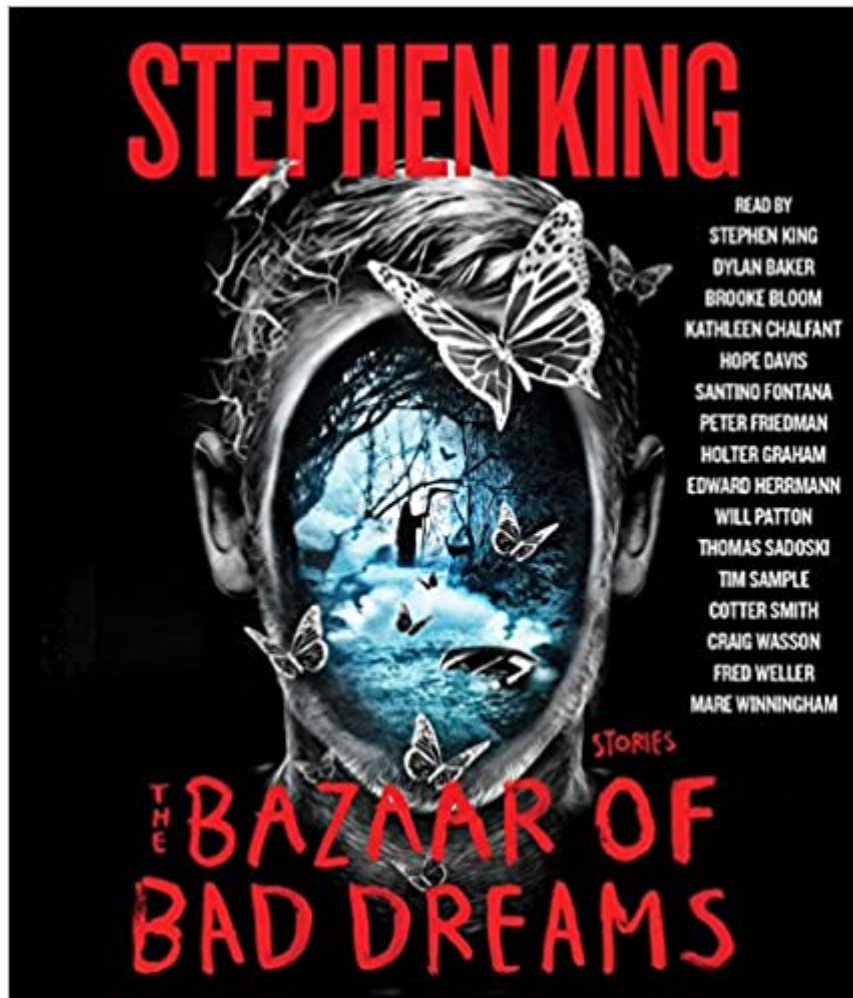




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The Bazaar Of Bad Dreams: Stories



Synopsis

Named to the American Library Association's Reference & User Services (RUSA) Listen List! A master storyteller at his best—the O. Henry Prize winner Stephen King delivers a generous collection of stories, several of them brand-new, featuring revelatory autobiographical comments on when, why, and how he came to write (or rewrite) each story. Since his first collection, *Nightshift*, published thirty-five years ago, Stephen King has dazzled listeners with his genius as a writer of short fiction. In this new collection he assembles, for the first time, recent stories that have never been published in a book. He introduces each with a passage about its origins or his motivations for writing it. There are thrilling connections between stories; themes of morality, the afterlife, guilt, what we would do differently if we could see into the future or correct the mistakes of the past. "Afterlife" is about a man who died of colon cancer and keeps reliving the same life, repeating his mistakes over and over again. Several stories feature characters at the end of life, revisiting their crimes and misdemeanors. Other stories address what happens when someone discovers that he has supernatural powers—the columnist who kills people by writing their obituaries in "Obits"; the old judge in "The Dune" who, as a boy, canoed to a deserted island and saw names written in the sand, the names of people who then died in freak accidents. In "Morality," King looks at how a marriage and two lives fall apart after the wife and husband enter into what seems, at first, a devil's pact they can win. Magnificent, eerie, utterly compelling, these stories comprise one of King's finest gifts to his constant fan—"I made them especially for you," says King. "Feel free to examine them, but please be careful. The best of them have teeth."

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Customer Reviews

“Renowned author King’s impressive latest collection wraps 20 stories and poems in fascinating commentary—the stories themselves are meditations on mortality, destiny, and regret, all of which showcase King’s talent for exploring the human condition—this introspective collection, like many of King’s most powerful works, draws on the deepest emotions: love, grief, fear and hope.” (Publishers Weekly, STARRED review) “A gathering of short stories by an ascended master of the form... This collection speaks to King’s considerable abilities as a writer of genre fiction who manages to expand and improve the genre as he works; certainly no one has invested ordinary reality and ordinary objects with as much creepiness as King... Best of all, lifting the curtain, King prefaces the stories with notes about how they came about. Those notes alone make this a must for aspiring writers.” (Kirkus) “To the reader’s delight, King provides a backstory for each tale, enticing the reader with a memory or scenario that prompted that particular selection’s birth... The stories collected here are riveting and sometimes haunting, as is the author’s style. Surprise endings abound. King is in a class all by himself. Be prepared to read voraciously.” (Library Journal, starred review) “BAD DREAMS packs plenty of bite into the 20 stories found here—a welcome dose of horror from the modern master. A large helping, too: Dreams weighs in at 495 pages, every one of which whips by as you plunge into one jolting tale after another—in the space of just a few pages, King can leave your nerves thoroughly jangled. As always, King conjures nightmares you don’t necessarily want to wake up from.” (Preston Jones, The Fort Worth Star Telegram) “[King] has always had a wicked (in more ways than one) sense of humor, too, and it’s often on display along with the scary stuff in his new short story collection, THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS—One of the bonuses of Bazaar is that each story is preceded by a note from the author about its genesis—If you’re looking for King’s paranormal horror side, though, Bazaar has plenty to satisfy you—And if you want King in full funny tall-tale mode, head for Drunken Fireworks. It’s the hilarious story of how its narrator, a Maine native named Alden who lives with his mother in a modest cabin on the Ectown side of Abenaki Lake, gets into an ever-escalating Fourth of July arms race with a rich guy on the other shore who’s rumored to be connected, if you know what I mean. One lesson: Never buy a firework called Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind.” (Collette Bancroft, The Tampa Bay Times) “The best stories in THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS are the ones that read like they

meant something to King... A Death, which bears the easy, plaintive prose of Kent Haruf, follows a sheriff preparing to go through with the hanging of a man who may have been falsely convicted of murder. Obit channels the snark and cynicism of contemporary culture as its hero, a writer of celebrity death notices for a Gawker-like website, discovers he can kill people by writing their obituaries while they're still alive. Summer Thunder, the touching post-apocalyptic story that concludes the book, ends on a note of lovely melancholy. Death may be inevitable, King says. But to fret about it or dwell on it is a waste of time when life, even at its most difficult, can bear so many rewards.

• (Rene Rodriguez, The Miami Herald)

“Outstanding” King’s usual homespun style and storytelling swerves are fully evident, yet what’s really neat about *Bad Dreams* is the scribe’s introductions to each piece. Like little throwbacks to his 2000 manual/memoir *On Writing*, King tosses out bits of trivia and inspiration for each of his short form treats. A series of 150-mile drives in college led to *Mile 81* and the most homicidal car since *Christine*. And a double whammy of trips to Applebee’s plus observing a road-rage incident in real time sparked his impressive imagination to create *Batman and Robin Have an Altercation*, an excellent piece pitting a father-and-son dynamic duo against Alzheimer’s and a strapping Texan. Short stories have a famous place in the King oeuvre, with the likes of *The Body* and *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* finding second lives on the big screen as *Stand By Me* and *Shawshank Redemption*. So it’s interesting to read how King likens himself to a midnight street vendor with these mini-tales and confesses they have given him a soul-deep fear that he will be unable to bridge the gap between a great idea and the realization of that idea’s potential.

Like all the greats, though, his ability to grip the reader’s mind, body and soul with his prose makes it all look easy.

• (Brian Truitt, USA Today)

“A triumph” Stephen King’s shorter works have inspired readers, writers, filmmakers and other artists for more than 40 years. His newest short story collection, *THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS*, continues his tradition of compulsively readable short stories, novellas and narrative poems that will thrill fans looking for scares, surprise critics that write him off as a genre author and inform artists about his personal creative process.

[the] introductions are a fascinating look into the mind of one of the most popular writers in the world, and much like his writer’s manual *On Writing*, he provides readers with concise and insightful observations about the art of the written word

remarkably resonant

The last story of the collection, *Summer Thunder*, takes the reader through the last days of two survivors of a worldwide nuclear holocaust

the last lines

of the story are some of the most emotionally powerful sentences Mr. King has ever committed to paper. They will leave readers weepy, uplifted and satisfied. With *THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS*, Stephen King has achieved something rare: a short story collection with no weak spots. From a woman confronted with the limits of empathy and the reality of pain, to a man who sees the names of the doomed written in sand, the pieces play off of one another to create a cohesive reading experience filled with optimism, sadness and a search for answers to life's unanswerable questions. While these stories may conjure up a few nightmares, they also will delight, inspire and, most importantly, entertain readers willing to make the journey." (Wendeline O. Wright, *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*) "[King] serves up a potent mix of stories that land in and around the horror genre. Not surprisingly, most are classic King page-turners, but the choicest finds in this bazaar are the stories behind the stories or, more correctly, in front of them. King introduces each story with an explanation about the motivation for writing it. You don't need to be a writer or a King fan to find these fascinating. Anyone who's ever wondered about the creative process will find the author's path to each story revelatory. Each story is compelling in its own way, though I'm guessing each reader will have favorites and it's doubtful that any two lists will be the same." (Cathy Jakicic, *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*) "King fans are in for another in a long line of treats. *THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS* provides a tasty sampler that, like his other short story collections, showcases the master's array of talents." (John Holyoke, *Bangor Daily News*) "Stephen King taps economic uncertainty and his own deep well of creativity to create 20 unsettling stories. It may be seven more years before King delivers another collection such as this one. Depending on how ordinary people continue to fare in the face of harsh reality, his topics of concern may shift in the meantime, as may those of his audience. Readers can be thankful, however, that he's still out there pitching stories with all the craft and guile he can muster." (Michael Berry, *The Portland Press Herald*) "[A] meaty collection with interesting insights into the creative process of a writer who caused many sleepless nights. Well worth keeping on your bedside table for those evenings when, as King puts it: '... sleep is slow to come and you wonder why the closet door is open, when you know perfectly well that you shut it.'" (Rob Merrill, *The Associated Press*) "There are a lot of good stories in this collection: moving, disturbing and in between. *Summer Thunder* imagines a post-apocalyptic world of startling beauty. In *Morality*, a marriage goes south when a wife falls prey to the imprecations of her employer — not sexual, but ethical. The idea is that we are all complicit, fundamentally, in what happens to us, that the stain of sin is a

collective one. When King gives himself a little room to move, the effects are not only unnerving but also deeply human, a series of riffs on love and loss. (David Ulin, The Los Angeles Times) "In the more harrowing tales of THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS, [it] the quotidian particulars of 21st century life • Walmart, DUI convictions, road rage, the stony realism of Maine's rural poor • that haunt us. THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS, of course, wouldn't feel like real Stephen King to some without a closing story from the apocalypse. In the grimly gorgeous Summer Thunder, another high point in the collection, a man, his stray dog, Gandalf, and a neighbor wait out radiation poisoning at the end of the world. The final line is killer. (Ethan Gilsdorf, The Boston Globe) "Short but sweet horror abounds in these collected tales. King confidently inhabits varied realms, from the American frontier, where a tale of justice plays out, to a Florida island with deathly secrets. He prefaces each story with an explanation of its genesis, providing a fascinating glimpse into the mind of remarkable writer.

(People) "King's constant readers will devour this new collection • the author is in rare form, not only talking to the reader directly in each introduction, but in making his characters fully human. Their hopes and their dreams are all on display. King says himself in the opening pages, "Feel free to examine them, but please be careful. The best of them have teeth. Indeed. (Doug Knoop, The Seattle Times) "King has not lost his ability to keep readers turning the pages late into the night, nor his knack of grounding the supernatural within the most mundane details of American life. This collection of 20 pieces displays a surprisingly wide range. Some of the high points find King in familiar territory. But there are equally successful stories that do not rely on the supernatural. Aptly, the book closes with Summer Thunder, an end-of-the-world story, this time caused by our old friend nuclear war. It's a quiet tale, just two friends and a dog out in the country waiting for the radiation to kick in, but there's a particularly moving finish. (Andy Smith, The Providence Journal) --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Stephen King is the author of more than fifty books, all of them worldwide bestsellers. His recent work includes The Bill Hodges Trilogy • Mr. Mercedes (an Edgar Award winner for Best Novel), Finders Keepers, and End of Watch • and the story collection The Bazaar of Bad Dreams. His epic series, The Dark Tower, is the basis for a major motion picture starring Idris Elba and Matthew McConaughey. It is also now a major motion picture starring Bill

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Dylan Baker's films include Happiness, Along Came A Spider, and 13 Days. He starred on the TV series Feds and Murder One. Mr. Baker's theater credits include La Bete (Tony & Drama Desk nominations), Eastern Standard (Theatre World Award), and Not About Heroes (Obie Award). Hope Davis' filmography includes The Matador, The Weather Man, Proof, Dumas, American Splendor (Golden Globe Nomination), The Secret Lives of Dentists, About Schmidt, Hearts of Atlantis, Mumford, The Imposters, Arlington Road, Next Stop Wonderland, The Myth of Fingerprints and Daytrippers. Stage credits include Midsummer Night's Dream, Spinning Into Butter, Ivanov and Two Shakespearean Actors. Off-Broadway in The Food Chain, The Iceman Cometh and Speed the Plow. Voted Best Actress in 2003 by the New York Film Critics.

Will Patton's numerous film credits include Remember the Titans, The Punisher, The Mothman Prophecies, Armageddon, and The Spitfire Grill. He starred in the TNT miniseries Into the West and on the CBS series The Agency, and won Obie Awards in the theater for his performances in Fool for Love and What Did He See. Edward Herrmann's films include Nixon, The Purple Rose of Cairo, Annie, and The Aviator. On television's Gilmore Girls he starred as the patriarch, Richard Gilmore. He has also appeared on The Good Wife, Law & Order, 30 Rock, Grey's Anatomy, and Oz. He earned an Emmy Award for The Practice, and remains well-known for his Emmy-nominated portrayals of FDR in Eleanor and Franklin and Eleanor and Franklin: The White House Years. On Broadway, he won a Tony Award for his performance in Mrs. Warren's Profession.

Frederick Weller's films include Four Lane Highway, The Shape of Things, When Will I Be Loved, Coyote Ugly, Basquiat and Armageddon. Television series include In Plain Sight (debut USA), The Jury, Law & Order: SVU & Criminal Intent, Pastor's Wife, and Missing Persons. On Broadway he starred in Seascape, Glengarry Glen Ross, Take Me Out, The Rehearsal, and Six Degrees of Separation.

Mare Winningham has appeared in more than fifty film and television projects, garnering an Academy Award nomination for Georgia and Emmy Awards for

the telefilms *George Wallace* and *Amber Waves*. She is also an accomplished singer-songwriter.

In recent years, many devoted readers of Stephen King have made the complaint that his novels have declined in quality. While that might be true, I always reply that his short stories are (and always have been) his best works. This new collection shows that Mr. King has not lost his talent at building up terror in readers of the span over forty or fifty pages. Unlike past collections, though, these stories more often reveal the monstrosity within the human soul, rather than any outside ghoul. In total, there are twenty stories in this collection, with only three or four I have not recognized from prior publication either in magazines or on Kindle. A few, like "Blockade Billy," even made it into a hardback format. Despite this, however, there are a few of his recent efforts (like "Into the Tall Grass") that have been regrettably omitted. That does not detract from the overall quality of this work. One of his stories, "Ur" contemplates the possibility of alternate realities in a vein similar to his novel 11/22/63, and also throws in a few allusions to his Dark Tower series, which personally thrilled me. Another story, "Afterlife," features a man who suffers a slow, painful death from cancer, but finds himself in a vicious ouroboros, repeating the mistakes of the past in slightly new ways, but with the same ultimate result. Although Mr. King has delved into Holmesian detective fiction before, his story "Batman and Robin Have an Altercation" unfortunately does not actually involve the masked detective. It does, though, grimly describe the visit of a middle-aged man to his Alzheimer's-stricken father in a nursing home and what that leads to. My personal favorite among these stories, however, is "The Dune," featuring a state supreme court judge whose attorney discovers the secret of the judge's childhood haunt. Surprisingly, Mr. King also includes a few pieces of poetry in this collection. While he has done so in the past, I must admit that I personally prefer his prose. Some of his other stories reveal Mr. King's age. When I saw the title for his story, "Hermann Wouk Is Still Alive," I wondered to myself if anyone under the age of forty even knows who he was. That is not a bad thing, however, and he also gives tips of the hat to horror writers like H.P. Lovecraft and Arthur Machen who ceased writing long before Mr. King began his career. For those with a love of the horror genre, these are welcome acknowledgements to some of King's most frequent inspirations. On the whole, this is a great collection by Stephen King. While it is not the best collection he has produced, it presents new and recently published material that meets the demanding standards of his fans. A great way to spend one's evening reading hours.

I knew a couple of the writings already from another book (ÅfÅcÅ â ¬Å Å“MoralityÅfÅcÅ â ¬Å Å• and ÅfÅcÅ â ¬Å Å“Blockade BillyÅfÅcÅ â ¬Å Å•), but the majority was new to me. I enjoyed

reading the little tidbits about Stephen King's life (some known, some new) or background information to the works themselves that preceded each of the short stories. I also noticed that Omaha is being referenced quite a few times which is fun, since I live and work in the Omaha metro area. My favorites are "Batman and Robin Have an Altercation", "The Dune" and "Bad Little Kid", just because I really like the spin on them. "Drunken Fireworks" reminds me of a story I read in the pamphlet of a church camp during my youth, and I kind of expected the end to be just like that - bloody and maybe a bit gory. In the church camp fable members of two families get into a fight and what starts relatively harmless ends in an arms race with actual casualties. I like S.K.'s finale a lot better!

Because life is full of interruptions sometimes I enjoy having a book of short stories to read. The stories in this book don't deal as much with horror as they do with the "human condition". As usual, Mr. King has his finger on the pulse of how people behave and what makes them behave that way. The stories show actions and consequences that are logical for the actions.

It amazes me that so many reviewers here complain that not all these stories are "New", as in "Unpublished"... It's rare for authors to publish story collections with completely new content... Generally, new stories are published in anthologies or magazines, then collected... That generates more revenue, obviously... King has published collections of novellas, such as *DIFFERENT SEASONS & FOUR PAST MIDNIGHT*, which were 100% original, but his story collections are usually a mix, collecting far more previously published stories, than new stories... "The Mist", a novella, was first published in Kirby McCauley's historic Horror anthology, *DARK FORCES*, then reprinted in King's 2nd collection, *SKELETON CREW*, for example...

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