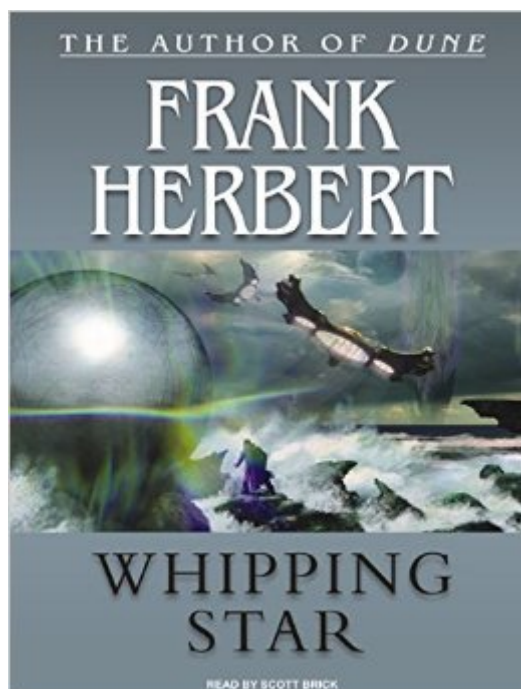


The book was found

Whipping Star



Synopsis

In the far future, humankind has made contact with numerous other species-Gowachin, Laclac, Wreaves, Pan Spechi, Taprisiots, and Caleban (among others)-and has helped to form the ConSentiency to govern between the species. After suffering under a tyrannous pure democracy that had the power to create laws so fast that no thought could be given to the effects, the sentients of the galaxy found a need for the Bureau of Sabotage (BuSab) to slow the wheels of government, thereby preventing it from legislating recklessly. In Whipping Star, Jorj X. McKie, a "Saboteur Extraordinary," is a born troublemaker who has naturally become one of BuSab's best agents. As the novel opens, it is revealed that Calebans, who are beings visible to other sentient species as stars, have been disappearing one by one. Each disappearance is accompanied by millions of sentient deaths and instances of incurable insanity. Ninety years prior to the setting of Whipping Star, the Calebans appeared and offered jump-doors to the collective species, allowing sentients to travel instantly to any point in the universe. Gratefully accepting, the sentiency didn't question the consequences. Now Mliss Abnethe, a psychotic human female with immense power and wealth, has bound a Caleban in a contract that allows the Caleban to be whipped to death; when the Caleban dies, everyone who has ever used a jump-door (which is almost every adult in the sentient world and many of the young) will die as well. The Calebans have attempted to remedy the error, but Mliss Abnethe refuses to cancel the contract, and the Caleban sense of honor makes breaking the contract from their side unthinkable. To save themselves, all the Calebans are handing over the time-like history lines of the sentients who used jump-doors to one Caleban, Fannie Mae, and withdrawing from ConSentiency space. McKie has to find Mliss and stop her before Fannie Mae reaches, in her words, "ultimate discontinuity," but he is constrained by the law protecting private individuals by restricting the ministrations of BuSab to public entities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is the first book, though third story, in the ConSentiency Universe. In this Universe, the wheels of democratic-government run so efficiently, so well, that laws are created, discussed, and passed in a matter of hours. You could imagine where this could be a bad thing (James Madison sure did, this is the ultimate Madisonian-nightmare). In lieu of the bureaucratic red tape to prevent society from doing ill-thoughtout things like passing bad laws, the ConSentiency created the Bureau of Sabotage (BuSab). It's best agent? Jorj X. McKie, Saboteur Extraordinaire, and the main character. This book, in particular, is about the Caleban. A race that offered the other sentient races a means of travel through a "jumpdoor" to virtually anywhere in the galaxy. Without thinking of any consequences, the government agreed. This had the unknown effect of essentially linking everyone to the Caleban. So if one Caleban died (they are apparently immortal otherwise)... everyone who had used that Caleban's jumpdoor dies or goes utterly insane. Through some social norms, legal contracts, and other contractual issues, a Caleban comes under the control of the main villain. This contract allows the Caleban to be whipped to death. McKie needs to find a way to save the last Caleban. Unfortunately, this falls beyond the scope of BuSab's stated mission. While it can take action to stop government... it cannot take action against a private citizen. Therein lies the dilemma. So, it's a story about bureaucracy, the need for checks and balances, and laws. Very different from Herbert's other works. There's a strange emotional plot involved between McKie and the last Caleban (which is essentially a star as that is their visible manifestation) that makes for more intrigue.

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