



The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories

By Stephen King

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Features the Edgar Award-winning Story “Obits”

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 readers 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 reader—“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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The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories By Stephen King Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #12543 in Books
- Brand: SCRIBNER
- Published on: 2015-11-03
- Released on: 2015-11-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.90" w x 6.12" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 512 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“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'soften 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 ‘town 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 I 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 writers' 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's] 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 a 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*)

About the Author

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*; the short story collection *The Bazaar of Bad Dreams*; *Revival*; *Doctor Sleep*; and *Under the Dome*. His novel *11/22/63* was named a top ten book of 2011 by *The New York Times Book Review* and won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Mystery/Thriller. His epic series, *The Dark Tower*, is the basis for a major motion picture from Sony. He is the recipient of the 2014 National Medal of Arts and the 2003 National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. He lives in Bangor, Maine, with his wife, novelist Tabitha King.

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The Bazaar of Bad Dreams

Introduction

I've made some things for you, Constant Reader; you see them laid out before you in the moonlight. But before you look at the little handcrafted treasures I have for sale, let's talk about them for a bit, shall we? It won't take long. Here, sit down beside me. And do come a little closer. I don't bite.

Except . . . we've known each other for a very long time, and I suspect you know that's not entirely true.

Is it?

I

You'd be surprised—at least, I think you would be—at how many people ask me why I still write short stories. The reason is pretty simple: writing them makes me happy, because I was built to entertain. I can't play the guitar very well, and I can't tap-dance at all, but I can do this. So I do.

I'm a novelist by nature, I will grant you that, and I have a particular liking for the long ones that create an immersive experience for writer and reader, where the fiction has a chance to become a world that's almost real. When a long book succeeds, the writer and reader are not just having an affair; they are married. When I get a letter from a reader who says he or she was sorry when *The Stand* or *11/22/63* came to an end, I feel that book has been a success.

But there's something to be said for a shorter, more intense experience. It can be invigorating, sometimes even shocking, like a waltz with a stranger you will never see again, or a kiss in the dark, or a beautiful curio for sale laid out on a cheap blanket at a street bazaar. And, yes, when my stories are collected, I always feel like a street vendor, one who sells only at midnight. I spread my assortment out, inviting the reader—that's you—to come and take your pick. But I always add the proper caveat: be careful, my dear, because some of these items are dangerous. They are the ones with bad dreams hidden inside, the ones you can't stop thinking about when sleep is slow to come and you wonder why the closet door is open, when you know perfectly well that you shut it.

II

If I said I always enjoyed the strict discipline shorter works of fiction impose, I'd be lying. Short stories require a kind of acrobatic skill that takes a lot of tiresome practice. Easy reading is the product of hard writing, some teachers say, and it's true. Miscues that can be overlooked in a novel become glaringly obvious in a short story. Strict discipline is necessary. The writer has to rein in his impulse to follow certain entrancing side paths and stick to the main route.

I never feel the limitations of my talent so keenly as I do when writing short fiction. I have struggled with feelings of inadequacy, a soul-deep fear that I will be unable to bridge the gap between a great idea and the realization of that idea's potential. What that comes down to, in plain English, is that the finished product never seems quite as good as the splendid idea that rose from the subconscious one day, along with the excited thought, Ah man! I gotta write this right away!

Sometimes the result is pretty good, though. And every once in awhile, the result is even better than the original concept. I love it when that happens. The real challenge is getting into the damned thing, and I

believe that's why so many would-be writers with great ideas never actually pick up the pen or start tapping away at the keys. All too often, it's like trying to start a car on a cold day. At first the motor doesn't even crank, it only groans. But if you keep at it (and if the battery doesn't die), the engine starts . . . runs rough . . . and then smooths out.

There are stories here that came in a flash of inspiration ("Summer Thunder" was one of those), and had to be written at once, even if it meant interrupting work on a novel. There are others, like "Mile 81," that have waited their turn patiently for decades. Yet the strict focus needed to create a good short story is always the same. Writing novels is a little like playing baseball, where the game goes on for as long as it needs to, even if that means twenty innings. Writing short stories is more like playing basketball or football: you're competing against the clock as well as the other team.

When it comes to writing fiction, long or short, the learning curve never ends. I may be a Professional Writer to the IRS when I file my tax return, but in creative terms, I'm still an amateur, still learning my craft. We all are. Every day spent writing is a learning experience, and a battle to do something new. Phoning it in is not allowed. One cannot increase one's talent—that comes with the package—but it is possible to keep talent from shrinking. At least, I like to think so.

And hey! I still love it.

III

So here are the goods, my dear Constant Reader. Tonight I'm selling a bit of everything—a monster that looks like a car (shades of Christine), a man who can kill you by writing your obituary, an e-reader that accesses parallel worlds, and that all-time favorite, the end of the human race. I like to sell this stuff when the rest of the vendors have long since gone home, when the streets are deserted and a cold rind of moon floats over the canyons of the city. That's when I like to spread my blanket and lay out my goods.

That's enough talk. Perhaps you'd like to buy something, now, yes? Everything you see is handcrafted, and while I love each and every item, I'm happy to sell them, because I made them especially for you. Feel free to examine them, but please be careful.

The best of them have teeth.

August 6, 2014

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jacob Lehr:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories. Try to make the book The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories as your close friend. It means that it can for being your friend when you truly feel alone and beside that course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunated to suit your needs. The book makes you much more confidence because you can know almost everything by the book. So , we need to make new experience in addition to knowledge with this book.

Chung England:

Do you have something that suits you such as book? The reserve lovers usually prefer to opt for book like comic, short story and the biggest the first is novel. Now, why not trying The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories that give your enjoyment preference will be satisfied by means of reading this book. Reading practice all over the world can be said as the means for people to know world considerably better then how they react to the world. It can't be explained constantly that reading addiction only for the geeky individual but for all of you who wants to always be success person. So , for all you who want to start looking at as your good habit, you can pick The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories become your own starter.

Joe Timmons:

That guide can make you to feel relax. That book The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories was multi-colored and of course has pictures around. As we know that book The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories has many kinds or genre. Start from kids until teenagers. For example Naruto or Private investigator Conan you can read and feel that you are the character on there. So , not at all of book usually are make you bored, any it makes you feel happy, fun and relax. Try to choose the best book for you and try to like reading that will.

Donald White:

Reading a reserve make you to get more knowledge from the jawhorse. You can take knowledge and information coming from a book. Book is prepared or printed or outlined from each source that will filled update of news. In this particular modern era like today, many ways to get information are available for you actually. From media social including newspaper, magazines, science reserve, encyclopedia, reference book, fresh and comic. You can add your knowledge by that book. Are you hip to spend your spare time to spread out your book? Or just in search of the The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories when you essential it?

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