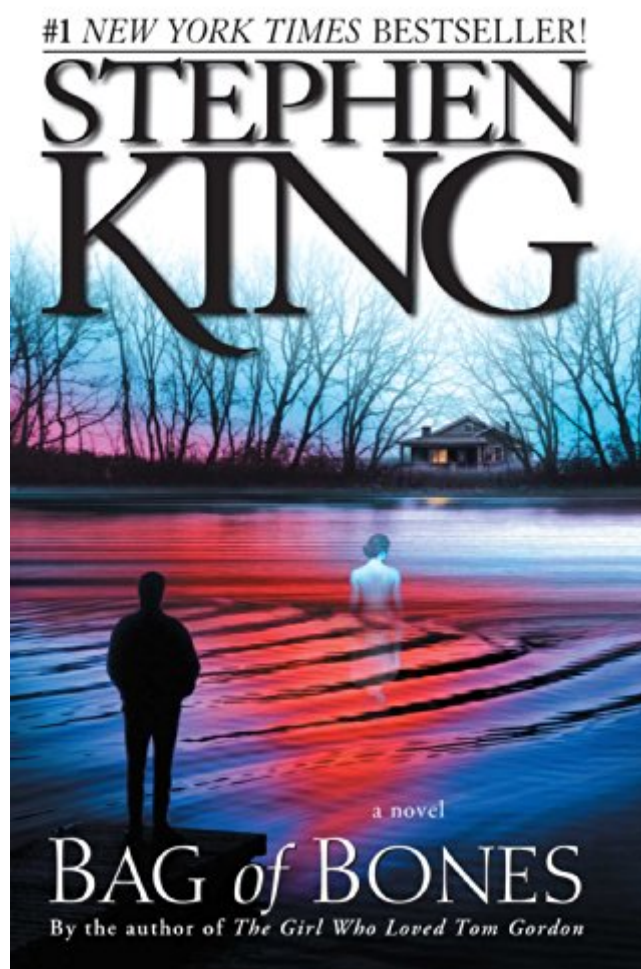


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Bag Of Bones: A Novel



Synopsis

From international bestseller Stephen King, a tale of grief, of love's enduring bonds, and the haunting secrets of the past—the inspiration for the A&E miniseries. Stephen King's most gripping and unforgettable novel, *Bag of Bones*, is a story of grief and a lost love's enduring bonds, of a new love haunted by the secrets of the past, of an innocent child caught in a terrible crossfire. Set in the Maine territory King has made mythic, *Bag of Bones* recounts the plight of forty-year-old bestselling novelist Mike Noonan, who is unable to stop grieving even four years after the sudden death of his wife, Jo, and who can no longer bear to face the blank screen of his word processor. Now his nights are plagued by vivid nightmares of the house by the lake. Despite these dreams, or perhaps because of them, Mike finally returns to Sara Laughs, the Noonan's isolated summer home. He finds his beloved Yankee town familiar on its surface, but much changed underneath—held in the grip of a powerful millionaire, Max Devore, who twists the very fabric of the community to his purpose: to take his three-year-old granddaughter away from her widowed young mother. As Mike is drawn into their 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, ever-escalating nightmares, and the sudden recovery of his writing ability. What are the forces that have been unleashed here—and what do they want of Mike Noonan? As vivid and enthralling as King's most enduring works, *Bag of Bones* resonates with what Amy Tan calls "the witty and obsessive voice of King's powerful imagination." It's no secret that King is our most mesmerizing storyteller. In *Bag of Bones*—described by Gloria Naylor as "a love story about the dark places within us all"—he proves to be one of our most moving.

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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.

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.

Stephen King has been called the world's scariest novelist; however, many critics agree that his work is too violent and his excessive use of adult language is not necessary in his writing. However, while reading Bag of Bones, I (having read most of his previous novels) found that this one was different. The book is open for all readers: mystery, horror, suspense, and even romance. This book focuses on the events that happen to a widowed best selling novelist, Mike Noonan who is grieving from his wife's sudden and unexpected death. He suffers from writer's block; a case when writers fear their computers and are literally in pain when they try to write. He begins having a perpetual, repetitive dream focusing on his dead wife appearing at the doorsteps of his Maine summer house he calls Sara Laughs. He packs up his belongings and moves into the old house in hope that he will ease up and begin writing again. Along the way, he meets a young woman, Mattie Devore and her daughter Kyra who are suffering from the death of Mattie's husband. Mike begins to notice supernatural occurrences that occasionally appear around Sara Laughs and realizes that they are there to help him (a) begin writing and get over the loss of his wife, and (b) help Mattie and Kyra escape from the clutches of her father in law, Max Devore who is trying to gain custody of his granddaughter. The book is incredible in that it begins a little unnerving, then towards the middle flattens itself out into a love story, and then wraps back up into King's typical scary ending.

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