

Stephen King - CELL

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I love Stephen King.

I consider him to be a brilliant writer. Yes I have Catholic taste in literature - my great favourites are Dickens and Shakespeare but Philip Pullman is a genius, JK Rowling is superb (and I said that years before the majority, as sales - ?? - of my 1999 Harry Potter Tribute CD showed!), Graham Greene and John Le Carre are my great favourites, Gerald Seymour is brilliant...

For some reason, probably because he's popular, King is sneered at but I love his style, his imagination and his abilities.

He helped me get through my first appalling weekend in the slum that is Beirut - the wing for newbies in Belmarsh Prison. I ignored the filth and grime and stains and sank into the world of The Black House, so for an entire weekend Stephen King (and Peter Straub) took me away from reality.

CELL is about the end of the world due to mobile phones and I think he may be right. This could well be less of a novel and more of a prophecy.

It's gripping, clever, exciting, nerve wracking... the perfect occupation for the beaches of Nice and Cannes and Morocco, which was where I consumed it.

It's now out in paperback and highly recommended. You may never use a mobile again. Quite right too.