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Mr. Mercedes: A Novel



Synopsis

In a mega-stakes, high-suspense race against time, three of the most unlikely and winning heroes Stephen King has ever created try to stop a lone killer from blowing up thousands. In the frigid pre-dawn hours, in a distressed Midwestern city, hundreds of desperate unemployed folks are lined up for a spot at a job fair. Without warning, a lone driver plows through the crowd in a stolen Mercedes, running over the innocent, backing up, and charging again. Eight people are killed; fifteen are wounded. The killer escapes. In another part of town, months later, a retired cop named Bill Hodges is still haunted by the unsolved crime. When he gets a crazed letter from someone who self-identifies as the "perk" and threatens an even more diabolical attack, Hodges wakes up from his depressed and vacant retirement, hell-bent on preventing another tragedy. Brady Hartfield lives with his alcoholic mother in the house where he was born. He loved the feel of death under the wheels of the Mercedes, and he wants that rush again. Only Bill Hodges, with a couple of highly unlikely allies, can apprehend the killer before he strikes again. And they have no time to lose, because Brady's next mission, if it succeeds, will kill or maim thousands. Mr. Mercedes is a war between good and evil, from the master of suspense whose insight into the mind of this obsessed, insane killer is chilling and unforgettable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you want aliens, cats that come back or creepy clowns, this is not the book for you. If you love well written King stories, it is. If you enjoyed *Shawshank* and *Stand by Me* ect., this book will make you

happy. 11/22/63 was good, but still used the supernatural to move the story, here it's just people. I think King is at his best when he uses the characters that always feel real. Enjoy a good story? Tired of the usual crap? Read this.

I love this new and improved Stephen King 2.0. I am not going to rehash the publisher's summary or go too deep into the plot as some consider writing about ANY plot points as spoilers. There are no spoilers here, just my opinion of the type of readers that would enjoy Mr. Mercedes as much as I did. In my opinion, there are three major buckets of Stephen King fans, A) Readers that love his earlier works that featured densely written supernatural stories that kindled the type of mental terrorism that innovated the genre. Novels that are deep in character and plot line development to the point they easily reach the level of an 800+ page epic. (See: *The Stand*) B) Readers that love his lighter works that loan themselves to the psychological thrillers of the physical and mortal world that are so terrorizing, they wish it was due to a supernatural entity. Novels that don't have as much depth (relatively speaking) or number of characters, but still great reads. (See: *Misery*) C) Readers who just enjoy to be entertained and terrorized by the master of horror, regardless of the believability of the plot's premise or source of the fear. For the hardcore fans that reside in segment A, I think they will feel Mr. Mercedes is a well written novel, but a rare miss by the author they have grown to love. That would be an unfortunate mis-characterization if readers think Mr. Mercedes is a miss due to the lack of page turning details developing voluminous characters and minuscule details of their surroundings. The development of the main characters in Mr. Mercedes was more than enough to keep us engaged and on our toes with a truly unpredictable plot. Protagonist Bill Hodges is definitely not a sympathetic character nor a character that can be simply introduced to the reader. We are taken through his very tough existence to see him as a loathing underdog and the city's only hope to stop the sadistic plans of the antagonist, Brady Hartsfield. Also, King does a great job still making use and giving depth to the small supporting cast which includes Hodges sidekick, Jermome, Brady's mother Deborah, and Jannelle Patterson - the sister of the woman whose Mercedes was used by Brady in the attack that starts it all. Fans in segments B and C will definitely feel the same heart-racing thrill that they have come to know from Stephen King. Mr. Mercedes is totally unpredictable, fast starting, and interlaced with many newer 21st century references that many will find refreshing. Mr. Mercedes lends more to a thriller where a lot of the plot plays out through the web - a new twist that makes me love Stephen King 2.0 even more. This was a great novel that is much easier to read than many of Stephen King's earlier works. It will definitely not be a disappointment for fans who are open to King's expanding range of finding new, and more 21st

century ways to keep us horrified, entertained, and guessing. I definitely recommend this to all King fans and those who may be new to his books. This review was of an advanced reading copy.

King negates a heavy hand for an authentic, subtly crafted story. Mr. Mercedes offers dual perspective, enabling a more interesting plot development for King's group of unlikely heroes. A fascinating adventure!

Like the Ice Cream Man's (stop me when I'm passing by), all Stephen King novels are guaranteed to satisfy. In MR. MERCEDES, King serves up a super-odd, Neapolitan triple scoop: an emotionally-disabled, milquetoast mid-40s lady who still lives with mom; a 6'5" African-American high school kid; and, the main protagonist Bill Hodges, a rather boring, recently-retired and divorced police detective in his mid-60s who failed to solve that last big case (of a Mercedes running over and killing 8 people, including an infant, waiting in line at a job fair). The novel begins with Hodges parked on his recliner, suffering through the honks of Dr. Phil and drowning his sorrows in a bottle, while occasionally gazing into the end of a loaded revolver's barrel. In the day's mail comes a letter from a guy claiming to be the Mercedes killer, mocking Hodges for his failed efforts to find him. Without providing too many details, the best description I can find for Mr. Mercedes is a psychotic and Oedipal Ice Cream Man bent on toying with Hodges, whom he refers to as "the Det Ret." As the plot develops, the mismatched trio eventually merge in a rush against time to try saving 4,000 screaming teeny-boppers at a "Round Here" [see, One Direction] concert from the psychotic bomb plot of Mr. Mercedes. Adding to the tension, the kid's mom and sister are in the crowd. Undeniably, King is still on his game, even without the supernatural to aid his story. The twists in the plot keep coming to build toward a concerto crescendo. This isn't a "character-driven" plodder that'll be taught in lit classes 100 years from now. With the King, The Story Rules and the characters driving the story are sketched with enough detail that you are drawn into the narrative and care what happens. King is and has been the master of creating the verisimilitude of evil in many forms in the genres of suspense, thriller and horror novels. MR. MERCEDES fits in the 1st of the 3, but it isn't near the Mozartian mastery Stephen King has achieved in the latter 2 genres. Here, while the antagonist is quite creepy, King has painted much darker villains. This psycho isn't evil incarnate; his evil has a cause (probably not THE only cause) and, without revealing too much, it has something to do with a home remedy for headaches, of which the details are so revolting that the reader-results should range from "rendered nauseous" to "released vomitus." This is more of a modern-day suspense novel, a genre in which novels are churned out so quickly these days their

writers remind me of rows of wind turbines on an empty plain. Some are obviously by hack writers, but quite a few have been written by authors as, or nearly as, gifted as Mr. King, who have, unlike him, done this long enough and worked hard enough that they have truly mastered in modern-day suspense. It isn't King's strongest suit. While the bomb plot at a teeny-bopper concert hits REALLY close to home and the internet and car break-in aspects of the story were interesting, I had a difficult time suspending disbelief over the combination of the protagonist detective and his peculiar sidekicks. This is a perfect beach read though: a rapid-paced suspenseful story with all the torque needed to keep you hooked from chapter to chapter until the end. I am still a big Stephen King fan; I'll buy his next novel, too, as soon as it comes out. In the genre, I give MR. MERCEDES 4 stars because I enjoyed it immensely, but I think it doesn't stand up to the level of 5 when put up against some of the spectacularly suspenseful novels penned by the top-shelf storytellers, who not only have risen to the talent caliber of Stephen King, they qualify as geniuses in tales of modern-day suspense, at least those that don't involve ghosts, vampires, demon spirits or other supernatural forces of evil.

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