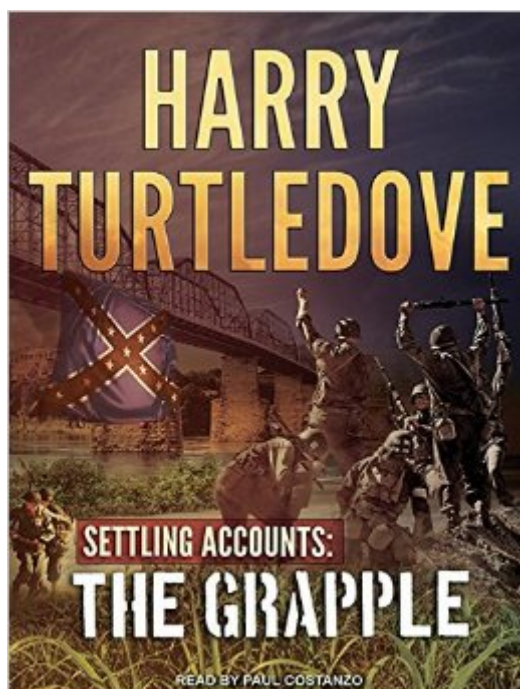


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The Grapple (Settling Accounts)



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

Series: Settling Accounts (Book 3)

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Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (86 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Plot: Volume umpteen of Harry Turtledove's seemingly endless in his South-won-the Civil-War alternate WWII series. Story picks up after the Pittsburg-Stalingrad defeat for the Confederacy and follows as the USA grinds the CSA down by a relentless drive into Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Georgia. Usual side plots galore on the seas, in Utah, and in Texas, with less on Canada this time. General weaknesses of breadth: Again, the wider world war is only barely, tantalizingly mentioned. Biggest strength: Hard to say except it's good to see all one's well-known characters back. Also, one senses that there will (hopefully) just be one more book to wind the series up. I at least enjoyed some of the little snide didja-catch-that one obscure historic references and real

characters in odd places. Castro snuck into this book for a cameo, and Oswald Mosley got another mention. Also, the North's main successful general, Irving Morrel is obviously not Sherman as some speculated but Irwin Rommel. Biggest flaw: As others have noted-- the endless repetition is one nominee. For instance, I counted over a HUNDRED references to how great CSA cigarettes were and how sucky USA ones were. As if the hundred or so times the last two books mentioned this were not enough. There are also barely changing sequences for many of the main characters, not only Dr. O'Doull, but also Sam Carstens, George Enos, and esp. Chester Martin. But my nominee for the absolute worst aspect is that the fractured plotline meant the first hundred pages or so were little but reintroducing all the characters and reminding us where we left off with them (necessary since, sadly, HT has scattered his writing efforts so much that this series rates but a book a year).

The Grapple is the third book in the Settling Accounts Trilogy, but actually the 10th book in a string that goes back to How Few Remain. Several of the characters have been featured since the second book in the string. This book takes place in the 1940's in a timeline in which the Confederacy won the Civil War in 1862 and has been an independent country ever since. World War II is underway, but the alignments are different. The USA (North) is allied with a German Monarchy against a fascist Britain and France and a Confederacy which is a strong Nazi analog. The CSA's blacks are treated as the Nazis treated Jews. As is characteristic of Harry Turtledove's serial novels, the story is told through multiple viewpoints which give a broad overview of the war, from extermination camps to battlefields in Ohio, Texas and Virginia, to ships at sea. Turtledove kills off a continuing character early in this book, also a Turtledove trademark. I have two fairly minor gripes about The Grapple. The book, and the whole series, parallel our own timeline a little too closely. The Texas extermination camps are Auschwitz/Buchenwald, Jake Featherston is Hitler, a Confederate Army in Pittsburgh stands in for Germans in Stalingrad, and so forth. Oddly enough, George Patton seems to stand in for Erwin Rommel. For my tastes, this book moves a little too slowly. I'd have preferred if Turtledove had finished the war at the end of this book. The next book of the sequence could have begun with the postwar period, war crimes trials, etc. Those complaints apart, The Grapple still reads better than most works in the field. Turtledove is a great creator of characters. Each is distinctive.

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