



Sleeping Beauties

Stephen King , Owen King

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In a future so real and near it might be now, something happens when women go to sleep; they become shrouded in a cocoon-like gauze.

If they are awakened, and the gauze wrapping their bodies is disturbed or violated, the women become feral and spectacularly violent; and while they sleep they go to another place.

The men of our world are abandoned, left to their increasingly primal devices. One woman, however, the mysterious Evie, is immune to the blessing or curse of the sleeping disease.

Is Evie a medical anomaly to be studied, or is she a demon who must be slain?

Sleeping Beauties Details

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From Reader Review *Sleeping Beauties* for online ebook

Matt says

Having long been a fan of Stephen King, I was curious to tackle this novel, which pairs the King of Horror with his Prince of Thrills (?), Owen. Working together on this massive piece, the reader is able to see the Kings' respective writing styles and notice how well they mesh together. In the town of Dooling, the discovery of two meth cooks are found murdered seems to be a day like any other, though a stranger may be behind this bloody mess. Normalcy ends in this community when women around the world are going to sleep and not waking up. While in these comatose states, they are discovered with an odd growth on their faces, spindly white thread that soon becomes a cocoon that surrounds their bodies. Panic ensues and those who seek to remove this cocoon from family and friends are met with a rabid response, sated only by the violent murder of anyone who dare disturb the woman's slumber. This odd occurrence is tied to sleep—but only of women—and is soon labelled Aurora Sickness. As the folks of Dooling do all they can to understand this phenom, the women are taking matters into their own hands to stay awake. Chaos reigns as caffeine and other stimulants—both legal and illegal—are sought by anyone possessing the XX chromosome, in an effort to remain awake. When rumours hit the internet about a scheme to 'torch' the cocoon-bearers, this only adds a new layer of concern in Dooling, where riots and vandalism have changed things for the worse. Tucked away in the prison is that aforementioned stranger, Eve Black, who appears to be immune to the cocooning and enjoys restful sleep without consequence. Does Eve have something to share with those left awake in Dooling that might bring an end to the madness? What happens to those who remain asleep in their cocoons? These answers and more await the reader as they flit through this massive novel—like moths on a summer night—and are enveloped in a story that has all the markings of a King classic. This joint effort should leave fans of the elder King quite pleased and raise interest in Owen's own writing.

Having never read Owen King before, I must use my knowledge of his father's writing to provide comparative analysis for this review. I will be the first to admit that reading Stephen King is not for everyone, though his novels as not as horror-based as they might once have been. Their uniqueness lies not only in the number of pages used to transmit a story, but also the numerous tangents taken to get from A to B. While that might annoy me with some authors, I find solace in the detail provided on the journey when King is at the helm. As King is wont to do, he supersaturates the story with scores of characters, all of whom play their own part in the larger narrative. While this may annoy some readers, I find it—bafflingly—exciting as I keep track of all the mini-stories that develop throughout. That being said, a few characters rise to the forefront in this piece and help bridge the story together. Lila Norcross proves to be a pivotal character, both in her role as sheriff and a level-headed player in town when chaos begins to rear its head. Lila has much going on and her character must face many struggles throughout the story, but she never backs down from what stands before her. Clint Norcross, Lila's husband and prison psychiatrist at the women's facility in town also plays an interesting role, in that he seeks to explore the lives and thoughts of those incarcerated, as well as serving as an important liaison for Eve Black, currently being detained in the 'soft room'. Eve Black remains that character that King uses in most of his novels, the unknown individuals who brings chaos to the forefront while remaining calm and even endearing. No one knows anything of Eve, though her character becomes significant as the story progresses. Turning to the story at hand, it is both complex and simplistic, allowing the reader to pull something from it that might appeal to them. The curiosity surrounding the cocoon remains at the forefront of the plot throughout and why women are the only one's being saddled with this remains a mystery. Both Kings seek to have the characters explore this anomaly throughout the novel, while also facing some of the concerns of a town disintegrating at the hands of its female population falling by the wayside, particularly when Eve's immunity becomes common knowledge. There are many wonderful plots to follow within the story, which develop throughout the

detailed chapters. The reader will likely have to use the character list at the beginning of the piece to keep everyone clear, though the detail offered allows a quick refresher for the attentive reader. The writing style is clearly elder King, with its meandering way and a narrative peppered with commentaries. It is for the reader to sift through it all and find the gems that will help them better appreciate the story. Chapters are broken up into numbered breaks, assisting with the literary digestion process, which allows the reader to better appreciate the magnitude of the story before them. I enjoy this style of writing, though am not entirely clear what flavour the younger King added to the story, as I am ignorant to any of his past published works. That being said, the collaborative King experience was one I thoroughly enjoyed.

Kudos, Messrs. King, for this excellent collaborative effort. I found myself enthralled until the very end and hope you'll consider working together again.

Love/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

A Book for All Seasons, a different sort of Book Challenge: <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/...>

Suzanne says

I love King books because they are insanely freaky and crazy! This time you get that entertainment from two Kings and it was so amusing. You have a fantasy (with some sci-fi vibes) about a world where most of the women have fallen asleep and have been cocooned leaving the world to a wide variety of male characters. Both the male and female characters are written so well and amusing.

Overall, yes it is a 700+ page book but it is worth it for that slow burn that keeps you interested. It's a King book so you just expect it!

Johann (jobis89) says

"Sometimes you get what you want, but mostly you get what you get."

A strange epidemic spreads across the world wherein once all the women fall asleep they become cocooned in an unusual waxy material. Disruption or tearing upon of this cocoon will cause the female inside to act in a homicidal manner. *Sleeping Beauties* focuses on the events occurring in a small town, Dooling, West Virginia, and in particular Clint and Lila Norcross, Clint being the psychiatrist in the local female prison, and Lila being the town's sheriff. One woman, however, seems to be the key to unravelling exactly what is going on...

I'm going to keep my review as spoiler-free as possible, as I know so many people are still reading it. So I'll just present some overall thoughts and opinions. Okay, so, I enjoyed this book, but it's not without its faults. Part 1 was brilliant, this idea presented by the Kings is so unique and interesting and to see how it all unfolds and the effect it has on the world, and in particular, in Dooling, is really exciting. Part 2, however... oh, it was a slog at times. It reminded me of my experience with *The Stand* where I just thought, "Oh get on with it!!!" I feel like this book could do with some characters being cut out and a number of pages trimmed off it.

Speaking of characters, there is a LOT in this book, but surprisingly I was able to keep up with who everyone was and how they were connected to each other etc. Sometimes I did have that split second of "Wait...who's this again?" but usually within reading a sentence or two I was back on track. So yeah, there isn't too many in terms of keeping up with the characters, but in my opinion, there were a few characters who I could just have done without. King is the King of character development and creating memorable characters that you just never forget - however, I think quite a lot of the ones in here are forgettable for me, apart from Evie and Lila. The rest, meh.

In terms of the collaboration between father and son, it was seamless to me, it didn't feel like it was splintered and all over the place as the voice switches from Owen to Stephen and back again. Of course, some parts felt distinctly Stephen, and others felt non-Stephen (I haven't read any of Owen's work beyond this so I can't comment on his writing style). The first half of the book felt like a Stephen King idea to me and a current-day King read, however the second half just lacked that punch that King usually delivers.

I guess my main complaint that is I didn't really FEEL anything reading this. I felt interested, sure, but I wasn't really expressing any emotions. Each and every character could have been killed off and I'd have been like *shrugs*. I did enjoy it overall, don't get me wrong, it's a great idea, a great premise, but the second half let me down and so I'd give this book 4 stars out of 5. Which perhaps seems high after all my complaining, but that first half of the book was SO good and I still found it hard to put the book down even when I got to the second half! Overall, a decent book!

Kemper says

This is a review of a Stephen King (& Son) novel being posted on Halloween. SPPOOOOKKKKYYYYY!!

Eh....Not so much.

Around the world all the women who fall asleep become enveloped by mysterious cocoons that form almost instantly once they go night-night, and they aren't waking up. They're still alive, but if anyone tries to cut or tear open a cocoon the lady inside will pop awake in a psychotic rage in which she'll immediately try to murder anyone around and then will immediately fall asleep and be cocooned again. (I can relate because I also fly into a homicidal fury if awoken from a nap.)

The small Appalachian town of Dooling is like everywhere else with the women struggling not to fall asleep, but as days pass the number of those awake begin to dwindle. Everything begins to fall apart as some men try to watch over the sleeping women they care for to protect them from jerkfaces who would do them harm. A lady named Evie is arrested for a horrific crime just as everything goes to hell and is locked up in the local women's prison. Evie shows a supernatural awareness of the people and events around her, and it's quickly obvious that she's immune to what's happening to all the other females. Meanwhile, the sleeping ladies find themselves someplace familiar but very different.

The main idea here is pretty clever as hybrid of a fairy tale story and the beginning an apocalyptic end-of-society-as-we-know-it novel. Trying to get that mixture right is one of the places where I think the book falls down a bit because the more hardnosed elements where people are having to come to terms with what's happening and prepare for the worst was more compelling than when it went deeper into the paranormal realm aspects of Evie. Yet that's a vital component to the flip side of the book where we find out what's going on with the women while they snooze which the book needs. So I'm left struggling to put my finger on

why I didn't like this more.

Maybe the writing itself is a factor. With Uncle Stevie collaborating with Cousin Owen I wasn't sure what to expect, and you can tell that this isn't a Stephen King solo effort. It doesn't feel exactly like one of his novels, but it's not exactly unlike one either. Even his books co-written with Peter Straub felt more King-ish to me which seems odd. I listened to the audio version of this which included an interview with both authors at the end, and they talked about how instead of trading off chapters or sections that they would leave holes in the middle of what they wrote for the other to fill in a deliberate attempt to keep a reader from figuring out exactly who wrote what. Mission accomplished, but I'm not sure that made for the best book possible.

Another interesting bit in that interview is that this started out as a potential TV series that they wrote some scripts for, and I think that shows through in some of the structure. There's something that feels episodic about this although again I'm not able to explain exactly why that that is. It's not all that different from any other book with multiple characters in different locations doing things, but I felt like there were moments when the credits were going to roll. It just reads like a TV show at times is the best way I can explain it.

I'm sure some will be upset at the overall message here which is essentially that women are routinely fucked over by men, and that men overall are pretty awful. (Breaking News: That's all true.) I admit that there were a few points where I found the male bashing a bit much, but not out of any nutjob MRA style faux indignation about double standards. It's because I'm a cynic and a misanthrope so I'm fully committed to the belief that deep down all people, men and women, are pure garbage. So while I agree in general that women are less prone to violence as a solution and several other points the book makes I still don't think that women would make a perfect world. Better? Probably. But not perfect. They'd just find more subtle ways to fuck things up. So for me the Kings' idea that most women are saints who will always do the right thing that they present here was more wishful thinking than reality.

It's not a bad book. (Certainly its miles better than *The Fireman*, another novel written by a King offspring in which a strange disease puts society in peril.) It's got a good core plot, interesting characters, and decent writing, but it's too long and never quite gets into the top gear it was straining for. It'll fall somewhere in the middle of my King rankings.

Zoeytron says

Quick! Would someone please pass me the No-Doze? The ladies in **Sleeping Beauties** could have used it, but I needed a double dose my own bad self before it was over.

This started out strong and had me wondering why so many of my GR buddies were less than enchanted with it. I get it now. It wasn't a total snooze-fest, but overall it was a disappointing read for this particular Constant Reader.

Perry says

Best Let Sleeping Beauties Lie
Completely revised on 10/18/17

Stephen King, who recently turned 70, has written a phenomenal fifty plus bestsellers. Regrettably, "Sleeping Beauties," a writing collaboration with his younger son Owen that may seem touching in the paternal sense, fails to plunge the reader into the type of heart-thumping chills and page-flipping thrills that casual King fans crave. Rather, the novel proves itself a tiresome, often grandiose, fantasy-soapbox that is sure to please only the most hardcore King fans.

The novel opens in the small Appalachian town of Dooling, West Virginia, when a nubile nude woman, with green pubic hair and moths fluttering from her mouth, strolls out from behind a mammoth tree in a large clearing to bludgeon a local meth dealer who abuses his girlfriend. She then patiently awaits arrest.

This supernatural goddess named Eve or Evie Black--we soon see--mocks all men, reads minds, controls a pack of prison rats and commands an army of moths. Sheriff Lila Norcross transports her to the women's prison outside of town where Dr. Clint Norcross, the Sheriff's husband, is the prison psychiatrist.

The same day, a worldwide plague known as the "Aurora flu" strikes every woman who enters a state of sleep, after which tendrils grow from her body and form a cocoon from which she does not awake. If anyone--even a family member--tries to break open the cocoon and wake the woman, she is transformed into a crazed, bloodthirsty killer. One yokel yucks that the plague is "the ultimate PMS." This of course leads to a dramatic increase in the sale of Red Bull, coffee and cocaine as women frantically try to stay awake.

We get sound bites of end times from around the globe: riots in D.C., vigilante brigades gathering to torch the cocoons, a jet going down, and "hard right conservatives on talk radio ... proclaiming the Aurora virus as proof that God was angry with feminism." The focus though is on the small hillbilly town.

Nearly half the book is consumed by a tedious introduction to seventy characters, including half of Dooling and most of the female prisoners. If you can keep up, you may still get frustrated by the lengthy and frequent slow-motion diversions into the connubial blemishes of Lila and Clint Norcross, which seem feeble when considering that humankind stands on the brink of extinction.

Dooling's female correctional facility is ground zero for the Aurora flu, housing the sole female immune from the plague, Evie Black. The question at the novel's center is how the men of this small Appalachian town will react to the plague. Will they act out backwards male stereotypes, form rabid packs and go after Evie?

As Evie explains to Dr. Norcross, she will not defend herself and only if she survives a number of days will the women be set free; if not, all women will perish. Thus begins the battle of men for the existence of our species: the men--almost entirely of cardboard stock--who want to kill Evie Black versus the men who want to protect her, the latter led by Dr. Norcross, who the Kings inform us is "the one who stands for all mankind."

Meanwhile, the spirits of the cocooned women gather in a parallel world of peace called simply Our Place. Our Place is just past the clearing from which Evie arrived and the "Mother Tree," the Kings' version of the tree of knowledge and the portal to Evie's Eden-like garden populated by a fox and a tiger that talk, a peacock, and a giant snake that slithers up and down the tree.

The Kings endeavor to shroud Eve in mystery via nonsensical queries: "Had Evie come from the Tree? Or had the Tree come from Evie?" It is nonetheless obvious that she is the biblical Eve: "Evie doesn't trust the snake.... She's had trouble with him before."

With the exception of maybe five characters, the characters merely play out gender stereotypes--often clownish--with most women (even the imprisoned murderers) caring and nurturing pacifists, and the men--with the exception of Dr. Norcross and a few prison guards--generally drinking, righteous, gun-toting, savage pigs.

The absence of the reader's investment in a legion of caricatures represents a fundamental flaw in building a shred of suspense. That is to say, by the time the battle for Eve ensues--think, "Lord of the Flies" at a women's prison--it is nearly impossible to know who does what, when, to whom, who was killed and who survived, and miraculous if one even cares.

Lovers of the Stephen King brand of graphic gore may find parts to relish, such as how "shreds of skin flapped like streamers" from a bulldozer that had just flattened a man, or how a man's jaw being cleaved open by a woman sounded like "a drumstick being torn off a Thanksgiving turkey." Yet, this is not the trademark King supernatural novel full of fright, intensity and surprises.

Instead, this doorstopper of a novel stands primarily as a political soapbox the Kings thrust upon readers via "original sin" Eve, brought back by some secret force that detests men. Whether or not a reader is in sync with some of the Kings' political persuasions is beside the point. Most readers, it seems, probably do not care to read a novel billed as a blockbuster supernatural thriller that can be more fittingly described as an environmentalist, gun-controlling, feminist, Trump-loathing fantasy with a take on everything from gender politics to racial violence, and that hits heavily on a range of social dilemmas such as suicide, marital infidelity, teen sex, alcoholism, drug addiction in impoverished areas, domestic violence and mental illnesses.

Perhaps it's best to let "Sleeping Beauties" lie.

Emily (Books with Emily Fox) says

3.5? Not sure yet!

In a world where women have fallen asleep in cocoons, the men are left to figure things out. The premise was super intriguing but I'm not 100% sure I'm happy with the ending.

This book contained a lot of characters. A LOT. I did appreciate most of the feminist views included although it sometimes bordered on the "m'lady hat tipping" side.

This book also featured one of my new most hated character of all time! Congrats Don Peters, you're a POS!
:D

I'll probably update this review when I have more time to think about it. I did like it but it's not my favorite from SK.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

I loved the tree and animals and that's all I'm saying!

There is a reference to a dead cat and a Mercedes. I might have missed some more but I caught those two and King fans will know where those references come from =)

There are a lot of characters in this book and I loved most of them! Evie was freaking awesome! I can't even think of all of them because I didn't make any notes! I was so enthralled every time I picked up this book to read on it that I didn't write anything down. So, I'm just going to ramble a bit and no spoilers. Nothing major at any rate!

One day something happens, I'm not going to say what but there is a force that comes into our presence. It's only here for good, but sometimes things just happen.

Okay, so a lot of the book is centered around some ladies in prison, the police department and the nuts in the town.

And one day, across the globe, women start going to sleep and their faces become cocooned. And if you decide to try to remove this cocoon, it will not be a good day for you my friend. Not a good day at all. I must say, I did enjoy what happened to a rapist and his Peter Pan when he thought he could rape a woman. I knew that was going to happen, the attempted rape that is. Oh the joy if that could happen to all rapists. But I digress.

So after the female gets her rage on, she then cocoons back up and is out like a light. But why is all of this happening? Let give you a hint . . .

. . .

. . .

. . .

. . .

READ THE BOOK! =D

It's a really freaking awesome book. I could feel Stephen King all over this even though I know Owen was involved as well. I think they made a fan-freaking-tastic book. It's so damn bizarre and what's why I love it. Kudo's to the King's < -- heh

Anyhoo, I'm leaving you with a little excerpt.

"Evie?" Lila moves around in a circle, searching--woods, ground, grass, air, milky sunshine--but there's no one. "Evie, are you there?"

She yearns for a signal, any kind of signal.

A moth flutters from the branch of the old oak tree and settles on her hand.

Happy Reading!

Mel ♥

MY BLOG: Melissa Martin's Reading List

Matthew says

The story of people in a remote town trapped by mysterious circumstances . . . no, wait, that's Under the Dome!

How about . . . the story of a mysterious disease and the fight between good and evil . . . darn it! That's The Stand!

One more try . . . the story of a magical prisoner who . . . ah, crap, I give up . . . that's The Green Mile!

Anyway, this is a pretty good book that brings back a lot of themes from earlier King novels. I have seen some places where people say they can tell the parts where Owen wrote instead of his dad. Not me - if you told me that ol' Stevie wrote the whole thing, I would believe it.

For a 700 page book I felt like it went pretty quick. At first, I had a hard time getting into it and I had 600 pages ahead of me, so I was kind of nervous. However, after I got comfortable with the 2.3 million characters in this book, it was all gravy from there!

3.5 rounded up to 4

Would I recommend this to a King first timer? Nope. But, if you are looking for a bit of King nostalgia after the Hodges Trilogy - which didn't feel all that much like King - then this is worth a try.

Justin Tate says

Stephen King is a god, but this book is a slog. I support quality father-son bonding, though, so for that I feel less guilty about wasting \$20 and 20+ hours of my life on it. But please, please don't waste your time. Not unless you've read every other word by SK. It's by far his worst effort to date.

It took me about 4 months to read the first half. I realized then that if I was ever going to finish it I'd have to do the audiobook. That helped a lot. My one positive comment is that Sleeping Beauties is more interesting than rush hour traffic. The narrator did a great job adding vocal personality to otherwise lifeless characters.

So why is it such a disaster? Many reasons, but mostly because all of the characters are the same. Picture the

stereotypical image of an Appalachian resident and then imagine 30 clones of that stereotype. There's your entire cast. Also, you would expect some type of brilliant social commentary with a premise like this, but no. No relevance to our world, past or present. I actually appreciated that there isn't a lot of political blah-blah-blah, but come on, there is nothing better than a thesis that men are inherently violent.

All that said, there were brief and fleeting moments of fine storytelling. In those moments I imagined Daddy King working overtime to breathe life into an arc that was clearly going downhill fast. Nevertheless, I'm sure this was the experience of a lifetime for Owen. I would give many body parts to collaborate with the King on a novel, even if it turned out to be trash. Maybe we will eventually look back on *Sleeping Beauties* as a historical document, the teething ring that led to many great things from Owen. We shall see. Until then, let the historians deal with this dusty tome and read something else.

Mark says

I enjoyed this book right through to the end. Not a classic king horror book but perhaps that is the input of Owen as much as that is Stephen veering down another path.

Carrying a veiled message perhaps for this day and age about the poor treatment that women receive at the hands of men and perhaps too an eye-opening slap in the face for men. Be careful to love what you have now before it is too late - sort of a strange time to read this message in a book on the same day I am reading about all of the misogynistic dirt surfacing around Harvey Weinstein.

The book is based in the town of Dooling in Appalachia. Circumstances arise where all of the female population cannot wake from their sleep - hence the title. A strange, mystical woman enters the town and before long it is realized that she can sleep and wake when she needs to. As the men try to keep their lives together without the women, it is not long before the blame for the eerie circumstances are laid squarely at the feet of the newcomer - Evie Black as she calls herself.

Evie is more secretive than the inner workings of Amazon as she sets about playing good against bad to achieve her goals.

The culmination of Evie's will and the townsmen's testosterone-fuelled response is akin to a minor civil war - haha lesson taught!! This is how men behave and react. OK, guys unclench those fists - check out the authors again - yep, Stephen and Owen King. Guys like us so don't go blowing off steam about bloody feminists or any other crap. And if you still feel riled just take solace in the fact that this is, at the end of the day, just a fictional novel.

So to this point, you can see that I liked this read. And yes, I did but I cannot give more than three stars because I felt there was a slight loss of originality.

I started with a concern that the disease/plague that was inhabiting the women, and the way that is spread worldwide quickly and easily, was a bit too close to the Captain Tripps flu from *The Stand*. Then I cut it some slack as it only affected women and we were not left with only little possess. There came a mention of a fire like bird and immediately I thought they had called Joe Hill to join the family and he had brought his Phoenix with him from *Fireman*. At one point he is actually mentioned by name in this book..... in the words of Jimi Hendrix, "Hey Joe".

The second half of the book deals with two alternate worlds, one where time flows a lot faster than the other and I was waiting for Roland Deschain to chase the man in black across the desert or for Blaine the Train to

come steaming out. At other times Evie formed the perfect picture in my mind although she looked remarkably like Drew Barrymore in the Firestarter movie, that was the impression I was getting. Little disappointed that the prison in this book is a women's prison, just couldn't get Morgan Freeman and Tim Robbins in the frame.

But don't be put off because I got some funny images/thoughts too. Read the book to get to this part but Evie appears, towards the end, fully naked except to say her pubic hair isn't as you would expect..... BANG!! My weird head conjures up scenes from one of the greatest movies ever - EVIL DEAD.

Sorry if the references to other works are unread by you but now you need to read more of the maestro. A good fun book, not his best but far from his worst and an enjoyable read.

Emily May says

Once a serious conflict commences—a fight to the death—objective reality is quickly lost in the smoke and noise.

Also, many of those who could have added their own accounts were dead.

As I was reading Sleeping Beauties, I was trying to find the words in my mind to sum up what I felt about the story - and Stephen King's stories in general - but then I got to the Authors' Note and discovered that they had done it for me: **"If a fantasy novel is to be believable, the details underpinning it must be realistic."**

^This is what I think makes King Sr's stories so strong. King integrates the supernatural seamlessly with the everyday. There's no big explosion out of nowhere, no aliens suddenly arriving on a giant ship... just the quiet everyday lives of these nuanced characters until something disastrous slips in. Slowly. Naturally, even. As if this could happen right now. To me and my family. It's extremely effective.

You can look at Sleeping Beauties in two different ways. As simply a really great horror story, or as a deeply metaphorical and political work. On the one hand, it's a creepy tale of a "sleeping sickness" that affects only the female population. As women around the world go to sleep, the men around them find they are not waking up. And what's more, gross, sticky threads start forming a cocoon around them. Attempts to remove this web have dire consequences.

One woman, the aptly-named Evie (or Eve), seems immune to the sickness and obviously knows something about what is going on. Maybe she even caused it. Why won't the women wake up? What made this happen? Are they gone for good? Have their minds gone somewhere else? What will the men do now? Can the few women still awake battle the delirium and fight off sleep? So many questions.

"In a terrified world, false news was king."

And then, on the other hand, it's difficult to not see this as a gender politics tale. You can't have a supernatural tree, a snake, and a woman called Eve and pretend not to notice the parallels. Plus, it's also an absolutely stellar takedown of Donald Trump, sexism, those who are opposed to women's rights and equality, sexual assault dismissed as "locker room talk", police shootings of unarmed black men and women,

and the belief in sensationalist news stories on the Internet. **King², it seems, has written a critical tale of our times disguised as a dark horror fantasy.**

There's definitely room to go into an in-depth analysis with this book, and perhaps I will sometime. But for now I will just say that I enjoyed this sinister, clever novel very much. Like with a number of King Sr's works, I feel like some parts could have been cut down without losing anything valuable, and that while detail is good, he sometimes crosses the line into "too much" territory. It's a small criticism, though. Once again I am reminded why he is such a popular author among horror fans and literary snobs alike.

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Edward Lorn says

How does it feel to be a **gender** and not a **person**?

Buckle in, ladies and gentleman, we're gonna be here for a while. I have a lot of coming-to-grips to do with this book and you're about to watch me decide whether or not I like it, almost in real-time. Let's do this.

This is a smart book. It's not a good read, but it is smart. Let's face it, if smart books made for good reading, David Foster Wallace would outsell James Patterson... (does that mean Patterson writes good reads? Fuck, stop. Let's reword that...). How about: if smart books were good reads, Don DeLillo would outsell Stephen King. Better. Whew. That was almost a disaster.

The brains of this book come from Owen King. Stephen King (for all my hero worship) does not write smart books. He writes entertaining books. Books you don't have to think too hard about. A lot of people are going to hate this book simply because it's smart. It's gonna go right over their empty heads and they're gonna take a break from fingerbanging their cousins to come on here to rage about how the book is sexist against men and nothing but feminist propaganda and yadda yadda Caveman make poopy in diapey. This book is anything but all of that, but we'll get to that later.

Right out the gate, this book feels like someone doing a middle-tier impersonation of Stephen King. Imagine a Stephen King book written by, say, Joe Hill after Hill's been hit in the head a few dozen times. In other words, it reads like *The Fireman*. That's the first problem. It's a big story told in a super small way that feels much less epic in scope due to the way it's told. Then again, *The Fireman* has its fans (who knows why that is), so if you liked that trainwreck, you'll likely enjoy watching this one occur.

Seriously, side by side *The Fireman* and *Sleeping Beauties* are almost the same book. Damn near note for note, which is odd. I've been comparing Hill to King for a while now, so to compare King to Hill feels, I don't know, fucking backwards. Anyway, both books use the same generic flow, which is easy to read but devoid of that special something King fans have come to expect. For that reason, you're going to have lifelong King fans who're super pissed at this book, too. Shit, man, the Mercedes trilogy felt more like King than this did.

The next thing that comes to mind is how King-ish this book is without being anything like a Stephen King book. It has the cast from *Under the Dome*, a gender-swapped Andre Linoge (for you non-King nuts out there, he's the bad guy from *Storm of the Century: An Original Screenplay*) named Evie Black, and the most Condensed-Books version of *The Stand* you will likely ever read. But the writing sounds nothing like

Stephen King, and I would hazard a guess that it's because he didn't write a healthy portion of this kitten-squisher. Owen did. You feel King in some sentences, but mostly it's Owen. Why is that? Lemme explain.

King and Owen did an interview wherein King says the idea for the book was Owen's. Owen told Stephen he should write it. Stephen said, nah, you do it. Then they settled on doing it together. It was going to be a television series (which I would've liked much more, I think) but somehow it became, well... it became this *thing*. And the book reads like a detailed script. For fuck's sake, the novel starts with a cast list. And if you're a King fan you know that none of his books that start with a cast list are any good. That cast list is there because not even the publisher has any faith in you remembering who the fuck is who and why the fuck you should care.

The thing is, like I said above, I've read about these people before. I didn't like them the first time I read about them in *Under the Dome* and I don't like them now. There's not a likeable person in the whole bunch. Why the fuck should that be?

Oh. I'm not supposed to like anybody because the book is packed full of villains, you say? Wait... what?

What about Frank?

Villain. Duh.

What about Evie?

Villain. Super duh.

What about Clint?

Villain. Less of a duh.

What about Lila?

Villain. She's not obvious at all, is she?

Goddamn it, where's the heroes? A 702-page goddamn book and there's not a single hero? How come, E.!? HOW COME?????!!!!!!

Because this book has a message. And fuck me, it's a good one.

Ladies, dig it. How does it feel to not have a choice? How does it feel to have your reproductive organs, your own personal vaginas and uteri and ovaries and wombs and in-utero babies, controlled by men in government? How does it feel to be told what to wear so you don't get raped? Where to go so you don't get raped? Who to talk to so you don't get raped? How does it feel to be treated as if you are constantly in need of protection? How does it feel to be a gender and not a person?

Focus on that last sentence.

How does it feel to be a **gender** and not a **person**?

Of course I'm man-splaining here, but fuck it, I'm going all in. This is what this book is about:

Women stripped of choice finally given a choice. Do they deal with the swinging-dick version of this world, or start over? Evie Black plans to give them that choice. But, in the end, even she tries to decide for them. Elaine tries to decide for them. Frank does... Clint does... Yes, even Lila does. Everyone thinks they know what's best for the female gender, but not one of them stops to think about what each individual *person* needs.

And THAT is what makes this book smart. Doesn't make this novel a good read, but it's smart as fuck. And that's all I have to say about that.

In summation: A gargantuan story told in a bubble. Not a fan of the delivery or the writing or the characters, but I loved the message. Awesome themes aside, I'd wait to find a thrift-store paperback version. Simply "okay".

Final Judgment: The brains get in the way of the story.

Outtakes:

I love how there's a review on here that simply says: *This book better be about the women and not the men.* Or what, dude? lol You gonna kick the authors' asses. Thanks for the laugh, broseph.

Evie Black is so Andre Linoge. Even down to the choice she gives everyone at the end. King recycled the fuck outta that character. Guess he thought it was fine, given how one was a script and the other only started as a script... or whatever.

Took me 600 pages to catch the subtext of this one, y'all. 600 PAGES! I'm slipping in my old age. Still, I do wonder how many man-rage reviews there'll be. Reviews that are just of men bitching about how they'd survive just fine without women, as if that's the point of the book. I know King doesn't read reviews, but Owen's an active Goodreads member. Wonder if he's reading the men's-rights-activist reviews and chuckling.

You're gonna get some hate on this one, E. You know King fans won't be happy with only two stars. You obviously missed the genius... wait, you caught the genius and you still gave it two stars? What the fuck is wrong with you?!?!?!?!?!?!!!!!!!

I might be a biased King fan, but I pride myself more on my honesty. Hope you guys liked the review, even if you don't like me or my opinion. smooches

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

1.5 stars rounded up..unless I get pissed off writing this review and just one star the thing.

I'm not really going to go into the blurb or storyline. You can read that yourself or one of the many reviews that will come for this book. All the women have gone to sleep and all the men are acting a dang fool wondering who is going to feed them in an hour. That's my take on it.

Now for the things I liked. Which is not much.

First off, Stephen King is and pretty much will always be..My favorite author. So cool yourself.

Second, this book is set in Appalachia, with meth heads and a women's prison. That shit right there alone should guarantee a five star read for me.

That's all the positive I've got.

Now the negatives.

The characters, this is one of those books that King figured you might as well make every character known to man have a bit part. There are so many people in this small Appalachian town that I stopped even caring who was who by about 10% into the book. There were characters still being added almost up until the very end.

I've read that King really needs a good editor. After this, I may tend to agree. He threw everything and the kitchen sink into this chunk and my dumb butt kept reading it thinking it would get better.

(Of course, my kitty lapping up the water in the sink doesn't work.)

The story. This shit has been done before. By Uncle Stevie himself. Multiple times: Under the Dome, The Stand and by the "other" kid The Fireman..but I actually liked all those books. I expected better.

More about the story: What the hell is it about frigging tigers?

First "The Walking Dead" threw one into the storyline and now even King jumps on the bandwagon? AND no, it really didn't make sense for it to be there.

Next, I read to escape. I know the world is a shitty place. I know we are in deep shit. I DO NOT read to hear more about politics. If authors start writing FICTION books just to pound out their political views I'm going to take up a new hobby. I DO NOT want to pick up a book by my favorite authors and get reminded of it. It's happened twice lately for me with books and this one was more on the "let me put my views out there" side. Just no. (I'm not talking about feminism either so get your typing fingers back to the twitter.) I may agree with some of the political viewpoints but I do NOT want my fictional stories to become sounding blocks for author's agendas.

*I'm about done so calm down..because I spend days reading this freaker I get a minute of ranting.

That's another thing. The size of this sucker. IT DID NOT NEED TO BE SO BIG. Most of it was just rambling and bored the heck out of me anyways.

I'm shutting up because my kid said I was making weird faces at the computer.

In the end..will I read Stephen King again? Hell yeah, Will I read a book co-written with one of his kids again? Probably, because let's face it-If my dad was Stephen King I'd want to 'write' a book with him too.

Does the King family give a shit what I think? Hell no.

They are way cooler than my grouchy ass.

Chelsea Humphrey says

That's it?

16 days later and I'm FINALLY finished. I feel completely drained by this book and hope to write a review in the next week, but for now I think it's safe to say I didn't feel this was one of King's stronger books. I'll gather my notes together and hopefully make a compelling argument for why this didn't work well for me.

BUT I MADE IT I CROSSED THE FINISH LINE AND I DIDN'T QUIT!
