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11/22/63: A Novel, by Stephen King, Scribner,
2011

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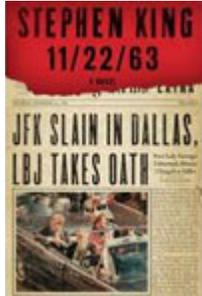
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Recommended Readings



11/22/63: A Novel

by Stephen King, Scribner 2010

Reviewed by Judi Morrel

There is hardly an American of a certain age who doesn't remember where she or he was when JFK was killed. What if you could time-travel backwards and prevent Lee Harvey Oswald from assassinating him? Would you? Should you? That's the premise of Stephen King's new novel *11/22/63*. Jake Epping, a teacher from Maine, is presented with a wormhole in time, which transports him from 2011 back to 1958. Through this portal, he can visit as many times as he likes and stay for as long as he likes (until November of 1963, for example), but when he returns to the present, only two minutes have passed. Every subsequent visit results in a reset (mostly), so he can change the past, undo his changes, and change it again. But as Jake learns, "the past is obdurate," and changes to the past may have unintended consequences for the present. If you are a Stephen King fan, you will recognize some of his previous characters who make cameo appearances, but this is not a horror novel. King makes it easy to suspend disbelief, rendering time-travel plausible; voluminous research enables him to depict the late 1950's and early 1960's perfectly, complete with ubiquitous cigarette smoke, fin-tailed Chevrolets, party lines and Elvis. No one tells a tale like King, but there is an underlying moral question: assuming such past-altering is even possible, do we have a moral obligation or even a right to change history?

- Judi Morrel is Professor of Mathematics and Director of the Center for High Achievement and Scholarly Engagement (CHASE) at Butler University.