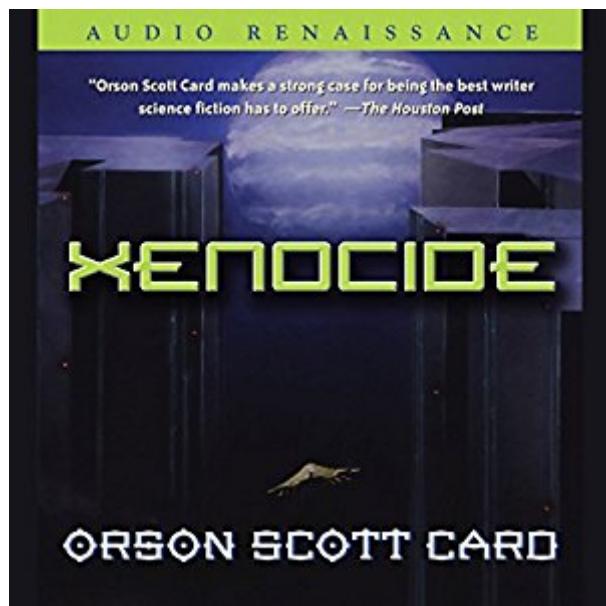


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# Xenocide



## **Synopsis**

The war for survival of the planet Lusitania will be fought in the heart of a child named Gloriously Bright. On 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. Or so he thought. 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, a second xenocide seems inevitable. Xenocide is the third novel in Orson Scott Card's Ender Quintet. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is the fourth of Card's Ender books I have read, and I think I like it best. It is not as focused as Ender's Game, but (almost) convincingly ties together a more complex story. Xenocide of species converges here: humans, Buggers, Piggies, intelligent virus, and Jane (a super-super-computer, of sorts)--all are at risk from one another (except for Jane, who is vulnerable but not a threat to anyone). Card is superb at rendering character (although Ender still eludes me), with considerable psychological insight. His writing is lucid and has the patina of believability, even when he discusses deep issues in genetics, ecology, physics and philosophy. I did find the denouement a bit contrived (the deus ex machina of instantaneous travel via something called "Outer" space, a transcendent dimension). Still, I was carried through a rich and complex story to a conclusion that ties up

ALMOST all the loose ends.

I absolutely loved the first two novels and tried really hard to finish this book. Ender goes from brilliant in the first two novels to stupid in this one, without explanation, apparently without Orson Scott Card even acknowledging this. The sci-fi is outlandish, but I might have survived had the details been left to my imagination, but Card goes on and on trying to justify it, forcing me to endure nonsense far too long. After asking two friends of mine whether it's worth pushing through to finish, both said it doesn't improve, and I quit.

Never before have I been so enamored by characters in a book or any story. As I read this third book of the Ender series I have come to love not only fictitious characters but aliens from another world like Ender himself had. Card does justice to the story as if he himself were the speaker of the dead and in his mind he carried the history of the universe prior. Never had I shed so many tears in my life, not even as a child, not for loss or pain, than I have for this story. The science even if it is fiction or theory, is remarkable. The struggles that the characters experience, whether interpersonal or the problems on a grander scale. Even the characters I came to despise for their imperfections I came to love and weep for. I yearn for this existence, as Ender existed. Yet I am grateful that I sit in an observer's chair that I may not experience a suffering akin to his.

Orson Scott Card will go down in history as a compelling author, but he seriously needs to revisit the idea of an editor. In parts of his stories, the pace lags and he grinds an idea to death, and then it picks up again. Where he takes you is what keeps you reading as his ideas are stellar, thoughtful and mind blowing in the direction of where he moves you. For anyone who saw the movie, "Children of the Mind", do not judge the book by the movie. Judge it by the series of books that lead up to it. I reread them all before the movie came out and although I enjoyed the movie, it was nothing compared to the book (as is often the case). Xenocide 3 was perhaps the least favorite of all five of his books, but worth it for the whole experience.

Mixing religion into works of science fiction is nothing new. Most of the time it simply does not work, as the respective authors will wind up misapplying Judeo-Christian symbols or interpreting them in an overly-literal manner. Mr. Card, however, manages to avoid that problem by not trying to interpret prophecy, but instead dealing with religion from a sociopolitical viewpoint. The story is set 3000 years in the future after Ender, still haunted by his decision to destroy the Bugger race in a

desperate gambit to avoid Humanity's destruction, has at last settled down upon the planet of, Lusitania, a primitive and strangely barren world. It is here that Ender attempts to atone for his sins by relocating the final surviving Bugger Hive Queen. He must also deal with the Piggies, the indigenous people of Lusitania. The Piggies are sort of like Ewoks who can speak Human languages fluently and who have a very unusual method of reproduction. The planet is also home to the Descolada, an unbelievably deadly and adaptive mutagenic virus which may or may not be sentient. Unfortunately, because all worlds are linked together the the Ansible system, sort of an instantaneous interstellar Internet, Starways Congress, Humanity's governing body, also knows of the Descolada, and they send a fleet to destroy Lusitania before the Descolada can spread to other planets...In thirty years, the fleet will arrive with the dreaded Little Doctor superweapon and Lusitania will be obliterated... First of all, let me say that Mr. Card's writing is seriously TIGHT. There are no holes in the plot whatsoever. He paints a fascinating picture of a world wherein people think and plan in terms of decades or even generations. The Ender Universe is kind of an anti-Star-Trek, a world where alien races are extremely rare, and where (initially, at least) interstellar travel is limited by the speed of light. There is little physical action in the story as everything is decided through lengthy intellectual and theological discussions... The only problem that I have with the story --and it is a relatively minor quibble at best-- is the apparent belief which Mr. Card expresses that language and religion 3000 years from now will be essentially unchanged from what they are today, when most likely, both will be completely unrecognizable from their current forms. Also, every planet in the story has ONE religion and one religion only, not a dominant faith and many minority beliefs. Such a spiritually homogeneous system is somewhat hard to believe in a society where there is free interchange of information to and from worlds. Also, in the story one of the alien races converts to Roman Catholicism, easily and universally. In my opinion, while an alien race may find a lot to agree with among Human faiths, it is more than a bit of a stretch to picture an entire species wholeheartedly embracing a Human religious dogma. Such matters aside, I cannot recommend this book strongly enough! I am looking forward most intensely to beginning Book Four in the series.

I loved Ender's Game, Speaker for the Dead was a great follow up. Then there was Xenocide. It was too long. It didn't have a whole lot to keep you really interested. The concepts in the book were really cool, but I'm sorry, reading about them in full detail became boring and kind of hard to follow. I don't like being made to feel like I need a physics degree to follow along with the story. He almost completely wrote Novinha out of the book, along with some of the other children. The whole of this book seemed a little too forced to really fit in line with the series. I'm still a fan, I think Card is a very

good author and I have just begun reading Children of the Mind, but I was just not thrilled with this one. And the ending? I was mad that it finished that way. Dull and boring.

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