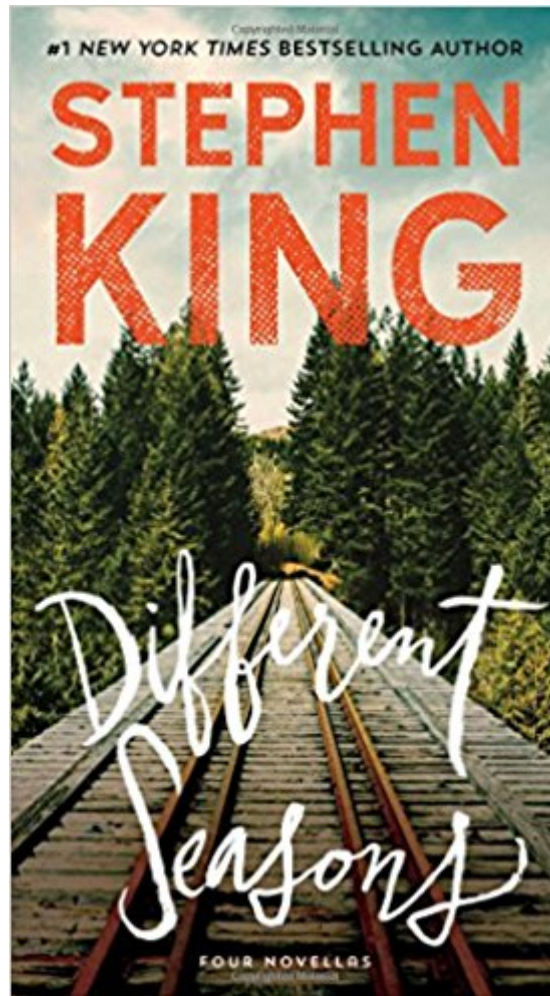




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# Different Seasons: Four Novellas



## Synopsis

A "hypnotic" (The New York Times Book Review) collection of four novellas "including the inspirations behind the films *Stand By Me* and *The Shawshank Redemption*" from Stephen King, bound together by the changing of seasons, each taking on the theme of a journey with strikingly different tones and characters. This gripping collection begins with "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption," in which an unjustly imprisoned convict seeks a strange and startling revenge "the basis for the Best Picture Academy Award-nominee *The Shawshank Redemption*. Next is "Apt Pupil," the inspiration for the film of the same name about top high school student Todd Bowden and his obsession with the dark and deadly past of an older man in town. In "The Body," four rambunctious young boys plunge through the facade of a small town and come face-to-face with life, death, and intimations of their own mortality. This novella became the movie *Stand By Me*. Finally, a disgraced woman is determined to triumph over death in "The Breathing Method." "The wondrous readability of his work, as well as the instant sense of communication with his characters, are what make Stephen King the consummate storyteller that he is," hailed the *Houston Chronicle* about *Different Seasons*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*Different Seasons* (1982) is a collection of four novellas, markedly different in tone and subject, each on the theme of a journey. The first is a rich, satisfying, nonhorrific tale about an innocent man who carefully nurtures hope and devises a wily scheme to escape from prison. The second

concerns a boy who discards his innocence by enticing an old man to travel with him into a reawakening of long-buried evil. In the third story, a writer looks back on the trek he took with three friends on the brink of adolescence to find another boy's corpse. The trip becomes a character-rich rite of passage from youth to maturity. These first three novellas have been made into well-received movies: "Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption" into Frank Darabont's 1994 *The Shawshank Redemption* (available as a screenplay, a DVD film, and an audiocassette), "Apt Pupil" into Bryan Singer's 1998 film *Apt Pupil* (also released in 1998 on audiocassette), and "The Body" into Rob Reiner's *Stand by Me* (1986). The final novella, "Breathing Lessons," is a horror yarn told by a doctor, about a patient whose indomitable spirit keeps her baby alive under extraordinary circumstances. It's the tightest, most polished tale in the collection. --Fiona Webster --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Triumphant ... Stephen King remains a master New York Times An incredibly gifted writer Guardian  
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I am (re)reading King's works in chronological order. I read this book when it first came out. Up to this point in his career he had proven he was a master of genre fiction, even including the Bachman books which though not horror are still various genres. Here King now turns his hand to straight fiction with four novellas within this collection, bringing some of his finest work to date and proving that he can write pure fiction, even "literature". Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption - This story is the narrative of a lifer at the prison called Shawshank. Shortly after he is incarcerated along comes a new inmate named Andy Dufresne. Andy has a huge impact on our narrator and he tells us Andy's story along with what life is like inside a maximum security prison. A gritty dramatic prison tale that held me fast from beginning to end. (5/5) Apt Pupil - This gets close to what we've come to expect from King. Not a horror story, by any means but a thriller; a psychological thriller. I couldn't quite remember this story at first but it all came rushing back as I started to read. A 14 yob is fascinated with the death camps of the Holocaust and after some detective work finds out a neighbourhood man is an SS Nazi in hiding, blackmails the man into telling him all about the details of what really happened at the camps and the two form a respect/hate relationship that lasts for the rest of their lives until what drew them together pulls them apart with vengeance. A bit hard to read at times (these are sick individuals) but an unputdownable read! (5/5) The Body - I was looking forward to re-reading this one the most as "Stand By Me" is one of my all-time favourite movies that

I've seen many times. I know the story impressed me the first time but upon re-reading, I find the movie is too firmly stuck in my mind. The story is, of course, good but it is very long and very retrospective more than having action. We are a party to the narrator's thoughts and this is truly a piece of literary coming of age work. I'm glad to have read it again and feel nostalgic and melancholy afterwards but, as I've said, the movie remains foremost in my mind. I could not help but picture the actors, especially Kiefer Sutherland and Corey Feldman. Feldman's character Teddy is quite different in the story and it was hard for me to reconcile the two. Vern, Jerry O'Connell's character, is completely re-written so him I didn't picture plus he is the least dominant character in the story, whereas he has an equal role in the movie. This story has tie-ins to the Stephen King universe with Sheriff Bannerman being mentioned a couple of times, only since this takes place in the fifties he is only a Constable at this point and Shawshank prison (from the first story in this book) is now part of canon, being mentioned twice. (5/5)

The Breathing Method - This is the only story from this collection that I didn't remember at first and the re-read didn't bring it back to mind either. So it felt new to me. This is a tale of the macabre and the closest to what we would expect from King, in this collection. It is also the weakest, in my opinion. It's firstly, a story of a men's club where they gather and tells stories, sometimes scary but not always, though Christmas is always an unusual or weird tale. There is something unsettling about this club and our narrator at times tries to discover what it is but never has the nerve to fully go all the way, realizing, as we do, that he is better off not knowing the club, the host and the house's secrets. Secondly, the story narrates a tale one icy, stormy Christmas of a young pregnant woman who dies in an horrific accident on the day she goes into labour. I actually found this boring at times, way too much time was spent on describing "The Breathing Method" otherwise known as Lamaze that it felt scholarly. My least favourite story in the book. (3/5)

Stephen King deserves 5 stars purely for the excellence of his writing -- far better than many Nobel prize winners! In these four novellas it was often more his compelling style which made it impossible to put the book down, rather than the story itself. For example, the 1st story, "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" was actually a bit long-winded, but again, I was glued to the pages. Not many writers can do that as far as I'm concerned. I confess I did not read more than about 10 pages of "Apt Pupil", because -- and this is just me -- I am rather sick of WWII and the Nazis. "The Body" was, I believe, made into the film "Stand by Me". I saw the film but it was long ago and the story is far better than the film. No, not much happens, but it's an excellent tale of a kind of coming-of-age of young boys. The descriptions and the characters were wonderful. King makes you feel as if you are

there with them -- and I am across the pond in another country. I'm also a grandmother, yet I was one of that gang of little boys! "The Breathing Method" had a rather yucky ending. With this story, I was hoping (in vain) for some more, maybe scary, info on that very peculiar "gentlemen's club", which wasn't even a club. It never came. In fact in the three stories I read there wasn't really any spooks or horror, but all who enjoy excellent writing and characterization should read "Different Seasons."

"Different Seasons" is a collection of four Stephen King novellas. I'll review them independently. 1. "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption". This is almost exactly like the great movie. Very few details differ. And like the movie, it's beautiful, sad, moving, uplifting... and all that. 10/10. 2. "Apt Pupil". This has also been made into a movie. The movie, despite having the great Ian McKellen, is decent but much different than the book in many critical ways. The written story is amazing. It's a unique, scary, disturbing tale about a young boy who discovers that the old man in the neighborhood is a Nazi war criminal. What happens after that is a total trip. My only complaint is that some of it seems awfully far fetched. 9/10. 3. "The Body". This was also made into a movie, and one of the best I've ever seen, "Stand By Me." There is very little difference between book and movie, and that's a good thing. When reading the story, I was struck at how absolutely perfectly... I mean PERFECTLY... Stand By Me was cast. Such a cool but sad story. 10/10. 4. "The Breathing Method". Strange and interesting, but ultimately very unsatisfying. Easily my least favorite of the bunch. I read that they are also making a movie out of this one! Although I can tell you now, the movie will be terrible unless they modify the story somehow. 5.5/10. Overall rating for the book: 9/10.

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