



Wool

Hugh Howey

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For suspense-filled, post-apocalyptic thrillers, *Wool* is more than a self-published ebook phenomenon?it's the new standard in classic science fiction.

In a ruined and toxic future, a community exists in a giant silo underground, hundreds of stories deep. There, men and women live in a society full of regulations they believe are meant to protect them. Sheriff Holston, who has unwaveringly upheld the silo's rules for years, unexpectedly breaks the greatest taboo of all: He asks to go outside.

His fateful decision unleashes a drastic series of events. An unlikely candidate is appointed to replace him: Juliette, a mechanic with no training in law, whose special knack is fixing machines. Now Juliette is about to be entrusted with fixing her silo, and she will soon learn just how badly her world is broken. The silo is about to confront what its history has only hinted about and its inhabitants have never dared to whisper. Uprising.

A *New York Times* and *USA TODAY* bestseller, as well as Kindle Book Review's 2012 Indie Book of the Year, *Wool* is truly a blockbuster.

Wool Details

Date : Published March 12th 2013 by Simon & Schuster (first published January 25th 2012)

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Author : Hugh Howey

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From Reader Review Wool for online ebook

Kemper says

A bunch of people live in an underground community and those who break the rules are cruelly expelled to their doom? Reality TV producers have to be kicking themselves for not coming up with this idea themselves.

At an undetermined time in the future, the people of the Silo have lived for generations with only a few dusty camera views to show them the world above ground. After the sheriff steps down from his post in rather dramatic fashion, the mayor and a deputy determine that a mechanic named Juliette is the best candidate to replace him, but her appointment results in a series of events that threaten to expose long kept secrets and tear the Silo apart.

Hugh Howey is one of the biggest success stories in self-publishing, and I understand why after the early chapters do an exceptional job of introducing us to this world. The stairwell is a vertical highway connecting the complex, and journeying from top to bottom is no easy task. Having two characters make the trek in the early part of the book was a great way of giving us a tour of the Silo that established not only how it works logistically, but how it functions as a society. Juliette started out as a very strong character against this vivid background, and Howe sets her up perfectly as the hero to carry the story.

Unfortunately, he seemed to have some problems with what to do after that, and I was slightly let down at where the plot went from there. I can't say much about that without giving the book away though. (view spoiler)

Overall, Howey created a well written sci-fi tale with an intriguing setting that I was very interested in, but unfortunately, I found the plot and actions taken by the characters far less compelling. I don't regret reading this, but I probably won't be checking out the follow-up books to it.

Maciek says

I don't get the hype.

If you'd judge a book by its rating on Goodreads and Amazon, you should consider *Wool* to be a science fiction miracle - the vast majority of Goodreaders gave it 5 stars, and on Amazon it currently holds an astonishing 3,740 five star reviews - with new ones appearing every day. *Wool* seems to be a prodigious child of a next Asimov or Heinlein, destined to last for decades and inspire generations of readers and writers.

What's even more interesting is that *Wool* began its life as a short, self-published novella, *Wool*, which so excited the readers that the author quickly published the next four parts, finally gathering them all in this omnibus. Film rights have already been sold to 20th Century Fox, with Ridley Scott showing interest in adapting *Wool* into a movie.

Does anyone here remember the PC game *Fallout*? Here's its great introductory movie, with its famous *war never changes* speech. I played the hell out of it when it came out and it's one of the games on which I learned the English language. In *Fallout* its 2161, and after a major nuclear war humanity has hid in underground vaults. Generations have lived in such way, without having seen natural light. The player controls an inhabitant of Vault 13, where a computer chip responsible for purifying water has broken - and is sent into the outside world to journey to other communities, looking for a replacement. The player has 150 game days to complete the assignment and return to the vault before its water supply runs out. *Fallout* has won many awards and spawned a number of sequels, and it stole many childhoods with its addictive qualities - including a large and open world, with many non-pcs ready for interaction, quests and subplots ready to indulge in.

Wool starts intriguing enough, and Howey has a good sense of pacing to keep up the interest all the way through the first part. After an unnamed apocalyptic event the earth has been rendered uninhabitable, and people have to live in an underground Silo, which extends many stories beneath the surface of the planet. Inhabitants can see the outside world only through a lens, and the images are grim: constantly cloudy and dark skies, the ragged plains and mountains depopulated by strong radiation. Despite this, people live quite comfortably in the Silo, except for one small detail: the lens which shows them the outside world gets dirty with dust and rust, and has to be cleaned - a perilous duty, as it involved going outside and becoming exposed to a deadly amount of radiation. Although technicians working at the Silo managed to develop protective suits, they only last for a short time before disintegrating from exposure - effectively making the cleaning a one-way trip. Therefore, the only people who clean the lens are those sent to do so as punishment. And everyone who is sentenced to cleaning cleans - there has not been a case of anyone going outside and not cleaning in the history of the Silo.

The first part of *Wool* follows the story of Holston, the Silo's sheriff who is trying to understand the circumstances which led to his wife's death. She has been sentenced to Cleaning - and Holston is doing his best to understand why, as he believes the sentence was connected to his wife's investigation of Silo's historical records. Although there is only basic worldbuilding and the characters are sketchily drawn at best, the familiar concept is still intriguing enough to turn the page.

But then *Wool 1* ends, and trouble sets in. Although the author maintains that each of the five installments is meant to be read as a standalone, there is simply no way that they could work this way. *Wool 1* leaves far too many questions unanswered - each introduced idea begets interest which is never properly cared for. Howey embarks an ambitious idea - trying to create a new society from scratch, and create characters the readers can care for - but a vast majority of questions the reader can have about his world, its past and present, science and technology are never answered. Holston, his wife, their relationship and the whole society is painted rather than presented, never feeling quite real. But how could it in just 50 pages?

Wool 1 ends with a giant cliffhanger, prompting a swift reader response demanding one thing - more! So Hugh Howey wrote four extra parts, again claiming that each was always meant to be read individually, but I don't believe it. Howey seems to be caught between wanting to tell a single story, and split it into several independent short novels - but doesn't pull it off, leaving each installment bordering awkwardly between wanting to experiment with new ideas and characters and dependence on the old for the sake of continuity. This leaves each installment unsatisfying on its own, as new characters are introduced, presented and dispatched - without offering the readers a proper chance to grow attached to them. The single storyline quickly starting to feel convoluted, as the subsequent parts merely dilute the ideas found in *Wool 1* instead of presenting truly new and fascinating concepts. I don't know how much of it was pre-planned, but it seems to me that the success of *Wool 1* caught the author by surprise, and he didn't quite know what to do with the plot to do justice to his premise, and what he came up with provoked only a small "eh? that's it?", with the author emerging not carrying a torch of victory but clutching a straw.

(view spoiler)

The science in *Wool* seems to be treated with a very soft brush, and paid only minimal attention to for the sake of moving the plot along. But most unbelievable is the cleaning process, on which the whole plot lies - it's really pointless and inexplicable with its needless complexity and waste of precious human resources. I couldn't believe that the society wouldn't invent a mechanical cleaner whom they could simply send out to clean the lens. Really? We sent humans, dogs and monkeys into space. Surely a small robot could be thought of. We have one on Mars right now.

And the sheer idea that every single person in history of the Silo has always cleaned the lens is simply unimaginable. With the cleaning being essentially capital punishment, it's ridiculous to suggest that every single person sentenced to death dutifully cleaned the lens for posterity instead of leaving it be or even breaking it. The cleaners knew that they had one final chance to get back at those who sent them there, sometimes perhaps unjustly - would we really believe that they all cleaned the lens out of their own free will, after they were condemned to death and were beyond the reach of their oppressors? What happened to all rebels and simple assholes?

Wool received so many rave ratings all over the web, but in terms of novelty, originality and even entertainment it has delivered so preciously little. It's really nothing more than a relatively simple idea stretched and separated into 5 novellas and then published as a single volume. It has nothing of the grand richness of great science fiction, with detailed and inventive world-building and creative ideas, complete with compelling characterization of both heroes and villains, making them vivid and memorable. From what I see here the author has already pulled a George Lucas on us, publishing a new series of prologue novels of the Silo's origin - but the reviews are beginning to get mixed. I won't be reading them - there are far too many other interesting novels to attend to. This year I have read Paul Auster's *In the Country of Last Things* and Brian Evenson's *Immobility*, both also dystopian novels - and much better than Howey's cycle of five. I would recommend them both over this any time, and although the time devoted on it goes by pretty fast it'd be much better spent by discovering the hidden gems of the genre which has so much to offer instead of following this goose only painted to look gold.

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

Good story, but OMG, did we REALLY need 500 pages to tell it?! So much of the "story" is just Juliette

spending chapters getting into and out of clothes and airlocks, it was about ready to drive me nuts. Could be a superb story minus about 200 pages.

And because of that, it's doubtful I'll pursue the rest of the series. There's a good internet saying for this:

tl;dr

Too long; didn't read

Sums up how I feel pretty well.

Full Review:

It is some unspecified time in the future; people live in silos, but they never talk about the circumstances of living in the silo. If they do, they head out to clean the cameras viewing the miserable outdoor world. Juliette takes over for the Sheriff, Holston, and quickly begins to uncover the secrets IT, led by Bernard, are hiding.

This book got several good reviews from Goodreads' friends, whose opinions I deeply trust. This is what led me to the book; this is what led me to choose this book for my Book Club book. And while my gut churns just thinking this in light of their favorable opinions, I got mixed feelings about this book. On one hand, it's got a fascinating story and was a great lesson for me to think about characters being non-white (see my Casting Review below). On the other hand, it's sooooooooo sloooooooooow. It seriously smarts of "first author syndrome" - the detailing of Each and Every Action, no matter how important to the actual story.

There were definitely great characters. Juliette proved to me that you can have a female lead without relying 100% on the romance angle. Other excellent nuanced characters include the slimy Bernard, Holston, Marnes, Peter, and Knox. Lots of great characters - it was even more fun for me because, instead of imagining each as a white dude or chick, I went out of my way to find non-white actors and actresses for each role.

As I mentioned above, the story and world-building had a lot of promise. I can't help but liken it to Justin Cronin's "The Passage" in this regard - both are about isolated societies in a post-apocalyptic world. I liked learning how the society was, even though there were plenty of details that made no sense (such as young, healthy people treating several stories as a huge deal when they've lived their ENTIRE LIVES on stairs). It felt like a dystopia - not like the fauxtopias that are all the rage these days.

But really, what really kept me from liking it, what is holding back all the stars is the fact the book is too damned slow. This is best exemplified in the second short story where the entire plot is Marnes and Jahns descending and ascending the stairs. Yes, there is character development going on. Yes, it does build the world. But seriously, 100+ pages for this? Absolutely not.

And this never really improves over the course of the novel. Howey spends whole chapters on Juliette flailing through airlocks and removing or putting on clothes. Again, really? I understand trying to detail his surroundings, but it quickly goes overboard.

As I was trying desperately to finish this before the new year, I agonized over something: why was I eager to continue Justin Cronin's equally slow "Passage" trilogy but considering giving up Howey's "Wool" series? Both are slow, both don't seem to go anywhere - so why one and not the other?

And then I remember - yes, "The Passage" was slow and boring in places, but the first 250 pages were

AWESOME. I devoured them. They didn't wallow in the characters' every detailed movement from one room to the other. They didn't spend huge chapters just entering an airlock. Stuff happened.

So, while this is a decent book, I won't be continuing the series. I've heard it just gets slower and more dragged out, and if I ever plan on making a dent in my To Read list, I need to start figuring out what books to read and which to let go.

Now, that isn't to say this is a terrible book that everyone should avoid. It just means: be prepared for a very, VERY slow pace.

Casting Review:

Because I have no life and am trying to get over my white privilege bias, I wanted to visualize actors for these characters, with an emphasis on non-white actors. Give me a hand!

Holston: Jaime Foxx

Allison: Lucy Liu

Jahns: Phylicia Rashad (I totally didn't think I could find someone other than maybe Diane Keaton or Sigourney Weaver for this part, because of the age, but Phylicia fits how I think of Jahns!!)

Marnes: Avery Brooks

Thanks to Julia for this one!

Bernard: Paul Giamatti

Thanks to Julia for this one!

Juliette: Michelle Rodriguez

OK, I don't see Juliette looking exactly like THIS pic - but this pic is AWESOME!!

Lukas: Max Minghella

Thanks Rachel (BAVR) and Becky!!

Peter Billings: Ideas: Anthony Mackie

Scottie: Justin Long

Knox: Tom Hanks (with beard - beard is a MUST)

McLain: Helen Mirren (she popped into my head from the first)

Solo: Michael Ealy

Thank you, Rachel (BAVR), for this excellent selection!!

Marck: Chiwetel Ejiofor

Not sure if he should be Marck, but he DEFINITELY needs to be cast in this movie!! Dude is awesome!!!

Shirly: Gina Torres

Walker: Kris Kristofferson

Thanks to Blade I canNOT think of anyone else as Walker but Kris.

Jenkins: Kal Penn

A bit of a strange one, but I'm thinking of his character from the TV series, "House". Smart, but also completely overwhelmed and underexperienced.

Normally, I don't do these sorts of things, but in this case, I thought, hey, why not! Also, post images of who YOU think should be each of the major(ish) characters!!h

Matthew says

This book is an excellent and unique take on a post-apocalyptic earth. Recently, literature has been saturated with post-apocalyptic stories and sometimes it is hard to find something that is fresh . . . something that doesn't feel like it has already been done before. Everything about this book was suspenseful and interesting - no boredom of rehashed ideas/concepts/storylines for me.

Another cool thing about it is the book is divided into little novellas which kind of refresh the story every 50 to 100 pages while keeping with the bigger story as a whole.

The characters you meet in this book are great. They are easy to empathize with. They are easy to cheer for. They are easy to despise. In the end, some are hard to mourn.

I am not sure this book is for everyone. I have read reviews that say it is too long or too slow. I did not feel either of those things so hopefully you won't either!

Gary says

I'm not one to expound too much on low ratings, but I feel compelled to do so, here, given the high praise heaped on this book by other reviewers.

That said, this will be spoilerific, so if you want out, now would be the time to bail. Seriously. I'm going to spoil the hell out of this.

Disclaimer: I have absolutely nothing against indie publishers (authors who choose to self-publish). This review has nothing to do with that.

First, the things I liked about the book.

The author is actually very good at pacing. The book reads easily -- one might almost say 'effortlessly' -- and you keep turning page after page to see how things come out.

I think that, from a technical viewpoint, the author is not bad. Nothing leaped out at me, as sometimes happens, to kick me out of the story because of some technicality of writing or style that reminded me, "Hey, you're reading a book." Some beautiful little turn of phrase or clever dialogue that made me focus on the words and not the story.

I thought the main characters were likable, and I found myself caring what happened to them at every point. This was, for me, the saving grace of the book.

Now, if that were all I judged the books on, I would easily have given this 4 stars and moved on. I was entertained. But a couple of things just have to be said.

First of all, I'm not a psychologist, nor do I have any clinical understanding of the field. But I couldn't help but notice that the people in this world don't behave like real people living in a real world. We are told early on that none of the people banished to clean the lenses has ever -- EVER, in hundreds of years -- failed to do his or her duty before dying.

Unless we're being lied to -- and that is a possibility, but if that's the case, then it was far too subtle for me to pick up on -- I find it highly improbable that not a single person would have failed to clean the lenses in hundreds of years. I would not have cleaned them, and I don't think I'm SO different from other people. I would have thought, "So long, suckers, I'm going to head over toward that miraculous city over there." Probably tinged with a little, "You jerks kicked me out. Why should I do you any favors?" Or maybe I would have frantically jumped up and down gesticulating wildly at the onlookers, trying to make them understand

that they were being lied to.

I had a real problem getting past that. It seemed plausible right up to the point where you kind of started to figure out what was going on, and then with the least bit of thought about it, the premise just collapses.

I read this on my Kindle (so no skipping ahead). After the main character of the first section dies, I thought, "Oh, so that was kind of a prologue. No problem." Then I read the second part, where the mayor was the main character . . . and then SHE dies. "O . . . K," I thought, angry, but willing to move on. Then the third section opens with Juliette about to be sent out for cleaning, and we quickly find out that the deputy committed suicide, and I stopped reading for over a week, absolutely disgusted with the book. This was at 23% in the Kindle.

I mentioned as much to a friend who had read the whole thing, and she told me that Juliette remained the main character for the remainder of the book.

Had I not known this, I would have honestly stopped reading it right there. It's too much. Give me a character to hang onto from the beginning. Don't yank the rug out from under me like that not once, not twice, but THREE times, and expect me to continue reading.

The next time I almost stopped reading was when Bernard explained to Lukas how all the silos came to be. It was . . . just so contrived. I mean, straight out of insane conspiracy theories about the New World Order. In short, the US saw that it was in decline, and rather than just deal with that, the Ebil Gubmint decided that if they couldn't be in charge, no one ELSE could, either, so they literally made the surface of the entire planet uninhabitable and established the silos as a kind of Ark to preserve the species and their ideological way of life. Why? Because they're EBIL. And they're the GUBMINT.

WHAT?

Had this come earlier in the book . . . I would have stopped reading it and moved on to something else. As it was, this came after I was invested in the characters of Juliette, Solo, Walker, Shirly, and Lukas. So I kept reading to find out how it ended. That, incidentally, is why I didn't give it 1 star. I did get invested in the characters, and I did want to know what happened. And, as I said, the pacing was marvelous.

Speaking of getting invested . . . Juliette risks her life to leave silo 17 and return to silo 18. I fully expected Lukas to die, so I was pleasantly surprised when it turned out to be Bernard. But in spite of her promise to the inhabitants of silo 17, we are not shown that she mentions them AT ALL after her return to silo 18. At the end, in an epilogue, we are given a glimpse into what's going on in silo 17 as Solo is about to call Juliette . . . but we don't know if anyone in silo 18 was primed to receive the call. For all the 17ians knew, Juliette died in the Outside. She was, after all, out of commission for weeks while she healed from her burns.

I was expecting Juliette's acceptance of the Mayorship to hinge on connecting 17 and 18 in the Down Deep and get some engineers over there to get 17 running again. But . . . no.

To be fair, perhaps this is the story for the sequel series, but it would have been nice for him to have at least followed up on this.

One last thing that just bothered the crap out of me is resources. It was stated that the silo complex was located near Atlanta, Ga. There were mines and oil wells under the silo. But I find it very difficult to believe that there is enough ore and oil in Georgia to sustain 50 silos for hundreds upon hundreds of years of

constant mining and pumping. I also found it very difficult to believe that in all that time, not even once did a wall collapse between the mines of adjacent silos.

Anyway, that's enough. My two stars are because I just can't accept the psychology, world building, physics, and math of the world I'm being asked to accept. And basing the entire premise on a loony conspiracy theory didn't help.

I wanted to like this book more. I'm not sorry I finished reading it, but if someone had told me from the beginning that it was based in New World Order conspiracy theories, I would have passed.

Arah-Lynda says

Hugh Howey paints a world, or what is left of one post apocalypse, with an eye for detail that is easily visualized; one that you can descend into and inhabit.

This is epic storytelling, told with a taut hand on the tiller, controlling the pace and direction, allowing the reader to uncover truths together with the many, care worthy, relatable characters that populate this place. I blinked a couple of times and found myself entrenched in this world. And it all seems so effortless, the narrative flows, the voices are real, the soup thickens and the heroine Jules is absolutely kick ass, with a mechanics cool composure; confident in her analytical ability to fix anything, determined to maintain that which is not broken. Stroke it or strike it.

She rocks!

I'm telling you I climbed those stairs from down deep, round and round, to up top, with these people, legs cramping, heart pounding in my ears, breathless and shaken from the trip. And every time I thought I knew where I was going, Howey held his grip firm on that tiller and took me someplace else. I laboured over the details, peeking in at the players, letting the pressure build, scarfing down every morsel offered, thumbing the pages, ingesting the words. **Yum.**

I LOVED IT!!!!

Note: Read the omnibus containing all five parts.

Veronica Belmont says

Some books take a while to dig into. The first few chapters set up the story, introduce you to the main characters and build a framework for the tale to come.

Wool sets up the story too, but in a heartbreaking and gripping way that has you consuming the book as quickly as possible, if only to learn the answer to: "that's not really about to happen, is it?"

There are moments in Wool when I wondered if maybe the book was too dark. I mourned for characters and didn't know how they would possibly get themselves out of the messes they (or others) had gotten them into.

I won't say it worked out for everyone, but there is enough hopefulness and light in the book to brighten the darkest depths of this silo.

Wool is not a long read (even shorter when you can't put it down and read it over two nights) but it is one that will stick with you.

Trudi says

Outstanding!

WOOL began its life as a self-published short novella in July of 2011. That's hard to believe. I feel like I've been hearing about this thing for *ages and ages*.

So I'm late to the party, but not that late. Due to excited reader response over WOOL 1, author Hugh Howey quickly released the next four parts in the series. Then came along this Omnibus which collects Parts 1-5. There is now a 2013 edition with a great new cover that features a blurb by none other than Justin Cronin, author of *The Passage*.

In a few short years, Howey has given all struggling writers out there toiling away at their craft in obscurity real hope. Word of mouth among bloggers and enthusiastic readers on sites like Amazon and Goodreads has the potential to lift the curse of invisibility from self-published works so that they may find their way to audiences who will love them. Never before have the barriers between author and reader been so few, the access so direct. No longer are authors strictly dependent on big publishing houses to discover them and deem their work important enough to go to market accompanied by a sexy publicity campaign. Authors and readers are doing it for themselves, and I for one think it's a beautiful thing.

I love everything about this story -- I love the details of the world-building, I love the characters, I love the shifting points of view, I love the slow burn when you're not sure what is going on. When it became clear to me exactly what was going on I love that I wasn't disappointed. For a post-apocalyptic story trodding very familiar science fiction territory, it still feels fresh. The author definitely gives it his own spin.

I love that the stakes are so high. I love that the author is patient and in control of his narrative. That he doesn't reveal too much too soon. That he understands the relationship between tension and release. All of that to say, I love that the writing is so strong and capable (I've read too much self-published stuff where the prose is inexcusably sloppy). Howey's writing is the exact opposite of sloppy. It's polished. Its engine hums. The shoes are shiny and it's wearing a tie. It's ready to take home to mom.

Finally, I love Juliette. She's Ellen Ripley, Katniss Everdeen, and Dana Scully all rolled up into one. She's got brains and courage and heart and a will made of iron.

There's a lot of under-developed, underwhelming dystopian fiction kicking around out there these days. WOOL leaves those attempts in its dust. It's worth your time. Trust me.

Book trailer available [here](#)

Lyn says

Wool, by Hugh Howey is reminiscent of Robert Silverberg's Time of the Great Freeze or Philip K. Dick's The Penultimate Truth with a population living underground following a climate-changing catastrophe.

The Wool Omnibus is actually a collection of five novellas connecting the action, a serialization of an ongoing storyline. The setting reminds me of the Zion population in the Wachowski Matrix films, an isolated, encased and quarantined populace. I found the narration mainly good, sometimes very good, but inconsistent, disjointed and with some holes in the plot. I felt like the great work in the beginning slacked off towards the later chapters; I really liked the first story and the second and third novellas, but by the last book, I was ready to see this wrap up. In fairness to Howey, I did like the ending and felt he concluded his story well.

This book also made me consider my interest in the post-apocalyptic / dystopian genre. A study could be made about the course of fantasy /sci-fi from the 50s on and how the dominant themes have moved from generally optimistic to more pessimistic. Was the 1969 moon landing a high water mark in our culture and since then has our collective artistic vision been more depressed and less optimistic?

Ultimately I think this book, like most dystopian stories, is fundamentally optimistic, with a story about the resiliency and determinism of humanity. Howey creates a meaningful metaphor for how we will survive, perhaps a seed tucked away in a silo, awaiting a better time, but surviving and enduring beyond bad times.

Cass says

There are two stupid things about this book, neither have to do with the writing. The writing is good, the story is original, I highly recommend this book.

Let's address the stupid things.

The name is stupid. It is like a garage band was after a clever name. There are no sheep in this book, there is no wool in this book. There is one tiny insignificant piece where a character is knitting but she isn't even using wool, she knits with cotton. Given the subtitles are all knitting related (unravel, cast off etc) I think the book should have been called "knitting" and then the book would have never sold a single copy.

I shall rename the book for the author SILO. Hereafter I shall refer to the book as such... Because it is a much better name that will actually appeal to the target market.

The second stupid thing about SILO (okay WOOL but my name is better) is that it is serialised into individual books. The author asks at the end of this omnibus if the reader would rate and review each book separately. As far as books/stories/novellas go only WOOL1 and WOOL 3 really stand alone. The others are just parts in a novel. They are also all the size of novellas not novels, making this omnibus edition about the size of a book. Here is my advice to the author. Just sell the omnibus edition, ebook users can read a sample anyway, the \$6 price tag is very reasonable for the whole book. In fact because I didn't realise it was a series of novellas I bought the first part plus the omnibus which was silly of me. Perhaps good for the authors pocket but it doesn't endear me toward him.

None of that has anything to do with the novel. The novel was original and highly interesting. Finally a novel that I don't think I could flippantly surmise in a paragraph or two.

Usually I do like to give a summary of the novel but I won't in this review as I think there are lots of refreshing little things about the novel that are enjoyable to discover while reading, plus a few good places where you can say "oh wow I didn't see that coming".

WOOL is a good little dystopian novel. The type that leaves you thinking about it for days. The type that creeps back into your mind months after you have read it. It has a fairly original concept that kept me thinking. I thoroughly enjoyed it and recommend it to all lovers of dystopian fiction.

Despite complaining about the way it has been serialised I am hoping the author has lots more little stories about this world coming.

ETA: **Before you comment.** This review has been around for almost two years, and it has spawned a wonderful bunch of friendly people who laugh and joke in the comment section - many (most?) of whom completely disagree with me. Please read the comments (even the first page or two). You don't want to be that douche who thinks he is the first person in 500 comments to think to inform me that wool was used for cleaning, or that is was a metaphor. I disagree with the importance of either as a reason for naming the book WOOL, and if you read even a few of my comments you will find lots of reasoning. Enjoy the community, but don't be the dude that makes us snogger (yes, so crazy is this littler community that we even coined our own word!!).

Dan Schwent says

When the old sheriff of the Silo dies, Juliette, a Mechanic, is thrust into the role and quickly finds herself in over her head after asking the wrong questions. What will she discover when she's cast out of the Silo into the toxic world beyond and left for dead?

Yeah, that's not a great summary but there's a lot I don't want to spoil.

Since I've become more and more interested in the idea of Kindle publishing as of late, I decided to check out Wool, one of the juggernauts of self-publishing. While I heard the title (and thought it was stupid), I went in cold and was pleasantly surprised.

Wool takes place in a dystopian future where what's left of humanity lives in a Silo underground, levels upon levels of apartments, farms, mines, machinery, a self contained community. People who commit certain offenses are sent out to Clean, to clear the grit off the sensors providing the residents a view of the outside, before dying in the nuclear wasteland.

Juliette, the protagonist of parts 2-5, is a fantastic character. Her logical mind, honed from years of repairing ancient machines, quickly has her asking all sorts of questions about the history of the Silo and the possibility of life beyond. Her relationship with Lukas was believable and not at all sappy.

The book reminds me of old school science fiction, exploring ideas about control, conformity, and manipulation. When Juliette and company figure out what's been going on for two hundred years, the manure hits the windmill.

The writing was understated but still good. It's several notches above what you'd expect in a self-published book and probably a notch or two above some Big Six publishing house efforts lately. Is it deserving of the massive hype it gets? Probably not but it's still **really** good. I think the "little guy done good" aspect of Howey's success gives it a little more punch in some people's eyes.

A few minor things bugged me, most related to pace and how readily some of the people revolted. Also, I wouldn't have minded a little more of Silo 17 in the epilogue. Still, it has some strong scenes in it. Juliette running out of air was a pretty powerful scene and will stick with me for a long time.

Wool should appeal to old school science fiction fans and dystopia fans alike. 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Wool Omnibus (Silo #1), Hugh Howey

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Michael Finocchiaro says

Admittedly, this is not my genre, but someone on GR strongly suggested it (who?) and I just finished it. Wool is the first volume of a trilogy (apparently, the 2nd volume is a prequel and the 3rd is the sequel to the first.) The plot is interesting, dystopian future with humans living inside because we destroyed the environment outside (you listening Mr Pruitt?). The character development is a bit thin, folks are pretty much black and white (although one gets the impression that all the characters are white caucasian.) It is a bit predictable to be honest, but there are good ideas here. A commenter as I was reading said the story was similar to (inspired by?) a Philip K Dick book called The Penultimate Truth.

I found myself skimming towards the end, knowing how things would turn out pretty much. The writing is OK, but as I said, I felt the characters were quite 2-dimensional and I was only marginally able to become attached to the protagonist.

I did eventually read (and review on GR) both sequels which I found more compelling and better written than Wool. That being said, this initial book did inspire me to learn more about Howey's particular take on a dystopian future.

Nataliya says

[What we may not immediately suspect is that there are several more dozen of similar silos around (hide spoiler)]

Carol. says

Forget Wool. This should have been called Forge.

Writing that's a power-punch to the gut. Direct, slow build of heat, singeing as it suddenly roars into flame. A world that feels solid, heavy, hard-edged, soldered with characters that are heated and molded into something new. This isn't knitting a scarf so much as forging a steel chain.

I absolutely love the character of Juliette, determined, essentially elemental, a person that rocks my character world. I love how all her metaphors are mechanical ones, problems and solutions both. Even though I'm completely tool-impaired, her thinking was relatable, a clear schematic of sense. "But as Bernard's footsteps receded... she felt a new resolve steel her nerves. It was like encountering a rusted bolt that refused to budge. Something about that intolerable stiffness, that reluctance to move, set Juliette's teeth on edge. She had come to believe that there was no fastener she couldn't unstick, had learned to attack them with grease and with fire, with penetrating oil and with brute strength" (p. 132).

But as organized and mechanistic as Juliette is in her world, by no means is she limited in her range of emotion: "She had made the same choices as an adult, to love without sanction, and so her hypocrisy was more keenly felt" (p.137)

Howey has a gift for understated prose, and the writing was one of pleasures of the book. With clear, straightforward language he captures subtlety of emotion and action. The funeral scene just about made me weep:

"But then, the lowering of the body and the plucking of ripe fruit just above the graves was meant to hammer this home: The cycle of life is here. It is inescapable. It is to be embraced, cherished, appreciated. One departs and leaves behind the gift of sustenance, of life... We are born, we are shadows, we cast shadows of our own, and then we are gone. All anyone can hope for is to be remembered two shadows deep" (p.158)

I absolutely loved all the little connections linking the sections. I was particularly fond of the shadow imagery and the chain imagery. A moment in the uprising solidly hit the connection:

"It startled Knox, this sudden link to a mysterious past. And it wasn't that terribly long ago, was it? Less than two hundred years? He imagined, if someone lived as long as Jahns had, or McLain for that matter, that three long lives could span that distance. Three handshakes to go from that uprising to this one" (p.321)

One of my only complaints is (view spoiler)

Sophisticated in its ethics and philosophy. Although I expected something unusual given the buzz, I was still astounded at what I found. While it is not a novel I would read again and again (that's what Kate Daniels is for), it's powerful and worth a second read.

Thoughts on the Omnibus:

Wool: Stunning in its character development. Introduces the psychology of the people in the intimate space through the story of the sheriff and his dead wife. Romantic, tragic, doomed; truly a hint of Romeo and Juliet.

Wool Two, Proper Gauge: Compelling mix of character and plotting. Mayor and Deputy find renewal during the search for a sheriff. Using the climb gives a terrific tour of the physics and politics of the silo without infodump.

Wool Three, Casting Off: Juliette takes center stage, struggling in isolation in her new job. Powerful discoveries mean the pattern starts to come together.

Wool Four, The Unraveling: The overarching structure clarifies, like being able to see a map zooming out. Delicious ending line of kickassitude.

Wool Five, The Stranded: Action packed tension. Delicately balanced characterization means no villains here. And I can tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt that I will never go cave/wreck diving.

Five dust-smudged and elusive stars.

Cross posted at <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2013/0...>
