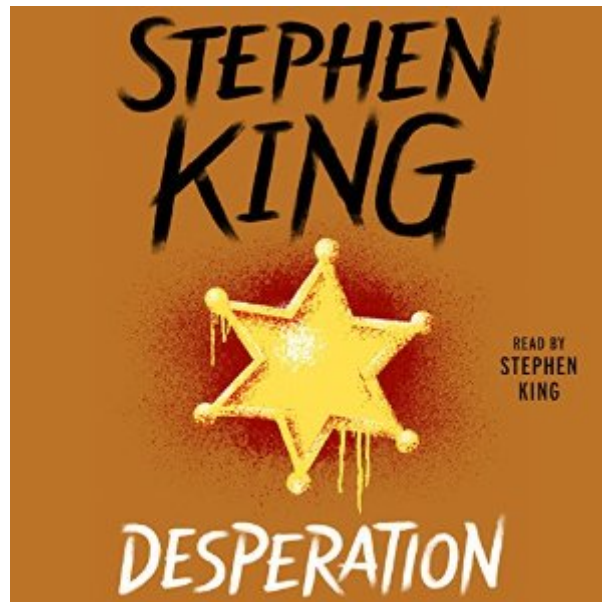


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# Desperation



## Synopsis

"The terror is relentless" (Publishers Weekly) in Stephen King's number-one national best seller about a little mining town, Desperation, that many will enter on their way to somewhere else. But getting out is not easy as it would seem.... Located off a desolate stretch of Interstate 50, Desperation, Nevada, has few connections with the rest of the world. It is a place, though, where the seams between worlds are thin. And it is a place where several travelers are abducted by Collie Entragian, the maniacal police officer of Desperation. Entragian uses various ploys for the abductions, from an arrest for drug possession to "rescuing" a family from a nonexistent gunman. There's something very wrong here, all right, and Entragian is only the surface of it. The secrets embedded in Desperation's landscape and the evil that infects the town like some viral hot zone are both awesome and terrifying. But as one of the travelers, young David Carver, seems to know - though it scares him nearly to death to realize it - so are the forces summoned to combat them.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

1996 must have been a heady year for Stephen King--coming off the critical and commercial success of his excellent six part serial, The Green Mile, he followed up with a pair of hard hitting, well-written novels, Desperation and The Regulators. Desperation was clearly his best work since Misery. The Regulators, written under his pseudonym, Richard Bachman, was less successful, but pleasurable reading nonetheless. The Regulators is King's version of the classic Twilight Zone adaptation of Jerome Bixby's It's a Good Life. The denizens of Poplar Street, located in the small

town of Wentworth, Ohio, find themselves sealed off from the rest of the world, trapped in a pocket universe created by the imaginings of an autistic child who has been possessed by a demon. Neighbors must band together to fight off killing machines that seem to have sprung from the television screen. Desperation features many of the same characters who populated The Regulators, albeit in altered form. Desperation, a small mining town off Route 50 in Nevada, is also under attack by a demon, but here the devastation is far worse. Instead of tormenting a few folks, the demon, after destroying most of the town, has taken to pulling people off the highway to satisfy its perverse longings. Again, a disparate group of people must cooperate to save their lives. The contrast between these books is startling--if you never noticed the difference between King's and Bachman's styles, reading these two books back to back will be a real eye opener. Bachman creates the aura of immediacy, but we never really get to know his characters. King, on the other hand, hews to his tradition of giving us characters we really care about, people we would like to get to know.

Having just slogged through "Bag Of Bones", my expectations for this book were pretty low. Basically, I was anticipating another seven hundred page turkey; my only real motive for reading it was making room on my bookshelf. Imagine my surprise to find it to be one of the best King novels I've ever read. At first, it looked like Jim Thompson-style noir. The villain, a six-foot seven small town Nevada psychotic cop, prowls U.S. 50, "the loneliest road in America", rounding up innocent motorists, kidnapping, imprisoning and killing them. So far, so good. The pure simplicity of such a storyline, especially in the hands of a master storyteller such as Steven King, can't fail to draw a reader in. The brute evil of Collie Entragian, the cop, combined with the isolation of the abandoned western mining town in which the story is set, creates a powerful, suspenseful conflict for the group of travellers Entragian has waylaid and locked up in the jail of the town of Desperation. But there's more. It soon becomes apparent that the supernatural is at work (what Steven King book would be complete without the supernatural?). Entragian speaks to the coyotes, buzzards, scorpions, spiders, snakes and other desert creatures in an unknown language, commanding them to help him carry out his nasty business. He has made good use of them so far, doing away with the entire population of Desperation, and will soon be turning his efforts against the travellers in his jail. For all of it's atmosphere and suspense, this novel is actually a return by King to the exploration of good versus evil, the nature of God and the mystery of faith which he delved into in "The Stand".

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