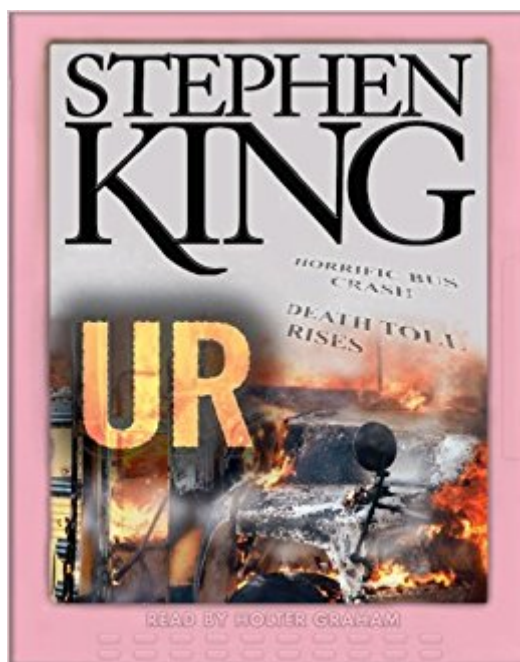


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UR



Synopsis

Ã Â FIRST TIME ON AUDIO...An Unabridged Novella Unavailable In Any Collection! Tapping into our primal fears of modern technology that made *Cell* a #1 bestseller, Stephen King sets his sights on the latest high-tech gadget in *UR*, in which a mysterious e-book reader opens a disturbing window into other worlds. Reeling from a painful break-up, English instructor and avid book lover Wesley Smith is haunted by his ex-girlfriend's parting shot: "Why can't you just read off the computer like everyone else?" He buys an e-book reader out of spite, but soon finds he can use the device to glimpse realities he had never before imagined, discovering literary riches beyond his wildest dreams...and all-too-human tragedies that surpass his most terrible nightmares. From vintage cars (*Christine* and *From a Buick 8*) to household appliances (*Maximum Overdrive*) to exercise equipment (*Stationary Bike*), Stephen King has mesmerized us with tales of apparently ordinary machines that take on lives of their own. *UR* gives this classic theme an up-to-the-minute spin, resulting in a horror masterpiece for our time and for the ages.

Book Information

Audio CD

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Language: English

ISBN-10: 1442303093

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Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.7 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 1,364 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #716,428 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD >

Authors, A-Z > (K) > King, Stephen #65 inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > Horror #216

inÃ Â Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction

Customer Reviews

Wesley Smith buys an Kindle to keep his mind off his recent nasty breakup, but he finds that his version is no ordinary e-reading device. Smith's Kindle has a special *Ur* option, which reveals the future and all the works his favorite authors have written in parallel dimensions. However, when the *Ur* delivers news of terrible events on the way, Smith must decide if he should interfere in fate. While King can certainly spin a good story, the Kindle focus (the story was written exclusively for and can only be read on an Kindle) keeps this one feeling like an advertising gimmick. While

listeners can easily follow Holter Graham's narration, his style and projection aren't particularly impressive. He is consistent with his characterizations, but his light nasal voice lacks energy and momentum, and given that King's voice is quite similar to Graham's and King can narrate just as well, it seems unnecessary to have enlisted Graham, whose performance adds little additional flare. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Stephen King is the author of more than fifty books, all of them worldwide bestsellers. His recent work includes *The Bill Hodges Trilogy* (an Edgar Award winner for Best Novel), *Finders Keepers*, and *End of Watch* and the story collection *The Bazaar of Bad Dreams*. His epic series, *The Dark Tower*, is the basis for a major motion picture starring Idris Elba and Matthew McConaughey. It is also now a major motion picture starring Bill Skarsgård. King 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.

(Minor spoilers) Although this carries out a number of SK favorite themes (other worlds than these) and images (low men with voices that sound like their voice boxes are filled with insects), it reads like a story that would have been published in a science fiction magazine rather than a Stephen King book. It's not a horror story so much as a short character study with interesting concepts. Maybe it's the result of making a shorter novella from some of the fabric of the *Dark Tower* books and fitting it onto a (virtual and literal) Kindle. Maybe it's because it has a different kind of ending than we've grown accustomed to. But it's a nice, tidy, self-contained story that doesn't go too deep and stays within the world of ordinary nice characters that could have inhabited any earth-bound F&SF cover story for the past 30 years. It was a good read. The most interesting things (especially since I read it a week before Election Day 2016) were the alternate US histories, both banal and terrifying, that were revealed. (Not even SK's most outrageous UR dreamed up in 2009 could include the possibility of Donald Trump as president, though... I think we got shunted onto a little-used level of the Tower when Al Gore lost the election in 2000). My lack of the fifth star was mostly because the low men weren't consistent with the rest of the DT universe. These were unpleasant but not terrifying guys, and they actually seemed likable compared to Ted Brautigan's pursuers. And they wore the Red Eye but said "all things serve the Tower." They were Regulators, maybe, but not the terrifying type. They weren't bent on the destruction of the multiverse, but on

maintaining the status quo and not working too hard at it. So maybe they should have been frumpy guys in cheap suits who looked like IRS agents. In my humble opinion.

Allow me a moment of imaginary dialogue. "Mr. King, it's calling. Would you be willing to write a story showcasing the Kindle, our new ebook technology? You'd have to be sure to include all of its capabilities. Not just books, but access to newspaper publications." "Eh, okay." Mr. King proceeds to dash said story off in a weekend. This is pretty much how UR reads, which is not to say it's bad. Just a bit on the predictable side, and it has dated a bit in the past ten or so years. I recently downloaded it while traveling and enjoyed it. After reading it my first thought was that if Kindle technology had existed when Rod Serling was alive, this would have wound up as a Twilight Zone episode. Basically, a fellow comes into possession of advanced/otherworldly technology, exploits it (though for the best of reasons) and then has to stand judgement for what he has done. The story stands out in a couple of ways: first, the characters who track our hero down - I will call them the Time Police - are scary but reasonable. Mr. King makes it clear that they are completely removed from our universe and utterly creepy. However, they are willing to listen to the main character's defense of his actions. (The main character, incidentally, is not a superhero, just an ordinary guy. This is another reason I liked the story.) Besides that, there is a very effective moment when the hero and his pals discover an alternate timeline wherein the New York Times ceases publication after a certain date. If you know your history, you will know why as soon as you see the date... and figure out that we had a very narrow escape. There is also an interesting portrayal of an alcoholic who has the potential to cause a tragedy. I hesitate to play Freud here, but I detected a fair amount of self loathing in Mr. King's description of this character. Overall I'd mildly recommend this story. It's a nice way to pass some time if you are in an airport or similar situation, and has some intriguing plot points. However, Mr. King has certainly written better things.

I loved this little book. I could have a few quibbles (Hemingway should not be born in a different year and still "be" Hemingway, and it is weird that NYC has 6 million dead in a Cuban Missile War strike and yet get a copy of the New York Times published, even if it's only three pages) but the concept was so enchanting that I was just swept away. I can hardly wait till incorporates the UR feature in our world's Kindles :-)

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