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Hidden Empire



Synopsis

In this sequel to Card's bestselling novel *Empire*, Averell Torrent has become President of the United States, with enormous political and popular support and, if people only realized it, a tight grip on the reins of both political parties. He has launched America into a get-tough, this-world-is-our-empire foreign policy stance. But Captain Bartholomew Coleman, known as Cole to his friends and enemies alike, sees the danger Torrent poses to American democracy and the potential disasters involved in his foreign military adventures. Cole quickly runs afoul of Torrent; on the run, he and a few friends and allies seek proof of how Torrent orchestrated the political takeover that included assassinating a President and nearly starting a civil war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Card combines flag-waving, political diatribe and Christian fervor in this bombastic sequel to 2007's *Empire*. The young American Empire is confronted with its first major crisis since the Progressive War: the appearance in Africa of a highly communicable and lethal disease. America quarantines the entire continent, while pompous President Torrent dispatches an elite team of supersoldiers to help slow the disease's spread. Young Mark Malich is compelled by his Christian principles to volunteer to help the benighted African natives, but he winds up in a Nigerian hospital targeted for destruction by malevolent Sudanese soldiers, leading to questions about Torrent's true goals. An evil dictator is named Idi De Gaulle, the bad guys machine-gun live babies, and FOX News gets prominent placement, but the only people likely to pick this up are those who share Card's politics,

rendering subtlety less necessary. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Card picks up the near-future launched in *Empire* (2006) a few years later, at first in Nigeria, where a 12-year-old monkey-catcher becomes the second victim and first survivor of a new, hypervirulent epidemic. Back in the post-9/11 second civil war U.S., President Torrent decides to quarantine all Africa and to send *Empire's* surviving hero's special-ops team to Nigeria to stop its government's genocidal operation against its non-Muslim population, among whom the epidemic started. Before long, and at the conscience-prodding of her 13-year-old son, *Empire's* nonsurviving hero's widow, a top presidential advisor, is spearheading a voluntary effort to nurse the sick and train caregivers, starting at the plague's ground zero. Such is the setup for an even more potent blend of high-tech military action, imperial politics, conspiracy, and practical philosophizing than Card whipped up in *Empire*. While the dialogue is often as cornball and Hollywoodish as before (particularly among the soldiers), the adult principals are sturdy, and in the African boy, Chinma, Card gives us a kid hero to rank with his sf immortals, Ender and Bean. --Ray Olson --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Unusual for Orson Scott Card, the ending of this book doesn't follow from what we see of the characters in the first three quarters of the novel. Characters are underdeveloped, with some who have an interesting introduction neglected later on. Also atypical for Card, there's much less showing, and much more telling of what characters think and who they are. It's a disappointing end to the fantastic story begun in *Empire*.

Card went from Scify to fantasy to what should be considered for a Pulitzer. This novel of a possible near future, tells a story with such passion, that it brought me to tears more than once. It also made me review and think about politics and government. I hope he completed this trilogy or expands. One pasage he defines knowledge as a shared belief. I have taken that to my class, for example we label the wave frequency of Red as Red, There was no reason why we could not have called it green with out changing the fact (physics) of the observation. He is more than a novelist, he is a teacher.

Empire and *Hidden Empire*: I think these books are nothing but the author's political and religious views with a thin veneer of fiction slapped over them. Very disappointing. What happened to this

guy? He used to write amazing speculative fiction! So sad.

It's interesting to see Card build this up slowly - he takes time and is careful with the plot, unlike in the first book where the action was sudden and early. The deeper question about benevolent tyranny and what to do about it remains unresolved, suggesting a third edition. But the characters are uncommon and deeper than expected. I give this book 4 stars for that.

It just isn't quite clear what his politics are, maybe Orson should write a book to clarify. I mean he still has some interesting ideas but the heavy handedness ruined it for me. I don't know why I thought it would be any better than the prequel, my bad. I really liked Ender's Game as a kid.

I wasn't sure how this story was going to work when I started, but you can always count on OSC to surprise you with some clever plot twists and an unexpected resolution. It's still kind of different reading Card without and true fantasy or supernatural elements, but he is a master at storytelling, and this book was no exception.

I have been reading Orson Scott Card since the mid-80's and have read over 30 of his books. I really think that the Empire series has been a letdown from his previous work. Nothing in either book really stood out and grabbed me-- unlike Ender's Game, Seventh Son, or even Enchantment. I probably rated the book as high as I did just because of the who the author is. Oh well, that is only my opinion....others may like the book and I don't want to ruin it for them.

"Empire" was stellar. Groundbreaking. One of the most original concepts I had read in years. "Hidden Empire" was bunk. Feels more like the author wanted to write his personal politics into the first one but good editing screened them out until a sequel could be guaranteed. Go buy Empire now. But if you must read this consider using a library.

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