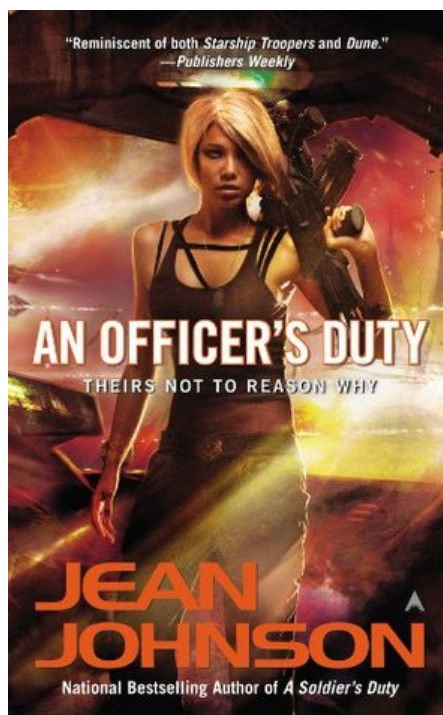




An Officer's Duty

Jean Johnson

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An Officer's Duty Jean Johnson

Jean Johnson—the national bestselling author of the Sons of Destiny novels—returns to the world she introduced in *A Soldier's Duty* with a terrible vision of the future...

Promoted in the field for courage and leadership under fire, Ia is now poised to become an officer in the Space Force Navy—once she undertakes her Academy training. But on a trip back home to Sanctuary, she finds the heavyworld colony being torn apart by religious conflict. Now Ia must prepare her family and followers to secure the galaxy's survival. Her plan is to command a Blockade Patrol ship. Her goal, to save as many lives as she can. But at the Academy, she discovers an unexpected challenge: the one man who could disrupt those plans. The man whose future she cannot foresee...

An Officer's Duty Details

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Author : Jean Johnson

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From Reader Review An Officer's Duty for online ebook

Rich says

Like many of the others here, I'd have liked to have seen more action. The early portion spent on her home planet was necessary as a foundation for later chapters, but I could have lived without half of the Academy portion. When she did get to the action bits after she graduated from the Academy, they seemed disjointed and unconnected, like short stories rather than chapters. If that was intentional, it just seemed a bit awkward to me. I found myself skipping ahead at times, which is never a good sign. It would help if Ia were just a little more likeable. I was always hoping that something would go wrong--a little setback to knock her down a peg. Still, I enjoyed it over all, and I will be looking forward to the next book in the series.

** Again, a very lame cover that has nothing to do with the story, and bears no resemblance to the actual character. Who is this? Ia's sister, the Victoria's Secret model?

Stephen says

I liked this book, despite the star rating. So don't get me wrong, it can be enjoyable. But objectively, it's pretty terrible, and it takes the right kind of reader to want to press on with this series past the first book.

First of all, there's no plot. There's nothing cohesive holding the story together, other than it's the sequential incidents in Ia's life. I feel like what Johnson chooses to show versus what we don't get to see makes for a rather sporadic mess at times, considering there's no overall thesis to the work. It's just Event_01, Event_02, Event_03...Event_N, Big Finish. And then a few more after events.

Second, Ia is perfect. Like, literally, completely perfect. When she makes a mistake or doesn't execute beautifully, it's by design. Johnson's idea of giving Ia a weakness is neglecting to give Ia the same superpowers that a comic book hero might have *with the same intensity*. She's still super strong, super fast, able to manipulate electricity, alter people's minds, etc. She computes probabilities like a machine. Oh, and of course, see the future.

It's the fact that she sees the future that both makes and breaks her as a character. She's able to do everything just so, because of her precognitive abilities, yet it's also the reason why her character kind of works. If she was doing anything other than rescuing the known universe from the tiniest possibility of salvation, the series would fall flat.

As it is, the story is 100% about Ia. The other characters don't matter. Bennie doesn't matter. Meyun doesn't matter. Her family doesn't matter. Sure, they all put in an appearance, but I have absolutely no reason to care about any of them.

So when Ia *isn't* able to accomplish something, it feels contrived. When there's a cloudy area in her predict-the-future skills, it's because it's convenient to the author. When her psi strength fails, it's because the enemy has somehow conveniently invented a psi blocking machine, even though (a) there's no reason to believe a species without psis would be likely to figure out how to do so, and (b) Ia still overpowers the machine anyway. We're certainly never afraid of her failure, even when she's rattling off the percent chance that something won't succeed. Background that accommodates for it or not, Ia's imperviousness is just a pinch too extreme. She's not afraid of anything, there's nothing that can possibly weaken her. We thought we might see a chink in her armor finally, here, with a potential love interest...nope.

I could rag on this story at length. And yet, for reasons I can't fully explain, I still liked it. All the while I'm complaining to myself about what the story does or does not do, and how I could write a better novel, I'm still turning the pages. I don't know what that says, but I maintain: Ia's story is not for everyone.

Paradoxical says

I'm of two minds of reading this series. I enjoy reading it, there is no doubt about that, but it's in that way where deep inside you, the part that (for me, anyway) is always rooting for the protagonist and always wanting them to *shine* and be *right* even when everyone else around her (or him) is wrong--well. That part is definitely feeling fulfilled in reading this book. Not to mention that the main character, Ia, is absolutely right with no doubt at all, because she's *precognitive*... heh.

So I get to be entirely justified when I'm miffed that other people don't immediately believe in Ia, because of *course* she is right because she can see the *future* and there is absolutely no chance of her being wrong.

But while satisfying in that sense, the more rational (wow, I am almost tempted to go id, ego, and super-ego in this review, but I'll refrain) part of me takes a step back, looks at the book, and promptly swats down that inner feeling of absolute glee in order to go *yeah, while it feels good reading it, it's so over the top it's cringe worthy*.

So, yes, two minds.

That said, I did enjoy reading the book. If I don't think about it too hard, I enjoy what the author is throwing out at us and the main character. Granted, the plot is kind of flat because it's basically detailing Ia's various adventures as she tries to set the course of the future to one where the galaxy lives. It doesn't make for all that much tension and suspense when you know the character is pretty much going to come out of everything smelling like roses, if a little battered.

And the characters? Well, other than Ia (who isn't all that greatly characterized, but I like her anyway, go figure), the rest of them are still rather flat. They're used as foils for Ia, instead of really seeming like they have lives and function other than floating around her and helping her, hindering her, or just fodder for her plans. This book revolves around Ia and the future that she is trying to etch out. Unfortunately a lot of events are told to you or skimmed over because the author needs to go through a large span of time and focuses on the more important or interesting bits of Ia's career. If you like something a little deeper and a little richer in your reading, well, this isn't the series for you.

The romance is lackluster at best. I don't really want or expect much romance from this series considering how indifferent Ia is to it most of the time, but if you're going to put it in, I expect something a little bit less... well, boring. Ia's reactions to it make sense, but the entire inclusion of the romance in the first place seemed rather forced and the male lead is still this shapeless blob in my head.

All in all? *An Officer's Duty* deserves 2 stars, flat out. *And yet I still liked reading it*. It appealed to my shallow side, the one that goes "yay!" whenever the main characters gets something over her opponents. I figure that because of that, I'll at least bump it up to a 3.

Aurian Booklover says

This second book in the series continues with Ia's story. In the first book, she is a soldier in the Space Force Marines, and now she will train to be an officer in the Space Force Army. Learning to pilot all kinds of space crafts, to give orders, to be everything a good officer needs to be. She has been prepared for this ever since her visions when she was 15.

But first, she gets a three week visit to her home planet, her family and friends. Where she prepares her brothers and mothers for the things to come, and what really needs to be done. She also crafts the tools needed in the future, using the crystal like rocks that grow only on her homeworld. Hard decisions have to be made, and her brothers may not like to do it all, but they will listen and do their best to succeed. As she has foreseen of course. But still, the future is all about free will, and Ia cannot force them.

What Ia did not count on, was a classmate who did not exist in her visions. She likes him, he is cute and fun and very good in his chosen profession. But as she cannot see what happens in the time streams, she tries to stay away from him. Unfortunately, her friend and superior officer, psychiatrist and chaplain Benny forces the two of them to face their problems and attractions. Ia has no time for romance, she knows she will never have a private life or children, so why tempt her with this man? If she really falls in love, he will only distract her from everything that needs to be done to save the galaxy, or even make her give up her goals altogether.

As fraternizing between cadets is against the rules, they promise to wait until after graduation, and then spend a few days together before going off on their next postings. Ia knows they will not serve together, and a relationship that spans galaxy's is never going to work. Nor can she afford the distraction. While making love, Meyun Harper triggers her powers, and gets sucked into the timestreams with her. He is resentful of her never giving them a chance, they could have a great life together, he has seen too much. Ia won't go for that future, as it would mean the end of the whole universe in 300 years. In the end, he does stand behind her in her decisions.

Next, Ia is a Lieutenant second class on a small Blockade Patrol ship, fighting almost daily, and making quick decisions. Her knowledge of all kinds of aliens and their customs is very well used now, and she gains respect among them. For her next goal, she needs her nickname to be well known and feared among the enemy. Foggy spots in the timestreams worry her, she does not know what they mean, but it cannot be good.

I devoured this fairly thick book, 439 pages, in two long sittings. If I did not need to sleep, I would never have stopped reading it.

I love Ia, her determination to save as many lives as she can, and be a good soldier and officer. Her chosen path is not easy, and she has to ask a lot of herself and her family and friends, but those who share her trust and her vision, stand behind her. Of course there are some fun things as well, like when her little brother wins the biggest jackpot in the galaxy ever, the money that will be needed to fund the rebuilding of her homeworld after the civil war that is coming. The boldness Ia has when addressing some of her superior officers, when she tells them the truth, when they finally find out about her powers and her heritage.

I am in awe of Jean Johnson's writing voice, as she captivates me and keeps me glued to the pages, needing to find out what happens next, and not wanting the book to end at the same time. I don't know when the next book will be published, but I saw on Twitter that she is working on the fourth now. I can hardly wait. These books will stay on my keeper shelf, and will be re-read.

10 stars

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Full review on my blog, www.boeklogboek.blogspot.com

E. says

An Officer's Duty" by Jean Johnson is part of the series 'Theirs Not to Reason Why' and is the exciting sequel to her mesmerizing book, "A Soldier's Duty". This is an action-packed science fiction novel which continues to describe the military career of Ia, an extraordinary female who was born on a 'heavyworld' (more than 1.56 times standard gravity) which confers remarkable physical abilities which pale in comparison to her mental powers. A stalwart defender who is determined to avoid the catastrophe that only she can see clearly, Ia has entered the Space Force Navy in order to build upon the skills she has already developed during her stint as a Marine. A gradually unfolding tapestry of her intricate plan and glimpses of the key people in Ia's background as well as encounters with the enemies that seek to destroy humans and their allies continue to mesmerize the reader. The author continues to introduce intriguing elements which give texture to a wonderfully imaginative read and makes one anxious for the continuing adventures of a fascinating heroine.

This exciting and entertaining tale is a wonderful combination of science fiction military action and mystical elements such as telekinesis, precognition, pyrokinesis, postcognition and several others. The action is nonstop and there are multiple alien races involved in the struggle which necessitates the presence of human military branches. The author provides more background to the inimitable and indomitable career soldier who is determined to prevent the horrific end to her universe that she foresees. There are glimpses of her softer side even as one follows her through her accelerated training. The introduction of a fellow trainee named Meyun Harper whom she can't read in the timestreams shakes the foundations of Ia's world and provides a wildcard to her careful plans even as it shows her vulnerability. It was satisfying to finally get a direct glimpse of the family who provide Ia's only unconditional support system and I was reminded of the long-range manipulation seen in a couple of other science fiction series that I am fond of by Orson Scott Card and C.J. Cherryh. This was a gripping read that immersed me into an intriguing universe that I can only hope to revisit again and again...fortunately it won't be a hardship to reread this book and the first in the series ("A Soldier's Duty") while I am anxiously awaiting a YEAR for the next one. It is strongly recommended that one read "A Soldier's Duty" first for greatest enjoyment of this fantastic read.

© Night Owl Reviews

I received a copy of this title in return for an honest review.

Gwen (The Gwendolyn Reading Method) says

This delves into how freakin' depressing it would be to have your whole life mapped out for you and the sacrifices of family and relationships you have to make. It does get a bit back into the exhilarating one upping the enemy in the end of the book. And overall I still enjoy the series, I think this made the story

deeper and more meaningful but it was a hard book, I will be taking somewhat of a break before I pick up book 3.

Lizzy says

I can't tell you what attracts me to military fiction, or science-fiction as is the case here. I am not a military brat, never served and have no family or friends that do. As a matter of fact, the military in Brazil has not recovered their prestige after the military dictatorship of the 1960 and 1970's. Nevertheless, I relish reading both military fiction and non-fiction books! It must be the adrenaline of action.

Anyway, Jean Johnson stays true to form in the second installment of *Theirs Not to Reason Why*. This is an incredible series if you like military stories, science-fiction, all mixed with some paranormal. I happen to be a fan of all them and loved the action-packed *An Officer's Duty* as well as now as the first time I read it. Each novel is a step forward for the '*precognitive*' Ia as she works to save the world from a catastrophe she foresaw, when she was just 15, on her first visit to the '*timestreams*'.

I've evolved from fantasy to science fiction not that long ago and later discovered the military sub-genre. I particularly enjoy a blend of space operas with a military drama, and if there is a strong female protagonist I am hooked, that is Ia! If you are anything like me, you will love this book: with a tremendous pace, it offers everything and more: epic battles; political maneuvering; friendship and even a little romance; alluring and plausible characters. Ah, there are surprises, and unexpectedly we are startled when we discover that Ia has an *Achilles's heel* after all. So, she is also human, after all! Awesome, '*Bloody Mary*'!

"I started in the service as a grunt in the Marines. I bear more decorations from my two years of service than anyone outside of Blockade Patrol. Most of my career in the Corps, I served as a noncom officer. I earned my Field Commission at the Battle of Zubeneshamali... I earned my military nickname from my first combat three and a half years ago. My CO looked at me standing there before him, covered multiple times from head to toe in Choya blood and Salik guts, and dubbed me 'Bloody Mary'. I have kept the nickname through my career to date, and kept it fresh.

"Call me whatever you want before my first drink... But you will learn to call me it with respect the moment we go on duty."

So dramatically Ia introduces herself to her subordinates on her first day as their commanding officer.

What astonished me when I first read the series was that an almost omniscient Ia is not monotonous or banal, so we get a great heroine and an incredible tale. She might know how everything is going to turn out, but even her '*future*' can change, and sometimes things go wrong.

An Officer's Duty is a mind-blowing book, read it. But if you haven't read *A Soldier's Duty* (*Theirs Not to Reason Why*, #1), first do that or you might be lost. Enjoy!

Rickb says

I've been reading science fiction of various sub-genres for over 40 years. That's science fiction. Not fantasy. All kinds. The sometimes comedic, sometimes romantic and always entertaining *Barrayarans* of Bujold; the

tomes of Neal Stephenson; the warped history provided by Flint's 1632 phenomenon.... But my heart will always beat a tad faster when I get to enjoy a really excellent space opera with a military flavor - particularly with a strong female protagonist (Weber's Honor Harrington, Moon's Kylara Vatta and Haris Serrano, Bear's Jenny Casey as examples).

I remember the first thing I did after reading A Soldier's Duty was look up when the next series installment was due to be published - and cursed. A whole year?!? Fine. Whatever. It'll probably be worth it.

Moments before sitting down to write this, I finished An Officer's Duty. I was not disappointed. It actually is better than the first one - and that's an achievement.

You want something that's got it all: action; romance; politics; interesting, fleshed out characters; a well-constructed universe and just a darn good story with tremendous pacing?

Read this book. Actually, first read A Soldier's Duty or you'll be lost.

Another cool thing is that I couldn't tell you what Jean Johnson's political leanings are. That's kind of refreshing in modern sf. (Take a lesson, brothers Kollin.)

The next one in the series, Hellfire, comes out in...Another year?!?

Meioa Johnson, I salute you. But, could you pick up the pace a bit. Please?

Moira says

1.6.2017 - 4,5*

Netuším, co to se mnou je, že rozeřtu knížku, někdy se dostanu až za dvoutřetinovou hranici, a pak ji odložím, přestože byla skvělá, a mám nevysvřtlitelnou nechuť se k ní vrátit.

An Officer's Duty je jedna z těchto knížek, přestože jsem do jedničky už nějakých pár let zamilovaná. Miluju, jak autorka popisuje armádu. Mentalitu, výcvik, zbraně. Mám pro podobná témata celkově slabost, takže jsem tak nějak neměla jinou možnost než se nechat strhnout. *smích* Dá se samozřejmě také zajímavý, především akční scény Johnson zvládá velmi dobře, ale celkově je to zamotaná pavučina, nebo možná spíše jen složitá mozaika, s kterou autorka dokáže pracovat znamenitě. Ale hlavní je, jak dokáže balancovat i vše ostatní, charaktery, popisy světů, politiku, i s prvky sci-fi, které sice nejsou tak technické, více zaměřené na mimozemské životy a širší politiku, ale i tak je to mimořádný koktejl. :)

Jediný důvod, proč tomu nemůžu dát plný počet, je "vrozená" chyba vepsaná už v první knize.

Ja zná budoucnost a udělala ze sebe takzka dokonalý nástroj, který vede po určité, předem dané stezce. Je to fakt, pro který mě jednička tak zaujala. Ale dlouhodobě se nedá vyhnout tomu, že se charakter realisticky nemá kam dále posunout, což je zatracená škoda. Přináší to sebou i ten nedostatek, že se nevyhnutelně většina z jejích plánů splní. Jediné lákadlo, které autorce zbylo, je cesta samotná, a to trochu na kouzlu příběhu ubírá... ale ne moc. Nakonec, u některých druhů serií?lov?k, kolem a kolem, očekává určitý výsledek, non? *smích*

Coucher de soleil says

I loved this one! It was incredibly exciting -at one point I was actually reading while trying to make my way home, because I just couldn't put the damn thing down!

Good points: The world building was very well done and expanded on that of the previous novel. I particularly liked the fact that the Salik were not depicted simply as monsters, but rather as a race whose general beliefs caused them to continually refuse to accept the equality of other sentient races, leading to their eventual downfall. Their originality and intelligence as a race was shown to the reader (for instance Ia regrets not being able to see the reputedly beautiful water-based monuments and fountains on their world).

I also LOVED the main character, which is what makes it possible to root for her, despite the very high degree of power and ability which she possesses, relative to everyone else. Ia does have Mary Sue-ish aspects as a character -but this book and series exemplifies the fact that this does not in and of itself make a book bad. I also loved her devotion to duty -her duty to save the universe, that is.

The plot was truly gripping, as I mentioned above. Especially towards the end, I couldn't put the book down! I also loved the fact that many things mentioned way back in the first novel (for example, the importance of the tech involved in the Zubeneschamali incident) were explained in this one.

Bad/not so good points: I don't have much to say here. As I mentioned above, some will not like this series because of the Mary-Sue-ish aspects of the main character. I would say that this IN NO WAY detracts from the story (IMHO), which is top notch military sci fi and space opera at its finest.

A fine read.

rameau says

This review can also be found on Book Girl of Mur-y-Castell-blog.

I'm rounding up the rating because while it wasn't as good as the first in the series I really enjoyed reading the book.

As Ia advances through the ranks of the Terran Space Force she continues to walk that very thin line between lie and deceit in the best interest of all humanity. It takes her to the Navy Academy and pilot school... and I lost count on how many things I'm misrepresenting in my review. Military isn't my forte.

The world of future is still there, only expanded and further explored. The ever changing character gallery introduces new faces and names all the time while rotating a couple of familiar names to focus for a while. There were some I'd missed but didn't see, and there were some I hadn't missed but glad to see all the same.

What's different to the first book is the shifting focus onto Ia's character growth. *Johnson* doesn't switch genres in the middle of a series but she does spend some time on illuminating through the interactions with her family who Ia was before she became hell bent on saving the galaxy, and who she could be if she wasn't so stubborn to not allow anything for herself.

And that's where this book's greatest weakness lies.

Ia does find her Achilles's heel, which was something I'd been waiting to see from the very start. Just as *Johnson*, Ia doesn't quite know what to do with it, but she tries. And it would have

worked—adequately—hadn't that revelation discussion been botched. In my opinion *Johnson* fails to hit that precious balance between avoiding repetition and doing justice to the character—Ia's blind spot in this case. What I read was rushed and unsatisfactory instead of a poignant scene between two people facing and accepting a personal tragedy. I am glad, though, that *the heel* wasn't completely forgotten and I'm hoping that as the series progresses the character gets a chance to pervade Ia's life just as Bennie has.

I like Bennie and hope to see much of her in the future. August can't come soon enough.

Jorden says

I enjoyed this book very much. It reminded me here and there of other books I've read, or I just had *deja vu*. She conveys the scope and immensity of the overall situation very well, and I felt that Ia is a very engaging "hero" character. The convolutions she (Ia) must go through over her lifetime because of her psy powers and what she sees just make for a really great story.

I was drawn into the book enough that I didn't put it down the first night until it was almost 3:00 a.m. That says something to me about how good the storytelling is!

Darcy says

With this book, as with the last one, I am amazed at all the balls in air that Ia juggles and at her altruistic motives. It seems like at each turn she sacrifices her wants for everyone, this book really pounds that point hard. I really wanted Ia to have something for herself, was glad that she was able to get those few days, but hated that it couldn't last. I did think it was a good think that the other person was able to find out the truth, not that it helped the bad news go down better, but it made it more understandable.

I really liked the start of the book where Ia was with her family. It showed the softer side of Ia. I liked how Ia really shared what was to come with her brothers and how after that they really bought into what they needed to do. I also loved the surprise that Ia had for *Fyfer* and the way that he played it.

I was surprised that Ia outed herself towards the end of the book. After all was said and done it makes perfect sense why she did it, but I worry that too many people now know about her abilities which could come back to harm her. With her last action in the book I can't wait to get my hands on the next one to see what happens next.

Lyndi W. says

Did you read the first book?

If yes, you need to read this book.

If no, you need to read that book, then come back and read this one.

Layla says

THIS BLEW MY MIND!

I don't even have words. I just don't.
