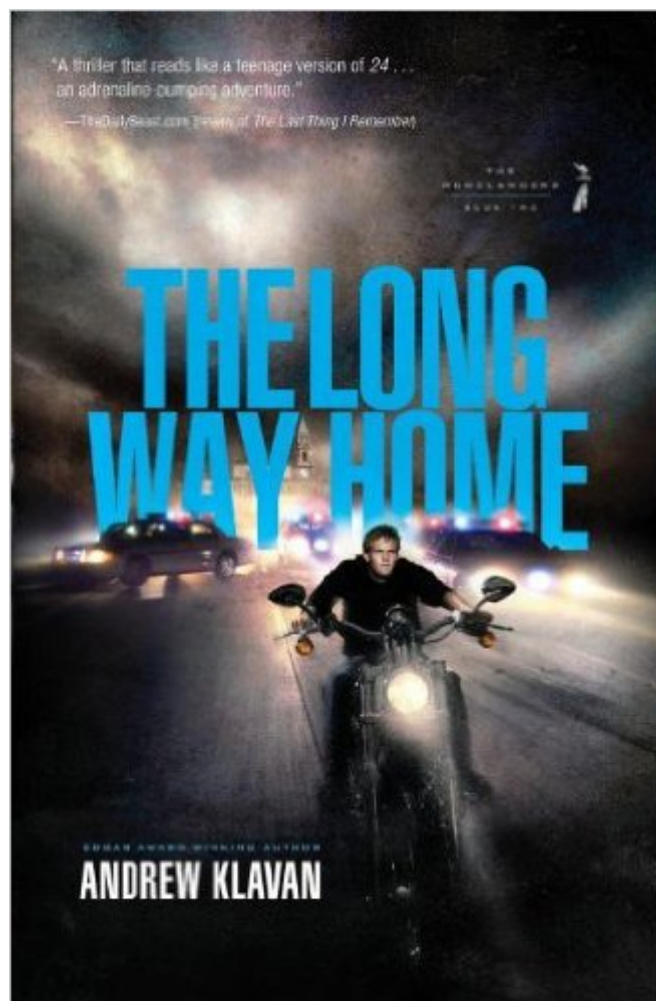


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# The Long Way Home (The Homelanders)



## Synopsis

Sometimes you have to go home to find out who you really are. Charlie West went to bed one night an ordinary high-school student. He woke up a hunted man. Terrorists are trying to kill him. The police want to arrest him for the stabbing death of his best friend. He doesn't know whose side he's on or who he can trust. With his pursuers closing in on every side, Charlie makes his way back to his hometown to find some answers. There, holed up in an abandoned mansion, he's joined by his friends in a desperate attempt to discover the truth about a murder he can't remember and the love he can never forget.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although it features a fugitive for a hero and the police are generally his adversaries, this book is very conservative. Other characters mockingly refer to Charlie's patriotism and his character as a "True Believer" in home, God, and Country, but the undercurrent of the book is that Charlie is absolutely right to be a True Believer and his faith is what gets him through the tough times. Charlie has no proof for his belief that he is innocent and that he is "the good guy," and his faith suffers sometimes. Ultimately, though, faith is what keeps him going. He believes that proof is out there, and the action-packed backdrop for this crisis of faith drives the narrative. Most readers will only notice the action--my son raved about certain fight scenes and another somewhat spooky scene--but I don't think it's a coincidence that this is published by Thomas Nelson, a traditionally Christian publisher. The moral absolutism behind this book clearly posits that good and evil exist as

real entities, that faith is justified even in the absence of facts, and that moral relativism is a slippery slope to terrorism (at one point a character as much as states this as a tautology). Conservative parents will probably applaud these underlying themes, but more liberal-minded folks may take offense. Parents trying to teach that right and wrong only make sense in context and that there are no "absolutely true" things in life may find that this book subverts their point of view. On the other hand, parents who are teaching that some things are just right and some are just wrong will find subtle moral support behind the 24-esque action of this adventure.

Excitement was what I felt when I saw the second installment of The Homelanders Series. In the last book, *THE LAST THING I REMEMBER*, readers were left with a lot of questions. Charlie West went to bed one night. When he awoke, he'd been captured by a group calling themselves the Homelanders and that wasn't the worse part. A year had gone by and he has no memory of it. If that wasn't bad enough, he's been found guilty of murdering his friend. In book two, Charlie West is still on the run from the police and the Homelanders. He heads back to his hometown where he finds his friends, Miler, Josh, Rick, and his girlfriend, Beth. They believe he's innocent and help him find some answers as to who is behind the terrorist group. Beth fills him in on parts of the year he can't remember. This series is written with a Christian slant. The preachiness seen in many of the Christian YA books is replaced with realistic values and Charlie West is very pro-America. Both this and the first book are packed with plenty of action that had me flying through the pages.

The second book in the Homelanders series continues with the main character, Charlie West. Charlie woke up one day as a wanted man and he doesn't know why. Both terrorists and the police are trying to catch Charlie and all he wants are some answers. He goes home to try to find the reason behind the situation he has found himself in. His friends from home join Charlie and his quest for what has happened. The first book in this series was great and this book is a great continuation. It's a fast paced book leaving you wanting for more. Highly recommended.

The Homelanders Series continues with this second book as teen hero and fleeing fugitive Charlie West makes his way home to investigate the murder he was falsely charged with and to re-connect with his girlfriend, Beth. The action and suspense climax along with the character development as the confused and amnesic Charlie tries to figure out who he is, who the good guys are, and what he should do next. This was one of my favorite books of the series because the budding romance added another layer to the story, and also because it ended neatly with some resolutions despite

the remaining mysteries. This book, unfortunately, didn't have a Reading Group Guide as the previous and latter books do. With all the books in this series, I think there is an excellent opportunity for parents to discuss the book and its elements with their teenage readers. And certainly, this book, which delves deeply into questions of identity, morality, faith and patriotism, is an important one not to overlook.

The continuation of *The Last Thing I Remember* is just as thrilling as the first. The story continues and now Charlie West is running with a little more information but just as much confusion. Charlie now knows the crime he was committed for and what day it is, but there still many holes in his past. Where are his parents, how did the girl of his dreams become his girl, how was he found guilty in a crime he is sure he didn't do, and who are the goons trying to kill him. Charlie decides the best way to get answers is to go back to the beginning of this mess. He heads home. This book gives only a few answers. We now know who is chasing him, but we are not really sure why. We know that there was evidence stacked up against him that made it hard for a jury to find him innocent. We know the story between him and his girlfriend. We also find out a more about the people from his past including his friends, his teachers, and his karate instructor. Charlie is still a great character in my mind. I love his commitment and his moral compass. He doesn't give up and tries to do things the right way. The only problem Charlie struggles with is that running from the cops is the right thing but also may be the wrong thing. We do get to meet his friends in this book. I really liked all of them. I like that they stick by him, they know him well enough to believe he never killed Alex. They will do what they can to help him out. This leads them straight to danger. Charlie does what he can to keep his friends out of it, but they insist on helping and land themselves right in the middle of a very dangerous game. Charlie now has to worry about getting himself out of a sticky situation while saving the life of another. The first part of the story was a little slower than the first book but when it picked up it really picked up and I couldn't get the pages read fast enough. I am looking forward to getting to the last two books to see how it all ends.

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