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Armistice: The Hot War (Hot War, The)



Synopsis

In the final book of the blistering trilogy *The Hot War*, old hatreds and new chances for revenge are unleashed on an already devastated world as the Cold War becomes a roaring inferno. In 1952 American cities lie in ruins. President Harry Truman, in office since 1945, presides over a makeshift government in Philadelphia, suffering his own personal loss and fearing for the future of democracy. In the wake of Hitler's reign, Germany and America have become allies, and Stalin's vise hold on power in the USSR persists. Unwilling to trust the Soviet tyrant, Truman launches a long-planned nuclear strike on the city of Omsk, killing Stalin and plunging the Red Army into leaderless, destructive anarchy. Meanwhile, the Baltic states careen toward rebellion, and Poland is seized by rebels bred on war. In a world awash with victims turned victors, refugees, and killers, has Truman struck a blow for peace or fueled more chaos? As these staggering events unfold, the lives of men and women across battle lines, ethnicities, and religions play out across the globe. In Los Angeles, an extended Jewish family builds a future, while the foul smell of a refugee camp in Santa Monica blows in on the ocean breeze. In Korea, a U.S. fighter struggles to bring his Korean interpreter stateside as a full American. In Siberia, two German women fight for their survival in a gulag and begin a strange, harrowing journey home. From the terrifying global chess match between superpowers to the strength of individual human conscience, *Armistice* captures a world that's been split to its core by the violence only mankind can create. Through the thunder of battle, the clashes of armies, and the whispers of lovers, how humanity will be rebuilt, and who will do it, are the questions that resound in this marvelous work of imagination and history.

PRAISE FOR HARRY TURTLEDOVE

• "Turtledove is the standard-bearer for alternate history."

• "USA Today" • "Fallout" • "No one writes alternate-history novels quite like Turtledove. . . . Expect epic political stakes as well as personal and heartfelt stories of war."

• "BookTrib Bombs Away" • "Turtledove's thorough research and grounded imagination work to create a frighteningly realistic past where world leaders act out of desperation and fatalism and a large cast of common folk suffer the consequences. . . . The vicarious sense of eschatological dread is always powerful."

• "Booklist Last Orders" • "All quite plausible . . . Turtledove's focus on the characters serves to fill out the big picture with patient, nitty-gritty detail. . . . Armchair warriors will have much to ponder."

• "Kirkus Reviews Two Fronts" • "A you-are-there chronicle of battle on land and sea and in the air."

• "Tor.com"

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Customer Reviews

Classic Turtledove. Didn't care for the ending (won't give it away), but the character development was superb, as always in his better works. That combined with the little bits of historical authenticity makes most of Turtledove's books excellent reads for those who know history or want to learn more about it.

This part of the trilogy was rather slow compared to the first two. It jumped around trying to get the major characters settled for the future and yet left them hanging. I can only hope that there will be one more edition to this story line.

One of Turtledoves worst books. Feels rushed to finish, ending unsatisfying and not compelling. First 2 books in series were decent this is garbage.

If you like his style this series will fill your needs. I have to admit it made me a little sad to see this version of the world

This whole series just seemed like Turtledove was phoning it in. Same formula as his other series, too much repetition, too many similar characters.

Armistice is the third book in the "Hot War" series which is based on the premise that Harry Truman decides on the advice of Douglas MacArthur to use atomic weapons against the Chinese in North Korea. Of course the Russians don't like this at all and instead of the Cold War we all grew up with we have a Hot War with Hiroshima/Nagasaki sized atom bombs being dropped willy nilly by both sides. In the words of Randy Newman, "Boom goes London, and Boom, Paris. More room for you and more room for me!" Spoiler: London escapes being bombed, Paris doesn't. This might work as a stand alone book, but I strongly recommend starting with the first in the series, *Bombs Away*. Frankly, I thought that has been the best in the series. Overall, this is average Turtledove. If you like him (I do) you'll probably like this. If you've never read him before, he's actually produced some pretty fun alternate histories with my all time favorite being *The Guns of the South* - time travelling racist South Africans equipping Johnny Reb with AK-47s! In any case, the Hot War series is Turtledove doing what Turtledove does. Lots of minor characters on all sides living out their lives in this alternate history. The author jumps around a lot of different stories, some more interesting than others. It's what he does and he's got it down.

Here we have the conclusion of Harry Turtledove's latest visit to the Alternate History well. How was it? Before I get to that, let's revisit the overall idea of this series. It takes place in a world (insert voice over here), where MacArthur was allowed to use tactical nuclear weapons against advancing Chinese forces during the Korean War. Strangely, the Soviet Union doesn't just sit back and accept this, and they drop an atom bomb on one of our allies' cities. We retaliate, they retaliate, and the next thing you know, World War III is happening. The premise isn't bad, and could easily sustain a novel, maybe two. Alas, this premise was stretched to three, and by the time we're done with it, it's more a sense of, "Well, I'm glad that's done," than anything else. By the time book three rolls around, the war itself is pretty much over with. An H-bomb takes out Stalin early on, peace is soon negotiated, and we then get to collectively sit back and review the aftermath. This takes about 350 pages. Now I'll admit that I'm glad there's a fairly solid conclusion here, unlike with the "War that Came Early" series, where the conclusion to the Japanese part of WWII is left up to one's imagination. No, here you're left in no doubt as to what the conclusion is to the stories for pretty much every character. This is good with some of the characters. I wouldn't have liked to have wondered about the fate of those stuck in a Soviet gulag, or a man from Harbin now stuck in

Poland. I'm glad that we get some closure with them. But really, I can only take so many scenes of appliance delivery before I want to rip out what little hair I have. Then there's the return of Turtledove's extremely repetitive writing style. In case you weren't aware, life in a small lumber town in California is different from life in Seattle. Also, being a white Russian (and a child of White Russians), in Harbin isn't easy, because of all the Chinese people there. But life is very different in the Soviet Union! Also, if you're an adult white man and you adopt an adult Korean man, people will think you're gay. Should you fail to be aware of these, and many other things, or should you forget them, worry not; you'll be reminded constantly. It isn't as bad as in the aforementioned "War that Came Early" series, where I felt like every other page was a reminder that dive bombers get lighter after they drop their loads, but it was still pretty bad. Also, I have a really hard time believing that after months at war, with enemy bombers hitting several positions on the West Coast, that the United States is LESS prepared for a bombing run on the East Coast than we are in the real world. Yes, this is a complaint that mostly references the previous book, but it's representative of problems throughout the series, where people just don't behave in a believable fashion. Turtledove has proven, yet again, that he's a genius when it comes to thinking up scenarios, and that he's somewhat less than adept at populating those scenarios with interesting characters. With "Guns of the South", Timeline-191, and the Worldwar series, the scenarios were interesting enough to compensate for sometimes boring characters. But with the Supervolcano series, "The War that Came Early", and now this series, the shine is really wearing off. It's a shame, and I really hope he starts to get some of his old magic back. Of course it would help terribly much if he would STOP writing about things that happened from roughly 1933 - 1953. But I have limited expectation of that occurring.

Harry Turtledove has a solid reputation for doing alternative history well. This is the first book of his that I have read because the description sounded interesting: The Soviet Union drops atomic bombs on the United States because of our actions during the Korean War. This book begins with the fallout in a post bomb 1950s America with stops in POW camps, the Gulag, and in general a world that is still shattered by World War II. The problem I had with this book was that there are multiple story lines and characters and while most of it was well written and interesting, I didn't really like getting pulled from one character to another and another and back again. Through 432 pages, eventually you adjust, which might work fine if all story lines are equal in their ability to captivate and engage, but some of the story lines are really well done while others are meh for me. This creates gaps where I was interested and disinterested, which is not a good thing. Really

good writing can't get past the swirling points of view.

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