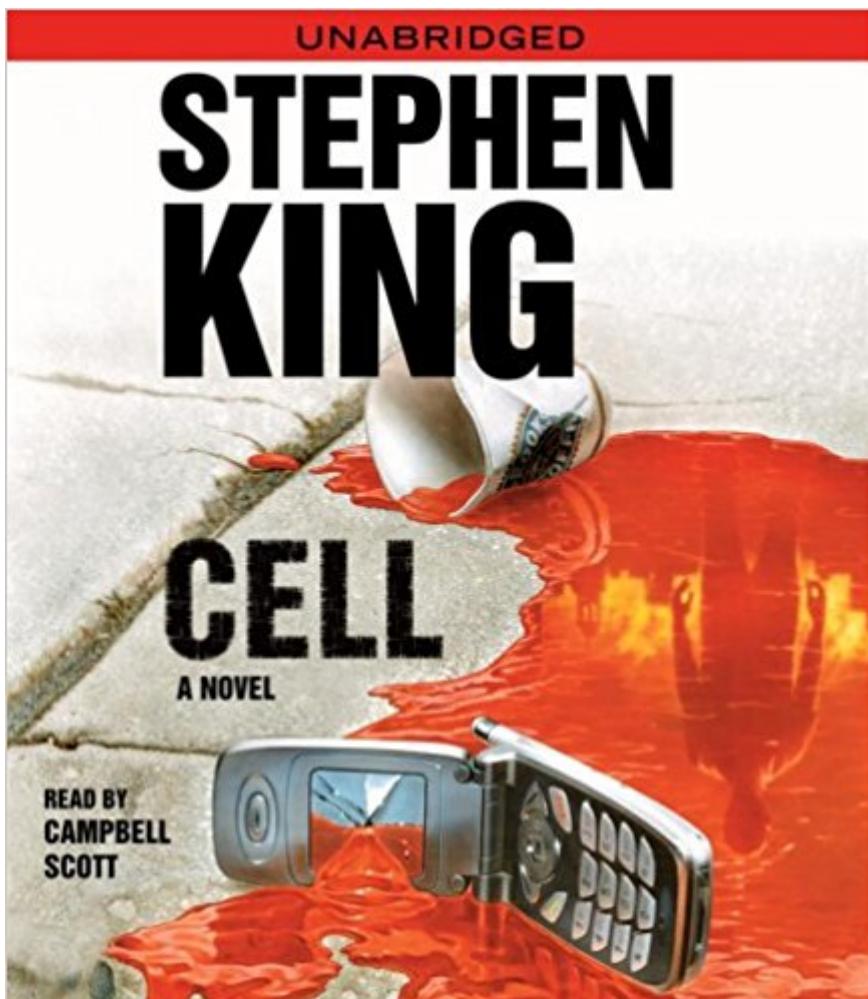


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Cell



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Synopsis

There's a reason cell rhymes with hell. On October 1st, God is in His heaven, the stock market stands at 10,140, most of the planes are on time, and Clayton Riddell, an artist from Maine, is almost bouncing up Boylston Street in Boston. He's just landed a comic book deal that might finally enable him to support his family by making art instead of teaching it. He's already picked up a gift for his long-suffering wife, and he knows just what he'll get for his boy Johnny. Why not a little treat for himself? Clay's feeling good about the future. That changes in a hurry. The cause of the devastation is a phenomenon that will come to be known as The Pulse, and the delivery method is a cell phone. Everyone's cell phone. Clay and the few desperate survivors who join him suddenly find themselves in the pitch-black night of civilization's darkest age, surrounded by chaos, carnage, and a human horde that has been reduced to its basest nature...and then begins to evolve. There are one hundred and ninety-three million cell phones in the United States alone. Who doesn't have one? Stephen King's utterly gripping, gory, and fascinating novel doesn't just ask the question "Can you hear me now?" It answers it with a vengeance.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This novel has a great underlying premise: The human brain is an organic computer that has a basic operating system, which is capable of being erased. In the case of this novel, the erasure is triggered by a "pulse" that is sent out to millions of people through their cell phones. Those who do not happen to be using their phones at the time of the Pulse are spared. Those who are using their phones turn into zombie-like creatures who maim and kill one another and appear to be driven only

by hunger and anger. The twist comes when the "normies" realize that the "phoners" (aka zombies) are sort of evolving over time. They appear to be developing more sophisticated traits that are, in some cases, superior to those of normal humans. For instance, they communicate via telepathy and move around by means of levitation. I would have liked to see this evolution idea further developed, perhaps even all the way to the point where the once inferior zombies become the next step up in human evolution, with the "normies" ultimately ending up in the same relationship as the Neanderthals may have been to Homo Sapiens. But, alas, that never happens. In fact, nothing close to that happens because King leaves readers in the lurch by not bringing the novel to a satisfactory conclusion. I know that King often leaves the ultimate endings up to the readers' imaginations, and I appreciate that technique. But in *Cell* he really should have taken us a bit farther down the road, at least so we knew whether or not the "old" human programming could be rescued from some area of deep memory so some phoners could be restored to their former condition.

If for no other reason, I thank Stephen King for taking those five words which haunt tv commercials: "Can you hear me now?" and turning the phrase into something more than merely annoying..and into the realm of the truly ominous. While it might seem obvious to some of us that cell phones are horrible little devices, it still takes a pretty talented writer to write a book about evil spread by cell phones...and to keep readers riveted the entire time. I was one of those readers. Like King, I refuse to have a cell phone, an "electronic leash". No thanks. But I'm really digressing here. Back to *The Cell* . If you think you don't like King's "supernatural" or "horror" style, I'd urge you to give *The Cell* a chance. I read it from cover to cover in one sitting. I can't say it is the best book he's written but it was still a fine read and had many of the trademarks of King's superior writing - excellent characterization, an unpredictable plot and just enough plausibility to make me think, "What if?" What if there WERE some way to use cell phones to affect people's brains, to create insanity in our population, with results leading to the brink of civilization's collapse? It is to King's credit that he not only raises these questions but kept me wanting to find out what happened next, to see what happened to Clayton, a guy who happens to be away from home when all hell breaks out. By the time it does, I was already intrigued by this guy, someone who was trying to figure out a way to curry his estranged wife's favor, who had the usual worries and imperfections of the average man. He was no hero, just an ordinary guy, just trying to get by, thinking about his career and the next step in his day, the usual stuff..

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