



'Salem's Lot

By Stephen King

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'Salem's Lot By Stephen King Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Stephen King's second book, *'Salem's Lot* (1975)--about the slow takeover of an insular hamlet called Jerusalem's Lot by a vampire patterned after Bram Stoker's *Dracula*--has two elements that he also uses to good effect in later novels: a small American town, usually in Maine, where people are disconnected from each other, quietly nursing their potential for evil; and a mixed bag of rational, goodhearted people, including a writer, who band together to fight that evil.

Simply taken as a contemporary vampire novel, *'Salem's Lot* is great fun to read, and has been very influential in the horror genre. But it's also a sly piece of social commentary. As King said in 1983, "In *'Salem's Lot*, the thing that really scared me was not vampires, but the town in the daytime, the town that was empty, knowing that there were things in closets, that there were people tucked under beds, under the concrete pilings of all those trailers. And all the time I was writing that, the Watergate hearings were pouring out of the TV.... Howard Baker kept asking, 'What I want to know is, what did you know and when did you know it?' That line haunts me, it stays in my mind.... During that time I was thinking about secrets, things that have been hidden and were being dragged out into the light." Sounds quite a bit like the idea behind his 1998 novel of a Maine hamlet haunted by unsightly secrets, *Bag of Bones*. --Fiona Webster

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Before vampires became sympathetic characters with their own alternate worlds, complete with vampire coffee shops and vampire politics, they used to be bad guys, scary not sexy, and they preferred wreaking havoc in horror novels rather than exuding tortured sensitivity in YA coming-of-age fiction. Fortunately, we don't need to go all the way back to *Dracula* and Boris Karloff to remember those halcyon days: we have Stephen King's *'Salem's Lot*, from 1975. Oddly, it's not the vampires that make *'Salem's Lot* great popular fiction. Mr. Barlow, our lead vampire, is no *Dracula*. He doesn't even appear until the story is nearly half over, and he is perhaps the most one-dimensional figure in the book (but that single dimension is enough: unadulterated evil). The real main character isn't a person at all, human or vampire: it's the seemingly idyllic New England town of Jerusalem's Lot. King once said that in *'Salem's Lot*, he set out to create "a fictional town with enough prosaic reality about it to offset the comic-book menace of a bunch of vampires." He did just that by drawing on our universal fear of outsiders, and nowhere is that fear more recognizable than in our traditional image of the New England small town, where insularity itself becomes a defense against incursion by strangers. The stereotypical Yankee, befuddling outsiders with a series of cryptic yups and nopes, may be a comic character from folklore, but he is also a soldier defending his Maginot Line against potential blitzkrieg. And behind the crotchety Yankee's seeming impregnability, there is the constant fear that one day a stranger will come to town who won't take nope for an answer. That juxtaposition of prosaic reality against outlandish terror has always been central to King's technique for scaring his readers. In *'Salem's Lot*, he does it by looking beneath the surface of idyllic New England. We see the pastoral beauty, the close-knit community, and the unpretentious lifestyle, yet from the beginning, we also see the harbinger of something else, something other. The novel begins with a stranger, not Barlow but a writer, Ben Mears, returning to the Lot, where he'd lived briefly as a boy. Mears has come home again not to reclaim his innocence but to expunge his demons—the memory of the body of a man dead for decades, still hanging in the closet of the Marsten House. Mears believes he hallucinated this horrible scene, but he wants to explore why it happened, why this house prompted him to imagine evil. What Mears finds when he returns to the Lot is that the Marsten House is now occupied by another stranger, our Mr. Barlow. As the known gives way to the unknown, King shows how the small-town insistence on maintaining the illusion of tranquility makes easy pickings for a vampire intent on fomenting a little evil. If *'Salem's Lot* were just

another old-fashioned vampire novel, it would portray a straightforward struggle between good (people) and bad (vampires). It would not portray the arrival of vampires in the Lot as a kind of supernatural manifestation of the town's distorted sense of itself. King feels both affection for and anger toward his small town. A part of him wants to see 'Salem's Lot get its comeuppance, and this part gives the novel a degree of frisson that most vampire stories lack. And yet, in the end, the vampires don't win, at least not exactly. Yes, Ben Mears pounds a stake in Barlow's heart, but that isn't enough. The evil continues to thrive. The town needs its own stake. Writers of every kind—from Nathaniel Hawthorne to Grace Metalious to John Updike to Carolyn Chute—have wrestled with their mixed feelings about the small towns of New England. But it took Stephen King to burn one down. --Bill Ott

Review

"Spine-tingling fiction at its best." --*Grand Rapids Press*

"A master storyteller." --*The Los Angeles Times*

"An unabashed chiller." --*Austin American Statesman*

"[The] most wonderfully gruesome man on the planet." —*USA Today*

"A super exorcism...tremendous." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"A novel of chilling, unspeakable evil." —*Chattanooga Times*

"[King is] . . . the guy who probably knows more about scary goings-on in confined, isolated places than anybody since Edgar Allan Poe." —*Entertainment Weekly*

"Stephen King has built a literary genre of putting ordinary people in the most terrifying situations. . . . he's the author who can always make the improbable so scary you'll feel compelled to check the locks on the front door." —*The Boston Globe*

"Peerless imagination." —*The Observer* (London)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gail Rodriguez:

Here thing why this specific 'Salem's Lot are different and trusted to be yours. First of all reading a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content than it which is the content is as delightful as food or not. 'Salem's Lot giving you information deeper including different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no e-book that similar with 'Salem's Lot. It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your current eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is possibly can be happened around you. It is easy to bring everywhere like in park your car, café, or even in your method home by train. Should you be having difficulties in bringing the printed book maybe the form of 'Salem's Lot in e-book can be your substitute.

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Kathryn Robinson:

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Sandra Vincent:

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