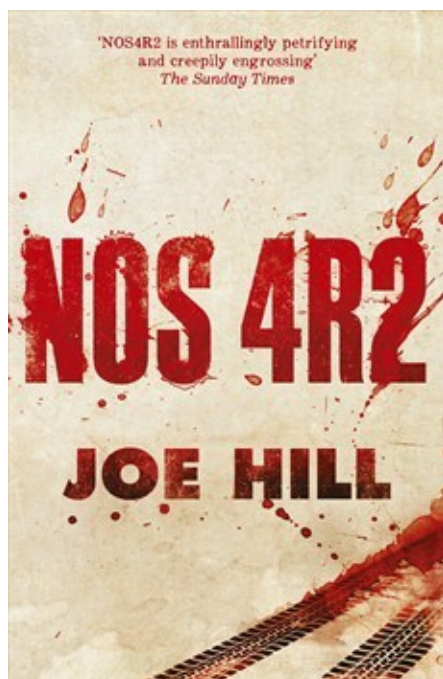




NOS4R2

Joe Hill

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NOS4R2

Joe Hill

NOS4R2 Joe Hill

Librarian's note: There is an Alternate Cover Edition for this edition of this book here.

NOS4R2 is a spine-tingling novel of supernatural suspense from master of horror Joe Hill, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Heart-Shaped Box* and *Horns*.

Victoria McQueen has a secret gift for finding things: a misplaced bracelet, a missing photograph, answers to unanswerable questions. On her Raleigh Tuff Burner bike, she makes her way to a rickety covered bridge that, within moments, takes her wherever she needs to go, whether it's across Massachusetts or across the country.

Charles Talent Manx has a way with children. He likes to take them for rides in his 1938 Rolls-Royce Wraith with the NOS4R2 vanity plate. With his old car, he can slip right out of the everyday world, and onto the hidden roads that transport them to an astonishing – and terrifying – playground of amusements he calls “Christmasland.”

Then, one day, Vic goes looking for trouble—and finds Manx. That was a lifetime ago. Now Vic, the only kid to ever escape Manx's unmitigated evil, is all grown up and desperate to forget. But Charlie Manx never stopped thinking about Victoria McQueen. He's on the road again and he's picked up a new passenger: Vic's own son.

NOS4R2 Details

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Author : Joe Hill

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Genre : Horror, Fiction, Fantasy, Thriller, Paranormal

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Download and Read Free Online NOS4R2 Joe Hill

From Reader Review NOS4R2 for online ebook

??? 2.? says

“The Wraith slid out of the mist, a black sleigh tearing through a cloud and dragging tails of December frost behind it. December frost in July. The roiling white smoke boiled away from the license plate, old, dented, rust-shot: NOS4A2.”

*? Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus,
Right down Santa Claus Lane.
Brad and Millie and all Manx children,
Are on your phone again.
Hammers a swingin', skulls a pingin',
All is bloody and bright.
So run for cover and say your prayers
'Cause Santa Claus comes tonight. ?*

Thus begins a prototypical vampire tale. Um no, not so much. Whoa, talk about turning the genre on its ear. But hold on a minute, can you even classify this as a vampire book? Ah, good question, random goodreader. I would say no, not in the traditional sense. Although there might be a few minor similarities, this is more of a creature feature.

So if this isn't a vampire tale, then what's it all about?

In a broad sense, I think it's about the magic of childhood, and how part of growing up involves losing your ability to view the world with that same childlike wonder. How sometimes the loss of that magic can turn a child into a bitter, jaded, and troubled adult.

This being a fantasy tale, of course Hill takes it a step further where that magic can seep into reality. As our resident scrabble expert, Maggie, explains to Vic, *“Everyone lives in two worlds...There's the real world, with all its annoying facts and rules. In the real world, there are things that are true and things that aren't. Mostly the real world s-s-s-suh-sucks. But everyone also lives in the world inside their own head. An inscape, a world of thought. In a world made of thought—in an inscape—every idea is a fact. Emotions are as real as gravity. Dreams are as powerful as history. Creative people...spend a lot of their time hanging out in their thoughtworld. S-s-strong creatives, though, can use a knife to cut the stitches between the two worlds, can bring them together. Your bike. My tiles. Those are our knives.”*

It all may sound a bit delusional, until you consider that people have always created real items out of their imagination. **“Fantasy was always only a reality waiting to be switched on.”**

So Vic is able to take her bike/knife and create a bridge which leads her to lost objects. Maggie can use her scrabble tiles to unlock secrets, answer difficult questions, or even predict future events. Our hero/villain Mr. Manx has the ability to drive his Wraith down imaginary roads, one of which leads to a magical place called Christmasland. This is a land of pure imagination, where all is fun and games, laughter and cheer, children are forever young, and every day is like Christmas.

All this magic comes at a price, and each individual pays a heavy toll, how their stories intersect is how this tale is told.

So without further ado, I give you:

– The Nice list –

Why, Charlie Manx (Nosferatu) of course. The star of the show. What a creepy, yet often hilarious villain.

Maggie Leigh, our guide and scrabble wizard. She's quite the adorable, stammering, purple haired, hipster librarian. Sadly, she was never given the screen time she deserved.

Lou Carmody, the oft-slighted love interest. Easy big fella, it's only a panic attack. You still may get a chance to play the hero, if you don't stoke out on me.

Aww Hooper, c'mere buddy. *scratches ears* You're a good boy.

– The Naughty list –

Bing Partridge (Renfield), A.K.A. the Gasmask Man. Damn son, you nearly wiped out good ole' Mr. Manx. That's very naughty indeed. You really think you deserve a ticket to Christmasland, after the mess you made or things? Pfft, choke yourself, Pyle Bing!

Victoria McQueen, A.K.A. the Brat. I think you use that bridge as a means of escaping your own problems, as much as for finding lost things. What happens when you're what's lost? Who can repair this bitter and broken shell of a woman you've become? You naughty girl, why can't you just leave Charlie be? Can't you see he only wants what's best for your boy? Hell, he's never harmed..one..single..child.

Bilbo, the man-nurse. You're no Browncoat, more like a turncoat, am I right?

Lastly, I suppose I should throw myself on the naughty list for not "getting the hype." It was fun ride, don't get me wrong, but I never fell head over heels for it. However, as someone who hasn't read all that much Stephen King, those little Easter eggs scattered throughout meant nothing to me. This will probably read like a love letter to dear ole' dad, for the rest of you, but I digress.

Now, having completed our list, remember boys and girls, Santa's always watching, so play nice. And if you're lucky, ~~Jolly Old Saint Nick~~ Charlie might even let you ride in his sleigh.

*? What a bright time, it's the right time,
To slit some throats hurrah.
Jingle bell time is a swell time,
To go scissoring the drifters away.
Giddy-up hippy, now pick up your feet,
It's stabbin' around the clock.
I'm fix'n to mangle you hideously,*

That's the Christmasland rock. ?

Buddy read with Stepheny, Delee, Randee, and Lisa. Thanks for the invite guys :)

Footnote: I HATE Xmas music, so, if you want to avoid all the stabby stabby, don't ever play that shit at my house! However, I will allow for the following exceptions.

Exception #1

Exception #2

Susanne Strong says

5 Stars.

One of my top favorite books of all time (which should be obvious since I have now read the book twice and have listened to the audiobook once, narrated masterfully by Kate Mulgrew, as well).

A Creepy, Disturbing Thrill Ride, with a flawed, yet lovable heroine, NOS4A2 is Joe Hill at his best.

Victoria (Vic) McQueen is no ordinary girl. She has a bike and with it, she can travel across a bridge, which takes her through space, from one part of the country to the next, in mere seconds. As a young girl, her bike was a blue, Raleigh Tuff Burner. It was the coolest thing she had ever seen. And when she traveled across the bridge? She found things. Lost objects: a missing bracelet, a missing photograph. As an adult, her motorbike is a Triumph and she finds answers to questions and she saves lives.

When Vic was young, she encountered the likes of one Charles Talent Manx and his ride was a Wraith. A 1938 Rolls-Royce Wraith, to be exact. It is an extension of him. It does what he wants it to. Manx is evil incarnate and with his ride, he can travel from this world to his own inscape, where his home, known as "Christmasland" is located. Why? To populate his own inscape with children, of course. So that they can celebrate Christmas. Every. Single. Day. But these aren't ordinary children. And Manx isn't an ordinary man. He is a man convicted of heinous crimes, and he simply cannot die. And he thrives upon stealing a child's innocence. And the remnants of those children whose innocence he steals, end up in Christmasland. He accomplishes this task with a little help from a friend, so to speak. That friend is Bing Partidge, a sick little man, who is eager to get to Christmasland himself.

Vic is the only child to have ever escaped Charles Manx and he has never forgotten it. Now that she is an adult, Manx decides to pay her back for it. The only way he knows how. Through her kid: Bruce Wayne Carmody. Son of the sweetest, kindest guy you'll ever meet, Lou Carmody. He is a teddy-bear of a man, who fixes motorcycles and truly loves two things in life. His son Wayne and Vic. Victoria has never really been good at anything except for finding things. Yet, for some reason, the people in her life don't give up on her. That goes for Lou and Maggie Lee - the only person who can help Vic stop Manx and find Wayne.

The path that Vic goes on to stop Manx is a crazy, turbulent one. It is a ride that I, personally, have taken three times (and have lived to tell the tale). It is wildly imaginative and definitely scary. And it is at times, a little horrific, but it is stellar nonetheless. It is one I encourage each of you to get on (preferably on the Raleigh or the Triumph not the Wraith) and hold on for your dear life.

Vic is a heroine like no other. If I needed someone to have my back, I would want it to be her. And Maggie Lee? Y-y-yess Puuhpplease. They are both flawed, tragic characters. But they have heart. And I loved them both dearly. As for Lou? He is one heck of a guy. What more can I say except for DUUDE??!! If you've ever read a Joe Hill novel, then you know that he is an expert at writing villains. Charles Manx might be his best. He sure scared the heck out of me.

In case it's not crystal clear: I ADORE this book. Love doesn't even begin to describe how I feel about it. I loved it the first two times I read and this last time, I decided to listen to the audiobook and if possible, I loved it even more. Why, you ask? Because it was narrated, by the multi-talented, Kate Mulgrew. For this audiobook alone, she made all 30 characters' voices distinct. I was terrified by the voice of Charles Talent Manx. Just thinking of it, I get shivers down my spine. I didn't think it possible for one person to change their inflection, intonation and/or their voice so many times to sound like so many different people but Ms. Mulgrew handled it skillfully. She made NOS4A2 rise to yet another level.

Below is a link to an interview with the magnificent Kate Mulgrew about her method of narration (which includes an excerpt to her narration of another Joe Hill novel, *The Fireman* – which I must now listen to the audiobook of (even though I've already read that book. Good thing I loved that one too!)). If this doesn't convince you guys to listen to one of the books she narrated, I don't know what will. Personally, I hope you choose NOS4A2. It might scare you, but it'll be worth it!

(<http://www.audiofilemagazine.com/narr...>).

Published on Goodreads and Amazon on 3/27/17.

Nataliya says

People think I'm strange because I don't like Christmas. Well, this book did not cure me of this dislike in the slightest, nossir. Read it, and you'll understand.

"You can't let facts get in the way of the truth."

I've also never been a fan of Christmas music. There's something just *off* in that fake strained cheerfulness that emanates from it. After this book, I dislike it even more because the annoying in it has been joined by the sinister undertones.

Also, the dislike *may* have something to do with working in a department store years ago, cleaning up before closing during the holidays¹ while listening to the never-ending 'Jingle Bells Rock' and 'Rudolf' and 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town' relentlessly playing overhead over and over again while your tired overworked brain is slowly turning to mush.

¹ Have you *seen* the mess that hordes of Christmas bargain-hunters leave in the stores??? Have you ever seen the murderous rage in the eyes of quiet little old ladies when they hear that the Christmas ornament - the 50% off one - is sold out??? I still shudder at the memory of that.

If this picture does not terrify you to the depths of your soul, just wait until you finish this book.

As a side note, I've also never been a fan of personalized license plates, either. Making a connection between 'Nosferatu' and NOS4A2 takes special neurons that I apparently lack.

NOS4A2 is the strongest of all Joe Hill's novels, leaving *Heart-Shaped Box* and *Horns in the dust*. It's confident and at times ruthless, moving along at a determined pace, never looking back. It has a brand of scary that's also fun, interspersing moments of gore with character development - all that, in a way, resembles the spirit of the earlier works of Hill's famous father (c'mon, you know the comparison to Stephen King was inevitable - but Joe Hill, despite sharing elements of his work with King's writing, has a voice that is nevertheless distinctly his own).

He looked at her and said, "So to recap: There's one version of your life where Charlie Manx, a dirty ol' fuckin' child murderer, kidnapped you from a train station. And you only barely got away from him. That's the official memory. But then there's this other version where you crossed an imaginary bridge on a psychically powered bicycle and tracked him down in Colorado all on your own. And that's the unofficial memory. The VH1 Behind the Music story."

Since childhood, **Vic McQueen** had the ability to find lost things. Her way to do so was a bit unconventional: she would speed on her Raleigh bike over a covered bridge - the one that had collapsed a while ago but remained standing in her mind - right to the place where the lost thing was. But, as with anything in life, there's a price to pay - it's not just the debilitating physical side effects that Vic experiences; **somehow her life itself seems to veer off the straight and narrow road as she keeps pedaling towards her special bridge on her special bike.**

"Imaginary bridge, superpowered bike. Got it."

"It was a bridge spanning the distance between lost and found, a bridge over what was possible."

Charlie Manx has a different ride - a black 1937 **Royce Wraith** that would have made a perfect match for Stephen King's infamous Christine. It takes him on a road to **Christmasland**, a very real place nevertheless contained in the dark recesses of the madman's imagination - a place to which he has brought probably a hundred kids over the years, leaving his henchman to dispense of the mothers and fathers of those children.

Manx has come across Vic when she was still a child - the chilling encounter neither of them can forget years later. Now, many years later, he's on the road again - and Vic, having been through a lot in her life, with the history of institutionalizations and mental breakdowns, having been living in fear of receiving a call from the dead children in Christmasland, - well, Vic is a mother to a young boy now, and would die to protect him.

"It was something, going over all the things that had led her to this place of high rock, endless snows, and hopelessness. She could not quite work out how she had found her way here. She used to be so good at finding the place she wanted to go."

Joe Hill does have an ability to keep the readers at the edge of their seats, feverishly following Vic's unlikely quest to take back what's hers.

He creates memorable characters, and Vic McQueen is definitely not the one to easily forget. Tough-as-nails

but infinitely vulnerable Vic, with her damaged cracking mind but enough ferocity and fierce protectiveness to become a formidable threat is fascinating. She screws up over and over again, and manages to survive under the blows life deals her, and it's actually painful to watch her get yet another punch from cruel fate. And then, when she refuses to give up, when she charges evil armed with little but a wrench, when she knows she's headed for sure death and yet does not waver from her path, - with all that you cannot help but desperately hope that somehow she will manage to overcome the odds.

And, the rest of the cast, even though they pale when compared to Vic, are quite well written, too. For instance, the Gasmask Man is terrifying and revoltingly pathetic at the same time, Maggie's presence fills the few pages she appears on with sad and gentle life, and young Wayne's strength and fragility are beautifully interwoven with each other.

He does not shy away from packing his novel with action scenes that are vivid and crisp clear. No, he does not quite avoid the pitfalls of having his 100-lbs heroine take an insane number of punches and yet still remain functional - but he does tend to do that less than many other writers.

And he does manage to pack such menace and foreboding even in something as innocuous as Christmas music that I felt uncomfortable reading this book in a dark room.

"Innocence ain't all it's cracked up to be, you know. Innocent little kids rip the wings off flies, because they don't know any better. That's innocence."

This book easily lived to all of my expectations, and Joe Hill has cemented his status as much more than just a son of one of my favorite writers. He proved that he's not a couple-of-books wonder but rather a skilled writer whose books I will be looking forward to for many years to come. **4 stars.**

*"If it's all right with you, can we skip Christmas this year?"
"If Santa tries to come down our chimney, I'll send him back up with my boot in his ass. It's a promise."*

Delee says

I will not compare Stephen King's son to him...I will not compare Stephen King's son to him.....I will not.....compare....

Joe Hill deserves to be in a class all of his own. Don'tcha think?

I put off reading NOS4A2 for awhile. I read Heart-Shaped Box first... Which I really liked- but this...this was much better!!!

Soooooooooooooooo many friends said- "You have to read NOS4A2!!!!...Oh you haven't read NOS4A2???? What is wrong with you??? Why haven't read NOS4A2?? What are you stupid?" One of those friends was Stepheny- and fighting it became pointless. Have I mentioned before that Stepheny is difficult? I think I have....a time or two...

So fast forward...buddy read at gun point with-The veeeeeeeeeeeeery persuasive Stepheny, Mssssssssssss. Randee , One of the easiest people to get along with- Lisa UK,and one of the hardest people to get along with Mr. Dan 2.0

Massachusetts 1986:

With the help of her trusty bike and a bridge called The Shorter Way- 12 year old Victoria McQueen finds lost things- keys, lost pets, jewelry...and one unfortunate day...she finds kidnapper Charles Manx.

...a day that will change her life in ways she could have never imagined.

Somehow I went into reading NOS4A2 having nooooooooooooo idea what it was about. Yes- I knew there was an old scary dude...and some kidnapped children and a Christmas theme...but that was about it. I highly recommend doing that..because this book was full of sooooooooooooo many surprises.

Bravo Joe Hill!! *clap clap clap* -Definitely one of my favorite reads this year!

Stephanie *Very Stable Genius* says

Victoria McQueen is a badass artist with a badass talent that goes beyond her artistic abilities. She has the ability to cross any distance with her 'shorter way' bridge to locate missing things. The bridge comes into existence with the combination of her strong, creative mind and transportation, not just any transportation, but a vehicle that chooses her,

a Raleigh Tuff Burner in her youth and a Triumph motorcycle in adult years. It's magic, and all magic has it's price.

Victoria finds she's not the only person in the world with special talents similar to hers, she finds two others, Maggie Leigh who can find answers to questions by the use of scrabble tiles and Charlie Manx who travels in a Rolls Royce Wraith

"

that can transport him to other dimensions in a world of his own creation.....his creation is called Christmas-land, where it's the happiest time of the year all year round (for Manx anyway.)

What good is an amusement park called Christmas Land if there are no children to fill it? None. So Manx goes about the country in his magic car kidnapping children, for their own good he believes,(what child wouldn't want to live in a place where it's Christmas day everyday?) with his sidekick, Bing. Bing doesn't have any special abilities other than being uber creepy.....seriously, he's the true stuff of nightmares.

One day Charlie Manx crosses Victoria McQueen and that is where the fun begins.....fasten your seat belts, keep hands inside the ride at all times, and for goodness sake don't get out of the car until the ride has come to a complete stop.

I grew up in the town that has the BEST amusement park in the U.S. and most likely the world. I got a job there as an artist as a youngster, and then continued to work in many parks all over the country for twenty plus years. So this book has much that appeals to me.

I always found amusement parks to have an underlying creepy factor, especially after close and all the rides have shut down, the shops have closed and it's quiet. Being a manager I would have to stay later than most on occasion, and trust me, it was a speedy walk to the car on those nights. I like that Joe Hill has touched on this, but I feel he's just tapped a well that could go much deeper.

NOS4A2 is filled with memorable characters (my favorite being Lou, Victoria's baby daddy) and I hope to spend some more time with them in the future.

I listened to the audio book and I have to say Kate Mulgrew did a fantastic job! A book can be ruined by a bad performer and made even better by a really good one. It also made me smile when he gave a shout out to Firefly and threw out a few references to some worlds his dad has created.

As seen on Shelfinflicted

Debra says

I may never view Christmas songs the same way again. I don't know if I should thank Joe Hill for that or kick him in the knee!

What can I say? I loved it (by "It" I mean this book and not "It" which I also loved)!!! I liked Horns, I liked Heart shaped box and I do believe those two books were Joe Hill getting "warmed up" and NOS4A2 is him hitting his stride. I seriously could not put this book down. I found it to be interesting and captivating from cover to cover...and yes, I am on the "nice" list because I read the acknowledgements!

I respect that Joe Hill shortened his name to create a pseudonym in order to stand on his own merit. But come on Joe, you look just like your Dad! But kudos!!! How brave to enter a profession where your father is "King" and how wonderful to know that you can stand on your own two feet and hold your head high knowing that you are an Author on your own merit. This book KICKED ASS!

Vic a.k.a Victoria a.k.a. "the brat" has a knack for finding lost things. She just gets on her trusty bike, rides across a rickety old bridge and is transported wherever she needs to go in order to get what she is looking for: a bracelet, a photo, etc. She knows not to mention the bridge or her visits to wherever she needs to be. She does not mention meeting Maggie, a stuttering librarian in Iowa who gets messages through scrabble tiles. Maggie warns her about Manx... but well, do people ever really listened when warned to not do something? A mother may warn her child not to touch a stove, but will the child still touch the stove to see just how hot the stove is? hmmm

Charles Manx is a maniac who preys on children. He takes them for rides in his 1938 Wraith which has the license plate of NOS4A2. His car seems to have power of its own, it can go wherever it needs to go on secret "hidden" highways and can control its locks and doors. What it can also do is take Children to Christmasland. Christmas Carols always seem to be playing and if you are a good boy or girl you will be "rewarded" with a visit to Christmasland.

One fateful day Vic finds Manx and of course, all hell breaks loose. She manages to escape - barely and helps put Manx away. Vic goes on to grow up and leave a troubled yet normal life. She has a relationship

and child with Lou, the man who saved her from Manx. How does not live a normal happy life after seeing and experiencing what cannot be explained or even believed? She begins to received phone calls from the Children in Christmasland. They are not happy withe her for taking Manx from them. Vic is not stranger to inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations, I mean she is speaking to missing children who live in Christmasland. Who will believe that?

Until one day when Charles Manx goes missing. No one can find his "body" and yet he is out and searching....searching for that one person who escaped him. He wants his second chance if you will to destroy Vic's life. As I mentioned, Vic has a son. A son Manx would very much like to introduce to Christmasland.

"Was there any human urge more pitiful - or more intense -than waning another chance at something?"

Manx is coming and Vic is ready for him. She receives a little help along the way but in the end there will be a showdown. I liked that Maggie came back to help as did Lou.

This is a BIG book. It's HUGE in fact but it didn't feel big. It did not feel as if it were over 700 pages. I read this book FAST as in very FAST because I wanted to know what happened next. I love when books have me on the edge of my seat, scare me a little but also dazzle me with their character development. All three were great in this book. There are also some really great characters in this book. There is also humor. This book has "teeth" and they will sink in and hold you captive. Hill's best in my opinion.

I love when a book surprises me. I did not expect this book to be bad but I was not expecting to like it as much as I did! It really did take me by surprise in a very good way.

Wonderfully written, a fun suspenseful read that kept me turning the pages and on the edge of my seat!

I highly recommend! READ THIS BOOK ALREADY!

See more of my reviews on www.openbookpost.com

Chris says

Review? Wow..

Of course this book deserves a review. It deserves one of the highest order. But what can I write that will do Joe Hill and his wonderful book any justice?

I mean, really. My ability to rave on this awesome book is dwarfed by the sheer wordpower of Joe Hill. So, here we go.

This was cool.

Uhhhh...yeah. Cool. I liked it.

A lot.

See what I mean? I'm humbled.

Truth is, I'm stuck on knowing what to say that doesn't 1) suck, or 2) spoil. The first is a waste of everyone's time, and the second is a betrayal.

So...read the book. It's F'in brilliant. Even though (or rather especially because) it does not have any (view spoiler). You might expect that it would....but it's better for it all the same.

Okay, Joe. When is your next book coming out?

Kemper says

As a little girl Victoria McQueen has a magical talent for finding things. While riding her bike and focusing on what she's looking for, Vic can conjure up an old wooden bridge that she can cross and be at the spot where the lost object is. Vic mainly uses her powers to distract herself from the constant fighting of her parents, and she eventually meets an eccentric librarian named Maggie with her own supernatural power who explains that Vic is tapping into imagination itself and plowing tunnels through it.

Maggie also warns Vic about Charlie Manx, another person with special talents who kidnaps children and takes them to a place called Christmasland in his 1938 Rolls Royce Wraith with plates that read NOS4A2. (Or Nosferatu for those of you, like me, who can't stand not being able to figure out a personalized plate.)

Vic eventually runs across Charlie during her travels, and the encounter doesn't go well for either of them. Years later, Vic's adult life has been a steady descent into what seems like madness, but she's trying to finally repair her relationship with her son when Charlie returns.

It's probably inevitable that Joe Hill will be compared to his father Stephen King whether it's fair or not, but the concept and characters seem very much like old school King to me. However, it's hard to see how Hill could possibly not be influenced by the old man, and in this case, that makes for a tense and fascinating horror novel.

The villains really stood out in this one. Charlie Manx isn't really a vampire, but he exists in a way by sucking the life out of children. However, since he legitimately sees himself as saving kids from worse fates and providing them with an eternity of fun, it makes him more interesting than just a monster who gets his jollies by murdering kids. Charlie's sidekick, Bing Partridge, is a simpleton who is terrifying in his role as the Gasmask Man that wants to help Mr. Manx to earn himself a permanent place in Christmasland.

But it's Vic McQueen that really made me love this story. As a bright kid with a knack for art, it's painful to see how her ability and meeting Charlie Manx seriously screws her up life. Hill has created a believable and damaged woman who writes and illustrates kid's books, but also has tattoos and a drinking problem. Vic is a graduate of the Lisbeth Salander Charm School, and she'll hit you in the face with the wrench she's using to fix a motorcycle if you give her any grief.

The book has a couple of problems. At almost 700 pages, Joe Hill apparently inherited King's penchant for writing big books. While the action does move along at a pretty swift pace it still seems like it could have been tightened up. (In Hill's defense, his stuff moves much faster than his dad. If King would have done this story, it probably would have been 1200+ pages.) There's also some plot inconsistencies. (view spoiler)

None of my minor gripes prevented me from thoroughly enjoying this very creepy action horror novel with a memorable main character.

One more note, I listened to the audible version of this, and it was narrated by Kate Mulgrew who gave an absolutely incredible reading of it with multiple character voices. It was especially fun because of Vic's foul mouth which made it sound like Captain Janeway was cursing people like a drunken sailor. Engage, you bastards!

Also posted at Shelf Inflicted

Wil Wheaton says

Joe Hill tells another wonderful story that is scary, disturbing, beautiful, sad, and surprisingly touching.

Read it all the way to the end. All the way.

Will Byrnes says

Do You Fear What I Fear?

Christmas was one of the best things about being a kid. There is nothing quite like the anticipation leading up to Christmas morning. And even now, having achieved geezerhood, I am still a complete sucker for the big day. Every year a real tree, the lights, sorting through and selecting from the decades and decades of collected ornaments, the gifts, and hopefully a tree skirt free of cat vomit. I put on *It's a Wonderful Life*, wife by my side, hopefully at least one of my now-grown kids at hand, and keep the tissues handy. I find it completely heartwarming. One must wonder, however, how Christmas might have been celebrated in the King household. I suppose it is possible that Dad left his darker impulses by his keyboard. Did they share hot chocolate like the rest of us, or maybe add bits of human flesh instead of marshmallows. Hot toddy made with blood from a guy named Todd? Brownies made with under-age Girl Scouts? Did their whipped cream scream? Well, probably not, but one *must* wonder.

NOS4A2, the author's latest tale from the dark side, takes a beloved annual celebration and gives it the special family treatment. If you like your Christmas trees decorated with sparkling abominations, your Santa more by way of an oversized, but underfed mortician, and your Santa's special elf a rapist psycho-killer, then this is the book you will want to find frightening off the other packages under your tree next Christmas.

Joseph Hillstrom King, under *nom de scare* Joe Hill, is a man who not only would be King, he already is one. He has been pretty busy the last few years, writing up a storm, *20th Century Ghosts*, *Heart-Shaped Box*, and *Horns*, establishing himself as a respected, successful writer of horror fiction, picking up at least eleven literary awards to date. Although his career has been relatively brief, he has, with *NOS4A2*, grown up to a level where he can glare, eye-to-eye, with the best of contemporary horror writers, even that guy across the table at Christmas dinner.

NOS4A2 is a work of impressive creativity, and one that may give you many a sleepless night, so powerful are some of the images he has created. But the core of the book is Victoria McQueen, Vic, The Brat. And how fitting that a King makes his heroine a queen. Applying a familiar horror-tale trope, the young female

hero, we are introduced to Vic as an eight-year-old. This kid loves her bike. (like another McQueen, of the Steve variety, in *The Great Escape*) But then she has good reason to. It takes her where she *needs* to go, whether that happens to be around the block or across a magically bespoke bridge that takes her across geography, wormhole style. It comes in handy when she desperately wants to locate, say, a lost necklace that figures in her parents latest screaming match, opening for her a personal *Shorter Way Bridge* to take her to the proper destination. It takes her home again, of course. But it exacts a toll. And the journey through it can be harrowing.

Countering this adorable heroine is Charlie Manx. *Not* so adorable. This definitely not so goodtime Charlie abducts children to his special place, Christmasland, taking advantage of their unhappiness to seduce them with a King-family version of Neverland. What if it were Christmas every day? Charlie's number one supporter is Bing Partridge. Bing's latest accomplishment was the murder of his parents, but not before engaging in unspeakable behavior of another sort. He may be dreaming of Christmas but it is more likely to be fright than white, and there are fouler things than partridges in the trees he favors. He lives, fittingly on Bloch Lane, named, we suspect, for the author of *Psycho*. Once teamed up with Charlie, he makes use of his access to a particular sort of gas, sevoflurane, to subdue his victims. The stuff smells like gingerbread.

Bing's yard was full of tinfoil flowers, brightly colored and spinning in the morning sunlight. The house was a little pink cake of a place, with white trim and nodding lilies. It was a place where a kindly old woman would invite a child in for gingerbread cookies, lock him in a cage, fatten him for weeks, and finally stick him in the oven. It was the House of Sleep.

You won't find Christmasland on any map, but it exists. Charley drives a 1938 Rolls Royce Wraith. Not exactly a sleigh, but useful for transporting Charley and his goodies here and there. Actually, it is more a case of him bringing the children to his dubious gifts than it is of the gifts being brought to the children. Charlie has been snatching children for a long time. So we have the goodie and we have the baddies.

Vic becomes that most horrifying of nightmares, an adolescent. And in a fit of rage against her divorced parents goes looking for trouble. Before you can say "Feliz Navidead," the Brat finds herself riding into a Charlie lair, the cutely named "Sleigh House." A bleak house indeed, as you might guess, and Vic has to resort to some extreme measures to make good her escape. Of course, once she does she earns a permanent place on Charlie's *naughty* list. One positive that comes out of this ordeal is that when Vic is fleeing Charlie she is picked up on the highway by a passing biker, the large, leather-clad Lou Carmody. Classic meet-cute and oh, someone is trying to kill me.

It turns out that Vic and her nemesis are not the only ones with a certain gift. When Vic crosses her Shorter Way Bridge to the place of business of Maggie Leigh (second possible *Psycho* reference?) she meets another person with a special talent, one particularly suited to a librarian. It's not heaven, though. It's Iowa. Later Vic's dad joins up and there is some help from beyond the grave as well. Team Charlie has a lot of young recruits, too. One might be forgiven at times for thinking that he might be giving new meaning to the term "cold calls" as he has his maybe-dead minions manning (would that be childing?) the phones to harass our hero.

"Everyone lives in two worlds," Maggie said, speaking in an absent-minded way while she studied her letters. "There's the *real* world, with all its annoying facts and rules. In the *real* world there are things that are true and things that aren't. Mostly the real world s-s-s-suh-sucks. But everyone also lives in the world inside their own head. An *inscape*, a world of thought. In a world made of thought—in an inscape—every idea is a fact. Emotions are as real as gravity. Dreams are as powerful as history. Creative people, like writers, and Henry Rollins, spend a lot of their time hanging out in their thoughtworld. S-s-strong creatives, though, can use a knife to

cut the stitches *between* the two worlds, can bring them together. Your bike. My tiles. Those are our knives.”

The King family seems to have figured out how to make us care for their heroes, and Hill has done a nice job of that here. Vic is sympathetic, not just for her courage and determination, but for her failings as well. And there is plenty of failing to go around here, but also generous doses of redemption.

And there is no shortage of action. It all builds to a very explosive climax. There are occasional bits of fun in here as well. Hill engages in a joke having to do with Checkhov’s gun that is sure to bring a smile. And he takes a cutesy swipe at Henry Rollins, in the quote above. No idea if this is a friendly poke, or a straight up dig.

There are some soft spots as well. Charlie is a pretty bad sort. Not enough attention is addressed to looking at how he came to be that way. It might have helped make him more understandable, if not sympathetic, which is always more interesting than the straight up boogie man. Bing is boogie man enough, despite his less than imposing façade, his child-like insecurity. And what is it that gives certain objects their magical properties? Never addressed. Hill takes on the somewhat softball difference in value between happiness and fun, which certainly has relevance to our consumer culture, but is far from novel.

Still and all, this is top notch horror, signaling not necessarily that a King is born, but that one has arrived and is ready to ascend to the throne.

Happy Horrordays!

=====EXTRA STUFF

Hill put up a nice promo vid for the book on his site

4/29/13 - The New York Times review by Janet Maslin

In Stephen King’s 2013 release, *Doctor Sleep*, he offers at least two nods to *NOS4A2*. Thanks Pop.

Some fun Christmas items from National Geographic:

-----11/29/2017 - Saint Nicholas to Santa: The Surprising Origins of Mr. Claus - by Brian Handwerk

-----12/13/2017 - Who Is Krampus? Explaining the Horrific Christmas Devil - by Tanya Basu

-----12/21/2017 - Vintage Map Shows Santa’s Journey Around the World - By Greg Miller – a kitschy 50’s Santa Map

-----12/19/2017 - One Town’s Fight to Save Their 40-Foot Yule Goat - by Sarah Gibbens – Yes, really, a Christmas goat

12/21/2017 - This NY Times video by Matthew Salton is a trip - Santa is a Psychedelic Mushroom

Melki says

"She told me about Charlie Manx. She warned me about him. She said there was a man, a bad man with a bad car. He used his car to suck the life out of children. He was a kind of vampire - a road vampire."

I put this book off for a long time because I assumed by the title it was *yet another* vampire book. **Yawn!** In fact, when my friend and I were at the library at the same time and saw this on the NEW shelf, and our grubby little paws simultaneously reached for it, I graciously let her have it. Had I known at the time how great this book is, I'd have wrestled her to the ground for it.

Charlie Manx is NOT a vampire in the traditional sense. He's more like a sinister Pied Piper luring children away to a magical place called Christmasland. There, surrounded by gumdrop houses and snowmen who never melt, children will always be happy, always be laughing...and have sharp little pointy teeth.

Our heroine, Vic McQueen, finder of lost articles and owner of a very special bike must find a way to stop him.

I once had a special bike.

When I rode it, it took me places both real and imaginary. And then I grew up.

Vic grows up and is tormented by thoughts of Manx and his village of lost children. So she finds another bike, and goes after him again.

This book was compelling, completely disquieting and one hell of a read.

The only fly in the ointment for me?

Here is the description of Charlie Manx:

...gaunt and ravaged figure in an archaic tailcoat. His misshapen bald head and beaky nose brought to mind vultures.

So, naturally, I kept picturing this guy:

Hey, he once wanted to make a coat out of some puppies. Can abducting children be far behind?

Do whatever you must to get your hands on this book...even if it means knocking your friends to the ground.

Pouting Always says

I think the books hardest to get into are the horror ones because it's really a thin line between something being scary and it becoming funny and not believable so I really have to give credit to Hill because even though the book was long he kept me engaged the whole time and even though the concept easily could've turned ridiculous he managed to keep it creepy, like every time Charles Manx was doing something I can't even explain the anxiety and anger I felt especially when the book was at its climax in the end. I really enjoyed the supernatural vibe he struck where it felt like something that could exist in real life also because it isn't so ridiculous that some people may have a hidden gift like that. I really also love Victoria who is obviously the love of my life.

Stepheny says

Joe Hill should just change his name to Joe THE FUCKING MAN Hill. Anyone care to sign my petition? :D

When I read Heart Shaped Box I was a little underwhelmed. I felt that, while it was a great **debut** novel, it lost something crucial along the way. But when I read Horns something inside of me just got it. I could totally dig it. Some books have an effect on me that is just impossible to explain; I love it as if it were a part of me.

Going into NOS4A2 I was very nervous. It's hard to LOVE a book so much when the author still has other books. I was afraid I wouldn't like it. I was even more afraid that I would like it more than my beloved Horns ~~which Delee still won't read!~~ I have a hard time ever accepting that the next book I read will be my new favorite.

During my trip to Bangor, where I was hoping to meet Stephen King, I was able to pick up a copy of NOS4A2. That's right! My copy travelled all eleven and a half hours home with me. There's a certain bond already created with that book and me. I was lucky enough to have a group of ladies to read it with me.

I believe that NOS4A2 will be Joe THE FUCKING MAN Hill's standout book. There will be the over-the-moon crazies, like yours truly, who will rave over Horns. BUT, I think NOS4A2 will be the one that everyone talks about; and it will be for good reason.

We meet the Brat at a young age and follow her throughout her life. Nothing is ever easy for her and my heart broke for her in so many ways while reading this book I stopped keeping track. While the Brat is our main protagonist, our heroine, I believe there were two characters that I loved more: Maggie Leigh and Lou Carmody. (Hey, I'm a poet and didn't even know it!)

Lou is the best kind of hero- the kind who is modest and shy and calls you dude because he isn't all that great in etiquette. He's overweight and underestimates his own abilities. He's sweet and kind and gentle. He is truly a wonderful character that I will hold in my heart for a long time to come.

Miss Maggie Leigh. What can I say about Maggie? Well, for starts, all I could picture when reading her character was Juliette Lewis. (#MickeyandMallory4Ever) Anyway- Maggie is a character that you just can't help but love. You want to reach through the pages and make everything in her life better. I don't want to say much about her in hopes that you'll read the book and love her for all the same unspoken reasons I did.

Charlie Manx and Bing are two of the creepiest villains ever. Quick note- Charlie's overbite and teeth kept getting mentioned which made me resort to images of Gary Busey. The villains are NOT vampires, so stop thinking you don't want to read this book because it's a vampire book and wahnnn wahhhnnn wahhhhn. It's a great book, truly. I would tell you more about these villains and how they aren't vampires, but really, just read it.

I think that Joe THE FUCKING MAN Hill has a great writing career ahead of him. He is a remarkably talented young writer and I say that NOT just because I am a fan of his father, but as an avid, well-read individual. I look forward to watching the progression of his writing.

Buddy read with some fabulous ladies:

The one and only Radiant Randee, the oh so Lovely Lisa, and of course my Darling Delee!!!!

And how could I forget That Darn Dan?!

Edward Lorn says

After I finish my King reread in October, (or, at the rate I'm going, well before) I will be rereading Hill's books.

Previous review: Yeah... I got nothing. Instant classic. The best book I have ever read. Nuff said.

I can do better than that, and I will. I will start by saying that I no longer consider it the best I've read, although it was the best book I had read at that point in my life (Summer 2013). As with anything else in life, a statement such as "BEST THING EVAR!!!" is purely subjective. I doubt many people who read this book will believe it's anywhere near a stroke of genius, but I did and do. *NOS4A2* remains one of the best books I've read, and I doubt that will ever change. I must add that after rereading Stephen King's *IT*, King's epic horror novel has reclaimed the number one spot in my top twenty. Yes, even over Marisha Pessl's *Night Film*.

In summation: This is still a shit review for an amazing book. I promise to do better after my reread. I should be over my fanboying stage at that point, so I'll be able to give it the honest dissection I believe it deserves.

Final Judgment: Postponed...

Jeffrey Keeten says

“Already, though, she understood the difference between being a child and being an adult. The difference is when someone says he can keep the bad things away, a child believes him.”

Charles Talent Manx with his silver hammer.

Some people are born with bad wiring. Some people get caught in a whirlpool of one tragic circumstance after another that has a detrimental effect on their sanity. Some people are too fragile; some are too hard, and some accumulate so much baggage that their soul gets lost in the jumble. To stick a pin in a man like Charles Talent Manx and compose a label that will define exactly what level of crazy he is would take a team of talented psychologists.

Crazy is one thing, but when crazy becomes wrapped in a smelly, wooly blanket of cosmic evil, things that shouldn't be possible, suddenly become so substantial that they actually wink into existence. The whole concept of Christmasland sprang from the demented mind of Charlie Manx.

You might think to yourself that Christmasland doesn't sound that scary. In fact, it even sounds like a great place to take the kids over winter break. The only problem is that its creator is bat shit crazy, so there might be candy canes and Christmas trees, but there are also razor blades and very, very sharp teeth.

It is *The Nightmare Before Christmas* stepping out of the silver screen and intersecting with a sliver of Colorado.

Now, you can't just drive to Christmasland even if you do have a general idea of where it is. Not just anyone is welcome. Manx has a key, a horcrux that might very well have eaten his soul, in the form of a vintage 1938 Rolls Royce Wraith. He drives it back and forth between the real world and Christmasland.

Christmasland

Vic McQueen has a key as well, a bicycle that when she rides it can take her over the Shorter Way Bridge to anywhere in the world where something she lost exists. On one of her journeys, she goes to Here, Iowa, and meets a librarian named Maggie who has stuttering issues. She also has Scrabble tiles that can help her much the same way Vic's bicycle helps her. Maggie is, by far, my favorite character in the book because she says stuff like this:

"No one looks too closely at a librarian. People are afraid of going blind from the glare of ssss-ssso much compressed wisdom."

And she is a naughty librarian too.

"If books were girls and reading was s-ss-ssss-fucking, this would be the biggest whorehouse in the county and I'd be the most ruthless pimp you ever met. Whap the girls on the butts and send them off to their tricks as fast and often as I can."

It only stands to reason that Vic with her key and Manx with his key would end up in the same place eventually. Manx, with the help of a loathsome companion named Bing who is a very, very dangerous dingaling, is going around the country "liberating" abused children from parents and taking these kids back to Christmasland. These kids, once they arrive, grow rows of serrated teeth and become hungry for munching on adults. If you are an adult who somehow accidentally falls through to Christmasland, you are breakfast, lunch, dinner, or dessert, depending on how fast you can run.

Vic and Manx intersect. She helps to put Manx in prison, and that is when the phone calls begin. They are kids from Christmasland, condemning her for her role in Manx's incarceration. She spends time in and out of mental institutions. For the sake of her sanity, she tries to forget things like the Shorter Way Bridge, Rolls Royces with vanity license plates, a skeletal gray man with red eyes, and children singing demented Christmas carols.

But now she has a son, and Manx is coming for him. She is going to have to remember everything and believe again if she is going to have a chance to save him.

Joe Hill likes to make sketches along with his signature. In this case, he drew Nosferatu. Eventually, he will probably quit doing this, so later these books with the sketches will be more collectible.

I've been following Joseph Hillstrom King's career very closely. It has been impressive to me that he decided to be a writer, a profession that his father has dominated for decades, but also that he decided to be a horror writer, forcing direct comparisons with his father's work. For a man capable of inducing so much fear in others, he has shown no fear in his decision to be a writer. Instead of thinking of his father and his father's fame as a hinderance to his own career, he must have decided to consider both those aspects assets. He did shorten his name for his writing pseudonym, but if the thought was to hide his relationship to his father, then

it has turned out to be one of the worst kept secrets in publishing.

Hill's father was always good about dropping pop culture and geek references into his books, and so is Hill. There is a moment when the father of Vic's child is giving him advice. *"If i die in a plane crash remember to always bag and board your comics. Love you too."* Wisdom, such as this, passed to your offspring will insure that your kids will be mutant nerds.

The Americans and the British publishers used two different covers. The collector in me always likes this because with an author that I like this much I enjoy having both books. Another interesting element is Charlie Manx's vanity plate. The Americans went with NOS4A2, and the British went with NOS4R2. I find that it is always prudent to defer to our cousins across the pond when it comes to points of contention with the English language.

The American edition is on the left, and the British edition is on the right.

Hill wrote a graphic novel called Wraith that gives his readers more background on Charlie Manx. I decided to read it first, even though it was published after NOS4A/R2, because I thought I might benefit from knowing the origins of Manx and might enjoy this book more. It certainly allowed me to consider Manx in a more well rounded light. In some strange way, he did feel like he was doing the right thing, that his madness was a John Brown type of madness, rather than the insanity of, say, a John Wayne Gacy.

*"Vic understood everything. Whatever the children had become, whatever he had done to them, he had done to make them safe, to keep them from being run down by the world. He believed in his own decency with all his heart. So it was with every **true monster**, Vic supposed. "*

The true believers are generally the most dangerous humans. The cause supersedes any contemplation of the effects of their actions on others. Hill has created characters and a story I won't soon forget. I can guarantee you all one thing that if I see a 1938 Rolls Royce Wraith gliding down the street in my direction I will flee like my life depends on it. This is one of the hazards of being a reader with an overactive imagination being matched with a writer with expansive creative ideas. This could prove to be Hill's masterpiece.

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>
I also have a Facebook blogger page at: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>

Justin says

This bad boy was an interesting mashup of horror, mystery, suspense, romance, comedy, and fantasy. I'm not sure what genre to plug it into. It's unlike anything I've read before.

Joe Hill wrote a few books and then just went all-in with a longer, epic story that spans decades, introduces new characters, and changes plot several times. It was a risk, and it's not perfect, but it's a very fun read. And, gee whiz, it doesn't feel like 700 pages. The short chapters kept the pages turning, and the action rarely let up. The proverbial petal was literally to the metal, with an exception in the middle of the book. That was really the only time the book kind of lulled. It was short, and business picked up again soon, so it's fine. It's fine. Whatever.

Charles Manx was a very interesting villain, almost like an anti-hero at times. He had depth, flaws, emotion. He wasn't an all-powerful, unstoppable superhero bad guy type. Plus, he was from Christmasland which

rivals Wonka's factory as the best place in the world! And he was so much more generous about inviting kids there. No golden ticket required. What a freaking nice guy he was! Come on!

I wasn't a fan of Horns, but my main man J-Hill redeemed himself here. I like that he isn't trying to fit the same mold his dad works in, and he's found his own literary voice if you ask me. But you're not asking me. Maybe you are. Either way, I think he's stepping out on his own and creating some truly unique stuff in this case.

Nice work, Joe. Thank you for ruining Christmas for me.

Will M. says

**I'm quite confused regarding the title of the novel. Most editions say NOS4A2 but this particular one that I own says NOS4R2? Is it one of those US and UK edition thing going on?

Out of all my goodreads friends, I'm part of the very few who didn't rate this more than 3 stars. So this review can be considered as an unpopular opinion. I think I'm the only one who thought that this was mediocre, but opinions vary. Not all novels are loved by everyone. I still don't know why I didn't enjoy this that much. Nos4R2 is a horror book, and horror is a genre I've been enjoying for the past few years now. Also add in the fact that my favorite author's son wrote this. Either something is wrong with me, or something is wrong with the book. It's probably the former rather than the latter.

The premise was very interesting for me. Someone abducting children to an imaginary place sounded pretty great to me before I read this, and it still does right now. The execution was mediocre, for me. The premise wasn't given justice because the novel focused on so much things that I felt that it drifted from its original purpose/goal. While reading this though, I came to realize that the plot was not that great anymore. Everything seemed so absurd, and I know that horror novels should be absurd to begin with. The absurdity of this novel was not the good kind. I didn't like where things were going.

The characters were boring and really underdeveloped. I didn't like Vic, Wayne, Manx, or any other character in this novel. I mostly root for the villains, but in this case I even wanted Manx to fail. They were all unlikable, and that doesn't happen often. I tend to have at least one or two characters that I liked. (view spoiler)(view spoiler)

The writing was not that bad. It reminded me of King's writing a lot. There were a lot of useless things though that made the novel longer than it should've been. I believe the author could've removed at least 150-200 pages and the story would still be the same.

3/5 stars. I couldn't even give it a 3.5 because the ending was not that original. (view spoiler) I'm not going to mention the similar novels anymore because that might spoil you. The novel was not bad, but rather a huge pile of mediocrity. I didn't expect this from Hill, and this particular novel, because everyone loved this. I might give this another try in the future, but for now, it's a 3.

If you're looking for a positive and more informative review of this, kindly check out reviews of my friends. Here are 2 noteworthy reviewers, surely you can trust their opinion when it comes to novels.

Dan
Becky

Char says

My only experience with Kate Mulgrew, prior to listening to this audio book, was in her role as Captain Janeway from Star Trek: Voyager. It's odd, looking back, that I almost never watched Voyager because Mulgrew's voice irritated the hell out of me. Needless to say, I got over it, and I became a big fan of Star Trek's first female captain.

I haven't seen or heard from Kate Mulgrew since the Voyager TV series ended. (I have some vague idea that she's on a new series "Orange is the New Black", but I haven't seen it, so... whatever.) Until now.

NOS4A2 is a rare example of how a good, (maybe GREAT), story can be made even better with quality narration. I loved this book, back when I first read it, (my original review is [here:https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...](https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...)). But I truly believe that Kate's voice as Charlie Manx, (and Maggie Lee, and Bing), adds a level of depth to this book, previously not reached. (Even considering the mispronunciation of Haverhill-it's not Haver-Hill it's Hay-vrill.) Ms. Mulgrew NAILS Charlie Manx's evil way of speaking-free of most contractions and unfailingly polite. Manx is a perfect gentlemen, as long as you ignore the fact that he steals children and he steals from them. (What, exactly, he steals from them, I will leave for you to discover on your own.)

Kate's performance of Lou, one of the main characters, has also added depth to this wonderful, big lug of a man. Starting his sentences so often with the word "Dude", (which Ms. Mulgrew turns into "Duuu-de"), just brings home his innocence and willingness to do whatever he can for his common-law wife and son. I loved this character and I love him even more now that he was given a "real" voice in this audio book.

Maggie Lee's horrible stutter is also brought home by Kate's gravelly voice. Between Joe Hill's amazing writing and Ms. Mulgrew's kick-ass voice, I feel that Maggie is the most realistic and sad character in this story. Her suffering and attempts at hurting herself somehow became even more poignant when I was listening to this tale, rather than reading it.

This has never happened to me before, but I'm giving the audio of this book one star more than I gave the book itself. Listening to this story brought to it an entire new level of understanding and empathy for the characters. Prior to listening to NOS4A2, I didn't think that could be done. Now I know I was wrong, and I also know that re-reading a book via narration can actually enhance the experience. Bravo to both Joe Hill and Kate Mulgrew for the hours of pleasure that is the audible book NOS4A2!

Dan Schwent says

When Victoria McQueen was young, she had a unique gift: she could summon an old covered bridge that would take her wherever she wanted to go. After an encounter with Charles Manx, a Rolls Royce Wraith-driving kidnapper with a similar ability, her life is torn to pieces. Twelve years later, Charles Manx comes looking for the girl that got away and not even death is an obstacle...

First off, I think the title, NOS4A2 (Nosferatu, get it?), while clever, is very misleading since Manx isn't a

vampire. Fortunately, that's the only complaint I have about this awesome book.

The lead, Victoria McQueen, is a broken woman whose life is thrown into further chaos when Charles Manx thrusts himself back into it. She rises to the occasion and does what any mother would do when her son is kidnapped: kick ass and take names!

Charles Manx, the villain, is like an even creepier version of Willy Wonka, abducting Children and taking them to another world, Christmasland, where it's Christmas every day and the children become feral little monsters. His Wraith is a pretty chilling car, with its inescapable back seat and mind of its own. I couldn't wait for Manx to get what was coming to him.

The supporting cast is also well drawn. Victoria's baby-daddy Lou, son Bruce Wayne, FBI agent Hutt, and Bing are all fairly memorable characters. I loved Maggie Leigh and hated to see her go out the way she did.

There were some Easter eggs in the text, references to *It*, *The Stand*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, and my favorite, the tie in to the Dark Tower when Manx mentions the doors to Mid-World. Heck, Derry is mentioned so I think it's safe to assume Hill's stories are part of the King-verse and thus the Dark Tower.

This was my first Joe Hill book and it won't be the last. While he writes like his father, he doesn't seem to have many of his father's bad habits. His prose reminds me of Stephen King from back when he was still in touch with his Richard Matheson/John D. MacDonald roots: chilling, evocative, and not long-winded or over-written. Even the fates of the characters reminded me of King from his heyday.

Five stars. That is all.

Chris "Gunner" McGrath says

Joe Hill has described this 700+ page book as "my senior PhD thesis on horror", about a very bad 140 year old man who kidnaps children and takes them to a terrible place called Christmasland. This is an accurate surface description, but doesn't even come close to describing what this book is really about: the truest kind of love, which can come from even the most flawed human beings.

Yes, this is a horror novel, no question, and it's one of the best I've ever read. As with Hill's other novels, the first portion of the book moves along very well and introduces us to this reality and all the unnatural and scary things that are possible here. Then as the story progresses, the characters themselves flesh out into something much deeper than archetypes or plot devices. Each major player in this book is so perfectly fleshed-out, it's easy to begin believing that this story is true and that we are seeing the inner dialog of real people.

One of the most interesting bits about this story is that in many books like it, the main character will insist that their story or special ability is real, or will likely sound crazy, trying to get everyone else around them to believe them. Hill turns this on its head and gives us a much more realistic result: the poor soul experiencing these unnatural things repeatedly has to try to figure out whether she is certifiably insane or not. Rather than trying to convince everyone else this stuff is really happening, she has to convince herself. It makes for a very satisfying read and makes her that much more sympathetic.

And so, while my first impression was simply that this was a great, creepy book, the final third proves that this is truly a beautiful work of literature, with much to say about the human condition, particularly the strange, confusing, and often conflicted love that children and their parents have for each other. It's rare that I

am truly moved by any book, and never before have I been moved by a horror novel.

I cannot recommend this book highly enough. If you can't stomach gruesome and disturbing scenes of child kidnapping and violent gore, then this certainly won't be for you; but anyone who can owes it to themselves to read the new great modern horror novel. He's proven that he has all of his father's skill much earlier in life, and writes better endings as well.

Site note: I love the references to Shawshank prison and Derry, Maine, as well as Lovecraft from Hill's Locke & Key series, which officially designates Hill's writing as happening in the greater Dark Tower universe. This has no impact whatsoever on the story, but is a nice little Easter egg for Stephen King fans.
