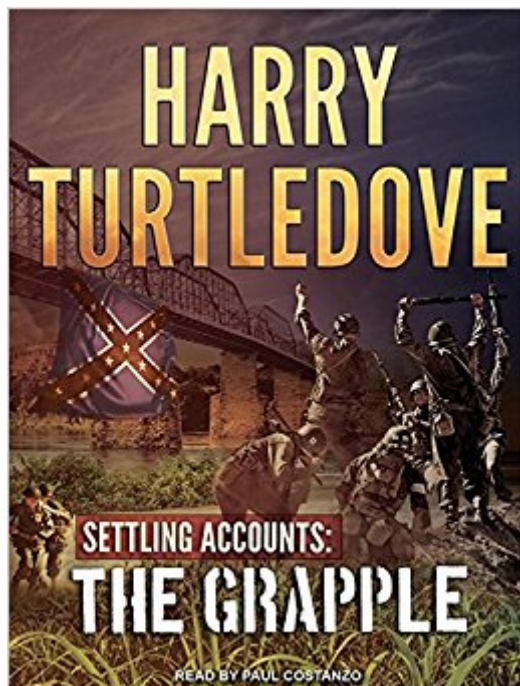


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The Grapple (Settling Accounts)



Synopsis

It is 1943, the third summer of the new war between the Confederate States of America and the United States, a war that will turn on the deeds of ordinary soldiers, extraordinary heroes, and a colorful cast of spies, politicians, rebels, and everyday citizens. The C.S.A. president, Jake Featherston, seems to have greatly miscalculated the North's resilience. But as new demonic tools of killing are unleashed, secret wars are unfolding. The U.S. government in Philadelphia has proof that the tyrannical Featherston is murdering African Americans by the tens of thousands in a Texas gulag called Determination. And the leaders of both sides know full well that the world's next great power will not be the one with the biggest army but the nation that wins the race against nature and science-and smashes open the power of the atom.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The compelling third volume (after *Drive to the East*) in Turtledove's third alternate history of WWII series opens with the Confederacy reeling after the loss of their forces in the cauldron around Pittsburgh. The United States is trying to suppress the Mormon rebellion in Utah, while Canadian patriots fight the occupying Yanks to a stalemate. Negro guerrillas who escaped being swept up into death camps authorized by C.S.A. President Jake Featherstone disrupt the rural economy. Meanwhile, both sides work feverishly to win the race to build an atomic bomb. One may question the appropriateness of using the Holocaust as a springboard for an entertainment, but Turtledove convincingly depicts how an American holocaust could well have happened. Some Confederates

begin to feel pangs of conscience, just as the U.S. troops who execute hostages among the Mormon, Canadian and Confederate civilians feel nothing but repulsion. While somewhat repetitious and a bit preachy in spots, Turtledove's latest proves that third time is the charm. (July) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The latest volume of *Settling Accounts*, Turtledove's magisterial saga of an alternate America--and world---ratchets up the levels of violence and tension. Through Franklin Roosevelt, Flora Blackford is keeping apprised of everybody's nuclear weapons programs as well as Confederate efforts to develop a ballistic missile. In the West, people of all races, colors, and genders die in gruesome numbers as the U.S. Army advances on the Confederate extermination camp, Camp Determination. Jonathan Moss roams Georgia with a band of African American guerrillas, trying to get back into the war. And George Enos now serves aboard Sam Carsten's *Josephus Daniels* and confronts a British Swordfish torpedo bomber that seems one entire war out-of-date. Responding with this-world prejudices, purists will complain that the alternative-world British would have built something better, or that the Confederates never could have built a V-2. Readers of broader vision will realize that Turtledove is hanging the notion of American exceptionalism out to dry and underlining how much luck the U.S. has needed to accomplish even as much as it has in preserving democracy, making peace among races, and not having its soldiers slaughtered by the millions and its cities wrecked by the score. A profoundly thoughtful masterpiece of alternate history. Roland Green Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

If you love history and have ever wondered about what if scenarios the Turtledove is the author for you. He does a great job of intertwining real historical figures with fictional ones to tell the what if tale. In this account he studies the what if of a World War 2 between the USA and CSA. If you are familiar with WW2 you see that Turtledove uses events from both the Eastern and Western front in Europe as a backbone to this tale. A great read from the master of alternative history.

This seemingly endless Turtledove series began in 1997 with *How Few Remain*, the story of the Second Mexican War between the USA and the CSA. Since then we've slogged our way through World War I, the Great Depression, and now we're in the middle of World War II, with the US making massive invasions of CS territories (following the Anaconda Plan which the North used in our own timeline to crush the South in the 1860s.) There are many long descriptions of battles and

far too many barely developed one dimensional characters in this series, and the exhausted reader often feels that Turtledove is trying to win some sort of award for the most volumes in an alternative history series. Turtledove's habit of jumping from subplot to subplot, sometimes for only a page or two, usually does little or nothing to illuminate the overall plotline. Nevertheless, there are some fine moments in this latest volume. Turtledove writes feelingly about the misery of the black Southerners, who have been condemned to mass extermination by the Fascist CS President Jake Featherston. I was particularly moved by the reactions of Southern whites who were forced by their US conquerors to visit one of the concentration camps and see for themselves what they had been so willing to ignore for so long. Of course this is based on the reactions of the Germans in our own timeline when the Allies made them tour the camps where Hitler's Final Solution was carried out. The different context and place brings out the horror all the more feelingly. I also found some of the descriptions of the US invasion of Tennessee and Georgia fascinating, as Turtledove has the armies moving through towns and cities with which I am very familiar. (In fact, both the town where I grew up and the town in which I now live would have been utterly destroyed in Turtledove's World War II.) There is to be at least one more volume in this series, and I hope that Turtledove will use it to set things closer to right in the brutal, impoverished world he has created. As a white Southerner, I hope to see the Confederacy utterly cleansed of Featherston's Fascists and some atonement made for the black Holocaust. I hope as well that my favorite character, US Congresswoman Flora Hamburger Blackford, will play a role in the healing process alongside the many other characters, both historical and fictional, whom Turtledove has enmeshed in his series.

My review is the same for all books of the series. Decent story, a little slow, but also one of the most annoying series because he repeats things over and over. Examples are that southern tobacco is way better than northern and northern smokes taste terrible. Also, this black guy was former butler who worked for this white rich lady and was taught to talk like an educated white man and details about his time there. Many more things like this, so just about anytime a soldier smokes in these books (about 100 times) you have to hear about the tobacco, etc. Each character has something told about them over and over and over and over and over, see how annoying that is.

Pittsburgh lies in ruins, but the Confederate army is broken and in retreat. U.S. General Irving Morrell has a plan that will break Jake Featherston's Confederacy once and for all: a stab deep into the heart of Dixie, with Georgia as the ultimate goal. But the fanatical Featherston isn't done yet, not as long as his country has the edge in rocketry, and as long as there is still hope of building an

atomic bomb before the U.S. does. Yet, even as the U.S. advances, Featherston still puts precious resources into his other master plan: the genocide of the CSA's black population. My review of "Settling Accounts: The Grapple" is probably more for my own amusement than the enlightenment of any reader. People who have stuck it out for Harry Turtledove's massive alternate history series of a Southern Victory during the Civil War will either agree with me or they won't. Anyone who has not read the series will not start with this volume, almost certainly the penultimate in the series. Suffice it to say, this volume is probably one of the most satisfying and entertaining reads in the series. There is a strong sense of climax, as the C.S. is left reeling, trying desperately to get a leg to stand on to continue their fight with the U.S. Alternatively, the U.S. has complete control of the course of history now, and the continued existence of the C.S. will be at its sufferance. While it seems quite the coincidence that of the fifteen or so point of view characters, only five are not in Georgia, from a purely literary standpoint, Turtledove's decision to do this suggests that he is orchestrating his final showdown. Unfortunately, Turtledove's decision to do this does create a little more redundancy than is necessary, as most of the novel concentrates on the front lines warfare. There is little insight into the home front. There is no insight into the air war. Certain storylines, hinted at the previous volume, are effectively suspended here. On the other hand, the battle scenes are fast and furious, underscoring the momentum with which things are falling down around Jake Featherston's ears. Turtledove also shows his willingness to kill off his characters, reminding the reader of the random nature of warfare. Characters we have followed since the first book, "Great War: American Front" have risen high in the world. Irving Morrell, for example, has become a bona fide hero. Others meet their tragic deaths right here, mourned only by their relatives and the reader, victims of history. There are the obvious complaints to be made about Turtledove. His characters use the same phrases much too often to be plausible, and that feels lazy. And while Turtledove has shifted gears some, following the course of the last years of the Civil War rather than overlaying World War II on North America, there is an air of predictability about the book. The U.S. will win. The only mystery is what kind of peace the C.S. will have to endure. On the whole, I think I probably enjoyed "Settling Accounts: The Grapple" the most in the "Settling Account" series. It's fast paced and heavy on action, and vividly detailed, creating a plausible and frightening world. There is only one book contracted for left, so enjoy.

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