Malik Williams working to de-modernize the force to accommodate for the after supervolcano conditions by using bicycles and walkie-talkies to catch crooks. Marshall sells a major story to Playboy. Congress passes a Homestead Act to help those in the refugee camps. Rob's wife gets pregnant. Etc.

But other than the harsher cold, there's nothing that really has any direct bearing on the super-catastrophe. Could just as easily be a soap opera. The author is obviously trying to capitalize on the excitement of the first two without much luck.

Vanessa getting \$10,000 stolen from her savings account by her boyfriend is an interesting thread. Then when the Canadian rivers freeze shutting down the power stations to most of the east coast, things get really serious. And I like the way the little community in Maine have banded together. Dick Barber showing them how to survive alone in the woods at night was interesting. And the band group guys are settling in nicely.

About 2/3rds of the way through, without a word of how or why, all of a sudden Kelly is in Montana, flying off to see the supervolcano damage and all they did was take some soil samples. The abrupt change felt like some pages were missing. I had to go back to check if I'd fallen asleep reading and missed them.

And while I love cats, (I have a highly spoiled one myself) this is not the type of book to have several pages describing Playboy's (the cat) cute behavior.

Fave scenes: the slide rule, chasing the tuna thief and Squirt Frog and the Evolving Tadpoles' gig in Greenville.

Chris Bailey says

Ok. Granted I happened to pick up #3 in a series but it was so poorly written I couldn't continue. Yikes. This guy has written a zillion books. Some of the must be better than this one!

Stefan Garcia says

There were some interesting peeks into possible plots, but the story just kind of wandered and never seemed to catalyze.

Joel Flank says

The final book in the Supervolcano series continues the story of the Ferguson clan and friends, in a world devastated by the after affects of the Supervolcano eruption 10 years before. While it's an enjoyable read, seeing how well written characters who seem realistic and (mostly) likable struggle in the new paradigm, the third and final book struggles itself in finding a plot to tie the series together. It was great reading about how characters had sometimes forms of closure, or hints of growth and positive change in their individual stories on the horizon after the book's end, the lack of a cohesive plot and climax to the story as a whole weakened the final product.

Fortunately, Turtledove writes in a way which is always enjoyable to read, even for a story about mostly regular people, living regular lives, just in an extraordinary time. By the third book though, there's not enough new to say about the world after the eruption which is substantially different from the first two books to really make this stand out.

Richard Rosenthal says

A novel length epilogue.

Rick Bavera says

An enjoyable read. Following the lives of Colin Ferguson and his family after the supervolcano.

The one thing that bothered me was the repetition of phrases like (paraphrasing here) "since the volcano" and also repetition of things, very explicitly, from within the same book. Sort of explaining what he already told us....as if we forgot or didn't understand the first time.

But I did enjoy the book, and the series.

Holly Booms Walsh says

Turtledove write lots of very skillful sweeping sagas, and you see his experience in the telling of this story. The story centers on the Ferguson family: father, new wife and daughter, ex-wife, adult daughter, and two adult sons. The storyline and perspectives shift from one to another and intertwine, with one character's life choices contrasting against another's. This story is a post-apocalyptic tale where a volcano at Yellowstone has erupted and caused respiratory deaths from ash fallout and massive climate change. This book, unlike most post-apocalyptic tales, is taking place after the fact. The threat is gone, and the problem is dwindling resources in the manner of small annoyances as fewer bus routes or having to bicycle to work - as opposed to looting or starving or fighting a war. This book is quiet and pretty intimate. It's more a drama about this family of characters learning life lessons and handling everyday life conflicts.

This book really reads as a first installment of a series, perhaps because of the lack of a definable plot and big climax. Turtledove does an okay job with his ensemble cast, but he doesn't have Stephen King's knack with writing a memorable cast of characters that emotionally grips the reader (maybe because there's no common enemy here?). I missed the tension and ingenuity of most post-apocalyptic fiction as the characters struggle to survive in a radically changing world. The stakes are lower here; nobody seems to be struggling. I kept reading waiting for the plot to happen, but the book ended without one.

John Roberts says

Finished this book just now, and like the second it is not a standalone and not even as somewhat interesting as the second or fun like the first. The secondary plot of the catching of the South Bay Strangler is five and now it was more about coping in an America covered in ash and snow. I only really finished it because it was the conclusion and a sense of duty to Turtledove whom I really enjoyed other titles from more. Again, he needs to avoid writing about relationship and corny imitate moments.

Danny says

about what I expected, the drama is...ok. The slow decay and realignment of civilization is interesting but everything still feels disconnected somehow. I just wanted to finish the series.

Eric Leeson says

I enjoyed the ending of this book. While it was not as suspenseful as I expected, the slow collapse of our infrastructure, the struggle to maintain the pre-eruption quality of life has failed, but things can get better. I was hoping for a Revolution, or at least a major upheaval. A good story, though I think his World War alternate history stories were better.

Ronald Tobin says

With this title I was hoping that Turtledove would finally address an all out collapse of society in the US as a result of the impact on climate and basic life because of the eruption. Sadly, he barely touched on this. The weather keeps getting colder, the power grid for the Great Lakes area and the Northeast collapses, and society stays generally peaceful. I figure by this point the thin veneer of society would be greatly strained.

So the saga of the Fergusons continues. Vanessa gets screwed over by her Serbian boyfriend financially, Rob Ferguson and his band are still stuck in Guilford, Maine. Marshall sells a short story to Playboy, has an affair with a married woman and then gets dumped when he doesn't make any more big sales. Colin, the chief protagonist, turns down the police chief position and then proceeds to get wounded in a shootout and retires from the force.

There's more, but you get the idea. Unlike the previous installment this one did not have a compelling subplot. One point that really disappointed me was when Kelly was at a geology convention in Chicago and the power went out. There was a chance for some really gritty drama, a major city falling apart in a deep freeze. What does happen? Not much, except Kelly can't get a flight out and has to come back to Los Angeles by train.

And, really, how many times can one put into the same book "Maine North and West of the Interstate" or some variation thereof? I think I counted at least twenty.

This is an OK read but here's hoping the next installment is more interesting. Possibly, also, the last?

Suzanne Johnson says

Review to come on blog covering trilogy 8-1-17. www.suzannejohnsonauthor.com.

