



On the Train

Harry Turtledove , Rachel Turtledove

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FROM PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

“Turtledoves père and fille offer two stories set on a railroad-girt world. Harry Turtledove (Supervolcano) introduces Javan, a young man from the city of Pingaspor whose third-class ticket allows him to expand his worldview, and whose ambition allows him to make a life for himself in the narrow confines of the Train. Rachel Turtledove’s story describes the first-class travels of nanny Eli, hired by the Baroness Vasri, who becomes entangled in the world of the Directors of the Railroad and the slinkers who stow away. The world of the Train is insular even as it circles the planet, offering only fleeting glimpses into the wonders beyond, whether the ravages of war or the effects more magical regions have on the Train’s mechanism. The original setting and likable characters have a surprising number of possibilities that could easily be explored in future books.”

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Is travelling on The Train a means to an end...a way to complete one’s journey...or is The Train the destination itself, rolling endlessly through realms both magical and mechanical?

And what of Javan, the lad from Pingaspor, whose third-class ticket entitles him to a spot on a hard bench? He has given up everything he had for that cherished spot. But where, exactly, is he headed?

Javan’s story is followed by the tale of nanny Eli, hired by Baroness Vasri to take care of her son and daughter as they travel on The Train in first class. But the Baroness’ agenda may run contrary to that of those running The Train...and what will become of the children?

On the Train Details

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From Reader Review On the Train for online ebook

Kate says

A bit of an uneven ride - Harry's writing is definitely more developed and skillful than his daughter's, a result of having spent much longer as a professional writer, I'm sure - but a very enjoyable one.

The concept of a world-circumnavigating train and the culture that develops aboard it (as well as the cultures - magical and technological - that exist outside) is a fascinating one, and the two stories examining The Train are excellent counterpoints to each other. Harry's examines the developing life of an ambitious boy who gets on the train, and what becomes of him as he learns life on the rails, gets married, and creates a career. Rachel's follows the escapades of a young governess suddenly caught up in a political coup involving the rail's governing families. Both are fast-paced and full of vivid characterization and description, and both make you fall in love with this world and want more.

I would've preferred a little more consistency between tales - the terminology used for the Train varied between the two stories, which didn't seem as though it should happen when a father/daughter team are developing the world and stories - but overall, the two complemented each other nicely and laid the groundwork for what could be a fascinating setting to explore further.

Sally Studley says

First off, I have really bad luck with contests and I almost did not enter the giveaway for this book. By some miracle, I actually won something for the first time in my life!

I have been reading this book aloud to my sister, and we both have enjoyed the story and Harry Turtledove's unique writing style. I would recommend that you give you story a shot. It is a pretty quick read but still immerses you in the storyworld's realm.

Pat Turner says

Stupid good! Two ripping yarns by an old master and his protegee, who just happens to be his daughter.

Lillith says

A train, a culture, passage towards the unknowable next stop

A young woman has dreamed of the train that passes her life, unreachable and mysterious. Then one day it stops for her, and her life becomes an adventure full of intrigue and magic

Brentman99 says

I think that this book has a lot of potential for a future series. I like the characters and Turtledove has left a

lot of room for growth.

I really like the concept of having a seasoned author pair up with a new one. His daughter, Rachel, Turtledove, did a really good job on her first published contribution. As Harry said, I expect to see more from her as her characters were developed almost as well as her father's. The premise worked and opened things up for more. If you like a good book, the only thing better is knowing that more will be coming. I hope that is the case here.

Worth the read.

Edward Fowler says

Great concept, but too short. I would love to see either Harry or Rachel Turtledove continue the stories of "The Train."

Jeff Crosby says

This is two novellas set in the same universe. The first novella by Harry Harrison is somewhat typical of his writing, with elements that have appeared in other stories--such as elephants pulling a train. It is largely a character piece and is a pleasant read.

The second novella is by his daughter Rachel. She uses the exact same setting, with some common locations to tell a very different story. Harry's story sets the stage. Rachel's story makes full use of that stage. I actually liked her novella more, but this is a fun book. Recommended for Doc, Kent and Ashley.

Arlian says

This was my first Turtledove book. I have a weird bias against him because I think I kind of hate his last name. I thought it was a pen name and a stupid one, but turns out it's real. I know it's a stupid reason to judge an author but what can I say? I'm weird.

I checked this book out from the local library when I was on "vacation" visiting family (...is visiting family EVER a vacation? And if it is....came I come be part of your family instead of mine??) Anyway, I snagged this because it was under 200 pages long, and I was desperately behind on my yearly reading goal, so I wanted something short I could finish in an afternoon. I'm *really* glad I stepped out of my comfort zone and read this book, because I really enjoyed it.

This book is part of the "Stellar Guild" series, where a veteran author pairs up with a novice protege of their choice. Harry Turtledove chose to work with his daughter Rachel--who, by the way, works as a teacher in the East Bay where I live. I don't know her personally or anything, I learned it from reading the introduction. However, I'm always tickled pink to find an author who lives in The Bay. This particular volume of the series has two short stories in it. The first is by Harry and the second is by Rachel. The stories aren't related, but you do have to read them in order because Harry's story explains the world that "The Train" is running in, where as Rachel's story takes it for granted that you just read the other story, so it doesn't explain as much since it's trying not to be repetitive.

Most of the other reviewers say that the first story (by Harry) was the better one, but I disagree. Rachel's story is much better. I don't really like characters (or real people) who go through life without thinking about the world around them, and the main character in Harry's story is like that. Just a weird, placid little thing that sort of bumbles along, taking advantage of good strokes of luck that go his way. Rachel's characters seem to be a bit more spunky and interesting.

All in all, I'm glad that I stepped out of my "book comfort zone" to read these short stories.

Gustavo says

A good book, composed of two short novels the kind Americans like to call novelletes or noveles. Each of them gave insightis both into the workings of the train and on the societies it passed through.

Both have sort of open endings, where several story threads closed, but the story could have continued. Both leave you with an immediate feeling of "That's it?" but then you look back and realize that "it" was a lot and you realize how good the endings are.
