



Readers' Favorite® Book Reviews and Award Contest

Book Review Mini-Critique



Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although these are general ratings we hope they will give you an insight into how others may view the different components of your book.

These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although your reviewer is not an expert literary critic or professional editor, they are at the very least, an avid reader of books just like yours.

Title: Shunt
Author: Jason Arsenault
Genre: Fiction - Science Fiction



Appearance: The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.

4

Plot: The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books -- those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.

5

- Development:** 5 Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is also a key factor, especially for informative books -- those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.
- Formatting:** 4 Formatting is the single most overlooked area by authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.
- Marketability:** 5 Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.
- Overall Opinion:** 5 The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.

Review:

Reviewed by Grant Leishman for Readers' Favorite

Shunt by Jason Arsenault is a science fiction tale of planet earth in the near future. PrimaCorp has developed a technology that allows humans to swap their unwanted thoughts and tendencies with someone else on the planet via the use of a small shunt surgically implanted in their necks and connected directly to the neural pathways in their brains. As with any technology, when the military sees a potential use for it, things can become problematic, and often ethics and common decency can fly right out the window. Jade is a young woman who had been fitted with just such a shunt to help her overcome the extreme grief and anguish she was struggling with over the murder of her little brother, a death she blamed herself for not preventing. The shunt seemed like a perfect solution for her until she starts experiencing weird dreams and believes they are linked to her surrogate's thoughts. Hiring a hacker friend to discover her surrogate's name and address, she determines to track him down and find out what is really happening. This will lead her on a chase around the world where she will uncover a major conspiracy between PrimaCorp, the government, the military, and one particular rogue employee high in the PrimaCorp structure.

Shunt is disturbingly and chillingly realistic, which makes it all the more fascinating. Author Jason Arsenault has crafted a tale that twists and turns in the best thriller/whodunit style. I particularly enjoyed trying to match the different characters from various arcs in the story to each other. Who was who's surrogate was a feature of the plot. This is a fast-paced and exciting action story that drags the reader along, caught up in the excitement of what will happen next. I did like Jade as the lead character. Naivety and gentleness in her character made it easy to identify with her and empathize with the awful pain and suffering she had endured, blaming herself for her brother's death. The idea of these shunts did not seem too far-fetched at all and certainly didn't tax the believability factor of the story. The author was clearly knowledgeable or had researched well the concept and the possibility of such a product being developed. The idea of replacing our "bad" impulses with "good" ones from someone else was appealing but the question the story raises so eloquently was - where do those "bad" impulses end up and what effect do they have on the surrogate receiving them? In a world dominated by high-tech and the all-important algorithm, this is a timely story to perhaps remind ourselves that we tamper with creation at our own peril. An excellent read that I can highly recommend.