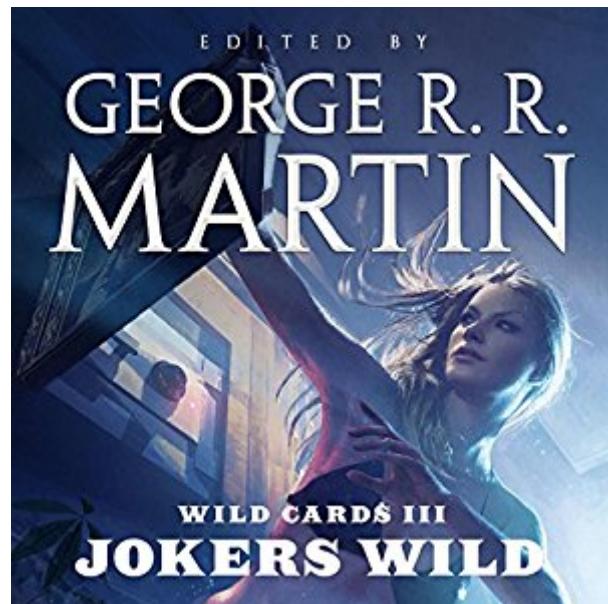


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# Wild Cards III: Jokers Wild



## **Synopsis**

Back in print after a decade is Wild Cards III: Jokers Wild, featuring fiction by George R. R. Martin, Roger Zelazny, Walter Jon Williams, and others. On September 15, 1946, the Wild Card virus was released, spreading a wave of mutations around the globe. "Aces" were endowed with extraordinary powers while "Jokers" were cursed with bizarre mental or physical disabilities. September 15th is now Wild Card Day. With each passing year, the festivities become larger and more fevered. And 1986 - the 40th anniversary - promises to be the biggest Wild Card Day ever. But in New York City, not everyone is celebrating: The Astronomer, a twisted, powerful genius, has been planning his own special festivities for Wild Card Day...a day of revenge against those who have opposed him....

Narrator cast list: Felicia Day for "Bagabond" Ron Donachie for "Hiram Worchester" Pam Grier for "Roulette" Stephen McHattie for "Demise" Ray Porter for "Sewer Jack" Prentice Onayemi for "Fortunato" Molly Quinn for "Wraith"

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The main plot and sub plots work together nicely but there's nothing really outstanding about the book. It's very slow paced and can be a bit tough to get into at first. Thankfully it's not too long but it can be a chore to read through. I think what disappoints me the most is that there's no real depth to the characters in this one. It's just them dealing with stuff at the moment, This unexpected attack, and nothing else. No new details about them or any back story, It's just what is happening in the present and what's happening isn't all that interesting.

I actually started reading the Wild Cards series in the 1990's, but I misplaced some of my copies of the paperbacks. I was quite happy to see the earlier books in the series begin to re-surface for Kindle. The premise of Wild Cards creates a unique excuse for super powered heroes, villains and people in general. In 1949, a ship containing an alien virus explodes over New York -- while most of the virus affects New York, some of it hits air currents to spread all over the world. 90% of the people exposed die a horrible, disfiguring death in all kinds of bizarre ways. 9% become disfigured in some way, often reflecting each person's personality. The last 1% gain powers, again often reflecting each person's personality. Disfigured people are called "Jokers," people with major powers are "Aces," and a few people with minor powers are sometimes called "Deuces." A few Jokers also have powers as well. This leads to a world where prejudice can be explored with the poor Jokers. There are also Sci-Fi elements to the stories as well. The other thing that makes the Wild Cards world unique is that it was one of the earlier "shared world" projects, where a bunch of authors write stories and create characters in the world while advancing an overriding story line. (A similar project created the "Thieves' World" books.) As a result, there are a wide range of characters and writing styles, with lots of little sub plots that add to the larger story. It also means that the writing is often inconsistent, but George R. R. Martin edits it all together. Some books, like this one, have chapters from the points of view of different characters that intertwine, where each of those individual stories were written by a different author. This is NOT a book series for kids, as there are a number of adult elements, from moderately graphic sex to fairly graphic violence. For example, one of the characters in this volume has a power to kill men when she has sex with them by infecting them with a rather nasty poison. This is the third book in the series, and volumes 1 and 2 are available in Kindle format -- read them first if you can. This is not my favorite book in the series, but it finishes out an important storyline started in Volume 2 and has lots of great characters that go on to other books in the series. Some characters are unique and creative, while a few are kind of standard superhero archetypes. This book has a typical Archer-with-no-super-powers-but-with-a-score-to-settle, just like DC's Green Arrow and Marvel's Hawkeye, and a cute-girl-who-can-phase-through-matter, like Shadowcat of the X-Men. Most characters have a weakness (often psychological) to go along with their powers. The Turtle is a powerful telekinetic who only uses his powers while in his tank-like "shell" -- out of his shell, he's a normal middle-aged guy from New Jersey. Mark Meadows is a hippy reject who was once a brilliant scientist -- he uses his own concoctions of drug combinations to turn into one of four "friends" for a one-hour period. One of my favorite characters is Croyd Crensen, a/k/a "The Sleeper." He sleeps

for a few weeks at a time, and has a complete transformation of his appearance and powers every time he wakes up. He has to experiment for a while to see what he can do each time. He has an understandable fear of sleep, so uses stimulants to try to stay awake for as long as possible but eventually becomes paranoid and delusional. He definitely has dubious morals and is often stealing stuff, but has certain lines he won't cross. This Volume III involves two main plots that intertwine; the sicko bad guy "Astronomer" from Volume 2 wants to kill all the people who attacked him, betrayed him or simply pissed him off before he tries to escape in a space ship he intends to steal, and stolen books from the safe of a crime lord are chased after by the Archer who is "out to get him" and rival crime groups. It is all going on during the annual "Wild Card Day" remembrance of the day the virus hit Earth. There are several sub-plots that affect everything else. If you like the idea of Super Hero stories with a gritty, realistic tone, you will love the Wild Card Series.

Jokers Wild, the third book and first mosaic novel in the Wild Cards series, is an epic, sprawling adventure that follows our now-familiar super-powered protagonists across the span of the fortieth Wild Cards Day as they try to stop the Astronomer from killing all the Aces that took him down in the previous book, Aces High. The mosaic format flows very well under Martin's steady guide, and never feels off-putting. Even the dreaded Mafia storyline (dreaded not because I'm scared of the Mafia or anything, but rather because this is a book with a Sorcerer-Pimp, a makeshift detective duo, and an alien from outer space running around! The Mafia is a bunch of guys with guns in this story, and not much more. Sorry, but I'd take the Sorcerer-Pimp over them any day.) flows in a series of easy to digest chunks, so that no one story is overwhelming to the point of needing a break. I especially love the long sequence at the end, as each of the characters go their separate ways. This is the All-Stars of Wild Cards, pure and simple. Everyone gets a moment in the sun, every storyline is handled accordingly, and it never stops feeling fun. This book is the one that made me love Wild Cards.

My son loves these books! The stories are interesting, funny, and creative. I love that there are so many books to read. Item arrived on time and in perfect condition.

The Wild Card series as a whole is filled with interesting and exciting characters. Joker's Wild takes several of the more intriguing characters from the previous story and adds a great deal of depth to them. The story itself is, as usual, a wild ride and leads the reader through some great highs and lows. Despite being the product of several different authors, you never feel as though the story is

disjointed. My only complaint is that the next book, Aces Abroad, isn't available on the Kindle store yet!

It does start off a little slower than the first two books, and follows a specific linear series of intertwined story lines which is different than the first two books, but the second half of the book explodes with suspense, drama, and oddly interesting twists, that do not feel contrived Or forced. Anxiously awaiting the 4th book's release on the Kindle in Jan 2015.

This book is amazing! This is the first book in the Wild Cards series and it sets the stage and introduces you to the awesome cast of characters. Obviously not for kids due to the more mature subject matter. I first read this over 10 years ago and still pull it out to re-read every so often, it's that good (and so are the others in the series)

Flows well... unlike some of the other books that bounce around, one shot characters, etc- this book has a terrific point A to point B plot. I even liked the time stamping- really ramped up the 'what happens next?'. A very good read. Some good plot hangers as well...a bit of everything. One BIG complaint tho- why is Book 4 not on Kindle yet?? and book 5, etc...?

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