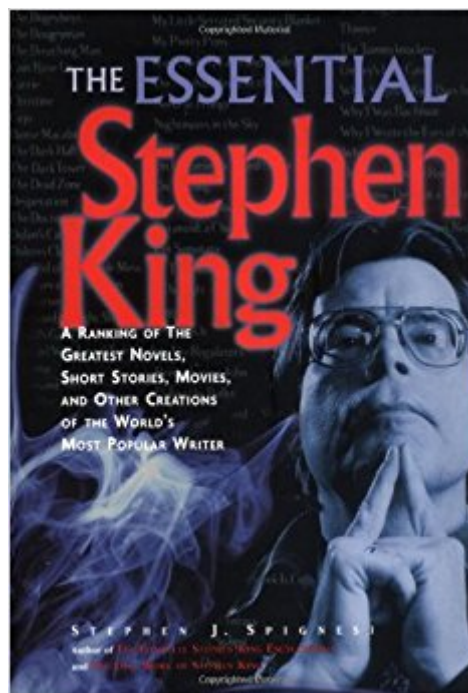


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The Essential Stephen King: A Ranking Of The Greatest Novels, Short Stories, Movies, And Other Creations Of The World's Most Popular Writer



Synopsis

Stephen Spignesi, the world's leading expert on Stephen King (Entertainment Weekly) ranks 101 greatest creations of the man he calls "our greatest living author." Working from a body of King's work numbering more than 550 individual creations, Spignesi lists all of King's writings in every genre and then determines the top 101. Each chosen work is synopsisized and reviewed. The Essential Stephen King provides an unbiased, uncompromising review of King's work by an acknowledged King authority. As such, it is a must for all serious and casual Stephen King fans as well as all lovers of superb contemporary literature.

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Customer Reviews

Spignesi is probably the biggest King fan out there. He knows every book, novella, short story and essay the man has written in and out. There isn't one work he isn't totally familiar with. I actually wonder if he knows more about King's writing than King does himself. In The Essential Stephen King, Spignesi tries to rank the 101 best things King has ever written. And although every major King work is featured (all of the novels are there, so are the novellas), many of King's best short stories didn't make the cut (where are The Night Flyer and Lawnmower Man?). And I was disappointed when I saw some of my favorite King novels ranked so high up the list (Dolores Claiborne, The Dark Half, Needful Things and Storm Of the Century aren't even near the top 10!). Of course, this is a fan ranking his favourite works. No two fans will think alike. The reason the book is so powerful is because of the author's writing skills. Spignesi writes with passion and dedication. Every sentence is like a love confession for the King of horror. And I also enjoyed the articles written by King

fans/experts at the end of the book. This book makes you want to revisit King's best writings. It's a book every King fan will enjoy and will use time and time again as a reference manual.

The problem with the book is that it's utterly uncritical of the entirety of Stephen King's work - it's simply a basic recounting of the novel's plot, followed up with a few bits of trivia and the author's "What I Liked" section. The problem is that the author of this book likes everything about Stephen King, even when he's talking about King's weaker material. You could write the words "I love Stephen King and everything he's ever done!" on an index card, then post it next to the search results for Stephen King and you'd have this book in a nutshell. Plus, he refers to the *Gor* novels as "wildly popular". Uh, no. -Darren MacLennan

This is a very dedicated fan ranking his preferences of Stephen King's work. His reasons are clearly set out and interesting. The only criticism for me was the non inclusion of many of my favourites. But then again with the immense amount of work King has put out over the years, what can anyone expect.

Stephen J. Spignesi has been a passionate follower of Stephen King's work for a good number of years. His extraordinary (and expansive) resource - *The Stephen King Encyclopedia* - placed him at the forefront of King experts. With this new volume, Spignesi examines what he determines to be the prolific author's top 101 works (actually 102 including a special note for a non-fiction eulogy that King wrote following the death of John Lennon, which Spignesi places in "a class of its own"). Although the rankings are primarily Spignesi's opinions and not all of King's wide fan base will necessarily agree with the author's opinions, in the end, Spignesi makes a strong case arguing that King is an essential author of modern American literature who should not be so easily pigeonholed into the "just a horror writer" category, but whose works can (and should) be subjected to the same tedious academic scrutiny that Authors such as Steinbeck and Faulkner have undergone. Efficiently written with energetic synopses for each of the selections as well as a qualifying explanation as to why the particular work received its ranking, *The Essential Stephen King* is a wonderful resource for all levels of King Fans to either learn of his exceptional works, or merely revisit them along with Spignesi.

The more I read of this book, the more it seemed like a little mind-trip of self-indulgence for the author. It's very difficult to take this book seriously when observing some of the comments the

author makes. For each book he rated there was a section called "What I liked about this book," and more than once his only comment in this section was, "everything." While it's nice to see that he's truly writing about something he enjoys, maybe the author should stick to something more modest, such as a column in the local paper, rather than such an ambitious undertaking as this. While not truly awful, the ambiguous format makes it painful reading.

Every ranking list is subjective, but I thought this one was pretty accurate (i.e I agreed with it)! It also had me rereading the short stories, which I haven't done in a long time.

Item arrived promptly and as promised.

Spignesi is a great fan(atic) of King's and his enthusiasm shows in this listing of the top 101 King writings. He includes a wide variety of King's material from across his career. Anyone who is a fan will enjoy remembering the great stories already read and will be inspired to read ones Spignesi mentions that haven't yet been read. Not all of Spignesi's opinions are correct, of course, but he is well-informed enough to make a strong case for each of his picks.

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