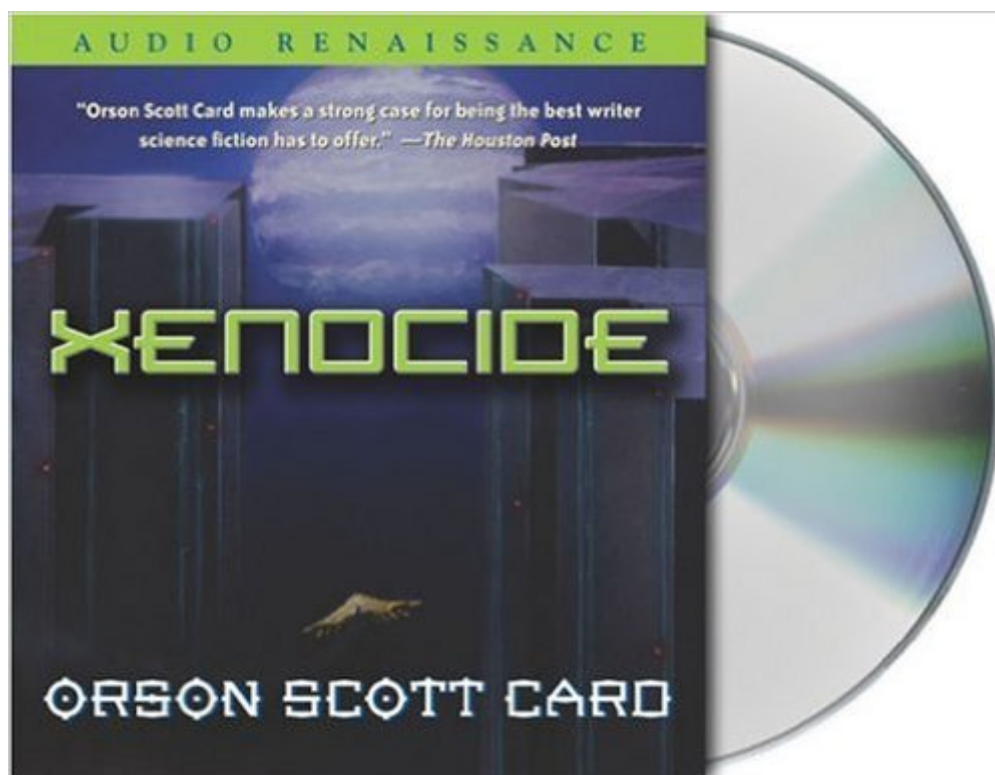


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Xenocide: Volume Three Of The Ender Quintet



Synopsis

In Lusitania, Ender found a world where humans and pequininos and the Hive Queen could all live together; where three very different intelligent species could find common ground at last. But Lusitania also harbors the descolada, a virus that kills all humans it infects, but which the pequininos require in order to become adults. The Startways Congress so fears the effects of the descolada, should it escape from Lusitania, that they have ordered the destruction of the entire planet, and all who live there. The Fleet is on its way and a second xenocide seems inevitable. Until the fleet vanishes. The task of discovering how the ships disappeared falls to Gloriously Bright, the most brilliant analytical mind in a world of people bred for superintelligence. There is little doubt that she can solve the puzzle; but will she choose life or death for the three races who live on Lusitania? Xenocide is the third novel in Orson Scott Card's Ender Quintet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It seems the reviewers of this book are divided into two camps. Some hated the book because it doesn't live up to Ender's Game and Speaker for the Dead, because the "plot" is boring and minimal, because it's too long and drags, etc. Others rate Xenocide highly because of its well developed characters and its treatment of ethical issues. Both views are valid to some extent, but if you're able to accept this book for what it is, then you'll find it's a superb book, well worth the time to read it. Ender's Game is all about Ender's childhood development, as he trains to become the savior

of humanity. *Speaker for the Dead* explores some larger issues as it tracks Ender's healing of Novinha's dysfunction family, and the plot is kept going partially through the mysteries concerning the pequininos. *Xenocide* is different from both of these in that there's no real main character, and very little plot; instead, the focus of the story is the dilemma faced by the three sentient species of Lusitania. Within this framework, Card explores a number of unusual ethical questions, such as whether human survival justifies the extermination of another species, and whether fear of the unknown will always be a barrier when interacting with those unlike ourselves. He also develops the complex web of love and hatred within Novinha's family, and the nature of the relationships within it. At times it was almost painful to read about the emotional states of the characters, so well did Card depict it. Yet I was completely hooked from the start, and I marvel at his ability to write about some very abstract issues within a science fiction setting. If anything, the situation Card created was too hopeless, and once things started resolving the plot became a bit incredulous.

Three months ago I was introduced to Orson Scott Card through his book *Ender's Game* (Ender, Book 1). Seeing how awesome his envisioning of modern technology (a lot of which have come true since the book was published) and study of human nature was, I eagerly jumped into the second book of the series, *Speaker for the Dead* (Ender, Book 2). This book was even better!! True, it was not as action backed as "*Ender's Game*" but nonetheless it was an amazing book that dove deep into the human behavior. How does one treat an alien race that is different than one's own? How about a human who is reacting out of guilt and secrecy? Can you learn to understand someone, even when they are 'evil' and do bad things? It was with great joy that I picked up the third book in the series, "*Xenocide*" (especially since book two ended before everything was resolved). Sadly enough, I have to report that "*Xenocide*" failed to uphold the same standard as the first two... =(Well, kind of... the first three-fourth of the book was fairly good as Card tried hard to explore how one could live side-by-side with aliens, who by their very existence, places your life in danger. He also explores the nature of life and what it means to be alive. I grant you that these are not easy questions/topics to explore...so some grace must be given to Card for tackling such concepts.

"*Xenocide*" continues the compelling storyline begun in "*Speaker for the Dead*". Having violated the strict policy of the Starways Congress regarding interference with indigenous species, the human colony on the planet Lusitania has been targeted for dissolution. The added factor of the existence of the killer (and highly contagious) genetic virus, *Descolada*, on Lusitania has led the Congress to order to the planet be destroyed before the colonists or other indigenous life can leave and spread

the virus elsewhere. On Lusitania, a group of colonists, led by Ender Wiggin and his adopted family, are in a race against time to find an antidote to the Descolada (not just a 'fix' like they are using currently) and find a way to stop the Fleet that is being sent to destroy the planet. The official full partnership between the 'piggies' species and the humans threatens to break apart under the stress of the events surrounding the Descolada and arrival of the Fleet. "Xenocide" is, on many levels, as equally captivating as "Speaker for the Dead" because author Orson Scott Card focuses on what he does best, character development and character interactions. Such focus is what made "Speaker for the Dead" and "Ender's Game" spectacular novels and Nebula award winners. "Xenocide" keeps much of that momentum going. The politics on the planet among the species (the Buggers have also been reborn there) are quite compelling. The efforts of the high-minded members of the human and piggie species to prevent the ignition of a bloody civil war caused by ignorant members of both species is both harrowing and suspenseful. The events take place 30 years after "Speaker for the Dead" and Novinha's children are all grown now and play major roles in the resolution of this conflict.

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