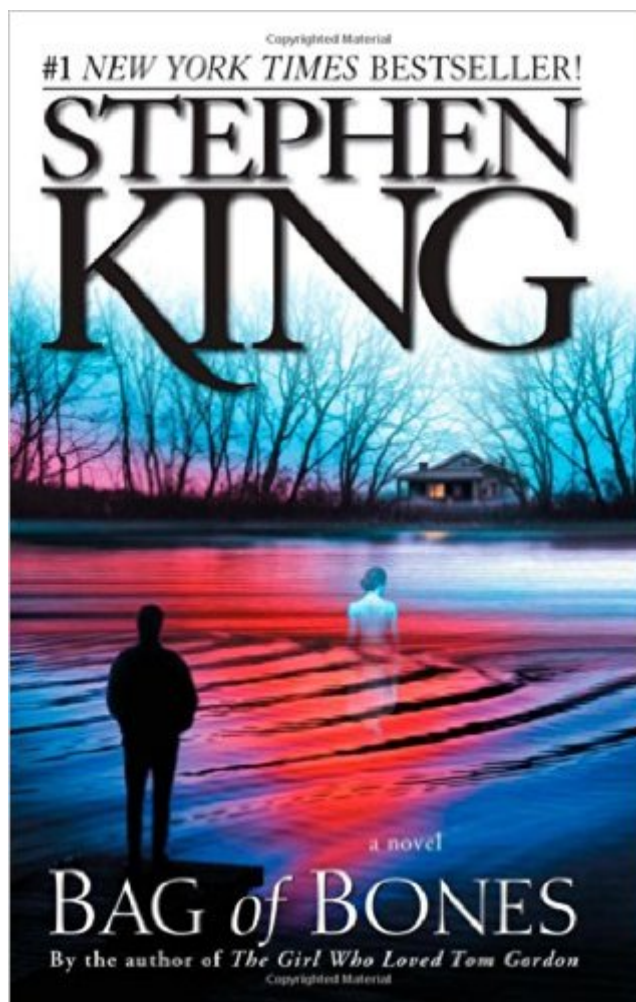


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Bag Of Bones



Synopsis

Here is Stephen King's most gripping and unforgettable novel -- a tale of grief and lost love's enduring bonds, of haunting secrets of the past, and of an innocent child caught in a terrible crossfire. Four years after the sudden death of his wife, forty-year-old bestselling novelist Mike Noonan is still grieving. Unable to write, and plagued by vivid nightmares set at the western Maine summerhouse he calls Sara Laughs, Mike reluctantly returns to the lakeside getaway. There, he finds his beloved Yankee town held in the grip of a powerful millionaire, Max Devore, whose vindictive purpose is to take his three-year-old granddaughter, Kyra, away from her widowed young mother, Mattie. As Mike is drawn into Mattie and Kyra's struggle, as he falls in love with both of them, he is also drawn into the mystery of Sara Laughs, now the site of ghostly visitations and escalating terrors. What are the forces that have been unleashed here -- and what do they want of Mike Noonan? It is no secret that King is one of our most mesmerizing storytellers. In Bag of Bones, he proves to be one of our most moving as well.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Many longtime King readers consider his early Magnum Opus, The Stand, the author's best work. Until the publication of Bag of Bones, that charge may have been true. No more. In BOB, King leaves cliché (both genre and his own) behind and weaves a classic, sprawling, and wholly satisfying tale of good and evil, right and wrong, love and hate, and the living and the dead. Mike Noonan's life - and writing career - come to a crashing halt when his wife dies of an aneurysm while watching an automobile accident. For four years, he puts himself on neutral and glides through life,

until he abandons his house for Sara Laughs, his summer retreat in Western Maine, on the shores of Dark Score Lake. There, he meets Mattie and Kyla, a single mother and her daughter who happened to get mixed up with the greedy, semi-psychotic computer magnate Max Devore, who wants Kyla, his granddaughter, as his own. Mike is inevitably drawn into the struggle, and at the same time finds that he, too, has a pulse and remnants of life. So too, he discovers, does Sara Laughs, a house that harbors spirits and secrets galore. Part romance, part meditation on love and life, part legal thriller, and part satire of the writing industry, Bag of Bones is King's only pure ghost story. HP Lovecraft opined that any real ghost story is about love, and it is this, the most basic (and complex) of human emotions, that King explores - love for wives, love for children, and love of place. He keeps his easygoing style and voice, but the subject matter in Bag of Bones is his most contemplative and mature, and while it has elements of horror (some of the ghost scenes are throat-closers), Bag of Bones manages to grow beyond that into a very serious novel. For a writer as maligned as King by the so-called literary-intellectual field, Bag of Bones could be a thumb-in-the-nose, look-what-I-can-do sort of book, but it escapes pretension and snobbery as well. Many of his books, written almost automatically in the 1980s and early 1990s, are downright formulaic, and there's a hint of that in Bag of Bones, but not much. It is also his best ghost story, as none of the main characters are psychics - just normal people who can experience ghostly phenomenon, making it all the more terrifying for the non-psychic reader. While *The Shining* pulled that off successfully, and *Rose Red* failed miserably, Bag of Bones keeps the hauntings grounded in something everyday people experience - that subtle, chill wind on a hot day, and noises in the night that may or may not be quite natural. It's disappointing that King's retirement looms so immediately on the horizon, but if one book should stand as a tribute to his literary works, that book should be Bag of Bones. It's a wholly different beast from *The Stand*, the other book for which King will undoubtedly be recognized for hundreds of years in the future, but Bag of Bones hums with a kind of tightness and literary prowess rare in any book, in any time. Final Grade: A

Bag of Bones was my first Stephen King read in a number of years. About halfway through *The Tommyknockers*, I felt like I had been there, done that time and again with him. I was fed up.....Jump forward, 11 years, to the publication of Bag of Bones. The dust jacket makes it look like typical King territory, but inside, there is a wonder to behold. Mike Noonan, author, widower, and grief-stricken man leaves his home for the cabin he and his wife shared, Sara Laughs. There he is not only haunted by her memory, but seemingly by her voice as well. He laments that there is nowhere to escape the loss he feels, even here, and finds it impossible to resume his writing career,

with deadlines looming, and his stockpile of 'backup' stories dwindling fast. Mike is drawn into a local power-play courtesy of Max Devore, the town's resident wealthy control freak, against the mother of his three year-old granddaughter and the child herself. Mike instantly feels sympathetic and protective to them both, and finds himself biting off more than he thought in extending his friendship to them. Suddenly, his ability to write returns, but the voices do not cease to come. And the more time Mike spends at Sara Laughs, the further he is drawn into the realm of ghosts there that extend far beyond that of his deceased wife. Bag of Bones is not a horror novel. Do not read it expecting gremlins, ghouls, or gore...what made King famous in the first place. Do expect a tale of loss, despair, frustration, and chance to begin again after suffering a terrible loss. As I have stated in other King book reviews, the man writes best when he leaves behind the demons that lurk in shadows and under beds, and probes the demons that lie in peoples' minds instead. This has to be my favorite of all Stephen King novels I have read, and was sufficient enough to make me take a look at some of his more recent, pre-Bones works, such as Rose Madder, and the Long Walk. For anyone who felt as I did all those years ago, that you had read it all before, pick this book up and give King another shot to entertain you.

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