



Shadow Soldier

J.L. Lyon

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Some legends don't begin with a hero. They start with the villain.

100 years in the future, after a series of brutal wars have changed the face of the globe and destroyed civilization as we know it, the majority of the planet has fallen under the control of a single government known as the World System.

At the age of ten, every citizen documented by the World System is required to take the Operations Potential Exam (OPE), a test that determines what job the citizen will occupy for the remainder of their lives.

It has been eleven years since 301-14-A tested into the soldier class. Loyalty and service are all that he knows.

Until a group of freedom fighters emerge from the untamed Wilderness and incite rebellion in the capital city. Until he witnesses the atrocities of his government with his own eyes.

Until her.

Now everything is different. Now nothing is certain.

Shadow Soldier Details

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From Reader Review Shadow Soldier for online ebook

Sarah Wilson says

I really enjoyed this book. Really enjoyed it. I'm looking forward to the sequel! I can't imagine how things are going to end well for these guys....and I want to know 301's backstory!

Adam Parker says

Shadow Soldier was a fast paced, action packed near future book that pulled me in immediately. I was surprised at the twists and turns the book made and at how well the author interwove elements of love and faith throughout. The writing style was lacking in detail at points which I found made certain interactions a bit shallow and at times the world in which the story takes place felt rather small. Those two points aside though, I thought the story was fresh, exciting, and quite honestly emotional. I think both women and men will find this book captivating.

Jodi Woody says

I loved this book! Military, dystopian, and some romance. A book for guys or gals. Written without swearing and sexual content (some implied), and some un-cheesy Christian content that does not distract from the story. Post Great War, the controlling government is set up in what used to be the US. One nameless soldier is the key. There is fighting and violence. I can recommend for ages 14 and up. A great read, and a favorite new author. This is the first in a series and I am looking forward to book two! Kept me on my seat! I give it a solid 5 stars.

Maddy Barone says

Let me begin by saying I really enjoyed this book. The 5 star rating might have given that away, huh? I thought it was well-written with good pacing, a nice balance of action and description, and enough tension to keep me reading. It took me so long to finish it because I was working overtime and had other things going on that cut into my reading time. It's a mark of how good the book was that even when I was at work I was thinking about the world the author created. The world is the real star of the book and the author has crafted his characters to be products of that world. Grace and 301 and the others don't act like modern day Americans pretending to live in a dystopian culture, but like the people the author has created based on his world.

301, the main character, begins the story as a cog in a military machine. He has a rank and a designation, but not a name because he's not supposed to be a "real" person. He should be utterly loyal to the militaristic government that rules all with an iron fist. Very soon events occur to make him think for himself. The conflict between the all-powerful, controlling state and those who want a life where they and their children can be free was compelling. I don't want to give the story away, so I'll just say that I can't wait for the next installment.

Fizzgig says

I liked this book a lot but was really put off about the religious messages. I am very concerned that the book is saying people of atheist, humanist, agnostic, non-theist, etc. beliefs are evil. The dominate society (evil, corrupt, anti-creative, and anti-human) is extremely anti-religion of any kind and the radicals are Judia-Christian (Hebrew and heaven elements are present.) Toward the beginning of the book, I almost tossed it because of the religion alone. I gave the story time before I wrote it off as offensive. I really liked the story other than the religious preaching. I will probably read the next book when it comes out because it's a good story. I just hope the religious tones calm down or label the book science-fiction, dystopian, and religious. If it turns into a religious story, I will probably abandon the saga and let my imagination fill in the rest of an otherwise good story.

The dominate society is truly scary. People are tested at their tenth birthday to become what they test as for the rest of their lives (solier, janitor, etc.) There is also an agenda behind the test. Only a few people have any kind of power and everyone else is a puppet of the few powerful. The powerful have a lot of political infighting. Everyone near the tight circle of control are pawns of those in power. Death is around many corners. Death seems to be the punishment for every offense. I find the world an impossible world to believe in since people are creative and stubborn. I can't imagine people that beaten down and there were no defects to the radicals. I imagine in that kind of world, there would be more defectors than society members and the MWR wouldn't exist.

The author stays focused on the main characters and doesn't develop the world much. The world I imagine as a very sterile place and this was probably done on purpose. I would have liked to have read about some of the other radical cells that are hinted at. There are other areas with their power cells. The MWR controls everything but the book focuses on Arlington and a little on Rome but that's it. It needs more world building and character development.

C Dove says

Gritty good read. The juxtaposition of multiple political intrigues with the changes that are wrought emotionally are well done.

Jessie Nichols says

American novelist and screenwriter Elmore Leonard once said, "I try to leave out the parts that people skip." That's exactly what Lyon does in his riveting and original debut.

Drawing from his background in history and political science, this young author writes with passion and precision, managing to construct a convincing futuristic military state in which a disillusioned soldier is struggling to find his place. All the elements of a great story are present, and the moment the reader begins to suspect a formulaic plotline, Shadow Soldier proves to be anything but predictable. Looking forward to the next installment in this saga.

Jer Wilcoxon says

This was a review that was difficult to write. On the one hand, the book's simplicity enabled the author to write a compelling story of a young military officer in over his head and thrust into a position of command, and a political arena, that he frankly lacks the experience for; while struggling to find his own identity, place and moral responsibility within his environment. The author's navigation of this character was realistic and shows an astute understanding of the post-adolescent mindset, and I found myself bonding with the character through sympathetic reminiscence of my own mentality at that age.

On the other hand, that simplicity gave the story an overall sense of naïveté and heavy handed morality, and deprived the book of the richness and depth that additional detail and complexity can provide. The author lost the potential depth of interaction between the main character and other major characters (for example, between 301 and Blaine, between 301 and Aurora) that can push a good story over the line to a great story.

Though the lack of dimensionality to the peripheral characters may have stemmed from an absence of detail and stylistic polishing, much of the impression of naïveté that it produced was refreshing and entirely in line with the angle, or essence, of the story. Since I believe this is a choice by the author, rather than a stylistic failure, I can accept its blunt nature; so long as the evolution of the characters fills in the void with depth later along in the expanded story line.

As a first effort, I'd call Shadow Soldier a success. It's genuine, honest, and fun. It's a good, simple story that offers a futurist twist to a classic Romanesque political struggle in a fantastically imaginative way. I think an optimal target audience is high school aged to mid twenties; though older readers should find the same refreshing sense of sympathetic reminiscence that I did. I gave it a 3 star grade only in absence of mid-point options, and believe it deserves a ranking somewhere around 3.5 stars. I look forward to the next episodes and watching the growth of the characters, and the author.

(Received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads)
