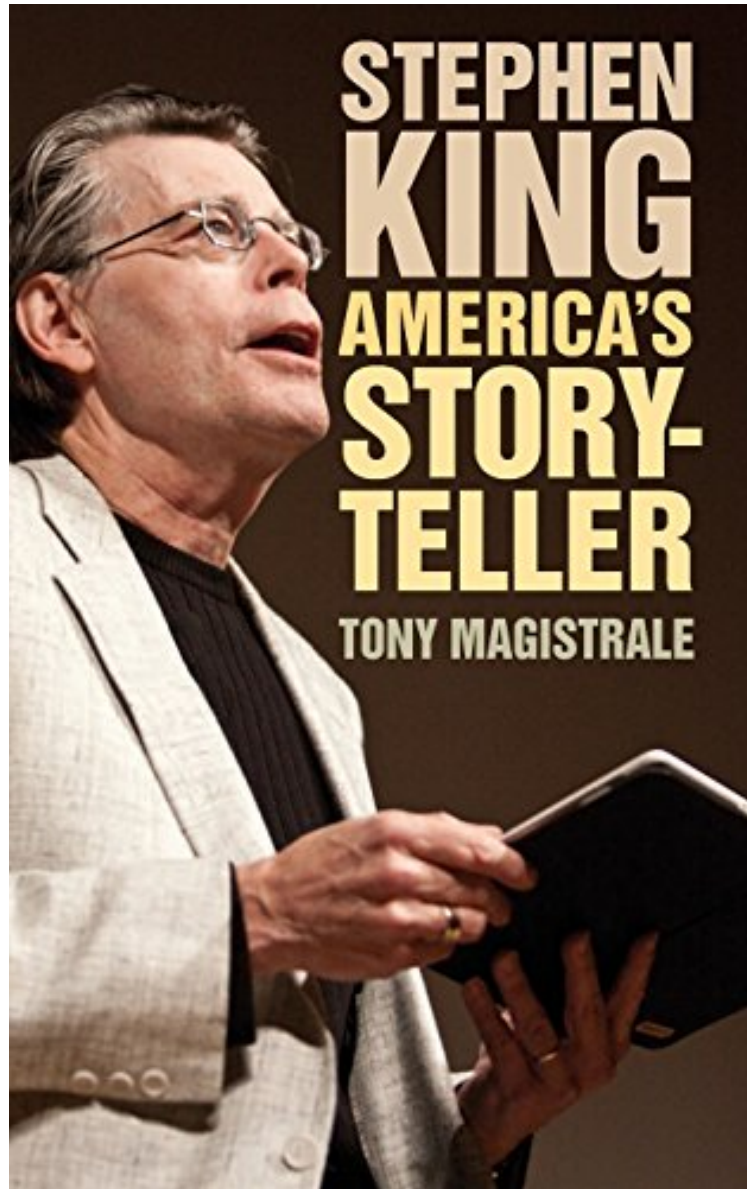


[Library ebook] Stephen King: America's Storyteller

Stephen King: America's Storyteller

Tony Magistrale

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Tony Magistrale : Stephen King: America's Storyteller before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stephen King: America's Storyteller:

2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An excellent and indispensable addition to the field of Stephen King criticism. By BeamTruth in advertising: Tony's a friend of mine, and I'm inclined to write favorably about anything he's written. The key word is "inclined." In writing a review, my first responsibility is to you, the potential customer, who

is weighing whether or not to spend your hard-earned money on the book. Also, I've written about King here and there, so my comments are drawn from many years of reading King's fiction and virtually all of the book-length criticism of his work as well. What 's product description doesn't tell you is that Tony Magistrale has previously published two books on King (HOLLYWOOD'S STEPHEN KING and THE FILMS OF STEPHEN KING), and that he is professor and chair of the English department at the University of Vermont in Burlington. In other words, he comes to this book with not only a wide body of knowledge about King's life and work, but he also comes equipped with the critical academic tools that allows him to look at King's canon with a discerning eye. That's important because, unfortunately, King has drawn more than his fair share of fanboy critics and sycophants who, beholden to King for access, are reluctant to write anything that might possibly jeopardize their access to King himself; the result is half-baked, inane "criticism" that ain't worth crap. Tony's criticism of King's fiction, in contrast, takes the proper posture: A respectful, discerning look that calls them as he sees them. In other words, an honest book. In doing so, he honors King and respects the reader's intelligence. This book, STEPHEN KING: AMERICA'S STORYTELLER, provides an updated chronology to King's life and work, followed by seven chapters: The Writer's Life: A Stephen King Biography; Tracing the Influences: Regional and Literary; Institutions and Institutionalism: Evil's Design and Heroic Rebellion; Sex with Consequences: Sexuality and Its Discontents; Why THE SHINING Still Matters: Revisiting and Reinterpreting the Novels and Films; Challenging Gender Stereotypes: King's Evolving Women; and Gothic Western Epic Fantasy: Encompassing THE DARK TOWER. For those who have never read King criticism, have no fear: Tony's prose is accessible in a way that invites reading. Unlike some critics who feel it's necessary to parade their credentials and show off their vocabulary -- both signs of a critic that lacks confidence -- Tony's interested in explaining to the layman, the student, and the scholar his considerable knowledge and marked enthusiasm for King's fiction. The underlying thesis: At this point in the game, King's long and varied career, both in popular fiction and literature proper, indisputably makes him America's STORYTELLER, hence his book title. A good place to start is the bio, which brings the King reader up to date on his comings and goings; I'd then read chapter 5, on THE SHINING, which virtually every reader will likely know, either through the book or the film. Tony's thesis--and it's one I and many others agree with--is that "More than three decades after its publication, the novel remains arguably the most terrifying work in King's prodigious collection of ghosts, ghouls, and spectral phenomena." Tony then explicates why that is so with a calm, measured prose style offering insights that earns the reader's respect. Then go on to the other pieces in the book, which are similarly reflective and authoritative. If I had to name the foremost critics who've written about King, I'd put Dr. Michael Collings, Douglas E. Winter, Stephen Spignesi, and Dr. Tony Magistrale in the first rank. So if you've not read any of these guys, Tony's most recent book is a good place to start. It'll inspire you to look for his other books and, almost surely, books by Collings, Winter and Spignesi. Bottom line: This book earns a rare, coveted five-star rating from me.

This analysis of the work of Stephen King explores the distinctly American fears and foibles that King has celebrated, condemned, and generally examined in the course of his wildly successful career. Presents separate chapters on major works of Stephen King, including The Shining, The Stand, It, Dolores Claiborne, and The Dark Tower Includes a chronology of Stephen King's life and 40-year career Offers a concluding interview with Stephen King

About the Author Tony Magistrale is professor and chair of the English department at the University of Vermont.