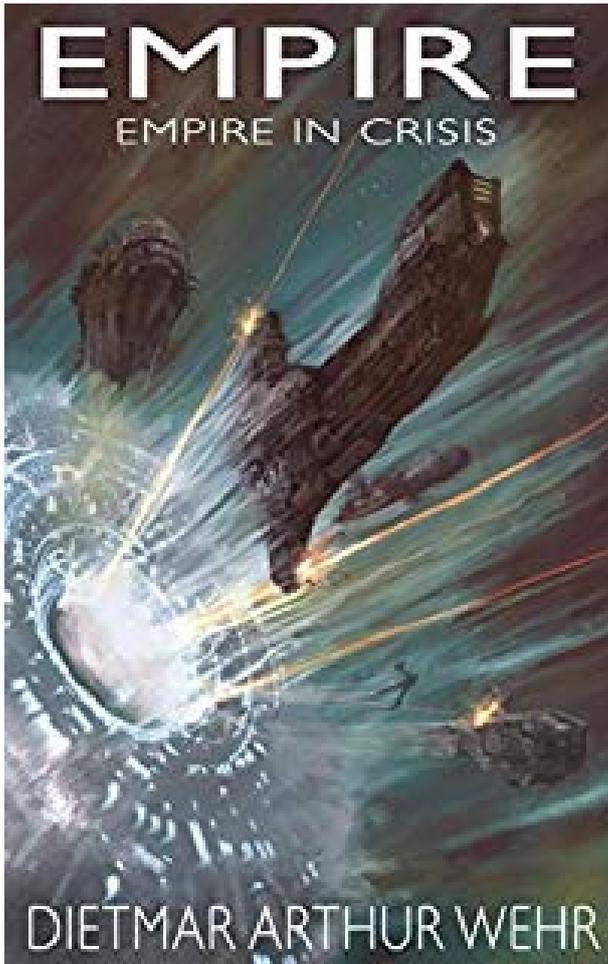


Empire in Crisis



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The Empire is a political entity that encompasses hundreds of colonized worlds united by a common language (Esperanto) and under a single individual, the Emperor. But the Empire is getting old and creaky. Its government is riddled with corruption and is choking on red tape. The Space Force is bloated with the incompetent who have risen to high rank due to nepotism and patronage. The Emperor has been assassinated and the Empire is surrounded by alien races that are becoming more hostile and more powerful as time goes on. When an exploration fleet in the rift between sections of the spiral arm are attacked by an unknown race, the dead Emperor's clone-son, now on the throne, recognizes that the Empire is standing at the edge of an abyss and must find a way to not only win this new war against the alien aggressors but also overcome the inertia of the arrogant Space Force officers who are more ready to overthrow their Emperor than fight the war.

Fans of military SF action will find it in this book. Excerpt: “Ah, not so fast, Ren.

We've just picked up five, I repeat, five unidentified ships heading this way at point eight cee. If they maintain this speed, they'll get here in about thirteen minutes. Here's the interesting thing. They're coming from the same direction as your longitudinal signal. I think it's highly likely that they came out of that same

wormhole just a short while before you found it. Standby while we try to make contact with the rest of the squadron.” Logan stepped closer to Montoya’s Command Chair. When Montoya turned his head in Logan’s direction, Logan leaned over and said, “If they came out of this wormhole, there may be more of them emerging at any moment. I recommend we pull back to extreme detection range.” Montoya nodded. “See to it immediately, SubCommander.” Logan went over to the Helm Station and told the Helm Officer what he wanted done. Detection of ships using warp drive was limited to a range of just under 11 light minutes or 200 million kilometers.

At Bird of Prey’s maximum speed of 4.

4 times the speed of light, travelling that distance would take just 2.5 minutes. The trick was to stay in contact with the relay ship by longitudinal wave transmission. That wasn’t a problem for Logan’s ship since they knew exactly where to point their transmitter, but the relay ship had to be kept updated via data transmission as to what Bird of Prey was doing so that it could adjust its transmitter to compensate.

Logan checked the chronometer for elapsed time since the relay ship had begun detecting the bogeys. Almost four minutes had gone by. He wondered about the bogey’s speed. If they were capable of faster speeds, why not do so? Could it be that their detection range was shorter than the squadron’s light cruisers’? His thoughts were interrupted by the voice of Black Eagle’s commander. “Oh Christ! Ren, those five bogeys have just boosted to four point six cee! They’ll be here within ninety seconds! We haven’t been able to make contact with any other ship yet! I’m taking us to Battle Stations, Ren! Stand by!” “XO, bring us to Battle Stations too.” Montoya’s voice had been calm. Logan wondered if his CO’s stomach was churning just as much as his own was right now.

Logan put his Command helmet back on and used the virtual controls to sound the Battle Stations alarm. “We’re at Battle Stations, Comma—“ Logan’s sentence was cut off by Magnasson’s voice.