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From A Buick 8: A Novel



Synopsis

The state police of Troop D in rural Pennsylvania have kept a secret in Shed B out back of the barracks ever since 1979, when Troopers Ennis Rafferty and Curtis Wilcox answered a call from a gas station just down the road and came back with an abandoned Buick Roadmaster. Curt Wilcox knew old cars, and he knew immediately that this one was...wrong, just wrong. A few hours later, when Rafferty vanished, Wilcox and his fellow troopers knew the car was worse than dangerous. Curt's avid curiosity took the lead, and they investigated as best they could, as much as they dared. Over the years, the troop absorbed the mystery as part of the background to their work, the Buick 8 sitting out there like a still-life painting that breathes -- inhaling a little bit of this world, exhaling a little bit of what world it came from. In the fall of 2001, a few months after Curt Wilcox is killed in a gruesome auto accident, his eighteen-year-old boy, Ned, starts coming by the barracks. Sandy Dearborn, Sergeant Commanding, knows it's the boy's way of holding onto his father, and Ned is allowed to become part of the Troop D family. One day he looks in the window of Shed B and discovers family secret. Like his father, Ned wants answers... From a Buick 8 is an audiobook about our fascination with deadly things, about our insistence on answers when there are none, about terror and courage in the face of the unknowable.

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Customer Reviews

Stephen King, an evil car, and a teenage boy coming to terms with the fragility and randomness of life.... Wait, haven't we read this before? Diehard King fans, worry not. Aside from the titular car playing a main role in the story, From a Buick 8 could not be less like King's 1983 masterpiece,

Christine. If anything, this story resembles King's serial novel *The Green Mile*, with reminiscing police characters flashing back on bizarre events that took place decades earlier. The book's intriguing plot revolves around the troopers of Pennsylvania State Patrol Troop D, who come into possession of what at first appears to be a vintage automobile. Closer inspection and experimentation conducted by the troopers reveal that this car's doors (and trunk) sometimes open to another dimension populated by gross-out creatures straight out of ... well, a Stephen King novel. As the plot progresses, the veteran troopers' tales of these visits from interdimensional nasties, and the occasional "lightquakes" put on by the car, are passed on to the son of a fallen comrade whose fascination with the car bordered on dangerous obsession. Unlike earlier King works, there is no active threat here; no monster is stalking the heroes of the story, unless you count the characters' own curiosity. In past books, King has terrorized readers with vampires, werewolves, a killer clown, ghosts, and aliens, but this time around, the bogeyman is a more passive, cerebral threat, and one for which they don't make a ready-to-wear Halloween costume--man's fascination with and fear of the unknown. While some readers may find this tale less exciting than the horror master's earlier works, *From a Buick 8* is a wonderful example of how much King's plotting skills and literary finesse have matured over his long career. And, most of all, it's a darn creepy book. --Benjamin Reese

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King, we learn in an author's note, hashed out the plot of this gripper while driving from western Pennsylvania to New York. The first draft took two months to write. That's quick work, and it's reflected in the book's simplicity of plot and theme; unlike King's chewy last novel, *Dreamcatcher*, this one goes down like a shot of moonshine, hot and clean, much like *Cujo*, say, or *Gerald's Game*. In 1979, an odd man drives what at first glance looks like a 1954 mint-quality Buick Roadmaster up to a service station in rural Pennsylvania, then vanishes, leaving behind the car. The state police of Troop D deposit the vehicle in a shed near their barracks, where, up to the present, it remains a secret from all but cop colleagues for the car isn't exactly a car; it may be alive, and it certainly serves as a doorway between our world and... what? Another dimension? Another galaxy? The troopers never find out, despite their amateurish scientific investigations of it and of the weird beings that occasionally emerge from the vehicle's trunk: freaky fish, creepy flowers and more. Moreover, the "car" is dangerous: the day it appears, a state trooper disappears, and experiments over the years with cockroaches, etc., indicate that just as the car can spew things out, it will ingest them. While the book's relative brevity and simplicity does lend comparison to earlier King, and King has relied on a nasty car before (*Christine*), the author's stylistic maturity manifests in his sophisticated

handling of the round robin of narrators (both first and third-person), the sharp portrayal of police ways and mores and the novel's compelling subthemes (loyalty, generational bondings) and primary theme: that life is filled with Buick 8s, phenomena that blindside us and that we can never understand. This novel isn't major King, but it's nearly flawless and one terrific entertainment. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is probably the first Stephen King novel I've read that bored me senseless. It was too slow-paced, the characters weren't particularly engaging, and it was too much like a blend of "Christine" and "Mile 81" (a lot closer to "Mile 81"). The spooky car-from-outer-space has been done, and by the same author. He's got way too much imagination to write something as dull as this book. There were a few moments of unmistakably King-style shock/horror, but the rest of the book seemed as if it was written by someone else. That's how far off the mark it was for me. Not to be entirely negative, I immediately bought 2 more of his novels because I still think he's the master storyteller in his genre.

Started this one expecting it would get better as it went along and it never really did. It's a story about a cat without a past or a future and without a place of origin it seems to be a monster of some kind, but you never really get to find out. I finished this one because I am a completionist and I want to be able to tell myself I truly have read all of King's novels. Boy, what a struggle.

I think Stephen King is a terrific writer. However, From a Buck 8 is not one of his winners. The plot is weak and repetitious. without much of a payoff in the conclusion. When King misses, he tends to miss in the same manner, with a repetitious plot. With a few of his misses, I felt like a man watching a tennis match. In FAB8, it was back and forth--something pops out of the trunk and the troopers react/. Back and forth...back and forth. Little or no character arc. I felt the same way in reading Needful Things. A great writer...nobody bats 1,000.

During the reading of this book, I kept having the feeling, "gee, haven't I seen/read this before"? About when the "whatever it is/was" ejected itself from the Buick's trunk, I actually began to lose interest. I have to give Steven King credit. He finally wrote a book I got tired of reading.

In rural, western Pennsylvania a portal to another world representing itself as a '54 Buick

Roadmaster is left abandoned at a gas station. The story revolves around State Troopers Troop D personnel and the Buick after it's impounded. It spends its days in Shed B. One of the main characters, Ned, is the son of a dead trooper. He plays a core role in that he's the listening ear, taking in all that's happened with the Buick and other troopers personal lives through the last 25 or so years. This is more a chronology of the cast's personal lives and thoughts than it is any supernatural horror story. It's somewhat reminiscent of the "Green Mile" personal recollections; though the "Green Mile" far exceeds this novel. The car is in the habit of, every so often, putting on violent light shows and spewing various other-wordly items from it's trunk. The novel's premise is good. Unfortunately the story, as told, leads to nowhere except boredom. Mr. King has a knack for pulling the reader into his novels. His characters are usually so well developed. That doesn't happen here. The viewer is on the outside looking in. Travelling through a couple decades, the book ends in the present time of the early 21st century. It touches on what's happened with personnel, as well as the Buick. By that time I could care less. I almost merely put this down and moved on. But, I kept telling myself this is a King novel. It has to get better and go somewhere. It did not. I believe this might have been better adapted as a short story instead of a full length novel. Do yourself a favor and pass on this. The mid-fifties Buicks were classics. This novel is more an Edsel.

I am addicted to Stephen King novels. This one, "From a Buick 8: A Novel" held true to satisfy my addiction and I really enjoyed reading it. Stephen King, in my opinion is a remarkable writer. He is able to develop stories within the story each with its own drama, horror, or suspense plot blended smoothly into the main story and plot. It is not like he is going "off track" with a new idea or story line; rather it allows development of each character or event so that the reader really knows and can actually "see" and "experience" the events. I seem to be so addicted to King. As soon as I finish one of his novels I usually buy another, but occasionally I may try a different author or a group of short stories by different authors (one of which is always King). However, not long after a start that different-author-novel or short story set, I begin to "miss" the writing of Stephen King and have to buy another King novel. Is that weird? Oh well, King seems to write like a maniac: always another novel to choose from, so I'm not going to worry about this addiction.

Stephen King, as always excellent, completely excellent. It never seem to amaze me how simple it is for Stephen King to put your mind exactly where he wants it to be. Not just the setting but the thought process King want you to have. It's an amazing thing. King plasma you exactly into the storyline and you hardly even realize it. You're in the car, in the garage or on the bench talking with

the characters. And trust me Stephen King has done just that. I wonder if setting the Buick on fire would be bad or good?

I'm a growing fan of Stephen King having read Needful Things, The Tommy Knockers, Dreamcatcher, The Dead Zone and Misery just to name a few but I honestly couldn't finish this book which is actually sort of sad because it's pretty short considering what King writes. But this book lags despite its short length making it feel like an accomplishment when you reach the 100 page mark. King has nice characters, but I was really only mildly interested in the plot. It's one of the few King books that I honestly wouldn't recommend.

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