



Wool

Hugh Howey

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Thousands of them have lived underground. They've lived there so long, there are only legends about people living anywhere else. Such a life requires rules. Strict rules. There are things that must not be discussed. Like going outside. Never mention you might like going outside.

Or you'll get what you wish for.

Wool Details

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Author : Hugh Howey

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Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Dystopia, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic

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From Reader Review Wool for online ebook

Gertie says

Great little story that I suspect will stick with me for a while. It was hard while reading it not to get too caught up in a guessing game about how things would unfold. The writing style is nicely descriptive and the story itself is engaging and memorable. Highly recommended.

Memorability Factor: 9/10

.....UPDATE.....

This turned out to be one of my favorite reads of 2012. They are currently running an art contest on Facebook for art made by fans, inspired by WOOL. No I am not going to be spammy and seek votes, but I thought it would be fun to include the pictures here.

If you haven't read this yet, I suggest you get on it already.

Michelle, the Bookshelf Stalker Queen of the Undead says

A Badass Hidden Gem...

<http://badassbookreviews.com/badass-h...>

OMG, this short story was absolutely fantastic. Who is this author and why is he not on everyone's radar. Must read, don't think about it, it's a short story and won't take up much of your time and I think it's only 99 cents, just go get it! Hurry...go.....why are you still reading this...gooooo

Go now...

Nataliya says

Wool by Hugh Howey is a short but worthy read. The author masterfully conveys the feeling of desperation, doom, and unrest that stem from questionably voluntary living/imprisonment in the confines of a giant concrete underground shelter in the toxic world, as well as the overpowering need and drive to find out whether there is truth in the faint but forbidden hope that there just *may* be something better outside.

For such a short book, the themes are very well-developed. The narration is great, the pacing and the feeling

of suspense well-realized. The ending may be a surprise for some readers or the inevitable conclusion for others, but it is shocking regardless.

On to the next installment immediately. The bleak and terrifying world of *Wool* is somehow addictive, and I want to find out more!

Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths Reviews

This is the first “story” in the *Wool Omnibus* series that took the world by storm in 2011. At 49 pages long, the tale can be read in a single sitting, and more than likely you will do just that, because you will find yourself immediately getting sucked into this one from the first paragraph.

In this post apocalyptic world, a remnant of mankind lives in a giant circular silo. (It is never mentioned whether this is an old nuclear missile silo or not, but having spent too many hours watching the television show “Doomsday Preppers” that is how I envisioned this sanctuary.) No one is allowed outside. That is because outside lies quick death by toxic air.

Hidden in their small silo, the only view of the outside that these survivors are allowed is a large tv screen fed from several cameras outside. The only problem is that every so often the cameras need to be cleaned. But since no one can go outside and live, it presents somewhat of a dilemma until they come up with a novel solution: send condemned criminals outside to clean the cameras.

And Sheriff Holston never questioned this at all until . . . the day his precious wife Allison was sent outside. Ever since, he has wondered if she is really dead? Some part of him longing to believe the outside world is not devastated but habitable. The story of its toxicity just a falsehood to keep them entombed in their concrete and steel coffins. But the only way to be sure is to do the unthinkable: follow her outside!

This was one of those stories that lived up to its hype. Hugh Howey penned a clever, inventive story that took a standard post apocalyptic idea and turned it on its head. And I personally loved every minute of it and am looking forward to reading the omnibus soon to see how he can top this little jewel of a tale.

Sharon Metcalf says

3.5 stars

So, *Wool* by Hugh Howey took me completely by surprise in a good way. Knowing it was of the SciFi genre had me feeling hesitant, but hey I belong to a bookclub to stretch my boundaries and take me out of my reading comfort zone every now and then. I'd read only one review prior to starting and to say it was unfavourable is an understatement. Reluctantly I opened the book and I'm delighted to say my low expectations were almost immediately shattered. I'm not saying it's my favourite book ever, probably not even close, but the author did a great job. He delivered a highly readable, interesting and unique storyline. He didn't pull any punches when it came to killing off favourite characters so that I was kept guessing all the way through, there was a bit of mystery and suspense, and I'd have to say it's the first dystopian novel I've truly enjoyed.

Set some time in the future, we learn that all of humanity is housed in a silo below ground and that nobody can survive the toxic environment outside. Hence, the greatest punishment in the silo is to be sent cleaning the outside sensors. Nobody has ever survived so this is essentially a death sentence. Juliette, recently appointed Sheriff of the silo, faces a string of suspicious suicides amongst her colleagues and her investigations take her up against the villainous IT. In no time at all she too is set to cleaning and this is where things get interesting. People of the silo start asking questions and there is a sense that the community has had the wool pulled over their eyes by their leaders. What is really going on? Is the outside really as toxic as they've been lead to believe? Are there other living humans outside the confines of the silo?

Wool is the first book in the trilogy and I could easily continue. I may not, but that's only down to the ever increasing height of my Mt TBR and not through a lack of interest in what happens next.

CS says

Sometimes I weep for the future generations and their concept of literacy. I know, this makes me a grumpy curmudgeon. But I can't help it when I read stuff like this.

While poorly written books have always been with us, and some poorly written books have become popular bestsellers, the self-publishing revolution has opened the floodgates to writing like this being praised and rewarded far beyond the ken. People, just because a metaphor is tortured beyond belief, that does not make the writing literary. Or anywhere close to objectively good.

The beginning of WOOL breaks the first commandment of creative writing: Show, don't tell. Instead, we are told...and told...and told...in language that any self-respecting editor would've lopped off at its pretentious, trying too hard knees. The first few pages read like an assignment turned in during the first week of Creative Writing 101.

Good writing is crisp, clean, precisely tuned. Lots of flowery metaphors and similes and adverbs and adjectives are not good writing. It's a neophyte's idea of how he should write instead. And it's painful to read.

However, once the story actually starts - when Holston locks himself in the cell and asks to see the Mayor - Howey seems to forget trying to impress whatever committees rejected him from MFA writing programs and the prose kicks into high, suspenseful gear. This part of the book earned four stars from me.

But alas, that only last so long and before the reader knows it, we're back to word vomit that goes nowhere fast. Not to mention that the world building falls apart with only the slightest poke. (view spoiler)

The ending is a reverse that only someone unfamiliar with American pop culture and science fiction tropes over the last fifty years didn't see coming. Hint: if the words "You maniacs! You blew it up! Goddamn you all to hell!" "Soylent Green is people" or "Luke, I am your father" mean nothing to you, then go right ahead and be surprised.

So one star for the beginning and end, four stars for the middle, for an average grade of two stars.

Only recommended if you have curiosity about self-published works that are hit by the zeitgeist lightning, and you are a fast reader so you don't waste too much time on this slight, over-written and cliched story.

Patrick says

Honestly, I don't see what all the hype is about. The book ain't terrible, and it was certainly worth the \$0 price tag, but I don't understand how anyone could possibly claim it is at the top or anywhere near the top of the post-apocalyptic genre. Maybe my expectations were set too high going into it; if I'd had the experience of finding a diamond in the rough like the first readers of Wool probably felt themselves to have done, I would be more invested in singing its praises. But as it is the popularity of this book is a complete mystery to me.

The twist struck me as convoluted and tacked-on. I'll grant that it was somewhat of a surprise (I worked it out before Holston, but not long before), but it just didn't make enough sense to stick with me. A good twist ending should see all the pieces finally falling into place in a way that makes you want to hit yourself for not seeing it all along. This one raised too many questions. Why did the silo society require a view of the outside so desperately if it was such a grim desolate place? Why did they insist that the work of cleaning sensors be done by the banished, when they appeared to have the technology for brief expeditions into the outside world (which without the fake visor images would have only served to further justify their practice of staying in the silo all of the time)? How exactly does the false image of paradise encourage people to clean the sensors? I can imagine that it might have that effect on some people, but it seems really odd that such a ploy would come up in a brain storming session on the issue. Much more effective would be finding some kind of leverage to bring to bear. It wouldn't even have to be a threat: If I was going to be banished into the wasteland either way, I would clean the sensors if I knew, for instance, that my doing so would mean extra rations or improved accommodations for someone I cared about.

Better yet-- decriminalize the act of leaving the silo. Make it known that it is likely a death sentence to leave, but make it a decision that can be freely entered into, and which the group will offer support for. Then, when the adventurer is ready to try his luck outside ask whether he would mind doing his community a much needed favor en route. Just a thought.

I just can't see how thinking that the silo society is deceiving itself would make a banished person want to clean the sensors. If anything it would seem to have the opposite effect. After all, by cleaning the sensors which display the false wasteland, the banished would be making himself complicit in this deception. If he refused to clean, on the other hand, he would be contributing the eventual black-out of the sensors which might lead people to lose their fear of the outside world and come join him in this paradise.

Yup, sorry, I can't get into a series with such a bullshit premise. And don't tell me that this is because it's the first of series. Wool was intended as a standalone so I don't see why I shouldn't evaluate it as such.

Zoeytron says

Most refreshing to find a dystopian tale that is not YA. This one grabbed my attention right away, and I have already purchased the omnibus. Interest officially piqued!

Wendy F says

Whoa.... (Imagine that a deeply shocked, whoa...)

I had no idea that a short could make me feel like that...

How can a book you can read in a 1/2 hour really make you feel such strong emotion?

I used to think that reader/character connection comes from page count. I mean, how else are you going to find enough time to really know who they are and connect to them on that certain level? Sometimes it does, depending on what the author is trying to overcome, (See Dan & Vadim). Well, I've come to realize that other times all it takes is a really great writer. Hugh Howey isn't the only one I've read and liked this much, Jordan Castillo Price is another. These people know how to write a short that still packs a punch.

What a story. If it was standalone, I'd still be seriously impressed. It's not, there are sequels. That's even better, because I need to know more. I want to know why!

Regina says

I read this novella for two reasons. First, Michelle's review and second, because the ebook was offered for free from Amazon. I am so glad for these nudges because the book was a lot of fun. The kind of fun that only a decent post-apoc and creepy dystopian story can deliver. One of my favorite kinds of literary fun.

The set up to the story is simple as the novella is only 59 pages. It is told from the point of view of one character - both in the present time of the story and through brief flashbacks to three years earlier. I do not want to give anything away; the story is dystopian (taking place in a very limited society after a post-apoc event) so readers can assume there will be a delightful twist at the end. And there was a twist, actually there were a few of them.

This is a quick read due to both its length and the fast pace of the text. If you enjoy this genre, I think you will enjoy this novella. I plan to read #2.

David Sven says

Book 1 of the Wool Omnibus. Short at some 49 pages – and its got my attention.

The remnants of mankind live in a giant circular Silo going into the ground – outside is an uninhabitable waste with toxic corrosive air. We aren't really told what's happened. People can view the outside world through a screen that's fed from four live feed camera's outside. Problem - the cameras need to be cleaned. Problem - going outside is a death sentence. Solution – send out condemned criminals to clean the cameras in a suit that will last long enough to get the job done.

So straight up I'm like, oh yeah? I know how this goes. Can't sucker punch this smart cookie. But I was well and truly sucker punched. And what's more – Howey used my own scepticism against me to do it. And now I've got to get to the next book because I still haven't wrapped my head around what just happened. Very clever intro – well clever providing he can answer some of the questions that have my brain in a spin.

5 stars

Helen says

I've heard so much about this sci-fi series so I'm glad I can finally tick it off my tbr. Wool is set in a dystopian future where what seems to be the sole survivors of some kind of catastrophic disaster are living in a silo. There's a few thousand of them living in this silo that extends about 150 stories beneath the earth and the only glimpse the inhabitants ever get of the barren outside world is through the silo's cameras. The first part follows Holston who becomes consumed by curiosity about what state the outside world is actually in as he's suspicious about the veracity of these 'cameras'. When he can't take the not knowing any longer, he volunteers for a suicide 'cleaning' mission in order to be sent outside and finally see for himself. The plot took a while to pick up, most of the novella in fact, and the writing was a little long-winded and stilted at points, but I did feel invested in Holston's story and Howey managed to create a certain amount of suspense over the outside world.

It was three stars for the majority but then there was that final reveal. Holy shit, that ending was awesome. I will definitely start reading the Omnibus so that I can carry on with the four subsequent stories and see how they (hopefully) answer all the questions raised by this first instalment. Plus, it was under 100 pages yet still counts towards my reading goal for the year so it's really a win-win.

Andi says

3.5 stars. This short story would make a great episode of The Twilight Zone. Set in a post-apocalyptic and uninhabitable world where the survivors live in an underground missile silo, criminals are sent outside to clean the sensors and cameras so everyone inside can continue to see what's out there. They are also supposedly sent to their deaths due to the toxic air, but no one really knows because they never come back. It's a wonder they actually complete their cleanings before going off over the hill, but somehow, they always do.

Three years ago, Sheriff Holston's wife dug up some things from deleted computer files that led her to believe that they haven't been told the truth about the outside from their leaders, and expressed the one thing that would immediately evict her from their society - her desire to go outside. So, Sheriff Holston watched her leave and hoped she'd return for him as she promised. But, she didn't, and so Sheriff Holston decides it's time for him to follow her.

I won't spoil it for you, but the author certainly keeps you guessing on what happens to him. This short story is well worth it for \$.99 on the Kindle!

Shannon says

Basically what my two stars boils down to is this: **I had too many questions by the end and I didn't feel attached to any of the characters.** I didn't think the "big reveal" was all that exciting or as terrifying as I'm sure it was meant to be either. And the more I found out about the world, such as the technology or what happened in the past, the more questions I had that were never answered. **I realize this is a short story and it continues on, but if you're going to sell me a book it needs to feel whole.**

Normally when a story features a husband and wife and something happens to one of them I'm a ball of emotions, but this couple's relationship felt flat and mechanical. At one point the guy talks about sobbing through the bars of the jail and I felt absolutely nothing. **There's this level of despair that I'm supposed to be feeling for these two people, their relationship, and their potential offspring, but I honestly couldn't care less if the whole silo went up in flames and everybody died.** That's probably not a good sign.

Thankfully, Howey writes well so I didn't feel like I was slogging through this and I never felt bored, but I'm not the biggest fan of post-apocalyptic dystopia (or short stories, for that matter) so I think fans of the genre would enjoy it more than I did. **This is free on Amazon right now** and the omnibus version that contains the first five books is only ~~\$1.99~~ (at the time of this review it was, now on 4/6/13 I see it's been bumped up to \$5.99. Hrm.) With the first story being so short and also free it's an easy choice to find out for yourself if it's something you'd like to check out or not. I didn't love this story but Howey dangled just enough in front of me that I might want to find out what happens next, but **honestly I don't think I'll ever care enough to continue.** I just don't think I'm the intended audience.

Also, here's hoping my choice to read and review a self-published book doesn't come back to haunt me. Oh lord, what have I done ...

Jennifer Wardrip says

The absolute best in apocalyptic short stories! Dystopian, post-apocalyptic, horror - take your pick, this little tale covers it all. I would LOVE to see more from this author, and from this scary, scary world!

****Edit & update - There IS more! I've picked up WOOL 2, 3, & 4, and Mr. Howey informs me WOOL 5 should be out sometime in February. Go now, my pretties, and pick up tales 1-4. The Genius demands it!**

Lisa Reads & Reviews says

Going into this, I knew this novella was meant to hook the reader into the Wool series. The writing is fine, well edited and clear, but doesn't have the richness or depth to earn 4 or even 3 stars.

Two main characters are introduced, Sheriff Holston and his wife. Oftentimes characters are what draws a reader into a series. Time and effort are invested by writer and readers, and, hopefully, attachments are formed enough to carry the story forward. In this case, I haven't that sense of attachment or wanting to move forward, mainly because (view spoiler) - which can work for a standalone short story, but not a novel series. Again, 3 stars for character development - they were nice enough.

So, how about the world building? Generations of people exist in an underground silo. While underground worlds aren't new, they aren't plentiful either, so I was intrigued. World building is challenging, and not as easy as one might think. China Miéville is great at it. George R.R. Martin and Cormac McCarthy both come to mind. The underground world in Wool is less richly drawn. Perhaps the novella format is the limiting factor, but the right vocabulary can pack powerful punches in short order. So, for the world ambiance, Wool was okay -- 2.5 stars.

The theme has potential -- ideas about society, government, beliefs. I know the wool is being pulled over the population's eyes, but by whom and for what reason are leads for a good story. When it comes down to it, I found myself simply unmotivated to pursue them. Why? Something was missing. I should be one or more of

these: 1) emotionally entangled 2) intellectually curious, or 3) in love with the prose. Because I'm none of the above, I have to rate this 2 stars, which is not a dig, but it was okay, without an exclamation mark.

Wendy Darling says

First three installments of this dystopian series are FREE today for Kindle. Fantastic reviews and ratings for this author, sounds like it's worth checking out!

Thanks to Michelle for the nudge. :)

Ivie ☆Born to Magic-Forced to Muggle☆ says

Have you ever felt guilty about not liking a book? Or is it only me? Or do I have a friend?

I will be honest. I had this book for seven, **SEVEN** months and this is my fifth attempt at reading it. I have had more success and pleasure in watching paint dry. The writing doesn't grip me at all.

I get it, I really do. I can see how there would be troves of people who like this book. I wanted to like this book so bad, too. The writing just bored me to tears. For the life of me I couldn't get anywhere and I tried so hard.

The storyline is right up my alley, but the way the author phrased things made me feel like I am attending an Entmoot. The plot development was so slow it made my eyelids rust... I am giving up. To all those lovely people who wanted to chat about Wool, alas I am sorry to say....

Penny Raspenny says

Amazing

I'm lost for words...

This was good!

After Hunger Games and Uglies, I thought I'd never find a good dystopian book (no ladies and gentlemen, Divergent didn't make it up there). Yet I stumbled upon this one (thanks to GR friends of mine that I saw had given good ratings).

We saw a dystopian world, a ~~seared~~ terrified crowd, a manipulative government and a ~~great~~ an everlasting love. A love I might add that we saw from the end. I mean, it was already there when we started reading, we never saw it *being born*, yet it was not at all less powerful. We were provided with every detail of the emotional state of the MC and the journey that lead him there, all being presented exactly right.

The writing was very good and in every step of the way you were taking the path the author wanted you to. Like inception, he planted the idea and you just followed. You never knew more or less than what he wanted you to know. I was carried away actually feeling and thinking whatever he intended for me to feel and think. I applaud!

I do have some questions about the world building but it never bothered me while reading the book. Things just were like that, period. Only now, after finishing it do I think of them. Yet I cannot imagine what could be happening in the second book...

It's not long, actually like a mini story so **read it**. I mean it!

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

I want to go out. I want to go out. I wanttogoout.

4.5 stars. Holy ____ . You can choose which word to insert there but you might want to pick something much stronger than cow. Because the word I'm thinking is pretty strong with a lot of caps and exclamation points following it.

People (ahhh...yes, the very abstract and almost imaginary use of "people") have been telling me to read this short for a while now. I should have been listening sooner. Btw... *Wool* is a very condensed little read. It only took me about a half hour to get through the entire thing. It's worth the try (especially if you like dystopia) because there's no risk when something is this short. I'm tempted to jump right into *Wool 2* but I can't right now.

Imagine being trapped in a silo, the rest of the outside world a complete mystery to you. Information is limited as to what's going on "out there." Your wife went crazy trying to figure it out. You feel like you're going crazy trying to know yourself.

Allison whispered something almost inaudible : "It's not real. Nothing you see is real."

Holston turned back to survey the muddy, lifeless landscape. It only looked depressing compared to scenes from the children's books.

"You okay?" Nelson asked. "Anything too tight?" Holston glanced around the airlock. My life is too tight, he wanted to say. My skin is too tight. The walls are too tight.

The animal part of his mind wasn't made for this, to be calmly ushered to a death it was perfectly aware of.

Yep. A lot happened in the span of a few pages. There is so much packed into such a little short. The ending was crazy. I honestly have no idea what's going to come next, so I'm very excited to get to the next

installment as soon as possible!
