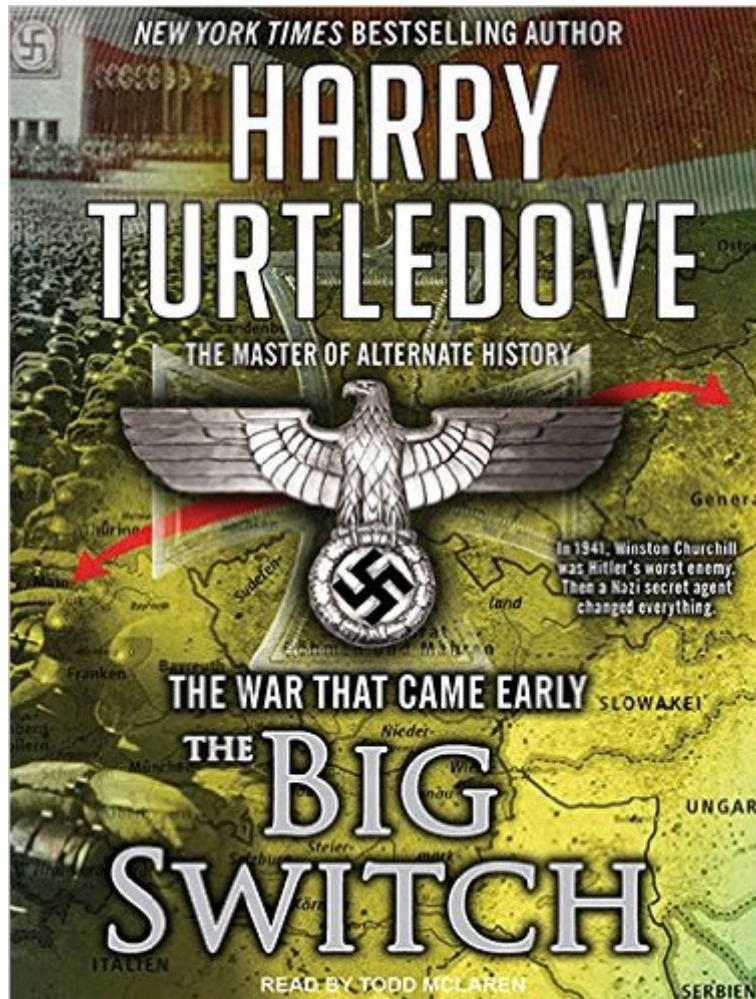


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The War That Came Early: The Big Switch



Synopsis

In this extraordinary World War II alternate history, master storyteller Harry Turtledove begins with a big switch: what if Neville Chamberlain, instead of appeasing Hitler, had stood up to him in 1938? Enraged, Hitler reacts by lashing out at the West, promising his soldiers that they will reach Paris by the new year. They don't. Three years later, his genocidal apparatus not fully in place, Hitler has barely survived a coup, while Jews cling to survival. But England and France wonder whether the war is still worthwhile. Weaving together a cast of characters that ranges from a brawling American fighter in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain to a woman who has seen Hitler's evil face-to-face, Harry Turtledove takes us into a world shaping up very differently in 1941. The Germans and their Polish allies have slammed into the gut of the Soviet Union in the west, while Japan pummels away in the east. In trench warfare in France, French and Czech fighters are outmanned but not outfought by their Nazi enemy. Then the stalemate is shattered. In England, Winston Churchill dies in an apparent accident, and the gray men who walk behind his funeral cortege wonder who their real enemy is. The USSR, fighting for its life, makes peace with Japan-and Japan's war with America is about to begin. A sweeping saga of human passions, foolishness, and courage, of families and lovers and soldiers by choice and by chance, *The Big Switch* is a provocative, gripping, and utterly convincing work of alternate history at its best. For history buffs and fans of big, blood-and-guts fiction, Harry Turtledove delivers a panoramic clash of ideals as powerful as armies themselves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the third book in a series which speculates about what might have happened if World War II had started in 1938 after the Munich peace talks failed. The books in the series to date are: 1) "Hitler's War" 2) "West and East (War That Came Early)" 3) This book, "The War that came early: the Big Switch" "The War that came early" is yet another alternative version of World War II from Harry Turtledove. It is quite astonishing that he can still find new perspectives from which to write about that war, but he does. In the opening paragraphs of the first book Turtledove made two changes in real history, and the first two volumes in the series work from there. First, in 1936 General Jose Sanjuro wasn't killed in a plane crash and consequently Sanjuro rather than Franco becomes leader of the Nationalist side in the Spanish civil war. Secondly, during the Munich negotiations, Henlein (leader of the Sudeten Germans) was assassinated, giving Hitler an excuse to press for even more punitive terms against Czechoslovakia. In this history Chamberlain and Daladier finally recognised that Hitler was determined on war, and suspected that he had actually ordered Henlein's murder himself. They found the spine to tell Hitler that if he invaded Czechoslovakia Britain and France would honour their obligations to the Czechs. Hitler did order the invasion of Czechoslovakia on the spot, and the war started a year earlier than in real history.

Harry Turtledove's newest volume in his "War that Came Early" series picks up where his last book, *The War That Came Early: West and East*, left off with a war grinding on in the harsh winter of 1940. Both Germany and the Soviet Union find themselves facing two-front conflicts, and with the focus increasingly on the clash with each other, their leaders are willing to let go on the other front. For the Soviets, that means allowing Japanese triumphs in Siberia. For the Germans, however, a more radical move is attempted: convincing their opponents Britain and France to change sides and join the Nazis in their war against Communism. Yet as the prospects of an alliance grow increasingly likely, the question posed by Winston Churchill seems increasingly pertinent: can the proverbial lambs lie down with the Nazi lion, or are they just setting themselves up to be consumed in turn? Longtime fans of Turtledove's alternate history novels will find much that is familiar within the pages of his latest book, as he describes the experiences of a cast of characters struggling to survive in a world where history takes a dramatic new turn. Yet the series does not measure up to his best efforts. The main flaw here seems to be one of characterization: unlike his *Timeline-191* series, which offered a range of characters from different backgrounds and positions, nearly all of the characters in this series are enlisted men fighting in the war he described.

Harry Turtledove has proven time and again that he's a really great storyteller, especially when it

comes to working with history. Though he's written straight historical novels like *Fort Pillow* and (as H N Turteltaub), the *Hellenic Traders* series, he's best known for writing alternate history novels which frequently expand into massive series. *The War that Came Early: The Big Switch*, is the third in a series where World War II, well, comes early. For those not up on the series, it starts when France, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom stand up to Germany after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1938 rather than waiting until the invasion of Poland in 1939. The result is that the war begins before both sides are really ready. This leads to a very different sort of war than what we're used to. Fascists and Republicans continue to fight in Spain, Germany faces off against the UK and France (which does not fall as it did in our world), while also invading the Low Countries, Denmark and Norway, Japan invades Siberia and lays siege to Vladivostok, and Poland allies with Germany against Russia, leaving Germany no place to build their planned extermination camps. Something that would be hard to do anyhow, since Poland isn't interested in killing off their Jews. And through it all the United States sides on the sidelines and waits... As this book begins, it is 1940 and we get updated on the various characters from the previous books. These include an American civilian stuck in Stockholm, a British soldier on an island off Norway, a Russian pilot from the Caucasus, a Czech fighting in the French army, an American Jew fighting in Spain, a German panzer soldier, a Jewish woman living in Germany, an American Marine in Shanghai, a Japanese soldier in Siberia and others.

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