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The Long War: Long Earth 2 (The Long Earth)



Synopsis

The follow-up to the No. 1 bestselling novel, *The Long Earth*. A generation after the events of *The Long Earth*, mankind has spread across the new worlds opened up by Stepping. Where Joshua and Lobsang once pioneered, now fleets of airships link the stepwise Americas with trade and culture. Mankind is shaping the Long Earth -- but in turn the Long Earth is shaping mankind. A new 'America', called Valhalla, is emerging more than a million steps from Datum Earth, with core American values restated in the plentiful environment of the Long Earth -- and Valhalla is growing restless under the control of the Datum government. Meanwhile, the Long Earth is suffused by the song of the trolls, graceful hive-mind humanoids. But the trolls are beginning to react to humanity's thoughtless exploitation. Joshua, now a married man, is summoned by Lobsang to deal with a gathering multiple crisis that threatens to plunge the Long Earth into a war unlike any mankind has waged before.

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Customer Reviews

War has come to the Long Earth. . . .Humankind has spread across the new worlds opened by explorers Joshua and Lobsang a mere decade ago. Now "civilization" flourishes, and airships link the multiple Earths. A new America christening itself "Valhalla" has emerged more than a million steps from the original Datum Earth. Like the American revolutionaries of old, the Valhallans resent being controlled from afar. And in the wake of humankind's advance, the trolls--graceful,

hive-mind humanoids whose song has suffused the Long Earth -- are beginning to fall silent . . . and disappear. Joshua, now married and a father, is summoned by Lobsang. It seems he alone can confront the perfect storm of crises that could plunge all of the Long Earth into war -- a war unlike any that has come before. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Author of the bestselling Discworld series, TERRY PRATCHETT is one of the UK's most popular -- and bestselling -- writers. His books have sold over 65 million copies worldwide and been translated into nearly 40 languages. He was awarded an OBE in 1998 and knighted in 2009 for his services to literature. He lives in Wiltshire.

I had high hopes but talk about a disappointment!! I found myself skipping sentences, then paragraphs, then pages of meandering, boring, forgettable personas, places and events. How anyone can give this mess over three stars is the real mystery - a literary scale on par with middle school. It reads like a novel from the 1970's. It's the year 2040 but could easily be mistaken for 1940 (or in some cases 1840). Apparently there has been zero technological advancement since 1998. No mention of nanotech, biotech, robotics, AI or computers. Folks have devolved to medicines from the Middle Ages - herbal drugs and "natural" methods. Our hero loses a hand and chooses to replace it with a clumsy, plastic 1980's model. He goes for an important meeting in prairie wear - Ye Haw! It's a travel journal - visit this world, that settlement, trade with cowpoke, converse with pilgrim gal, see Earth 20 million, blah blah blah. Absurdly, folks searching for someone find them fairly easily despite having millions of possible hiding sites!!! The strongly-implied lesbian romance never materializes. In fact, every relationship is forced, phony and sterile. Plot devices are too stupid to be real - "Dog" people who speak English, a space station built from bricks made in the same way as the Egyptians did, humanoid races who are (of course) inquisitive, friendly, innocent and caring. Characters are utter and complete caricatures found in lazy novels - evil politician, friendly cowboy, jealous wife, crazy religious zealot, adorable alien, etc. When will authors learn that less is more? I purchased the third novel in the series at the same time so I will give it a try but am not holding my breath. My grade - D-

I thought this book was far less enjoyable than its predecessor, The Long Earth. In this sequel, we get a few tantalizing glimpses of possible new discoveries (the rumor of someone who steps in a direction other than East/West, the ray gun without a full explanation, the idea of a matriarchal dog society at odds with humanity, stapling, and the space travel possibilities, to name a few) but none

of these concepts are ever explored. Further, the China/Roberta story arc seems to serve no purpose, the story of Joshua vs. the Beagles is brought to a sudden, unsatisfying conclusion, Agnes is nothing more than a footnote despite the possible issues of what it means to be human being unexplored, and the whole Joshua vs. Lobsang conflict seemed contrived at best. Very disappointed in this sequel... In fact, I would say I was as disappointed in this book as I was thrilled by the first novel. That one was nearly pitch-perfect. I felt cheated by this book. It seemed like it was slapped together hurriedly, and it dragged on and on until the final two chapters when it suddenly seemed rushed to an artificial conclusion.

I quite liked "The Long Earth", to which this novel is a sequel. The idea of an infinity of worlds sitting 'sideways' from each other, accessible by a simple potato driven electronics circuit - or not even that if you are a natural "stepper" - created an excellent premise for a novel of discovery and wonder. But even as that novel wrapped up, and the opportunity for this sequel became obvious, I wondered whether the premise would support it. And my conclusion after finishing "The Long War" is that it can't. It seems that for this plot at least, an infinity of worlds (or even the 22-million odd noted in the story) seems to overwhelm the authors imagination. As it probably would most of us, but we're not selling a story about it! One of the main problems I had was 'doing the math' and pretty much every time I kept coming up with the conclusion that the human population spread across these many hundreds of thousands of earths would be so diffuse that most of the plot points can't make sense. Similarly, what's with the trolls? For them to do what they are supposed to be doing - signing the song of The Long Earth **and** keeping the grass mown on so many worlds by eating their body weight in flora - there would have to be so many you could not move for the buggers. And each would have to have a brain bigger than a blue whale! Also, how do their songs all come together? How do the USA trolls hear the songs of the Australian trolls and the Russian trolls etc. etc.? Another one...if The Gap imparts momentum when you step into it, when you step back you are more likely to be high in the air than at ground level, so how does that work? The Long War is replete with such lazy accounting that ignores the consequences of what the novel presents. The human characters also suffer from laziness, but in this case it's more motivational and personality-wise. Take Sally, who has an unlikely ear-to-the-ground on most things that are happening, to the point that she can step right into frame, time upon time. OK, we know from "The Long Earth" that she has shortcuts that span many worlds at once, but still. There is just too much volume for one person to track and trace all the events, major and minor, that she knows about. Also, the apparent reason she is even stepping out, so to speak, was disclosed in "The Long Earth"

and then totally ignored in this novel. It seemed an unnecessary oversight of the motivation of a major character. As does her grumpy nature. Surely someone as acerbic as her, with the habit of literally disappearing before your eyes when conversations get disagreeable to her, would be marginalized by most people? Perhaps Sally represents some kind of mythic American mid-West ideal of the authors - Annie Oakley on speed, maybe? Whatever, her horrid behavior seemed at odds with the amazing outcomes she could engender. Likewise Joshua, our latter day Daniel Boone/poster child for all things right with stepping. He's ten years older, married with a son, Mayor of one of the little villages that populate The Long Earth...and all to ready to put that aside because Sally drops in and demands he "do something". The problem for me was that the problem Joshua is sent to fix is so obviously human nature that any 'fix' that applied across The Long Earth is impossible to reconcile. Irrespective, off Joshua goes with nary a clue, wading into situation upon situation for which he is ill-prepared, pretty much because he's the type of guy who has to fight the good fight, no matter the odds or even that the fight makes no sense. Even worse in terms of character development, Joshua's wife, Helen, is consistently painted as some kind of haridan-in-training, not so much the Woman Behind the Man, as the Woman Holding the Man Back. This is so at odds with the moxy she displayed in "The Long Earth" that it needed an explanation, but of course none was given. Then there are the series of chapter-in-chapter stories:- A Chinese expedition 20-million worlds East that was a yawn fest and I think solely included to introduce a few new characters for the inevitable Volume 3 of this series that is due in 2014.- A US Navy expedition across the American Aegis to 'wave the flag' that was interesting enough but ultimately pointless (apart from the need to introduce a few new characters for the inevitable Volume 3 of this series that is due in 2014).- More sapient cultures, in this case a motley collection of step-able and step-unable humanoids and others who were reduced to 'bad guy' variants in terms of plot development. And I'm sure they'll also appear in the inevitable Volume 3 of this series that is due in 2014.- Yellowstone National Park, which is given a strong "Humans destroy the environment and looked what happened" cameo for no apparent reason. Taken together, none of this created a story. Indeed, for the most part these narratives played out independently of each other, only coming together at the end of the novel but not in terms of story arc...I mean actually physically coming together like the cast of a TV show "you can't wait for next season" teaser episode. About the only character I found consistently interesting was Lobsang. He's a cracker; please Pratchett and Baxter, just write about him next time! Finally, for a book written by two English authors, "The Long War" is tediously US-centric. It would be cynical of me to think that is deliberate to garner more sales...but that's what I think! Sure there are some little vignettes of other countries and cultures, but

they are nibbles in a smÃfÃ¶rgÃfÆ'Ã Â¥sbord of American culture. That joker earth with the radioactive pyramid gets more air-time than the whole of Europe! For me, this was a lackluster effort. The authors seemed to balk at the sheer audacity of their own concept, eschewing gritty realism, the very likely degeneration of all our current national and cultural identities, and the numerical consequences of an infinity of worlds, to create a young adult adventure yarn that barely skims the surface of the amazing multiverse they have created.

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