



## Falcon Fire

**Erik A. Otto**

Sagis Press (Mar 22, 2022)

Softcover \$19.95 (420pp)

978-1-73213-616-8

*Falcon Fire is engrossing science fiction in which Venus's class war comes to a head, showing that the dangers of misinformation span the whole of the solar system.*

In Erik A. Otto's science fiction novel *Falcon Fire*, a class war erupts as Venus nears completion of a terraforming project.

Venus is undergoing a centuries-long terraforming project that makes use of massive, beetle-shaped machines that crawl across its surface. There, towers stretch toward the sky, housing the Reformers, the civilized elite who oversee the terraforming process. Decrepit dirigibles carry the population to and from the towers, serving to divide the Reformers from the Hedonites below.

One Hedonite, Hix, rises from the lawless underground cities to become a film star, but then he's accused of murder and is sent to prison. Hix finagles his way out of the situation by volunteering to be a copilot on coring missions across the planet. But Neeva, the inspector who oversaw Hix's initial conviction, remains suspicious of him. She discovers a series of Hedonite crimes that hint at a larger conspiracy.

With deep worldbuilding featuring social divides, advanced mythology and lore, derelict settings, its own localized slang, and an unusual system of governance, this is an involving story with a fascinating lead. Conversational quirks are used to highlight the disparity between the Hedonites and the Reformers, with the Hedonites preferencing shorthand, and the Reformers adopting formal, esoteric speech patterns.

Hix, who is introduced as a former celebrity, finds himself in dire situations even after his release from prison. He's complex, revealing secrets with the sense that more remains. Neeva's development complements Hix's: despite her history with the Reformers, she evolves in order to chase her mystery, becoming less naïve about the world around her—and its social structures. Indeed, she is led to explore Hedonite society for the first time as she tries to solve her violent case.

In this tense story, elements of suspense are ably staggered between Neeva and Hix's disparate story lines, which finally merge toward the book's explosive ending. Future developments are suggested, though the novel also concludes its own story lines well: Hix and Neeva both have to face their pasts before Venus's future as a sustainable colony can be determined. The effect is tantalizing, generating interest in adventures to come.

*Falcon Fire* is engrossing science fiction in which Venus's class war comes to a head, showing that the dangers of misinformation span the whole of the solar system.

JOHN M. MURRAY (February 5, 2022)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*