



## State of Grace

*John R. Phythyon Jr.*

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It should have been a simple murder investigation. Instead, Wolf Dasher finds himself caught in a web of assassination, betrayal, and zealotry, as he tries to save the elf nation of Alfar from a deadly act of terrorism.

State of Grace is the first in a series of fantasy-thriller mash-up novels that blend magic, super-spies, and politics in an electrifying brew of action and adventure.

## State of Grace Details

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Author : John R. Phythyon Jr.

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## **From Reader Review State of Grace for online ebook**

### **T.L. says**

I had given up reading fantasy because either the series was 1000 books long, or just plain sucked.

Not so with this book!

Adventure, action, fantastic characters and plot...all in ONE volume! Huzzah!

I'll be reading the rest of these ASAP!

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### **Catherine Vickers says**

I liked the element of humans and elves as I love fantasy. My favourite character was the woman who changed into a cat. The chapter including this scene was fun. The story is loosely based on modern day terrorism. Whilst I'm happy to plod through political intrigue in a story, I found this too realistic as I like to delve into fantasy. For me reading is an escapism so I don't care too much for realism. I'm happy to read battles and politics but prefer made up ones so it doesn't seem real. Anyway, characters were ok but I never really felt I got to know anyone deeply other than the main guys both good and bad. Then when the baddy was uncovered he sort of fizzled out of the plot very quickly. Excellent presentation ie grammar, spelling, editing.

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### **Elizabeth Jane says**

It took me longer than I would have liked to finish this. The story started out interesting enough to keep me turning pages. However, the body of the novel seemed full of unnecessary filler. For example, the story line with Shadowcat. Also, the "intrigue" sections of the novel didn't feel intriguing. It became redundant and lost my attention each time. Admittedly, I don't want to be retold information I've already deduced from clues in the writing. I did enjoy the character Wolf Dasher. He is someone I'd want to read about again.

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### **Hunter Johnson says**

Five stars, for its audience: this is a pulp-escapist James Bond novel set in a fantasy world, where the elves are the Middle Eastern Muslim world (allegorically) and the two human nations are the United Kingdom and the USSR. The James Bond parallel is strong, down to a character named Quincy playing the role of Q.

If any of that grabs you, this is your book. It is engaging, clever, and well-paced. I wasn't sure about the intricacy of the gambling game in the opener (mash up poker, chess, and Magic: The Gathering), but after that, a great ride.

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### **Maria says**

this was the first Dasher book I've read, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, an exciting blend of fantasy and action and mystery. It had an intriguing story line and engaging characters, and while it completed this story there is clearly more to come as it ends with a teaser!

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### **Teri says**

What a wonderful mage of everything wild, funny, horrifying, strategic and yes like other reviewers have mentioned, very James Bond like. The Agent is sexy and sexual, calm and cool in all situations and leads a great story that keeps you excited, on the edge of your seat and waiting with baited breathe. A great read with characters that handle their roles well. I would have gladly rated the book higher yet too many terms and titles to keep straight and took from the fun and enjoyment of the read but then again I'm not a military or agency style reader so it could just be me.

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### **Susan says**

I bought this book a year ago but it got lost in my e-library. I'm glad I rediscovered it. This is the first book in what is hopefully a long series.

Trying to define the type of book this is other than fantasy is difficult. I saw that some of the other reviewers thought it was very "Bondesque" but I have a hard time with that label. All I can say is it's a very fast read, which is great since I read it in one sitting. Then I am off to read more.

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### **Mandy Walkden-Brown says**

Really unusual and so very enjoyable!

A fascinating story indeed. A very strange mix of a spy network very reminiscent of James Bond and co, even with an equivalent of Q, Quincy, a magician capable of inventing some extremely useful gadgets.

Cracked up when the ejection seat in the horse-drawn carriage made its appearance.

Unfortunately, I also got the giggles at one stage, wondering just which of the more annoying elves might be Vladimir Putin. No, not very politically correct, but a fact.

It's also a quite intriguing analogy of our world today, past and present, but placed into a genuinely unique fantasy world.

Loved it!

Characters and plot are strong and it's an enthralling story, well told - a truly different fantasy read, and refreshingly, no sign of irritating or whining adolescents on any page. An adult fantasy and an extremely good one. I'm going to be following both this series and its author. (Have already purchased more of his books!)

This book was definitely a compelling and ultimately, very satisfying read indeed.

I received a free e-copy via an author promotion and chose to post a review. It deserved one!

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### **Darnell Dickerson says**

State of Grace is a phenomenal beginning of a series. For starters Wolf Dasher is a likable character, he doesn't feel like a self-insert character or a man without flaws, he has vulnerabilities. There's a romantic, passionate side to him as well as a cunning deadliness.

The story draws strong parallels to our modern world but is different enough to be interesting, you find yourself wanting to learn more about Urland and Alfar as the pages turn. This book is a little politics heavy, there are a lot of players involved and histories between the nations. If you're into that aspect of world-building then you'll love it. Personally, I had a little trouble keeping up with some of the subplots but it all came together nicely in the end.

I think Silverleaf was easily my favorite part of it all. I'm one to root for the villains and Sagi Silverleaf (how could you not root for someone with such a cool name?) is one clever and dangerous elf. The highlight of the story for me was the card game between Silverleaf and Wolf. The game design itself was interesting which is a credit to Phythyon's experience in writing role playing games. The dialogue in that scene, the suspense, the way Silverleaf gets under Wolf's skin was all very well done.

I have to mention Ravager as well - a sadist with a unique shadow ability - he added just the right amount of physical menace to Silverleaf's mental machinations. We were also briefly introduced to a few members of Urland's Shadow Service and I can only hope that as the series progresses we will learn more of the Shadow Service and its members with unique gifts. That was a huge part of the story's intrigue for me.

State of Grace on the surface level can be said to be 007 in a fantasy setting, and it does have a number of things in common with that series, but I would say that it stands on its own merits. A totally solid story, interesting characters with cool names, and a thrilling ride till the end.

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### **Elizabeth says**

Well worth the price for a copy!

This tale of magical espionage erupts from a nebulous time and place and reflects on familiar global Earth events. Phythyon scribes a range of emotional hooks both heartbreaking and humorous, as well as horrific. The reader is instantly pulled into the plight of the many races and the alluring sense of magic in this fantastical place. A complex world emerges from the text, where countries strive for dominance over the rest of the races and magic is the key they all seek. Individuals are trapped deciding where their loyalties must lie. Incredibly sinister forces are at work.

Wolf Dasher is a Shadow, a human with powers endowed to him by a phenomenon known as the Rift. Others like him work for the Shadow Service, the mysterious spy arm of the Urlish military. Their main

human opponent, the country of Phrygia, has a similar branch; and the two nations exist in a cold war state, each threatening the other with all out war...eventually. Elves are known as God's chosen people, and it is their duty to lead the rest of the races to God, only their own people are split by a rift in their religion. Half follow the teachings of Frey, the elf who received this proclamation from God, while the other half follow the teachings of Shendali, another self-proclaimed prophet. These sharp divisions form a world in a constant state of instability, always on the precipice of collapse.

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### **Melanie Adkins says**

Elf on elf violence had escalated. The Shadows were helping to maintain peace between the two. Then Shadow Five was killed. Wolf Dasher, Shadow Seven, was sent to find out how she died and who killed her. Russians and elves were trying to work together to bring the elf nation back to one nation. An Ambassador decides he will take over and be the president. First however, he must do away with the humans and the coalition government. "Beware of religion. There is no greater formenter of hatred on Earth."

A fantasy story with a James Bond feel to it. This book is action packed and full of surprises. I found this one to be exciting, caring, and enlightening. It's easy to get lost in this one. The issue I found was there seem to be several stories being told at once. It does a good job of tying everything together at the end, but can be slightly confusing as you read.

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### **Cindy Kidd says**

#### **Good romp of a book.**

I can see why this was compared to James Bond, but not Game of thrones so much. This is a totally fun book with a good thriller as the main plot. Although the way the main protagonist was treated in an unsatisfactory manner. I was given this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **KelticKat says**

#### **Solid start**

Good solid start to a new series. Thought the world building was good - On that note I would love see a map of these lands I'm such a visual person - other than that good and well done.

Conflict was well played and intriguing - enjoyed the twists and turns of the story as it unraveled.

Getting a solid read on Wolf was a bit tough and thought he was a bit slippery and loose lipped - like-able none the less.

Definitely warrants a return trip for another adventure.

