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KING

*A Critical Companion*

Sharon A. Russell

# Stephen King: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

By Sharon A. Russell

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## Stephen King: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers) By Sharon A. Russell

One of the most prolific and popular contemporary novelists, Stephen King has a devoted following of captivated readers. This is the first critical work on King to examine his most recent novels, *Dolores Claiborne*, *Insomnia*, and *Rose Madder*, and to analyze the many threads of his fiction in a way that is accessible to young adults and general readers. It is designed to help the reader understand the carefully organized narrative structure of his novels, the relation of his fiction to the horror and science fiction genres and to each other, character development, and stylistic and thematic concerns that recur and evolve throughout his work. Following a biographical chapter that links his life to the development of his fiction, Russell offers an overview chapter on all his novels. Individual chapters examine nine representative novels: in addition to the three mentioned above, Russell examines *Salem's Lot*, *The Shining*, *The Stand*, *The Dark Half*, *The Dark Tower III: The Waste Lands*, and *Needful Things*. A complete bibliography of all Stephen King's work, critical sources, and a listing of reviews of the novels examined in depth complete the work.

Each chapter deals with one novel and includes sections on plot and narrative structure, character development, and thematic concerns. While concentrating on the elements of each novel, Russell also draws comparisons to other novels in King's canon and points out their developmental relationship. She shows how King uses horror, science fiction, and suspense to explore human relationships, how he expands traditional approaches to genre by combining elements of the various genres in his fiction, and how he has continued to grow as an artist throughout his career. Each novel is also examined from an alternative critical approach, which offers the reader an additional perspective from which to read it. Because it is the only critique of King to deal with his recent novels and has been designed for young adults and general readers, this critical companion will be a key purchase for school and public libraries.

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