

## Executive: An Earth 340K Standalone Novel (Soldier X Book 1)

**D.P. Oberon**

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*This is science fiction with an epic scope—exhaustively detailed, with an explosive plot and a socially-attuned premise.*

*Executive*, the first novel in D.P. Oberon's Earth 340K series, is an action-packed, character-driven thriller about a discredited corporate executive who is coerced into a deadly military mission to ensure humanity's survival.

In the year 339,999, human civilization dangles precipitously on an environmentally ravaged Earth. A sweet-faced, messianic nine-year-old, known as the Greatest Scientist, tasks a multinational aeronautical company with finding ore to power a ship, which will shuttle Earth's peoples to other habitable planets.

Leading this quest is Saradi. Saradi's pursuit of career and corporate profits have come at significant cost; she is a functioning alcoholic, approaching bankruptcy as a result of lavish spending, and her family is unraveling. When a soured business deal crashes Saradi's high-octane lifestyle, she is recruited by the military for a high-stakes commando operation. These developments all have serious consequences for Earth's warring empires, Saradi's missing-in-action brother, and humanity's existence.

Many ideas and themes are incorporated into this apocalyptic dystopia. It touches on questions of social class and technology, warfare and light political intrigue. Its vision of future technology is particularly strong and realistic, including its mechanized robotics, use of genetic engineering for personal enhancements, and super-fast avionics.

A three-caste social hierarchy is also given a strong foundation, with class playing a vital role in how characters think and react. The exacting environment of the upper class Highers, along with their many technical and economic advantages, is well established with rich details. Lower classes do not receive the same treatment, though; they are acknowledged in a more cursory way, though the soldiers of Oberon's world are given a believable place to unwind after a deployment—a dive bar, the setting of a brief chapter.

Along with themes of corporate greed, environmental disaster, and war, the novel explores mental illness and incest, though in a way that is antithetical to Saradi's already fragile personal and mental state. While the novel also demonstrates knowledge of current events, it opts for surface-level, populist details to lend the story political gravitas.

The language at the beginning of the story is choppy, with clunky dialogue, and it struggles to maintain a rhythm; the book settles into a tighter narrative rhythm in the second half. Dialogue becomes more crisp as the novel progresses and takes on a natural cadence. The novel's ending leaves open possibilities for new beginnings and personal redemption.

*Executive* is science fiction with an epic scope. It is exhaustively detailed, with an explosive plot and a socially-attuned premise, making it an entertaining addition to the sci-fi canon.

NANCY POWELL (December 9, 2016)

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