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Doctor Sleep: A Novel (The Shining Book 2)



Synopsis

Stephen King returns to the character and territory of one of his most popular novels ever, *The Shining*, in this instantly riveting novel about the now middle-aged Dan Torrance and the very special twelve-year-old girl he must save from a tribe of murderous paranormals. On highways across America, a tribe of people called the True Knot travel in search of sustenance. They look harmless—mostly old, lots of polyester, and married to their RVs. But as Dan Torrance knows, and spunky twelve-year-old Abra Stone learns, the True Knot are quasi-immortal, living off the steam that children with the shining produce when they are slowly tortured to death. Haunted by the inhabitants of the Overlook Hotel, where he spent one horrific childhood year, Dan has been drifting for decades, desperate to shed his father's legacy of despair, alcoholism, and violence. Finally, he settles in a New Hampshire town, an AA community that sustains him, and a job at a nursing home where his remnant shining power provides the crucial final comfort to the dying. Aided by a prescient cat, he becomes "Doctor Sleep." Then Dan meets the evanescent Abra Stone, and it is her spectacular gift, the brightest shining ever seen, that reignites Dan's own demons and summons him to a battle for Abra's soul and survival. This is an epic war between good and evil, a gory, glorious story that will thrill the millions of devoted readers of *The Shining* and satisfy anyone new to this icon in the King canon.

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Customer Reviews

The return-to-form King displayed with 11/22/63 and the novella JOYLAND continues for the most part with King's long-awaited 36-years-later sequel to 1977's THE SHINING. Picking up only a few years after the conclusion of events in THE SHINING, the prologue features one of the most memorable apparitions from The Overlook making a welcome return "haunting". From there, the novel jumps ahead a couple of decades, picking up with Danny at his lowest point in his late twenties before coursing ahead several more years. The pacing is a little disjointed at times and I was disappointed that some of Dan's arguably more compelling years (his teenage years) - and characters such as Wendy and Dick Hallorann - are never really explored to the extent or depth I had hoped they would be. A little more detail and padding here would have been welcome. However, King has often been criticized for his meandering, overlong style so many readers may relish this slightly more concise style. The constant references throughout to even minor events in THE SHINING will have most readers inevitably comparing it to the earlier book (throwbacks to "REDRUM" and many other references abound). While DOCTOR SLEEP does work as a stand-alone novel, it works best as a sequel. There are two main threads to this novel: the exploration and expansion of the character of the now adult 'Doc', as he battles with his demons (alcoholism, his past, and his shining ability); and the new story and characters such as Abra, Chetta, Lucy, Doctor John, Dave, and The True Knot. The new characters, especially Abra, are well drawn but the villains come across as a little hammy and the overall plot pales in comparison to Dan's inner ruminations.

[THIS REVIEW CONTAINS SOME SPOILERS] After reading an author for as many years as I've read King, I have become accustomed somewhat to the writer's habits and other signature moves to the point where I can almost predict them. And when those habits and signatures aren't there, when a writer you've read for years is off his or her game, it becomes as palpable on the brain as the lack of salt feels almost injurious to a gourmet's palate. That's how I felt when I read Doctor Sleep, the sequel to King's masterpiece to The Shining. I'm almost at pains to call it a sequel, because it feels so utterly separate from the mind and world in which the first book was written that one could easily read this book without having read The Shining and not miss much of a beat, but there is some bridging there between the first two books for those who have read The Shining. That

being said, the book started off very strong. Dan Torrance, once known as Danny or "Doc," has grown up and he's wrestling with the alcohol demon, in much the same way his father did, only he has his childhood nightmare at The Overlook as well as his often torturous psychic ability still riding shotgun. He's a bit of a nomad, drifting from town to town after he's burned enough bridges (usually thanks to the antics he gets up to while on a liquor binge) but he tries to make the best of things working as an orderly at various hospice centers where he helps to usher dying patients gently into the afterlife. This whole side of Dan's life is not given a whole lot of gravity or dimension, however, and it left me wondering what exactly he does for these people that is so special. That was my first cue that King was not entirely on his game here, but I'll get to that in a minute.

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