

Empire (Review)

Written by Administrator

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This is a first on *RobertRaymond.com*, a review for an audiobook. But there you go. We listened to it on a road trip up to North Carolina and I figure it counts. A lot of people swear by this form of literature – my commute is too short and often it's on a bike, but if it works, why not?

Anyway, *Empire* is a tale set fifteen minutes into the future, that of the Second American Civil War. The premise is good – that the rupture between the left and right has grown so significant (on every issue) that a shooting war might be just around the corner. I rather enjoyed the historical prospective at the outset, that the Roman Empire (whose fall everyone equates to every little thing concerning our own culture) is not entirely correct. Rome fell from a dictatorship, one arrived at when their republic went through its own civil war and in the prospect of greater safety, elected a dictator. From there came the downfall.

Since going on from this point would involve spoilers, I'll be vague in my issues with the book. Also, I don't want to piss off half my readers who might not share my political view. So, with that, assume two political stances, A and B. The president is assassinated, and immediately after that, one of the sides nearly throws a coup, making the other side react and seize New York. Fine. The deal is, one of the sides is pure as the driven snow, dupes of the other, a pawn in their game. The other side, the aggressors, spout straw-man political statements. Several states began to consider a sympathetic secession. Add to this the fact that the aggressor side has been developing sophisticated weapons systems (in a vast underground complex – shades of Bond movies) and you've got the makings of a beach book, nothing deeper.

There are even real world media heads and their networks, shown with what can be seen as a very sympathetic portrayal. It's clear – one side is good, the other bad.

Which is why, when the dust settles and the baddies have been beaten by the action-figure goodies, Card's "Afterward", with his caution of painting those you don't agree with with a broad and simplistic brush, seems so misplaced. You can't vilify such a situation, clearly choosing sides with dynamic heroes and craven villains, and then, with the last of your ink, plead for moderation.

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I'll give his story this – it was still interesting. Sure, the heroes seemed to stumble into every event that happened. But there is a titanic plot twist at one point, one that rocks the story and made my wife and I blink in our seats, exchanging glances and “Wait. What?”s. It was a George R.R. Martin sort of thing, if you know what I mean.

But simplistic and one-sided as the story is, it was a fun read (listen). On the trip home, I was involved in a minor car accident (not my fault – got my mirror clipped off by a youthfully distracted driver (i.e. an idiot)). After we got the insurance information and got back on the highway, a few miles along, my wife asked, “Can we listen to the story some more?” Yes, she was hooked. It's got that sort of pull.

I'll give this one something between a “meh” and a nod. Check it out. And if you have a long drive ahead of you, it will make the miles fly by.

[>>>NO AUDIO BOOK FOR “EARLY RETYREMENT” YET, BUT IF YOU BUY A COPY, MAYBE I’LL SIT IN YOUR BACK SEAT AND READ IT ALOUD TO YOU. BUY THEM HERE!<<<](#)