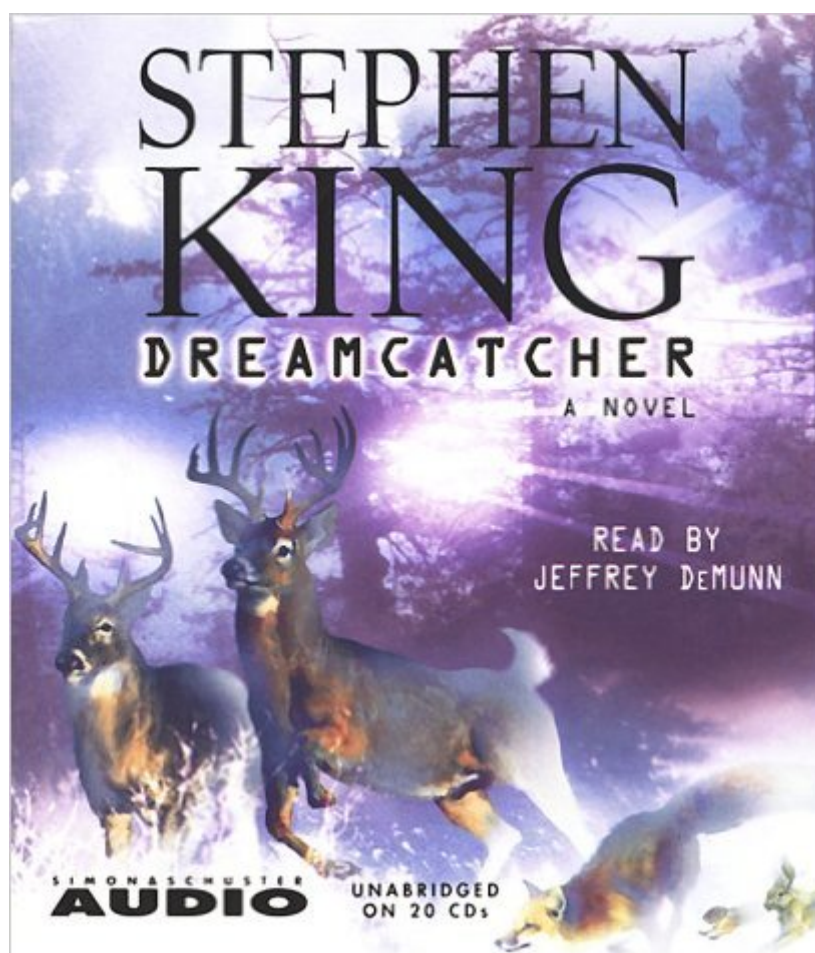


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Dreamcatcher : A Novel



Synopsis

Once upon a time, in the haunted city of Derry (site of the classics *It* and *Insomnia*), four boys stood together and did a brave thing. Certainly a good thing; perhaps even a great thing. Something that changed them in ways they could never begin to understand. Twenty-five years later, the boys are now men with separate lives and separate troubles. But the ties endure. Each hunting season the foursome reunites in the woods of Maine. This year, a stranger stumbles into their camp, disoriented, mumbling something about lights in the sky. His incoherent ravings prove to be disturbingly prescient. Before long, these men will be plunged into a horrifying struggle with a creature from another world. Their only chance of survival is locked in their shared past -- and in the *Dreamcatcher*. Stephen King's first full-length novel since *Bag of Bones* is, more than anything, a story of how men remember, and how they find their courage. Not since *The Stand* has King crafted a story of such astonishing range -- and never before has he contended so frankly with the heart of darkness.

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Customer Reviews

Because "Dreamcatcher" is the novel Stephen King wrote (in longhand) while recuperating from his near-fatal accident, it easily lends itself to all sorts of psychological interpretations. After all, one of the characters is hit by a car and breaks a hip. To me, the first part of the book comes across as a melting pot of familiar elements from King books: once upon a time there was a group of four boys who were best friends ("The Body"), who become involved in stopping a great evil as adults ("It"), because of a spaceship that has landed in the woods ("The Tommyknockers") and a horrible

infection is spreading around ("The Stand"). Fortunately they have some psychic ability ("The Dead Zone") that will help them not only with the aliens but also with the psycho running the government operation ("Firestarter"). For good measure, throw in literary homages to the original "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" and "Alien" with a generous twist of "The X-Files," while keeping in mind that not everybody gets out alive in a Stephen King novel, and you have the general picture of what "Dreamcatcher" is about. The four friends--Joe "Beaver" Clarendon, Pete Moore, Henry Devlin and Gary Jones--are bound together in a way that they do not even suspect. Beaver is an inventive curser who owns a cabin in the Maine woods where the group gathers for the last time, Pete can find lost car keys or anything else when he puts his mind to it, Henry is a suicidal shrink who has a tendency to lash out at patients from time to time, and Jonsey is a college professor who just "knows" when students cheat on exams.

I'm glad to have "Dreamcatcher" on my bookshelf. If for no other reason than because I was almost sure, two years ago, that there wouldn't ever be such a thing as a new Stephen King novel. I remember seeing Stephen King and his wife Tabitha interviewed on tv the fall after his near-fatal accident, and his spirits were so low, it really didn't look like he would ever be writing again. The gloomy feel of that interview, coupled with the Bartelby-"I prefer not to" theme running through the end of "Bag of Bones" made me worry that that might be his last full length novel. Which made me sad, because I've been one of King's Constant Readers since my twelfth birthday, when I finished "Pet Semetary". I've been with him through the good years and the bad. The occasional rambling blahs and the cherished moments of pure transcendent bliss, like at the end of "Low Men in Yellow Coats" from "Heart in Atlantis," where I simultaneously cried my eyes out and felt a surging thankfulness for being alive and being in the world, and having that book in my hands at that moment. A perfect moment. For that moment, and many moments like it over the years, I consider Stephen King a good friend. I didn't like the idea of not hearing the voice of my friend ever again. Especially when his last book, the collection "Hearts in Atlantis," contained some of the best writing he'd ever done. It left me starving for more great Stephen King. Any Stephen King, really. So I'm extremely happy to still be hearing his voice, to be reading his words. It makes the world a better place to be in. But I'll have to say that "Dreamcatcher" isn't nearly as good as the brilliant "Hearts in Atlantis.

For my money, Hearts in Atlantis is King's best work, narrowing out Pet Semetary, the Dark Tower series and the first half of It by a little bit. Dreamcatcher isn't quite as good as those, but it's still a

good read (above all else, King is one of the best storytellers alive). Things I liked: * The kids in his story are utterly believable - he certainly hasn't lost touch with his childhood.* As always, his references to other stories are clever in-jokes (and having this story set partially in Derry, I'd have been disappointed if there weren't any at all)* The interior battle between Mr. Gray and Jonesy was VERY well written - another thing King can capture quite believably is the not-quite-reality of dreams.* (very minor spoiler alert) The evolution of Mr. Gray from an alien 'intelligence' into something with human emotions/desires (bacon!) was nicely and subtly done.* One thing I have always liked about King's work (and my wife doesn't) are his little sidepaths he takes his story down. The little anecdotes that let us get into his characters heads are essential, I think, to character development (my wife thinks they distract from the plot).* Duddits was a fantastic character - even though he's essentially the same guy as the Wolf in Talisman, and Tom "M-O-O-N spells moon" Cullen from the Stand, it's a character I really like. Sort of like an old friend popping up unexpectedly :-). Things I didn't like (and they're minor): * It reminded me a little of Tommyknockers, which I didn't enjoy at all. That has nothing to do with this book, actually, but I still don't forgive him for that one.* Same thing with the last 200 pages of It, which was an absolutely fantastic story until he dragged in all that Spider and Turtle crap.

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