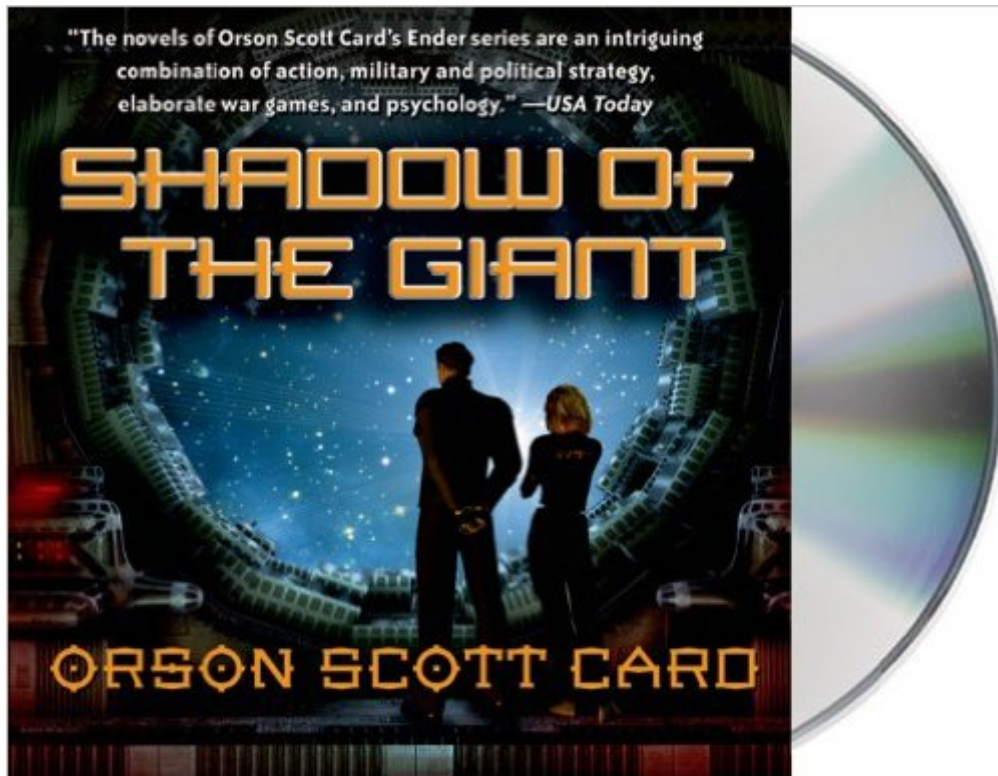


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Shadow Of The Giant (The Shadow Series)



Synopsis

Bean's past was a battle just to survive. He first appeared on the streets of Rotterdam, a tiny child with a mind leagues beyond anyone else. He knew he could not survive through strength; he used his tactical genius to gain acceptance into a children's gang, and then to help make that gang a template for success for all the others. He civilized them, and lived to grow older. Then he was discovered by the recruiters for the Battle School. For Earth was at war - a terrible war with an inscrutable alien enemy. A war that humanity was near to losing. But the long distances of interstellar space has given hope to the defenders of Earth - they had time to train military geniuses up from childhood, forging them into an irresistible force in the high-orbital facility called the Battle School. That story is told in two books, Orson Scott Card's beloved classic Ender's Game, and its parallel, Ender's Shadow. Now, in Shadow of the Giant, Bean's story continues. Bean was the smallest student at the Battle School, but he became Ender Wiggins' right hand, Since then he has grown to be a power on Earth. He served the Hegemon as strategist and general in the terrible wars that followed Ender's defeat of the alien empire attacking Earth. Now he and his wife Petra yearn for a safe place to build a family - something he has never known - but there is nowhere on Earth that does not harbor his enemies - old enemies from the days in Ender's Jeesh, new enemies from the wars on Earth. To find security, Bean and Petra must once again follow in Ender's footsteps. They must leave Earth behind, in the control of the Hegemon, and look to the stars.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps it's because Card knew exactly where he needed to be at the end of this book, but it just worked for me better than the last two. There's less outright war, and more political maneuvering than the last two books. The political machinations are more complex, yet somehow more believable this time around. That plausibility might be a result of seeing the Battle School characters as human and therefore potentially flawed. In previous "Shadow" series books, the Battle School kids were all good guys, except for the cardboard cutout villain of Achilles. It fell to the other characters, mostly politicians, to display human fallibility. This time, the Battle School grads have serious character flaws of their own, and these flaws lead them into big mistakes. They also get into more and better conflicts with each other, which enriches the dynamic of the book. Characters are nicely done - a particular strength throughout Card's books. The tragic Bean, the acerbic Petra, the enigmatic Alai, the dashing Han Tzu - all are crisply drawn. I never, ever get characters confused with one another in Card's books, and certainly not in this one. The character development of Peter Wiggin is especially well handled. We already know from the very first Ender book (Ender's Game) that Peter becomes a beloved leader, and that Ender writes Peter's "obituary" as the second part of his book *The Hive Queen and the Hegemon*. Now we get to see the other side of that story, including what Peter did to arrive at that point and how he was induced to get Ender (of all people!) to write his unvarnished life story. Not everything is tied up into a neat little package. The matter of Bean and Petra's children is handled well, but I wouldn't call the end result "neat".

"Shadow of the Giant" is the latest Card novel in the "Ender" universe. Not all readers know that "Ender's Game," the first novel, started from a short story. That short story still remains arguably Card's best single piece of writing. But after four novels in the "Ender" arc, and now another four novels in the "Shadow" arc, as well as a few short stories along the way, Card and the Ender universe are starting to run out of gas. Card's first problem is that we know exactly how it is going to come out. Let's call this the Lucas Problem. Anyone who carefully read the first book knows what is going to happen. Card has to make the process interesting enough to hold our attention. He nearly succeeds, but is hampered by some other issues. Card's second problem is that he knocked off the arch-villain Achilles at the end of the previous book. Since E. E. "Doc" Smith's "Skylark" series, thoughtful science fiction writers have known it's always a mistake to kill the bad guy early. "Giant" misses Achilles. Card's third problem is that the series' most compelling character, Ender - Andrew Wiggins, the protagonist of the first four books - has long since left the scene. The primary protagonist of the "Shadow" series, Julian "Bean" Delphiki - a minor character in "Ender's Game" - is

still dying of the same disease we have known about from the start. So all that is left for readers is the problem described at the end of "Ender's Game" - a half a dozen or so teenage military geniuses loose on a deeply divided earth. As we watch them succumb, variously, to gene-meddling, megalomania, naivete and ennui, it turns out that the adults, the teachers, those same folks that trained Ender and the other children, had the solution all along.

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