



Shadow Over Avalon

C.N. Lesley

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Fortune twists in the strongest hands. This is no repeat; this is what happens next.

A man, once a legend who bound his soul to his sword as he lay dying, is now all but a boy nearing the end of his acolyte training. Stifled by life in the undersea city of Avalon, Arthur wants to fight side by side with the air-breathing Terrans, not spend his life as servant to the incorporeal sentient known as the Archive. Despite the restrictions put on him by Sanctuary, he is determined to help the surface-dwellers defeat predators whose sole purpose is to ensure their own survival, no matter the cost.

Ashira, War Maid and princess of the surface-world, is ready to sacrifice her life to defend her kin, but when she is betrayed and cast out of the life chosen for her, she must choose whether to die with honor or become one of the creatures her kinsmen fear and loathe.

Following two threads of time, C.N. Lesley's new incarnation of the Arthurian tales of old delivers the perfect blend of science fiction and fantasy.

Shadow Over Avalon Details

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Author : C.N. Lesley

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From Reader Review Shadow Over Avalon for online ebook

Gillian says

The Arthurian Legend has always held a certain fascination for me, so reading a science-fiction version with fantasy elements gave the old tale a new and delightful twist.

The tale is told over two times, but from the beginning we are immersed in an underwater world that is technologically advanced, versus a surface land that's caught in a medieval-like time. The characters are beautifully developed and wrought. Ashira is fearsome and courageous, but from the beginning there is a sense of mystery about her. Her life in the surface lands is a hard one, made more difficult when she is betrayed. Arthur is bold and inquisitive and has a thirst to discover knowledge and more about history. Along with the main protagonists, Lesley has clearly developed characters you both love to love and hate!

There's plenty of twists in the plot and a seamless blending between the science-fiction, fantasy as well as the adventure and romance, which together, bring this tale to life.

I would recommend Shadow Over Avalon to anyone looking for an original twist on an old tale, adventure, romance and a great story.

Dax Munro says

Shadow Over Avalon, by C. N. Lesley, is an amazing Sci-Fi/Fantasy novel, with a range of multi-faceted humanoid races.

Told from a third person perspective, we follow the story of Arthur, an eighteen-year-old Seer Acolyte who has never known his parents. While Seers attempt to breed from him, Arthur searches desperately for clues in the memory files of the notorious Shadow. The question most on my mind was this; 'How will Arthur react when he finally gets his wish?'

Through his and Shadow's eyes, we learn much about Shadow's heart-wrenching life as she faces love, capture, and the most impossible of dangers. Their collective enemy, known as the Nestines, need to be stopped from meddling with human genetics. The use of futuristic technology was well thought out, with terrific world-building skills demonstrated throughout the novel. Avalon is without a doubt my favourite location as it reminds me very much of the mythical underwater city of Atlantis.

This inspiring first book of a series held a wide array of characters, my favourite being Ashira, otherwise known as Shadow. She is the most complex character I have ever come across in fiction. Her motivations and desires are unique to her and I especially related to the way in which she shut off her feelings when they became too overwhelming.

The main theme I identified was to 'know thy enemy.' This tale includes some sort of betrayal at every turn, making it difficult to distinguish potential allies from foes. The writing made for a fluid read and had a unique and beautifully descriptive style. Shadow Over Avalon is a real page turner with an intricately crafted plot. For those who enjoy Sci-Fi and Fantasy novels, I would strongly recommend that you read this series.

Ju Ephraime says

C.N. Lesley's has written a beautiful blend of SciFi and fantasy based on the legendry tale of Arthur of Avalon in her, *Shadow Over Avalon*. I searched for a word to describe this book, and only one kept coming to mind...beautiful. There was so much going on in the story that I had to concentrate in order to follow. How the author was able to produce such a masterpiece, while remaining sane, is the reason I thought this a work of beauty. I fell in love with several of the characters, but especially Uther and Ashira, and then there is Shadow. Brilliant! Lovers of SciFi are in for a thrill! Highly recommend!

Steve LeBel says

Is it possible for someone to take the story of King Arthur and recast it in the distant future? Can Arthur live under the ocean in a city called Avalon? Thanks to author C. N. Lesley's brilliant work, I have the answer to that: ABSOLUTELY!

Lesley does a masterful job of recasting the Arthurian legend in a new world with new characters, new technology, new mental abilities, and even dragons. And yet it is still the story of Arthur. The story is told through a young and rebellious Arthur who chafes at the role he is being forced into. Struggling to discover his place in the world, he resists the pressure to become an acolyte and serve the monk-like Sanctuary; instead he yearns to see the surface world. Arthur learns about the surface by accessing the recorded memory and experiences of an amazing and mysterious woman called Shadow, one of his city's warriors, originally from the surface. We learn of a feudal world with kingdoms, duchies, and wild dangerous territories. More interestingly, we are introduced to a brutal and primitive cast system that is aggressively reinforced by a mysterious priest class. All the while, there is a mysterious intelligence that sits in a crystal cave, observing and manipulating lives as it creates the conditions for Arthur's emergence in this time of need.

This was a wonderful blend of both the Arthurian legend and true science fiction. And it remained wonderfully true to both. I made notes as I pieced together the clues and hints from the world of the submariners and later the surface world, so different in every way. The descriptions were excellent, allowing me to clearly picture the city under the sea, as well the surface world as we rode along a dangerous path between castles, fearful of the beasts that lurked along the way. As Arthur learned more about Shadow's life, we discover layer upon layer of detail that continues to enrich the story. The characters are intense and very easy to identify with, and it was fun to watch Arthur mature and grow in confidence as he learned more about his world and began making decisions about his life.

As the story drew to a close, I was pleased to think of it as more of a satisfying pause than an ending. There is definitely a lot more story to tell. And when C. N. Lesley introduces the next book, I will be first in line to buy it.

Bill Ward says

WOW! This is a truly epic and imaginative story, which made yesterday's long train journey fly past. How does someone conjure up such a futuristic world combining fantasy and science fiction? I loved the characters, especially Ashira and Uthira, who had me captivated from the first pages. Arthur is also an interesting character and the author has cleverly woven together the two different story lines. This is a quality book, well written and by no means just about a fantasy world in the future. The actions and emotions of the characters are also relevant today. Simply a fabulous read!

Jalpa Williby says

Imagination Out of This World!

This book has everything I like. First of all, there's a badass heroine! I love my female characters strong, and this one definitely is strong. There's action- lots of it! There's suspense, romance, mystery, betrayal, and loyalty.

The author does a nice job describing the main character's pain and loss. Then we see her becoming stronger and persevering- wanting to get revenge.

I have to admit, the author has quite an imagination. The fact that the author was able to put her imagination into a story is quite impressive. My advice to the readers is to read the book where you can focus. Trust me, you don't want to miss anything.

I don't want to give anything away because there are many things that happen in the book that you don't expect. But, if you're looking for a very different story, that has a lot of twists and turns, this is the one for you.

Brenda Perlin says

Shadow Over Avalon is an unusual book that caught my attention, grabbed hold and didn't let go until the very last page. I loved the ongoing adventure that was both thrilling, entertaining and wildly suspenseful.

This is a well developed story with great characters and extremely good writing. So much creativity and imagination. Pretty mind blowing if you ask me. This futuristic tale took me by surprise and brought me to a completely different time and place. How I loved the surprises. This story moved at a quick pace as there was never a dull moment. Surprising since I am not much of a fantasy or science fiction fan. The writing was enough to keep me glued to the pages. Loving every minute. This is a smart story that will take you places you never imagined existed. I would highly recommend this great tale if you are looking for a great escape with a great unpredictable plot. I love how the different story lines come together. Very clever. I would read more from this author. Without a doubt. So enjoyable.

Excerpt ~

"Two days of rest refreshed Shadow. The morning of solstice started a warm, cloudless day. She walked along the shore after breakfast, followed by two brothers. They didn't appear to trust her not to leave them, looking on the edge with her so near water. She returned to the camp with reluctance and one backward glance at the sun glinting off the waves."

The writing is soothing and poetic. Sophisticated and yet easy to get lost into. I would highly recommend this sophisticated story that has the wow factor!

Susan says

I read this novel a while ago, when the author and I belonged to a writing group. When I write a review, even if I know the author, I try to be scrupulously honest, because I know exactly how an author feels. I have a library full of books - yes, real ones - because for me, the mark of a great book is when I can go back again and again and still find something.

When I read *Shadow over Avalon* again, even knowing the outcome, I discovered the same thrill on my initial reading. That pleasure of a great plot that kept me on my seat from start to finish - that anticipation when I know I am getting close to reading time at the end of the day. Because the characters get a hold of you and you simply have to follow them.

If you mention 'Arthur' as a storyline many folks will sigh and mutter stuff like - been there, done that. Don't be fooled, this is a unique novel where the author's scientific knowledge shows through. This Avalon is nothing like the almost utopian creations of Arthur and his round table and his perfect knights. This is a battle for survival where Earth has returned to a more primitive form. Avalon is one of the few outlets that have retained technology, but there is a price. Avalon is under the sea.

Shadow over Avalon is just the beginning of an epic tale which describes how this happened. Arthur, whose talents as a seer, make him a valuable asset rather than a 'person' must discover his true origins to gain freedom. 'Shadow' is the mysterious woman whose life he follows upon the surface world to gain that knowledge.

The real threat, however is only just beginning to show its ugly head. Who or what is truly manipulating events? And how did this threat come about?

But a stunning plot is nothing without the characters who people it. Characters you can empathise with, or hate for their actions. *Shadow over Avalon* has it all.

Now I am going to tap my fingers for the next one. Ms Lesley, please hurry up!

Steven Guscott says

I have been looking forward to reading *Shadow Over Avalon* for a while now as I'm a fan of the Arthurian Legends. I finally reached it on my list and I have had the pleasure of reading it. I didn't actually know much about the story before hand, just that it was going to be a sci-fi/fantasy mash up about King Arthur, but that's about all I knew. It turns out its very much sci-fi with a bit of medieval environment as well. The overall story was very good and I enjoyed it a lot. There was less King Arthur type stuff than I thought there would be, but the connections are certainly there. I also like to read original stories that I can't predict where the plot is going and S.O.A was certainly original and mostly unpredictable.

When I started reading I was totally drawn in from the start as it had a very intriguing opening, but then I did find myself less enthralled from time to time due to some difficulty with awkward wording and phrasing. This is just a minor nit-pick as there was always something interesting that came along to keep me reading.

The characters were interesting to read about and Arthur's journey of learning and discovery is enjoyable. At times I did want more Arthur time as a lot of this story actually follows the people around Arthur. There is a considerable amount of time spent on how their choices effect his life and him trying to discover motivations and reasons for their behaviours. There's a good enough balance though, and it means the reader can learn about other characters, and mostly about the mysterious character Shadow, while also learning about Arthur. I just personally wanted to see more of Arthur, but I guess that will come with the next story as this is just the first book and no doubt the set up for more Arthur time.

The ending was a good way to finish, and clarifies some of the mystery built up through-out the story. The ending also kept the story wide open for a number of possible directions, and once again I like this as I can't really guess what will happen next.

Overall, I really liked Shadow Over Avalon. My personal opinion is that this is a story for those who enjoy mostly science-fiction stories. Maybe others who don't usually read sci-fi will like it, but they might get lost by some of the science aspect of the fiction. If you think it's something you might like you should certainly give it a read.

Jan Raymond says

One of my favorite stories growing up was King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. The author has taken this timeless tale and given it a brilliant new twist. The storyline is intricate and complex, and one gets drawn into the two entwined stories. A boy looking for his origins and a girl trying to survive!

The plot unwinds spectacularly, and the author manages to keep the book fast paced and exciting, while developing her characters. The strengths and weaknesses of each character are explored. You feel pity for those that circumstances changed for the worse and sadness for those who got affected by the change. I love her style of writing, it kept me glued to the book.

A reunion, betrayal, survival and promises of new adventures to come and new possibilities to explore! C.N.Lesley ends her book on a note of suspense, leaving us waiting to know what happens next. Applause for the author on her own timeless tale!

Rafaële says

I wouldn't be surprised to see this story on the big screen, as a major blockbuster, one of these days.

"Shadows over Avalon", Book 1 of the Shadows series, has all the ingredients to make a captivating high concept movie.

Arthur, an incredibly gifted young citizen of the underwater city of Avalon, is so special that he's under constant scrutiny. Arthur won't accept the life programmed for him by Avalon's powers to be, and decides to escape and fight above water with Terrans, against their oppressors, the repulsive and all-powerful Nestines. In order to prepare for his escape on the surface, Arthur secretly accesses the all-knowing Archive system, and discovers the story of Ashira, the beautiful and fierce War Maid, princess of the surface-world, betrayed by her father, and then by her peers. Ashira's life is tied to the story of Avalon. But how does Ashira's life relate to his? Why does he have dreams of a previous life? And what is his real purpose?

C.N. Lesley's imagination has no limits. The worlds she created are so vivid and well thought out, that the reader's gets completely immersed in this brilliant tale of lost love, mind games, and science fiction. Very

impressive!

Giacomo says

Shadow Over Avalon takes you to a different world, but at the same time manages to keep some part of you anchored to a beloved piece of literary history. And the way that Lesley does it is as magical as the legend itself. Lesley not only creates an environment that mesmerizes the reader, she also threatens, amazes, and makes the reader feel at home, but always with suspense thick in the air.

The characters make or break a book for me, and these characters were as real as my neighbors (unfortunately). Some I loved like a dear friend; some I loathed. But all of them made me “feel” and that’s what’s important to me. These were not cookie-cutter fill-ins that Lesley pulled from another novel. I’m convinced that somewhere, in some life or time, Lesley “knew” these people. They’re as real as that.

Plot is the other thing that keeps me flipping pages in a book, and I have to say I’m often tempted to toss a book if the plot isn’t strong. No worries with Shadow Over Avalon. This plot keeps you guessing, keeps you filled with suspense and dread, keeps you wondering what the hell is going to happen next. Exactly the way I want it.

That brings me to prose and quality of writing. There’s not much to say, except—damn good job. Every author has a unique voice; Lesley’s is unique in a very good way. Like all good authors, it takes a few pages for her style to latch onto you, but once you settle in there’s no going back. I read this in two nights, but only because I had to sleep; otherwise, I would have pushed through that first night. Don’t plan on starting this book late; you’ll curse yourself in the morning if you do.

There aren’t a lot of books I rave about, but Shadow Over Avalon takes most of what I love in books and wraps it all up in a nice present. Great characters, great plot, great prose, add in a great setting and you’re set to go. I recommend this to anyone who likes a good book. And I might say, this could easily be a cross-genre interest. You don’t have to be a fan of Arthurian legends, or SciFi/fantasy to love this book. Go get it. You won’t be disappointed.

Giacomo Giammatteo, author.

Phillip Stephens says

Excalibur and dinosaurs. How can you miss?

When I was a kid, my favorite book was T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* (mostly *The Sword in the Stone* section with Wart and Merlin; I picked up the later sections as I grew older). Like many kids, I loved all things Arthur and tales of knights of the round table. I listened to the soundtrack of Camelot for hours, when other kids were listening to the Beatles and Herman's Hermits.

Later, much to my wife Carol's disbelief, I became a huge fan of Mark Schulz' Cadillac and Dinosaurs graphic novels. I only wish he'd written more.

When C.N. Lesley wove the two together to create *Shadow Over Avalon*, she catapulted me in readers' heaven. This juxtaposition does her injustice, however. Her prose cast a spell on me long before the heroine Shadow encounters her first Saurian after betrayal by her lover's advisors and the priesthood.

Heroine? you might ask. Isn't this a novel about King Arthur? And, improbably, dinosaurs? Yes and no. *Shadow Over Avalon* tells the story of the restoration of Camelot in the distant future after an apocalypse demolished civilization and repopulated the planet with resurgent predatory reptilian species. Lesley combines two narrative storylines, that of a young outcast named Shadow who forges an alliance of outlaws and a scholar named Arthur who pries into unauthorized records in the clerical database.

Neither realizes darker forces conspire to control the planet and its human populations. Lesley weaves a compelling narrative that threads more elements than a North American quilt, adding revelation onto revelation to draw the reader into her story—genetic manipulation, undersea and space colonization, and Celtic mythology.

Lesley's prose draws the reader immediately and keeps them riveted for the rest of the novel. It's been a long time since I read a book that reminded me why I enjoyed reading as much as I do, or that I downloaded and read the sequel as soon as I finished the first installment. I admit that there were moments I felt I was in the middle of a Hong Kong or Bollywood movie as Lesley threw in yet another fantastic element or plot twist, but, in the end, they all mesh together into a satisfying whole.

Rating system:

5 = *Delicious dialogue, crisp prose, clever characters & compelling plot*

4 = *Great read, won't want to stop (Some reviewers rate this 5 stars)*

3 = *Worth buying (but...)*

2 = *I will tell you what audience will like this, but other readers might want to look elsewhere*

1 = *If I review a book this bad I felt seriously compelled to warn you*

Phillip T. Stephens is the author of Cigaretts, Guns & Beer, Raising Hell and the new release Seeing Jesus.

You can follow him @stephens_pt._

Jana Petken says

A science fiction novel intertwined with an old tale of knights and villains. A young boy and a young girl searching for their paths and their roots takes us from under the sea and an advanced technological world to the surface of primitive mayhem.

This is a well written book, filled with action and adventure with a flowery writing style that is both descriptive and intense. The genre, though predominately science fiction is also fantastical, as it delivers us to different realms with great imaginative settings and magic.

The two young characters are wonderfully developed, as are all the characters, and like all good books, you either love them or hate them. I was kept glued to the story and followed the plot and sub plots with ease.

This is an epic story that crosses barriers of time and it took only the first chapter for me to realise that I was going to thoroughly enjoy the ride right to the end.

carol says

Where do I start...this is a masterful combination of world building, science fiction, mixed with the past and legend, a complex setting up of a story that has a follow on novel, maybe the setting up of a series. This is by a new writer to me C.N. Lesley, and this is a magnificent but horrific novel.

The legend, that of Arthur, and Avalon. Characters from the famous stories of the past...yet this is set many generations into the future, and within it the story builds but doesn't really become clear until the last. The earth, the surface world, with forts and the people still using horses for travel, with Dukes who rule as if in days past when fiefdom was commonplace. In fact, the way they live appears to reflect the medieval period of history...but then there are Submariners, a technologically, highly advanced and apparently self sufficient group of beings, to which Arthur belongs, and so it becomes apparent, a post apocalyptic world, maybe a distopian society. Neither seems to like or trust the other. Then enter the priestly class, those worshipped by land dwellers, the Harvesters or Nestines, and these have the ability to travel through sky and space...but as you find are not exactly human. Then there is an ethereal persona or is it a computer that communicates and gives information to Arthur. Almost a tease as bit by bit the creation of this timezone unfolds, the history is finally revealed, the future...if there is to be one needs a hero...and Arthur it seems is being groomed, but for what?

There are things in this story that amazed me, there are continuous links to the traditional story of Arthur known to many over the generations, yet this is a young man who is affected by memories and dreams..are they past, present or future, guiding him to some event or destination or warning him away from such. The story doesn't leave you on a cliff hanger...and yet it reveals enough to horrify and definitely want to know more and at the point where you realise there is a lot more to come and you want to know the conclusion...or you may wish you hadn't wanted to know it. There's a fight to be had, for knowledge to be passed on, for alliances to be made and for enemies to work together.

This is not a book for children in my opinion, definitely adults and even some YA's may struggle...actually there are parts where I think it may give sensitive adults some unpleasant dreams.

There is a very intelligent mind creating this story, it is well thought out and I think this has been on the drawing board for a long time.

This has the quality and impact of a classic, a quest and a struggle for good to overcome evil...and I seriously compare this to Tolkien and Pratchett in one way, but twisted with the times of legends of Arthur and Merlin and Excalibur and now I'm wondering if Shadow is linked to The Lady of the Lake within the submarine world of Avalon.

I think it would make a tremendous film if detail and storyline is kept too.

I highly recommend this story to the intelligent reader. I happily give it 5 + stars.
