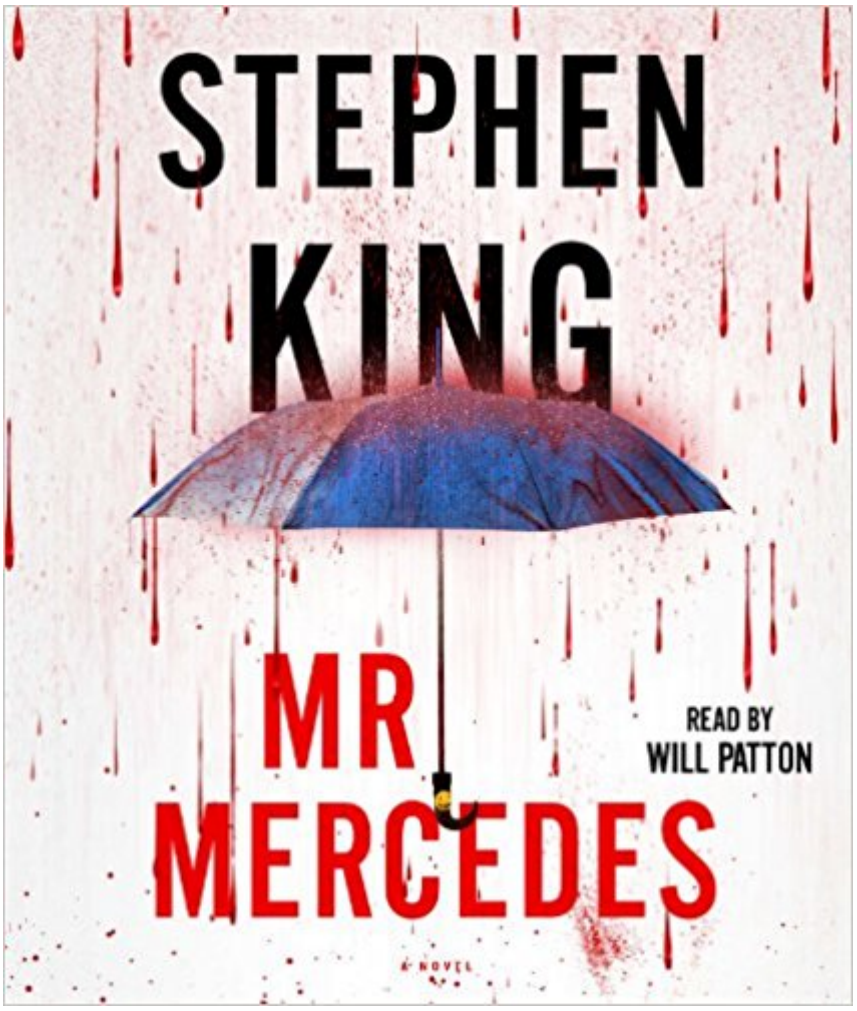
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Mr. Mercedes: A Novel



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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 Ã¢â ¬Å“perkÃ¢â ¬Â• and threatens an even more diabolical attack, Hodges wakes up from his depressed and vacant retirement, hell-bent on preventing another tragedy. Brady Hartsfield 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 BradyÃ¢â ¬â„¢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

KingÃ¢â ¬â„¢s interest in crime fiction was evident from his work for the Hard Case Crime imprintÃ¢â ¬â •The Colorado Kid (2005) and Joyland (2013)Ã¢â ¬â •but this is the most straight-up mystery-thriller of his career. Retired Detective Bill Hodges is overweight, directionless, and toying

with the idea of ending it all when he receives a jeering letter from the Mercedes Killer, who ran down 23 people with a stolen car but evaded HodgesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ capture. With the help of a 17-year-old neighbor and one victimÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sister (who, in proper gumshoe style, Hodges quickly beds), Hodges begins to play cat-and-mouse with the killer through a chat site called Under DebbieÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Blue Umbrella. HodgesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ POV alternates with that of the troubled murderer, a Norman BatesÃ¢â ¬â œlike ice-cream-truck driver named Brady Hartfield. Both Hodges and Hartfield make mistakes, big ones, leaving this a compelling, small-scale slugfest that plays out in cheery suburban settings. This exists outside of the usual Kingverse (Pennywise the Clown is referred to as fictive); add that to the atypical present-tense prose, and this feels pretty darn fresh. Big, smashing climax, too. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: No need to rev the engine here; this baby will rocket itself out of libraries with a loud squeal of the tires. --Daniel Kraus --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Pays off exuberantly... Surprising and invigorating." (Megan Abbott The New York Times)"Classic Stephen King. Creepy, yet realistic characters that get under your skin and stay there, a compelling story that twists and turns at breakneck speed, and delightful prose that, once again, proves that one of AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s greatest natural storytellers is also one of its finest writers." (Associated Press) --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

I have been an on-again, off-again reader of Stephen KingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s over the last decade or so (I was more loyal prior to that time) as sometimes I like his stuff and sometimes I donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t. The last one I read was the awful "Under the Dome," which was long, pointless and ultimately just silly, and I wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t thinking of reading anything else by him until I read a couple of reviews by Charles de Lint in a recent Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. I trust Mr. de LintÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s tastes, so when he praised "Mr. Mercedes" and its follow-up, I figured IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d give them a try. Mr. Mercedes is the nickname given to a man who stole a car (guess what make) and plowed into a group of job seekers standing outside a building waiting for a job fair, killing 8 and wounding many others. Recently retired cop Bill Hodges has been drifting since his retirement, regretting that he didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t catch certain bad guys, including Mr. Mercedes, but when he receives a letter purporting to be from the villain, instead of succumbing to depression as the writer intended, he begins to investigate. And, of course, the investigation just becomes more and more dangerous as he continues to delve into the mysteryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|. The reader knows who the culprit is from early on in the book, so the

appeal is following the cat-and-mouse hunt as the suspense builds. King is as good as he ever was with respect to his characters and plotting, and heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s always great with the gross-out scenes (which here are not too many, thankfully). This turns out to be the first book in a trilogy, and IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve already picked up the second, "FinderÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Keepers," with the third due out in mid-2016. Fast-paced popcorn reading, "Mr. Mercedes" just hits the spot; recommended!

This novel lost steam for me as it went along (especially once I realized that a promising new character was just Stephen King's version of Lisbeth Salander), but for the most part King has delivered an exciting crime thriller about a retired cop exchanging taunting messages with the serial killer he never caught. The plot mechanics that keep Bill Hodges from telling his former police colleagues what he's doing are a bit hard to believe, and I would have personally preferred more of a detective story where the readers get to put together the clues alongside Hodges, but these are ultimately minor quibbles. Mr. Mercedes is that rare Stephen King novel without even a hint of the supernatural, and it's generally just a well-told thriller from a master of his craft.

This was the first Stephen King book I've read, as I'm not a fan of horror, but my brother had recommended it, so gave it a try. I loved it! Well written,with interesting, layered characters. It was like a cat and mouse game between the anti-hero main character plus his crew of colorful cohorts, and the antagonist. A battle of wits with many twists and surprises. Definitely kept me on the edge of my seat at times. Nice balance of character and plot focus, and the pace kept me engaged throughout. I just started the second book in the trilogy (although this book can be a stand-alone and is resolved in a very satisfying way by the end).

Reading this one, in which the bad guy is a dysfunctional basement dweller specializing in internet harassment, stalking, and potty-mouthed whining butthurt, I found myself wondering if King had been hearing some anecdotes through the olÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ horror writer grapevine. But then, a few key signature spelling errors aside, Brady Hartfield can string together coherent sentences and actually has his moments of being an effective, credible threat.The book opens with a bit of socioeconomic commentary, in which people are lining up and camping out in the foggy pre-dawn hours not for a movie or Black Friday doorbusters but to get into a job fair. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s desperate times and hopeless measures; they already know the odds are overwhelming. But, theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve got to try. After all, things canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t get much worse

ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œExcept, of course, things can get much worse. A murderous maniac in a clown mask and stolen car could ram right into the crowd, killing and maiming, then escape and leave a bloody swathe of ruin in his wake.For retired detective Bill Hodges, thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s one of the unsolved cases, the main One that Got Away. Like too many cops whoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve hung up the badge, heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s sunk into depression and is on the verge of suicide. An email from someone claiming to be the driver of that deadly Mercedes may be meant to encourage him along ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ instead, it gives him a renewed sense of purpose.What follows is pure thriller, with none of the supernatural overtones usually associated with King. Hodges, teaming up with some unlikely allies, puts himself hot on the trail of the killer, breaking the rules in the best action-movie go-it-your-own tradition After all, heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s already retired; itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not like the police force can fire him, right?Some bits of Mr. Mercedes are amusingly self-referential ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ the Pennywise mention, for instance. Others struck me as a tad rehashed or recycled ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦ without too many spoilers, let me just say I was getting serious Insomnia and Rose Madder flashbacks.Overall, it was, I dunno, okay but not great. A solid example of what it is, as a catch-the-killer-thriller, but not a book that wowed me or changed my life. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll read it again, and IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll read the announced sequels, but all things considered I far and away preferred Doctor Sleep.

King knows how to rivet the reader from page one. I’ve enjoyed his books for decades and this was no exception. I’m now on the second book of this trilogy, while the first one makes the rounds of friends and family who want to borrow it.

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