

Heart-Shaped Box

By Joe Hill

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“Wild, mesmerizing, perversely witty....A Valentine from hell.”

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The publication of Joe Hill’s beautifully textured, deliciously scary debut novel *Heart-Shaped Box* was greeted with the sort of overwhelming critical acclaim that is rare for a work of skin-crawling supernatural terror. It was cited as a Best Book of the Year by *Atlanta* magazine, the *Tampa Tribune*, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, and the *Village Voice*, to name but a few. Award-winning, #1 *New York Times* bestselling Neil Gaiman of *The Sandman*, *The Graveyard Book*, and *Anansi Boys* fame calls Joe Hill’s story of a jaded rock star haunted by a ghost he purchased on the internet, “relentless, gripping, powerful.” Open this *Heart-Shaped Box* from two-time Bram Stoker Award-winner Hill if you dare and see what all the well-deserved hoopla is about.

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Heart-Shaped Box By Joe Hill Bibliography

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- Binding: Paperback
- 400 pages

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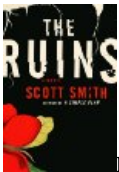
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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Do you sleep with the light on? Are you in the habit of checking your doors and windows before you go to bed? Maybe even checking *under* your bed? If you are about to crack open Joe Hill's chilling thriller *Heart-Shaped Box*, you might want to rethink your nighttime habits--Hill's story about an aging rock star (with a penchant for macabre artifacts) who buys a haunted suit online will scare you silly. But don't take our word for it. We asked bestselling authors (and masters of dark terror tales themselves) Scott Smith, and Harlan Coben to read *Heart-Shaped Box* and give us their take. Check out their reviews below, and you might want to pick up a nightlight while you're at it. --Daphne Durham

Guest Reviewer: Scott Smith



In 1993, Scott Smith wowed readers with his stunning debut thriller, *A Simple Plan*. Thirteen years later, he spooked us again with *The Ruins*, a horror-thriller about four Americans traveling in Mexico who stumble across a nightmare in the jungle.

The set-up for Joe Hill's novel, *Heart-Shaped Box*, is appealingly simple. Jude Coyne, an aging rock star, buys himself a dead man's suit. He acquires it online, lured by the promise that the dead man's ghost will be included in his purchase. Jude thinks this is a joke, of course. He also assumes the seller is a stranger. We soon discover that he's wrong on both counts, however, and from this point on the story moves with an exhilarating urgency. Jude wants the ghost gone; the ghost wants Jude dead. We watch, chapter-by-chapter, as they battle for survival. "Watch" is the appropriate word, too, because this is an extremely visual book. Hill's prose is lean and precise, and he renders Jude's world with impressive confidence. It feels solid, every detail both correct and fresh. And this physicality provides a firm platform for the book's otherworldly happenings, which seem all the more frightening for being so securely grounded.

Hill has a flawless sense of pacing. His narrative never flags, nor does it ever move so quickly as to outrun itself. And one can sense his literary ambition pushing at the margins of the genre. There are times when his writing, for all its spare efficiency, seems to jump away from him, stopping one small step short of poetry. An e-mail to Jude from the ghost (trust me, it's not as absurd as it sounds) could even pass for something ee cummings might've written, in an especially morbid mood. And toward the end of the book, when Hill describes a trip down death's "night road" in a '65 Mustang, the passage has a startlingly lyrical beauty.

The story's horror ultimately has as much to do with Jude Coyne's past--his mistakes, abandonments and betrayals--as with anything supernatural. Jude has caused a lot of pain over the years, moving through life with a carelessness that verges on the callous. His battle with the ghost brings this behavior into sharp relief, forcing him to reflect upon his own capacity for cruelty. This dawning self-awareness leavens the book's bleakness and gore (and it is delightfully gory in places) with an unexpected sweetness.

Despite our initial impression, Jude is gradually revealed--both to himself and the reader--as an essentially decent, even kind man. It's this kindness, this fledgling ability to love and be loved, that will ultimately be of crucial consequence in his death struggle with the ghost. And it's what makes Hill's debut not only well-written and terrifying, but also--as it draws to its close--surprisingly moving. So go ahead, take a chance, and open his *Heart-Shaped Box*. I think you'll be happy you did. --Scott Smith

Guest Reviewer: Harlan Coben



Harlan Coben is the author of the beloved Myron Bolitar series about a wisecracking sports agent, as well as stunning stand-alone novels like *The Innocent* and his breakout thriller *Tell No One*. His new novel *The Woods* releases on April 17, 2007.

You, dear reader, are obviously somewhat versed in making online purchases, so today, immediately after you click on the yellow "Add to Shopping Cart" on the top right hand corner of this page, why not do an online search and buy something totally unique?

Like, say, a vengeful ghost.

That is what rock-star Judas Coyne does, thinking it will be a laugh, fun for his "sick-o" collection of such things. It seems a random buy, but Judas soon learns that it is anything but. This particular ghost is one Craddock McDermott, step-father to recent suicide victim and boy, is he cranky. He demands revenge for his step-daughter's death, which he blames on Judas's shabby treatment of her.

Or is he after something else?

There are Amazon readers who will give you a better plot summary. Don't read them too closely because Joe Hill provides plenty of fun surprises. *Heart-Shaped Box* is a true spine-tingler. I don't use that hyphenated word much anymore. We have seen and read it all, haven't we? But right away, in the first chapter, there was a subtle line that made the hairs on the back of my neck go up in a way I haven't experienced since I first discovered great horror as a teenager.

Hill writes with a sure hand. The prose is compelling. Like most memorable tales of horror, this book is more about redemption than scary moments--though *Heart-Shaped Box* has plenty of scares. They are visceral, shocking and very well done. The characters are flawed and real. The father-son relationship adds texture and surprising poignancy.

So here's the thing. My guess is, you won't find a ghost to buy online, but if you read the *Heart-Shaped Box*, you will be getting something that will haunt you and startle you and stay with you and yes, visit you in your dreams.

Sleep well, dear reader. --Harlan Coben

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. This first novel by Hill, the second son of Stephen King, provides the perfect raw material for Lang to create an auditory world so convincing that the listener will feel as if they have seen a film by the time they are through. The complex plot can be simply stated: as a lark, retired heavy metal star Judas Coyne buys a haunted suit online. The ghost turns out to be the very angry stepfather of an ex-groupie/lover of Coyne's who killed herself after he sent her away. The relentless ghost is there to kill Judas and anyone who tries to help him. Lang's superb narration is nearly hypnotic in its calm delivery, perfect as backdrop for the action and horror that surrounds it. His Coyne is reminiscent of John Goodman, deep and understated, with a foundation of confidence with a barely perceptible trace of a Southern accent. Each disk starts with a bit of Nine Inch Nails—ish heavy haunting electronica, an ideal tone setter for the journey.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Hill, two-time winner of the Bram Stoker Award for his short fiction, delivers a terrifyingly contemporary twist to the traditional ghost story with his first novel. Aging rock star Judas Coyne is a collector of bizarre and macabre artifacts: a used hangman's noose, a snuff film, and rare books on witchcraft. When he purchases a suit billed in an online auction as the haunted clothes of a recently deceased man, Coyne finds more than he bargained for. Everywhere he looks he sees the twisted spirit of an old and evil man following him and dangling a deadly razor on a chain. He learns that the suit belonged to Craddock McDermott, the stepfather of a former lover who committed suicide shortly after Coyne tossed her out of his life. McDermott, a professional hypnotist prior to his death, swore to destroy Coyne's rock-star life of self-indulgence to avenge her death. The behind-the-scenes look at stardom alongside the frightening pyrotechnics of McDermott's ghost will draw in teens who really enjoy a good scare. But like all good ghost stories, Hill also crafts a deftly plotted mystery as McDermott's true motivations and powers unfold. The depth of character hidden in the dark shadows of both men lifts what could otherwise be a formula supernatural thriller to an impressive debut.—*Matthew L. Moffett, Pohick Regional Library, Burke, VA*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Hubbard:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or maybe read a book called Heart-Shaped Box? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have other opinion?

Linda Manning:

The book Heart-Shaped Box gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable far more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting tension or having big problem along with your subject. If you can make reading through a book Heart-Shaped Box to be your habit, you can get considerably more advantages, like add your own personal capable, increase your

knowledge about several or all subjects. You may know everything if you like open up and read a reserve Heart-Shaped Box. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science book or encyclopedia or some others. So , how do you think about this reserve?

Mattie Peters:

This book untitled Heart-Shaped Box to be one of several books that best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit in it. You will easily to buy this book in the book retail outlet or you can order it by using online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, since you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason for you to past this book from your list.

Jennifer Powell:

What is your hobby? Have you heard that will question when you got college students? We believe that that concern was given by teacher to their students. Many kinds of hobby, All people has different hobby. And you also know that little person just like reading or as reading through become their hobby. You need to know that reading is very important and book as to be the matter. Book is important thing to incorporate you knowledge, except your personal teacher or lecturer. You discover good news or update in relation to something by book. Different categories of books that can you choose to adopt be your object. One of them is Heart-Shaped Box.

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