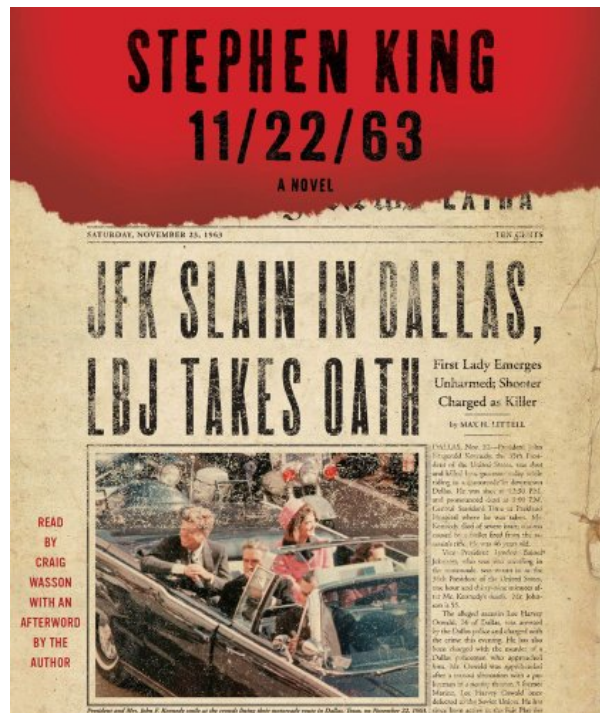


11/22/63: A NOVEL BY STEPHEN KING



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STEPHEN KING 11/22/63

A NOVEL

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1963

TEN CENTS

JFK SLAIN IN DALLAS, LBJ TAKES OATH

First Lady Emerges
Unharmd; Shooter
Charged as Killer

by MAX H. LITTELL

READ
BY
CRAIG
WASSON
WITH AN
AFTERWORD
BY THE
AUTHOR



President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy smile as the crowd lining their motorcade route in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963.

DALLAS, Nov. 22—President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, was shot and killed here yesterday while riding in a motorcade in downtown Dallas. He was shot at 11:50 P.M. and pronounced dead at 1:00 P.M. Central Standard Time at Parkland Hospital where he was taken. Mr. Kennedy, 46, of seven years, was considered by a doctor here from the assassination, 35, was 46 years old.

Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was still standing in the motorcade, was sworn in as the 36th President of the United States, one hour and 45 minutes after the death of Mr. Kennedy's death. Mr. Johnson is 55.

The alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, 24, of Dallas, was arrested by the Dallas police and charged with the crime this evening. He has also been charged with the murder of a Dallas policeman who approached him. Mr. Oswald was apprehended after a tenuous situation with a policeman in a nearby street. A former Marine, Lee Harvey Oswald once defected to the Soviet Union. He has since been active in the Bay of Pigs

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Review

The reader feels the benefit of 40 years of narrative craftsmanship and reflection on his nation's history. Going backwards proves to be another step forward for the most remarkable storyteller in modern American literature. Mark Lawson, Guardian The pages of 11.22.63 fly by, filled with immediacy, pathos and suspense. It takes great brazenness to go anywhere near this subject matter. But it takes great skill to make this story even remotely credible. Mr. King makes it all look easy, which is surely his book's fanciest trick. New York Times A wonderful book: page-turningly exciting, witty, wise, melancholic. But also utterly human, profoundly decent Ashley Pharoah, co-writer and co-creator of Life on Mars and Ashes to Ashes Take King's hand and allow him to lead you into a past so vibrant and complete that you can almost taste it. But hold on tight, the Master of Horror has now become the Master of Time ... Utterly enthralling, emotional and magical Matthew Graham, co-writer and co-creator of Life on Mars and Ashes to Ashes Fine stories to take with us into the night. Neil Gaiman in the Guardian America's greatest living novelist. Lee Child King's gift of storytelling is unrivalled. His ferocious imagination is unlimited. George Pelecanos 'King's most purely entertaining novel in years ... utterly compelling.' John Connolly on UNDER THE DOME 'Staggeringly addictive.' USA Today on UNDER THE DOME 'Tight and energetic from start to finish.' New York Times on UNDER THE DOME 'The pedal is indeed to the metal.' Guardian on UNDER THE DOME Delivers a lot of praise and enjoy. The story comes off the blocks with almost alarming speed ... he tells a story like a pro ... 11.22.63 kept me up all night. Daily Telegraph Stephen King at his epic, pedal-to-metal best Alison Flood Sunday Times, Culture, i> not just an accomplished time-travel yarn but an action-heavy meditation on chance, choice and fate. Independent Books of the Year The details of Fifties America, the cars, the clothes, the food, the televisions with wonky horizontal hold, are so vivid that you begin to wonder whether the author himself hasn't had access to a time machine. ...But as you worry at the paradoxes and the brilliantly explained pseudo science there is no denying that this monster yarn is blindingly impressive. Manly writers run out of steam as they get older. King, though, writes books that are ever longer and more demanding. I can't wait to see what he will tackle next. Daily Express Stephen King's new novel, 11.22.63, combines a variety of genres, being a JFK assassination, a story of time travel, a variation on the grail quest, a novel of voyeurism, a love story, a historical novel, a counter-factual historical novel and the chilling tale of a sinister animate universe, a form which can be traced back to the ghost stories of MR James. London Review of Books Stephen King's new novel, 11.22.63, combines a variety of genres, being a JFK assassination, a story of time travel, a variation on the grail quest, a novel of voyeurism, a love story, a historical novel, a counter-factual historical novel and the chilling tale of a sinister animate universe, a form which can be traced back to the ghost stories of MR James. London Review of Books Stephen King's new

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Yet as Jack/George moves closer to his goal, other, darker notes intrude, as time itself begins to resist his attempts to change its course, and as he begins to identify with his quarry... Beneath the reassuring glow of King's portrait of an earlier, simpler time moves a darker and less comfortable vision, a glimpse of the terrifying machinery that moves below the surface of human history, and which stands as a stark, chilling rejoinder to the fantasies of escape embodied in so many time travel stories. The Weekend Australia Mammoth but entertaining, this is part sci-fi, part suspense and part travelogue of a long-ago America. Who Weekly Stephen King is a remarkable and wonderful storyteller who never loosens his grip on the reader throughout the 750-page book. Woman's Day The novel is big, ambitious and haunting. King has probably absorbed the social, political, and popular culture of his baby-boom American generation as thoroughly and imaginatively as any other writer. Mildura Midweek King weaves the social, political and popular culture of his baby-boom American generation into a devastating exercise in escalating suspense. Daily Liberal A fascinating journey. Armidale Express Extra A delightful blend of history and fantasy by a man who has always had a soft spot for an America where men wore fedoras, drove big Fords and could do the foxtrot. A thriller by a genius writer. The Courier Mail People often complain there are no writers of the stature of Dickens anymore. I think that for pure energy and invention missed with compassion, King stands in that writer's direct line. Dickens' heir is alive and well and living in Maine. Eureka Street This is Stephen King in top and chilling form. Take 5 You have to take a leap of faith with time-travel novels, but if there's one writer who can pull it off, it's Stephen King. ... Captivating, surprisingly pacy and free from sci-fi cliché, it's no wonder the film version is already being planned. Shortlist The most remarkable story-teller in modern American literature. Mark Lawson, Guardian a powerful love story Mirror One of the strengths of the book is King's at once nostalgic and honest view of the end of the Eisenhower era. King manages to avoid both sentimentalizing the past and treating it with massive condescension; his role as the poet of American brand-names serves him well here. Independent King swiftly moves beyond vintage Americana to unfold a stunningly panoramic portrait of the era. His [King's] fascination with evil...arranges characters among clear mortal frontiers that fell meaningful rather than simplistic. King commands an inordinately fat space on the bookshelf with 11.22.63 but it's hard to begrudge when his vast imagination is working across such an epic canvas. Seven, The Sunday Telegraph 11.22.63 marks a definite maturing of literary command and ambition. The key to any novel set in an alternate reality is credible world building, the steady accumulation of detail - preferably lightly distributed - that brings the story alive. King succeeds in this, partly drawing from his own memories. Adam LeBor, FT Weekend ...This is the American of Stephen King's childhood and it's one that he re-creates in vivid and loving detail... This is a truly compulsive, addictive novel not just about time-travel or the Kennedy assassination but about recent American history and its might-have-beens, about love, and about how life 'turns on a dime'. It's a thumping 700-pager which left me only wanting more. The master storyteller in truly masterful form. Daily Mail Stephen King is up there with the best. It's a thriller, a meditation on late Fifties and early Sixties America and a love story. It creates a world you can lose yourself in. Peter Robinson in the Sunday Express He writes incomparably good stories ... King's mastery of plot and his ability to create characters and situations both homespun and far-fetched means that this is the book you dream of getting stuck on the train home with. Independent on Sunday The story moves seamlessly from detailed reality to elaborate fantasy and back again through a meticulously researched backdrop of late 1950s events, fashion and sentimentality. It is a story of temptation, sacrifice,

politics, love and self-interest. It was enthralling and I loved it. *Townsville Bulletin* (Australia) The fictional offering that engaged me most urgently ... an extraordinarily ambitious tale. *Canberra City News* A suspenseful drama. *New Idea* (Australia) Time travel and an incredible talent for storytelling combine to produce a unique tour de force. *Sun* A book of the year. *Sun* *Cleverly* evokes the moral dilemmas of time travel and whether a time traveller could or should prevent the assassination of John F. Kennedy on 11.22.63. King also beautifully and nostalgically evokes the minutiae of American suburban life in the late 1950's. *Canberra Times* A fondly-felt, wryly funny, subplots-and-tangents-aplenty character study. *Rip it Up* (Australia) A real page-turner. *Woman's Day* (Australia) A fascinating read that's like an episode of *Dr Who*, the book leaves you with more questions than answers. *Sunday Telegraph* (Australia) *Delivers* as an affecting, suspenseful page-turner. *Irish Times* King has form in rendering plausible the fantastic ... 11.22.63 stakes another claim for its author to be classified as *sui generis*. *Times Literary Supplement* King's first effort at melding fact with fiction is as successful as his previous books, and perhaps even more intriguing considering the subject matter: time travel and the implications of change. A contemplative and thoughtful book as filled with heart as it is with intrigue, courtesy of one of our most gifted living writers. *Australian Penthouse* Legendary writer King has written another magical tome. *People* (Australia)

About the Author

Stephen King is the author of more than fifty books, all of them worldwide bestsellers. His recent work includes *End of Watch*, the short story collection *The Bazaar of Bad Dreams*, *Finders Keepers*, *Mr. Mercedes* (an Edgar Award winner for Best Novel), *Doctor Sleep*, and *Under the Dome*. His novel *11/22/63*—a recent Hulu original television series event—was named a top ten book of 2011 by *The New York Times Book Review* and won the *Los Angeles Times Book Prize* for Mystery/Thriller as well as the *Best Hardcover Book Award* from the *International Thriller Writers*. His epic series, *The Dark Tower*, is the basis for a major motion picture from Sony. He is the recipient of the 2014 *National Medal of Arts* and the 2003 *National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters*. He lives in Bangor, Maine, with his wife, novelist Tabitha King.

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8

On Monday, March 25, Lee came walking up Neely Street carrying a long package wrapped in brown paper. Peering through a tiny crack in the curtains, I could see the words REGISTERED and INSURED stamped on it in big red letters. For the first time I thought he seemed furtive and nervous, actually looking around at his exterior surroundings instead of at the spooky furniture deep in his head. I knew what was in the package: a 6.5mm Carcano rifle—also known as a Mannlicher-Carcano—complete with scope, purchased from Klein's Sporting Goods in Chicago. Five minutes after he climbed the outside stairs to the second floor, the gun Lee would use to change history was in a closet above my head. Marina took the famous pictures of him holding it just outside my living room window six days later, but I didn't see it. That was a Sunday, and I was in Jodie. As the tenth grew closer, those weekends with Sadie had become the most important, the dearest, things in my life.

9

I came awake with a jerk, hearing someone mutter "Still not too late" under his breath. I realized it was me and shut up.

Sadie murmured some thick protest and turned over in bed. The familiar squeak of the springs locked me in place and time: the Candlewood Bungalows, April 5, 1963. I fumbled my watch from the nightstand and peered at the luminous numbers. It was quarter past two in the morning, which meant it was actually the sixth of April.

Still not too late.

Not too late for what? To back off, to let well enough alone? Or bad enough, come to that? The idea of backing off was attractive, God knew. If I went ahead and things went wrong, this could be my last night with Sadie. Ever.

Even if you do have to kill him, you don't have to do it right away.

True enough. Oswald was going to relocate to New Orleans for awhile after the attempt on the general's life—another shitty apartment, one I'd already visited—but not for two weeks. That would give me plenty of time to stop his clock. But I sensed it would be a mistake to wait very long. I might find reasons to keep on waiting. The best one was beside me in this bed: long, lovely, and smoothly naked. Maybe she was just another trap laid by the obdurate past, but that didn't matter, because I loved her. And I could envision a scenario—all too clearly—where I'd have to run after killing Oswald. Run where? Back to Maine, of course. Hoping I could stay ahead of the cops just long enough to get to the rabbit-hole and escape into a future where Sadie Dunhill would be . . . well . . . about eighty years old. If she were alive at all. Given her cigarette habit, that would be like rolling six the hard way.

I got up and went to the window. Only a few of the bungalows were occupied on this early-spring weekend. There was a mud- or manure-splattered pickup truck with a trailer full of what looked like farm implements behind it. An Indian motorcycle with a sidecar. A couple of station wagons. And a two-tone Plymouth Fury. The moon was sliding in and out of thin clouds and it wasn't possible to make out the color of the car's lower half by that stuttery light, but I was pretty sure I knew what it was, anyway.

I pulled on my pants, undershirt, and shoes. Then I slipped out of the cabin and walked across the courtyard. The chilly air bit at my bed-warm skin, but I barely felt it. Yes, the car was a Fury, and yes, it was white over red, but this one wasn't from Maine or Arkansas; the plate was Oklahoma, and the decal in the rear window read GO, SOONERS. I peeked in and saw a scatter of textbooks. Some student, maybe headed south to visit his folks on spring break. Or a couple of horny teachers taking advantage of the Candlewood's liberal guest policy.

Just another not-quite-on-key chime as the past harmonized with itself. I touched the trunk, as I had back in Lisbon Falls, then returned to the bungalow. Sadie had pushed the sheet down to her waist, and when I came in, the draft of cool air woke her up. She sat, holding the sheet over her breasts, then let it drop when she saw it was me.

“Can't sleep, honey?”

“I had a bad dream and went out for some air.”

“What was it?”

I unbuttoned my jeans, kicked off my loafers. “Can't remember.”

“Try. My mother always used to say if you tell your dreams, they won't come true.”

I got into bed with her wearing nothing but my undershirt. “My mother used to say if you kiss your honey, they won't come true.”

“Did she actually say that?”

“No.”

“Well,” she said thoughtfully, “it sounds possible. Let’s try it.”

We tried it.

One thing led to another.

10

Afterward, she lit a cigarette. I lay watching the smoke drift up and turn blue in the occasional moonlight coming through the half-drawn curtains. I’d never leave the curtains that way at Neely Street, I thought. At Neely Street, in my other life, I’m always alone but still careful to close them all the way. Except when I’m peeking, that is. Lurking.

Just then I didn’t like myself very much.

“George?”

I sighed. “That’s not my name.”

“I know.”

I looked at her. She inhaled deeply, enjoying her cigarette guiltlessly, as people do in the Land of Ago. “I don’t have any inside information, if that’s what you’re thinking. But it stands to reason. The rest of your past is made up, after all. And I’m glad. I don’t like George all that much. It’s kind of . . . what’s that word you use sometimes? . . . kind of dorky.”

“How does Jake suit you?”

“As in Jacob?”

“Yes.”

“I like it.” She turned to me. “In the Bible, Jacob wrestled an angel. And you’re wrestling, too. Aren’t you?”

“I suppose I am, but not with an angel.” Although Lee Oswald didn’t make much of a devil, either. I liked George de Mohren--schildt better for the devil role. In the Bible, Satan’s a tempter who makes the offer and then stands aside. I hoped de Mohrenschildt was like that.

Sadie snubbed her cigarette. Her voice was calm, but her eyes were dark. “Are you going to be hurt?”

“I don’t know.”

“Are you going away? Because if you have to go away, I’m not sure I can stand it. I would have died before I said it when I was there, but Reno was a nightmare. Losing you for good . . .” She shook her head slowly. “No, I’m not sure I could stand that.”

“I want to marry you,” I said.

“My God,” she said softly. “Just when I’m ready to say it’ll never happen, Jake-alias-George says right now.”

“Not right now, but if the next week goes the way I hope it does . . . will you?”

“Of course. But I do have to ask one teensy question.”

“Am I single? Legally single? Is that what you want to know?”

She nodded.

“I am,” I said.

She let out a comic sigh and grinned like a kid. Then she sobered. “Can I help you? Let me help you.”

The thought turned me cold, and she must have seen it. Her lower lip crept into her mouth. She bit down on it with her teeth. “That bad, then,” she said musingly.

“Let’s put it this way: I’m currently close to a big machine full of sharp teeth, and it’s running full speed. I won’t allow you next to me while I’m monkeying with it.”

“When is it?” she asked. “Your . . . I don’t know . . . your date with destiny?”

“Still to be determined.” I had a feeling that I’d said too much already, but since I’d come this far, I decided to go a little farther. “Something’s going to happen this Wednesday night. Something I have to witness. Then I’ll decide.”

“Is there no way I can help you?”

“I don’t think so, honey.”

“If it turns out I can—”

“Thanks,” I said. “I appreciate that. And you really will marry me?”

“Now that I know your name is Jake? Of course.”

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11/22/63: A NOVEL BY STEPHEN KING PDF

On November 22, 1963, three shots rang out in Dallas, President Kennedy died, and the world changed. What if you could change it back? Stephen King's heart-stoppingly dramatic new novel is about a man who travels back in time to prevent the JFK assassination.

Following his massively successful novel *Under the Dome*, King sweeps listeners back in time to another moment—a real life moment—when everything went wrong: the JFK assassination. And he introduces listeners to a character who has the power to change the course of history.

Jake Epping is a thirty-five-year-old high school English teacher in Lisbon Falls, Maine, who makes extra money teaching adults in the GED program. He receives an essay from one of the students—a gruesome, harrowing first person story about the night fifty years ago when his father came home and killed his mother, his sister, and his brother with a hammer. Harry escaped with a smashed leg, as evidenced by his crooked walk.

Not much later, Jake's friend Al, who runs the local diner, divulges a secret: his storeroom is a portal to 1958. He enlists Jake on an insane—and insanely impossible—mission to try to prevent the Kennedy assassination. So begins Jake's new life as George Amberson and his new world of Elvis and JFK, of big American cars and sock hops, of a troubled loner named Lee Harvey Oswald and a beautiful high school librarian named Sadie Dunhill, who becomes the love of Jack's life—a life that transgresses all the normal rules of time.

A tribute to a simpler era and a devastating exercise in escalating suspense, *11/22/63* is Stephen King at his epic best.

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- Binding: Audio CD
- 30 pages

Review

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in that writer's direct line. Dickens' heir is alive and well and living in Maine. Eureka Street This is Stephen King in top and chilling form. Take 5 You have to take a leap of faith with time-travel novels, but if there's one writer who can pull it off, it's Stephen King. ... Captivating, surprisingly pacy and free from sci-fi cliché, it's no wonder the film version is already being planned. Shortlist The most remarkable story-teller in modern American literature. Mark Lawson, Guardian a powerful love story Mirror One of the strengths of the book is King's at once nostalgic and honest view of the end of the Eisenhower era. King manages to avoid both sentimentalizing the past and treating it with massive condescension; his role as the poet of American brand-names serves him well here. Independent King swiftly moves beyond vintage Americana to unfold a stunningly panoramic portrait of the era. His [King's] fascination with evil...arranges characters among clear mortal frontiers that fell meaningful rather than simplistic. King commands an inordinately fat space on the bookshelf with 11.22.63 but it's hard to begrudge when his vast imagination is working across such an epic canvas. Seven, The Sunday Telegraph 11.22.63 marks a definite maturing of literary command and ambition. The key to any novel set in an alternate reality is credible world building, the steady accumulation of detail - preferably lightly distributed - that brings the story alive. King succeeds in this, partly drawing from his own memories. Adam LeBor, FT Weekend ...This is the American of Stephen King's childhood and it's one that he re-creates in vivid and loving detail... This is a truly compulsive, addictive novel not just about time-travel or the Kennedy assassination but about recent American history and its might-have-beens, about love, and about how life 'turns on a dime'. It's a thinking 700-pager which left me only wanting more. The master storyteller in truly masterful form. Daily Mail Stephen King is up there with the best. It's a thriller, a meditation on late Fifties and early Sixties America and a love story. It creates a world you can lose yourself in. Peter Robinson in the Sunday Express He writes incomparably good stories ... King's mastery of plot and his ability to create characters and situations both homespun and far-fetched means that this is the book you dream of getting stuck on the train home with. Independent on Sunday The story moves seamlessly from detailed reality to elaborate fantasy and back again through a meticulously researched backdrop of late 1950s events, fashion and sentimentality. It is a story of temptation, sacrifice, politics, love and self-interest. It was enthralling and I loved it. Townsville Bulletin (Australia) The fictional offering that engaged me most urgently ... an extraordinarily ambitious tale. Canberra City News A suspenseful drama. New Idea (Australia) Time travel and an incredible talent for storytelling combine to produce a unique tour de force. Sun A book of the year. Sun Cleverly evokes the moral dilemmas of time travel and whether a time traveller could or should prevent the assassination of John F. Kennedy on 11.22.63. King also beautifully and nostalgically evokes the minutiae of American suburban life in the late 1950's. Canberra Times A fondly-felt, wryly funny, subplots-and-tangents-aplenty character study. Rip it Up (Australia) A real page-turner. Woman's Day (Australia) A fascinating read that's like an episode of Dr Who, the book leaves you with more questions than answers. Sunday Telegraph (Australia) Delivers as an affecting, suspenseful page-turner. Irish Times King has form in rendering plausible the fantastic ... 11.22.63 stakes another claim for its author to be classified as sui generis. Times Literary Supplement King's first effort at melding fact with fiction is as successful as his previous books, and perhaps even more intriguing considering the subject matter: time travel and the implications of change. A contemplative and thoughtful book as filled with heart as it is with intrigue, courtesy of one of our most gifted living writers. Australian Penthouse Legendary writer King has written another magical tome. People (Australia)

About the Author

Stephen King is the author of more than fifty books, all of them worldwide bestsellers. His recent work includes *End of Watch*, the short story collection *The Bazaar of Bad Dreams*, *Finders Keepers*, *Mr. Mercedes* (an Edgar Award winner for Best Novel), *Doctor Sleep*, and *Under the Dome*. His novel *11/22/63*—a recent Hulu original television series event—was named a top ten book of 2011 by *The New York Times Book Review* and won the *Los Angeles Times Book Prize* for Mystery/Thriller as well as the *Best Hardcover Book Award* from the *International Thriller Writers*. His epic series, *The Dark Tower*, is the basis for a major motion picture from Sony. He is the recipient of the 2014 National Medal of Arts and the

2003 National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. He lives in Bangor, Maine, with his wife, novelist Tabitha King.

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On Monday, March 25, Lee came walking up Neely Street carrying a long package wrapped in brown paper. Peering through a tiny crack in the curtains, I could see the words REGISTERED and INSURED stamped on it in big red letters. For the first time I thought he seemed furtive and nervous, actually looking around at his exterior surroundings instead of at the spooky furniture deep in his head. I knew what was in the package: a 6.5mm Carcano rifle—also known as a Mannlicher-Carcano—complete with scope, purchased from Klein’s Sporting Goods in Chicago. Five minutes after he climbed the outside stairs to the second floor, the gun Lee would use to change history was in a closet above my head. Marina took the famous pictures of him holding it just outside my living room window six days later, but I didn’t see it. That was a Sunday, and I was in Jodie. As the tenth grew closer, those weekends with Sadie had become the most important, the dearest, things in my life.

9

I came awake with a jerk, hearing someone mutter “Still not too late” under his breath. I realized it was me and shut up.

Sadie murmured some thick protest and turned over in bed. The familiar squeak of the springs locked me in place and time: the Candlewood Bungalows, April 5, 1963. I fumbled my watch from the nightstand and peered at the luminous numbers. It was quarter past two in the morning, which meant it was actually the sixth of April.

Still not too late.

Not too late for what? To back off, to let well enough alone? Or bad enough, come to that? The idea of backing off was attractive, God knew. If I went ahead and things went wrong, this could be my last night with Sadie. Ever.

Even if you do have to kill him, you don’t have to do it right away.

True enough. Oswald was going to relocate to New Orleans for awhile after the attempt on the general’s life—another shitty apartment, one I’d already visited—but not for two weeks. That would give me plenty of time to stop his clock. But I sensed it would be a mistake to wait very long. I might find reasons to keep on waiting. The best one was beside me in this bed: long, lovely, and smoothly naked. Maybe she was just another trap laid by the obdurate past, but that didn’t matter, because I loved her. And I could envision a scenario—all too clearly—where I’d have to run after killing Oswald. Run where? Back to Maine, of course. Hoping I could stay ahead of the cops just long enough to get to the rabbit-hole and escape into a future where Sadie Dunhill would be . . . well . . . about eighty years old. If she were alive at all. Given her cigarette habit, that would be like rolling six the hard way.

I got up and went to the window. Only a few of the bungalows were occupied on this early-spring weekend. There was a mud- or manure-splattered pickup truck with a trailer full of what looked like farm implements behind it. An Indian motorcycle with a sidecar. A couple of station wagons. And a two-tone Plymouth Fury. The moon was sliding in and out of thin clouds and it wasn’t possible to make out the color of the car’s

lower half by that stuttery light, but I was pretty sure I knew what it was, anyway.

I pulled on my pants, undershirt, and shoes. Then I slipped out of the cabin and walked across the courtyard. The chilly air bit at my bed-warm skin, but I barely felt it. Yes, the car was a Fury, and yes, it was white over red, but this one wasn't from Maine or Arkansas; the plate was Oklahoma, and the decal in the rear window read GO, SOONERS. I peeked in and saw a scatter of textbooks. Some student, maybe headed south to visit his folks on spring break. Or a couple of horny teachers taking advantage of the Candlewood's liberal guest policy.

Just another not-quite-on-key chime as the past harmonized with itself. I touched the trunk, as I had back in Lisbon Falls, then returned to the bungalow. Sadie had pushed the sheet down to her waist, and when I came in, the draft of cool air woke her up. She sat, holding the sheet over her breasts, then let it drop when she saw it was me.

"Can't sleep, honey?"

"I had a bad dream and went out for some air."

"What was it?"

I unbuttoned my jeans, kicked off my loafers. "Can't remember."

"Try. My mother always used to say if you tell your dreams, they won't come true."

I got into bed with her wearing nothing but my undershirt. "My mother used to say if you kiss your honey, they won't come true."

"Did she actually say that?"

"No."

"Well," she said thoughtfully, "it sounds possible. Let's try it."

We tried it.

One thing led to another.

10

Afterward, she lit a cigarette. I lay watching the smoke drift up and turn blue in the occasional moonlight coming through the half-drawn curtains. I'd never leave the curtains that way at Neely Street, I thought. At Neely Street, in my other life, I'm always alone but still careful to close them all the way. Except when I'm peeking, that is. Lurking.

Just then I didn't like myself very much.

"George?"

I sighed. "That's not my name."

“I know.”

I looked at her. She inhaled deeply, enjoying her cigarette guiltlessly, as people do in the Land of Ago. “I don’t have any inside information, if that’s what you’re thinking. But it stands to reason. The rest of your past is made up, after all. And I’m glad. I don’t like George all that much. It’s kind of . . . what’s that word you use sometimes? . . . kind of dorky.”

“How does Jake suit you?”

“As in Jacob?”

“Yes.”

“I like it.” She turned to me. “In the Bible, Jacob wrestled an angel. And you’re wrestling, too. Aren’t you?”

“I suppose I am, but not with an angel.” Although Lee Oswald didn’t make much of a devil, either. I liked George de Mohren--schildt better for the devil role. In the Bible, Satan’s a tempter who makes the offer and then stands aside. I hoped de Mohrenschildt was like that.

Sadie snubbed her cigarette. Her voice was calm, but her eyes were dark. “Are you going to be hurt?”

“I don’t know.”

“Are you going away? Because if you have to go away, I’m not sure I can stand it. I would have died before I said it when I was there, but Reno was a nightmare. Losing you for good . . .” She shook her head slowly. “No, I’m not sure I could stand that.”

“I want to marry you,” I said.

“My God,” she said softly. “Just when I’m ready to say it’ll never happen, Jake--alias--George says right now.”

“Not right now, but if the next week goes the way I hope it does . . . will you?”

“Of course. But I do have to ask one teensy question.”

“Am I single? Legally single? Is that what you want to know?”

She nodded.

“I am,” I said.

She let out a comic sigh and grinned like a kid. Then she sobered. “Can I help you? Let me help you.”

The thought turned me cold, and she must have seen it. Her lower lip crept into her mouth. She bit down on it with her teeth. “That bad, then,” she said musingly.

“Let’s put it this way: I’m currently close to a big machine full of sharp teeth, and it’s running full speed. I won’t allow you next to me while I’m monkeying with it.”

“When is it?” she asked. “Your . . . I don’t know . . . your date with destiny?”

“Still to be determined.” I had a feeling that I’d said too much already, but since I’d come this far, I decided to go a little farther. “Something’s going to happen this Wednesday night. Something I have to witness. Then I’ll decide.”

“Is there no way I can help you?”

“I don’t think so, honey.”

“If it turns out I can—”

“Thanks,” I said. “I appreciate that. And you really will marry me?”

“Now that I know your name is Jake? Of course.”

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Through the past darkly - a no spoilers review

By James Tepper

"11/22/63", Stephen King's latest, might just be his greatest. Seriously. At least as far as "mainstream" fiction or "literature" goes. Yes, it is built around a well-used SF trope, time travel, but really, the portal to the past that Jake Epping is shown in the back of an aluminum diner is only the launch mechanism for this fantastic journey. There are no monsters here, at least none that aren't human, and little or no horror in the supernatural sense that King's constant readers have come to know, love and expect. Even SK's other "straight" fiction, "Misery", "Dolores Claiborne" and "The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon" come to mind, had elements of the supernatural and/or flat-out horror. Not this time.

But that doesn't mean that 11/22/63 is boring. Quite the contrary. Although it might seem that it would be tough to build suspense around a conclusion that seems to be inevitable, this turns out not to be the case. Big time. I just finished playing hooky from work for a day when I read the last 400 pages non-stop (except for a couple of bathroom breaks), because I just couldn't stop. I just kept pressing the advance button on my Kindle.

The adjective that first comes to mind in describing 11/22/63 among SK's oeuvre is, oddly enough, "mature". I have read every novel and anthology that King has published, plus a large number of single short stories, starting with "Carrie" in a borrowed paperback back in the late 1970s. I have never before thought of describing his work in any of them, many good, some great and a few clunkers (some of which I have reviewed as such), as mature. But that is the first, best word that comes to mind in describing 11/22/63. There were others too; exciting, romantic, bittersweet and, as with all SK's stuff, well-written.

Lee Harvey Oswald and the Kennedy assassination were obviously very well-researched, clear from the details in the text even before one gets to the afterword that describes some of the sources and methods used. The lead-up to the day of the assassination is described in great detail, along with Oswald's relationship to his family and associates, all matters of historical record (at least according to the sources cited by SK, with which most of the readers who did not like the novel disagreed emphatically). But I should point out that the facts concerning the Kennedy assassination are actually not the main focus of the novel.

The world of 1958-1963 is described in wonderful detail, through the eyes of Jake as he gradually sheds his

early 21st century armored shell and falls in love with a small Texas town and Sadie, its new young librarian. Their love story is the centerpiece of the novel and is told with great depth, sensitivity and believability. I'm old enough to have experienced lots of the stuff that Jake encounters in 1958 (albeit as a child) and it jives with and jogs my recollections and induces a feeling of longing for older, simpler times. For King's "Constant Readers", there are easter egg cameos from "It" and "The Langoliers" that I recognized. Knowing SK, there may well be others.

The ending is not predictable (if you say you saw it all coming you are either lying or should be a best-selling novelist) and is surprisingly satisfying. To those who say King doesn't know how to end his novels, I say, read this one.

Very Highly Recommended for all (even those who think they know but don't "like" Stephen King).

J.M. Tepper

77 of 81 people found the following review helpful.

I was swept away (no spoilers)

By Amazon Customer

The cold war, the Cuban Missile Crisis, gasoline at 30 cents a gallon: these were realities of life if you were born in the early 1950s. I was 13 when JFK was shot. I remember like yesterday the teacher coming to my science class room and talking to our teacher at the door. Then our teacher announced to us that "President Kennedy has died. He was shot today in Dallas, Texas." Our teacher was Canadian and he went right on with the lesson. My most vivid memory of the days that followed is Kennedy's son John-John raising his hand in salute as the coffin passes him. My mom and sister both burst into tears. (Yes, for you younger folks, that was the John Kennedy that was killed in a plane crash in 1999.)

King brought all these memories to life for me in 11/22/63, the story of a man from 2011 that goes back to 1958 to try to stop the Kennedy assassination in 1963. I am a King fan and this will not take the place of my number one novel, *The Stand*, but it comes close. Sometimes I couldn't put it down and sometimes I couldn't go on reading because of all the memories.

Everything is in this story: romance, suspense, history, science fiction, not to mention what makes King excel over other popular writers of the day. That, in my opinion, is his ability to weave themes into a story that re-occur and tie the story together emotionally. One example from this book, "the past harmonizes." There is nothing of the supernatural here yet the function of the supernatural is replaced by the weird and intriguing idea that the past does not want to change.

Another example is the dancing theme. Dancing occurs at several points in the story and forms the thread for Sadie's words in the end, "How we danced." Even as I write this, those words cause my chest to grip.

Some say that King's biggest strength is his story telling. I disagree. King is a great story teller. Yet, his biggest strength is his ability to make us care about the characters. Even Marina Oswald, whose name is all but lost in history, comes alive to us as she struggles with being an outsider trapped in a marriage to an abusive lunatic.

Ultimately this story is a romance. Didn't someone once say that "it is always about the girl?" Jake and Sadie had me smiling and tearing up and thinking about the romances in my life, good and not so good (is romance ever really bad?). I am not a fast reader or a "long session reader". An hour at a time is my usual. But the last 200 pages or so kept me reading for most of one evening and I then stopped with 20 pages to go because I

wasn't ready to say goodbye to Jake and Sadie. I woke up at 4:00 AM the next morning and read the last 20 pages as well as the end material. Then my eyes water up. Sorry, I am a 61 year old guy and, unlike Jake, I do cry.

So, thanks again, Stephen for your dedication to your readers, your hard research and your imagination. I was swept away by this story.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Very Slow Moving + Disappointing Ending

By Kaley Quinn

I haven't read much Stephen King before, but I'd heard so many good things about this book. And I love time travel stories, so I decided to try it. Well, unfortunately, I found it very slow in the plotting. The premise itself is very interesting -- a guy from 2011 has a portal that takes him back to 1958. The guy who shows him this portal convinces him he has to go back, live in the past for 5 years, then stop the Kennedy assassination.

But then there were all these other tragedies Jake also needed to prevent. So that went on for many, many pages. Then he sees Lee Harvey Oswald, and instead of killing him, he becomes like Hamlet -- he can't make up his mind to kill him, so he wastes a lot of time being indecisive. Then we have a VERY BORING romance thrown in. Sorry, but I just never cared about Sadie for most of the book (a little bit at the end only).

Then, we had a very disappointing ending. Not what I was expecting.

This book really should have been half the length, with tighter, more suspenseful plotting. I found myself skipping a lot of pages because it was boring stuff about high school dances and plays, boring Sadie being either boring or annoying, or Oswald's crappy home life (who cares? how many scenes did we need of him abusing his wife?). Yes, we can tell the author did an exhaustive amount of research on the Kennedy assassination, but the only interesting part was the part where Jake is racing to stop it.

The only good things about it were: the time travel ideas and learning a bit more about the time period (and I am glad that King acknowledges that the 1950s / early 60s were mostly good if you were a white male; for most other people it was a sucky time).

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Review

The reader feels the benefit of 40 years of narrative craftsmanship and reflection on his nation's history. Going backwards proves to be another step forward for the most remarkable storyteller in modern American literature. Mark Lawson, Guardian The pages of 11.22.63 fly by, filled with immediacy, pathos and suspense. It takes great brazenness to go anywhere near this subject matter. But it takes great skill to make this story even remotely credible. Mr. King makes it all look easy, which is surely his book's fanciest trick. New York Times A wonderful book: page-turningly exciting, witty, wise, melancholic. But also utterly human, profoundly decent Ashley Pharoah, co-writer and co-creator of Life on Mars and Ashes to Ashes Take King's hand and allow him to lead you into a past so vibrant and complete that you can almost taste it. But hold on tight, the Master of Horror has now become the Master of Time ... Utterly enthralling, emotional and magical Matthew Graham, co-writer and co-creator of Life on Mars and Ashes to Ashes Fine stories to take with us into the night. Neil Gaiman in the Guardian America's greatest living novelist. Lee Child King's gift of storytelling is unrivalled. His ferocious imagination is unlimited. George Pelecanos 'King's most purely entertaining novel in years ... utterly compelling.' John Connolly on UNDER THE DOME 'Staggeringly addictive.' USA Today on UNDER THE DOME 'Tight and energetic from start to finish.' New York Times on UNDER THE DOME 'The pedal is indeed to the metal.' Guardian on UNDER THE DOME Delivers a lot of praise and enjoy. The story comes off the blocks with almost alarming speed ... he tells a story like a pro ... 11.22.63 kept me up all night. Daily Telegraph Stephen King at his epic, pedal-to-metal best Alison Flood Sunday Times, Culture, i> not just an accomplished time-travel yarn but an action-heavy meditation on chance, choice and fate. Independent Books of the Year The details of Fifties America, the cars, the clothes, the food, the televisions with wonky horizontal hold, are so vivid that you begin to wonder whether the author himself hasn't had access to a time machine. ...But as you worry at the paradoxes and the brilliantly explained pseudo science there is no denying that this monster yarn is blindingly impressive. Manly writers run out of steam as they get older. King, though, writes books that are ever longer and more demanding. I can't wait to see what he will tackle next. Daily Express Stephen King's new novel, 11.22.63, combines a variety of genres, being a JFK assassination, a story of time travel, a variation on the grail quest, a novel of voyeurism, a love story, a historical novel, a counter-factual historical novel and the chilling tale of a sinister animate universe, a form which can be traced back to the ghost stories of MR James. London Review of Books Stephen King's new novel, 11.22.63, combines a variety of genres, being a JFK assassination, a story of time travel, a variation on the grail quest, a novel of voyeurism, a love story, a historical novel, a counter-factual historical novel and the chilling tale of a sinister animate universe, a form which can be traced back to the ghost stories of MR James. London Review of Books Stephen King's new novel, 11.22.63, combines a variety of genres, being a JFK assassination, a story of time travel, a variation on the grail quest, a novel of voyeurism, a love story, a historical novel, a counter-factual historical novel and the chilling tale of a sinister animate universe, a form which can be traced back to the ghost stories of

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On Monday, March 25, Lee came walking up Neely Street carrying a long package wrapped in brown paper. Peering through a tiny crack in the curtains, I could see the words REGISTERED and INSURED stamped on it in big red letters. For the first time I thought he seemed furtive and nervous, actually looking around at his exterior surroundings instead of at the spooky furniture deep in his head. I knew what was in the package: a 6.5mm Carcano rifle—also known as a Mannlicher-Carcano—complete with scope, purchased from Klein's Sporting Goods in Chicago. Five minutes after he climbed the outside stairs to the second floor, the gun Lee would use to change history was in a closet above my head. Marina took the famous pictures of him holding it just outside my living room window six days later, but I didn't see it. That was a Sunday, and I was in Jodie. As the tenth grew closer, those weekends with Sadie had become the most important, the dearest, things in my life.

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I came awake with a jerk, hearing someone mutter "Still not too late" under his breath. I realized it was me and shut up.

Sadie murmured some thick protest and turned over in bed. The familiar squeak of the springs locked me in place and time: the Candlewood Bungalows, April 5, 1963. I fumbled my watch from the nightstand and peered at the luminous numbers. It was quarter past two in the morning, which meant it was actually the sixth of April.

Still not too late.

Not too late for what? To back off, to let well enough alone? Or bad enough, come to that? The idea of backing off was attractive, God knew. If I went ahead and things went wrong, this could be my last night with Sadie. Ever.

Even if you do have to kill him, you don't have to do it right away.

True enough. Oswald was going to relocate to New Orleans for awhile after the attempt on the general's life—another shitty apartment, one I'd already visited—but not for two weeks. That would give me plenty of time to stop his clock. But I sensed it would be a mistake to wait very long. I might find reasons to keep on waiting. The best one was beside me in this bed: long, lovely, and smoothly naked. Maybe she was just another trap laid by the obdurate past, but that didn't matter, because I loved her. And I could envision a scenario—all too clearly—where I'd have to run after killing Oswald. Run where? Back to Maine, of course. Hoping I could stay ahead of the cops just long enough to get to the rabbit-hole and escape into a future where Sadie Dunhill would be . . . well . . . about eighty years old. If she were alive at all. Given her cigarette habit, that would be like rolling six the hard way.

I got up and went to the window. Only a few of the bungalows were occupied on this early-spring weekend. There was a mud- or manure-splattered pickup truck with a trailer full of what looked like farm implements behind it. An Indian motorcycle with a sidecar. A couple of station wagons. And a two-tone Plymouth Fury. The moon was sliding in and out of thin clouds and it wasn't possible to make out the color of the car's lower half by that stuttery light, but I was pretty sure I knew what it was, anyway.

I pulled on my pants, undershirt, and shoes. Then I slipped out of the cabin and walked across the courtyard. The chilly air bit at my bed-warm skin, but I barely felt it. Yes, the car was a Fury, and yes, it was white over red, but this one wasn't from Maine or Arkansas; the plate was Oklahoma, and the decal in the rear window read GO, SOONERS. I peeked in and saw a scatter of textbooks. Some student, maybe headed south to visit his folks on spring break. Or a couple of horny teachers taking advantage of the Candlewood's liberal guest policy.

Just another not-quite-on-key chime as the past harmonized with itself. I touched the trunk, as I had back in Lisbon Falls, then returned to the bungalow. Sadie had pushed the sheet down to her waist, and when I came in, the draft of cool air woke her up. She sat, holding the sheet over her breasts, then let it drop when she saw it was me.

"Can't sleep, honey?"

"I had a bad dream and went out for some air."

"What was it?"

I unbuttoned my jeans, kicked off my loafers. "Can't remember."

"Try. My mother always used to say if you tell your dreams, they won't come true."

I got into bed with her wearing nothing but my undershirt. "My mother used to say if you kiss your honey, they won't come true."

"Did she actually say that?"

“No.”

“Well,” she said thoughtfully, “it sounds possible. Let’s try it.”

We tried it.

One thing led to another.

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Afterward, she lit a cigarette. I lay watching the smoke drift up and turn blue in the occasional moonlight coming through the half-drawn curtains. I’d never leave the curtains that way at Neely Street, I thought. At Neely Street, in my other life, I’m always alone but still careful to close them all the way. Except when I’m peeking, that is. Lurking.

Just then I didn’t like myself very much.

“George?”

I sighed. “That’s not my name.”

“I know.”

I looked at her. She inhaled deeply, enjoying her cigarette guiltlessly, as people do in the Land of Ago. “I don’t have any inside information, if that’s what you’re thinking. But it stands to reason. The rest of your past is made up, after all. And I’m glad. I don’t like George all that much. It’s kind of . . . what’s that word you use sometimes? . . . kind of dorky.”

“How does Jake suit you?”

“As in Jacob?”

“Yes.”

“I like it.” She turned to me. “In the Bible, Jacob wrestled an angel. And you’re wrestling, too. Aren’t you?”

“I suppose I am, but not with an angel.” Although Lee Oswald didn’t make much of a devil, either. I liked George de Mohren--schildt better for the devil role. In the Bible, Satan’s a tempter who makes the offer and then stands aside. I hoped de Mohrenschildt was like that.

Sadie snubbed her cigarette. Her voice was calm, but her eyes were dark. “Are you going to be hurt?”

“I don’t know.”

“Are you going away? Because if you have to go away, I’m not sure I can stand it. I would have died before I said it when I was there, but Reno was a nightmare. Losing you for good . . .” She shook her head slowly. “No, I’m not sure I could stand that.”

“I want to marry you,” I said.

“My God,” she said softly. “Just when I’m ready to say it’ll never happen, Jake-alias-George says right now.”

“Not right now, but if the next week goes the way I hope it does . . . will you?”

“Of course. But I do have to ask one teensy question.”

“Am I single? Legally single? Is that what you want to know?”

She nodded.

“I am,” I said.

She let out a comic sigh and grinned like a kid. Then she sobered. “Can I help you? Let me help you.”

The thought turned me cold, and she must have seen it. Her lower lip crept into her mouth. She bit down on it with her teeth. “That bad, then,” she said musingly.

“Let’s put it this way: I’m currently close to a big machine full of sharp teeth, and it’s running full speed. I won’t allow you next to me while I’m monkeying with it.”

“When is it?” she asked. “Your . . . I don’t know . . . your date with destiny?”

“Still to be determined.” I had a feeling that I’d said too much already, but since I’d come this far, I decided to go a little farther. “Something’s going to happen this Wednesday night. Something I have to witness. Then I’ll decide.”

“Is there no way I can help you?”

“I don’t think so, honey.”

“If it turns out I can—”

“Thanks,” I said. “I appreciate that. And you really will marry me?”

“Now that I know your name is Jake? Of course.”

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