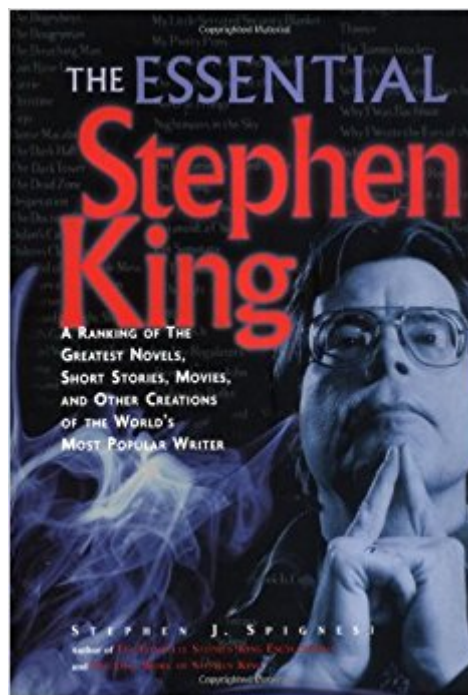




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# The Essential Stephen King: A Ranking Of The Greatest Novels, Short Stories, Movies, And Other Creations Of The World's Most Popular Writer



## 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 synopsized 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Spignesi, credited with over 20 books (The Stephen King Quiz Book; The Celebrity Baby Name Book; The Beatles Book of Lists; etc.) in the past decade, views Stephen King as "our greatest living author." With his staggering 18,000-item Complete Stephen King Encyclopedia, he was labeled "the world's leading expert on Stephen King" by Entertainment Weekly, and he again beelines for his favorite destination. This time he itemizes 553 works by King and selects his 101 favorites from among King's novels, short stories and nonfiction (with one poem). His top 10 picks are all novels, including It, The Stand and Bag of Bones. Each selection is shoehorned into a template that includes, for example, rank (and justification for such), publication date, King's comment about the work, Spignesi's brief personal reaction ("what I really liked about the book"), film adaptations and a short excerpt from each work. The author's colloquial style is peppered with such sentences as "Yikes!" and "Great fun." Personal anecdotes, parenthetical digressions and

Spignesi's worshipful approach signify mammoth first-draft fanzine more than serious critical study. Short pieces by Spignesi's friends and colleagues, including an interview with a King collector, add to this effect. Agent, John White. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Wiater and his coauthors, all writers deeply involved in sf and horror writing or criticism, here aim to show that King's stories are interconnected by theme or character and that the "Dark Tower series is the core of the Stephen King universe." In their investigation of linked themes, the authors limit themselves to King's published titles, including his early work only if a specific title has been published in a collection. Appendixes include a chronology of Stephen King's life and works, a bibliography of King's writings, a list of recommended web sites, recommended reading, and an index. Taking a different tack on King's corpus, admitted King fan Spignesi (*The Complete Stephen King Encyclopedia*, *The Lost Work of Stephen King*, and two Stephen King quiz books) specifies King's 101 best works and also lists all 553 works with publication status at the end of the volume. (His index was unavailable for review.) Like Wiater, Spignesi discusses story lines and main characters, also including little-known tidbits and a comment from King regarding each title. Both books include information about film adaptations with Spignesi listing the movie's cast and Wiater presenting movie reviews. Wiater also indicates when a story has been released in other formats. Both titles will appeal to serious King fans, but Wiater's will be an especially useful addition to academic resources on contemporary authors. Recommended for those libraries with a need for in-depth information on King and his work. Laurie Selwyn, San Antonio P.L., TX Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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.

This book is a great resource. It has a vast amount of information on King's books that you won't find elsewhere in one collection. I found this little gem at a bookstore and spent about a half hour reading through it. I finally broke down and bought it on and I'm really glad I did. I'm already a Stephen King fan and have read many of his books. But it was great to read synopsis's on his other works that I haven't gotten to yet. The author made a break-down of each book, gave the character's names, and a movie adaptation of the book if applicable. If you are already a Stephen King fan, you

will no doubt enjoy this book. You can see which books made which spots on his '100 list' and perhaps argue, but I found myself agreeing with the author on most of his choices. If you aren't a Stephen King fan yet, but are thinking about reading a book of his and are not sure which one to pick first, this is a great choice for you to read, so you get an idea of what you're headed for. :)

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 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.

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.

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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