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# United States Of Japan



## Synopsis

A spiritual sequel to *The Man In The High Castle*, focusing on the New Japanese Empire, from an acclaimed author and essayist. The Axis won WWII and now, in the late 1980s, the Japanese Empire rules over the western US states, their power assured by technological superiority (giant mecha, etc.) But when a video game emerges that posits a world where the allies won, a game censor and an Imperial Government agent discover truths about the empire that make them question their loyalty. From the Trade Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Preface: I was given an ARC for this novel by the publisher. First line: The death of the United States of America began with a series of signatures. I saw the gorgeous cover of this book, and immediately wanted to read it. I assumed it was in the vein of *Pacific Rim*, *Kaiju Rising*, or *Project Nemesis*, and it would involve big ass robots fighting big ass monsters. It doesn't. There's a couple of scenes with hot robot-on-robot action, but for the most part this book is far more interested in delving into questions like "What would it be like to be on of Orwell's thought police?" and "What kind of weird tech would an Japanized America make?" with the emphasis on weird. We're not

talking zany weird, either. This isn't Welcome to Night Vale or Terry Pratchett. This is a crimelord who has his minions that were genetically modified. At one point you get a gun grafted onto a main character. This is cyberpunk/dystopian/Netrunner kind of weird. The main characters aren't very likable, but I really think that's sort of the point. One's a government censor, and the other is a member of the secret police. Their job is to oppress the populace and ensure that the Emperor's rule is maintained. By making them the protagonists, it allows the author to examine the questions of "What's the place of government?" and "How should the populace be controlled/directed?" The book was well written, but I felt that the storyline was a little choppy with the transitions sort of jarring. It's very possible that this was the intention of the author, but it's not the sort of thing that I enjoy. The conclusion was satisfying and the book felt like it earned it. Final Verdict: I enjoyed it.

United States of Japan takes a similar premise as Philip K Dick's The Man in the High Castle in an even more dystopian direction, that premise being that America lost the war, Nazi Germany has the Eastern portion, Japan has the Western portion and Nazi's and the Japanese Empire distrustful frenemies. All of the action takes place on the west coast with the Nazi's being a mere mention. If you like your visions of the future dark and dystopian, there's plenty of that here. There is also plenty of hope and a recognition of fortitude in the face of totalitarianism. This is a personal journey and a political movement. There are no one dimensional characters (although some of the bad guys are thoroughly bad) What makes this book such a rare gem is that it manages to do all things well. Its writing is clever, careful and often beautifully phrased, which is especially challenging with contemporary dialog (about which more later). America, mainly focused on California, is reeling in the aftermath of its devastating post-World War II loss. In depicting said America, Mr. Tieryas' follows Chekhov's dictum: "Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass." He does so in spades, painting the scene in all of its livid, detailed glory which sometimes presents surprises and is always all too believable. The characters are multidimensional, interesting and, often, not nice. They, too, are full of surprises. The cohesive narrative flows quickly while pulling you completely in and spitting you, wrung out, by the end. Often, good books do two or three of these aspects of writing well; Mr. Tieryas accomplishes the rare feat of nailing every one, making this a great book.

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