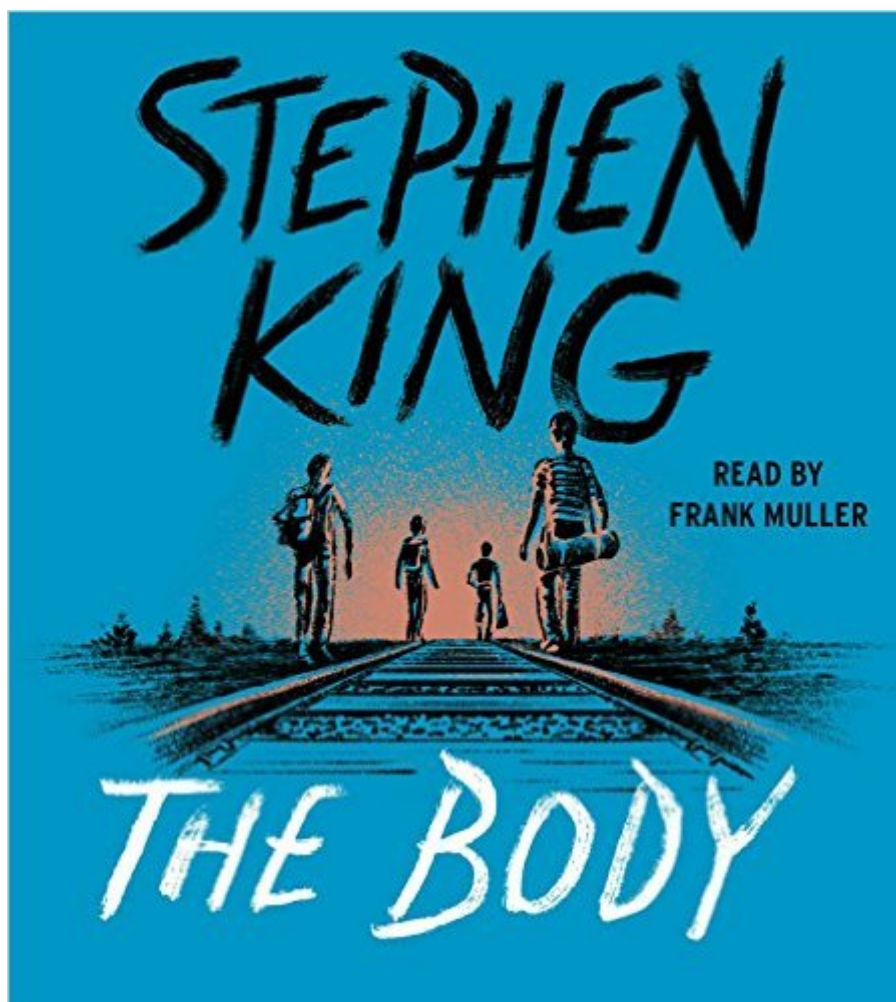


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The Body



Synopsis

Stephen King's short story "The Body" which became the film *Stand By Me* from the collection *Different Seasons* is now an Encore stand-alone CD. 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.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #115,069 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (K) > King, Stephen #10 in Books > Books on CD > Horror #103 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged

Customer Reviews

"The Body" is a novella (shorter than a novel and longer than a short story), and was originally published as one of four novellas in the collection "Different Seasons" (1982). The book "Different Seasons" contains one story for each season, and "The Body" is subtitled "Fall from Innocence". In "The Body" we are in the company of four 12-year-old boys who are very good friends. The leader of the group is Chris, a tough but smart guy from a down-and-out family with a drunken father. Chris is trying to break out of the destiny his background is forcing him into, and he's the real hero of the story. Gordie is more the intellectual and sensitive type and is second in command in the group. Gordie tells the story in the first person and sounds very much like Stephen King's alter ego. (The adult Gordie, in writing the story, tells briefly how he has become a successful writer of horror books.) The last two members of the group are Teddy, the wild one, and Vern, the cautious one. Neither Vern nor Teddy are leaders but they are each very unique and real boys, and almost as important to the story as Chris and Gordie. Chris, Gordie, Teddy and Vern set out on an adventure, a "pilgrimage" to see the dead body of a boy from another town. Their trek stretches out over two days, much longer than they expected, and involves several unexpected encounters and dangerous

situations. What makes "The Body" such a wonderful story is the way we can relate to these four boys and their lives and the way they interact with each other. Stephen King does a fantastic job of writing about people in a way that makes them seem completely real and authentic. We think back to our own childhood and the struggles and the friendships and the pain of growing up.

A fall from innocence is exactly what four adolescents experience, in *The Body*. This novella by Stephen King was originally published in *Different Seasons* along with three other novellas. This novella is a great read for all teens and even adults. It is an intriguing tale about Gordie Lachance, a twelve year old boy, who feels like he is the "Invisible Man" to his family (King 310).

Gordie's friends are described as "a thief and two feeps" by Gordie's father (King 309). Gordie and his three friends are all misfits and come from families that are uninterested in their well being, and instead find support through their friendship with one another. Gordie, Chris, Teddy, and Vern go on an adventure to find the body of a young boy who was hit by a train, and died in the woods. When Vern asks "You guys want to go see a dead body?" it obviously spikes the adolescents attention, and gets them thinking about life and its meaning (King 299). The theme of this novella is described throughout the boys entire journey to find the body Ray Brower. King shows that you can't hold on to innocence when society is corrupt and untrustworthy. The adolescents discover that bad things are a reality and that they can happen to anyone, even them. While on the adventure Gordie sees a deer early in the morning while all the others are asleep. The deer symbolizes innocence, and the good that is still left in the world. The narrator of the story is Gordie as an adult, telling the story of his summer in 1960. King's quality of writing is excellent and the tone of the novella is serious and is somewhat looking back in awe. On this journey they uncover how cruel the world can be, but also how miraculous. In the novella King quotes the bible saying, "In the midst of life, we are in death" (King 343).

I had just finished *Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption* by Stephen King and liked it so much that I decided to read some more of his work. *Apt Pupil*, which I won't review, came next and then *The Body*, which I liked well enough to recommend to readers who are interested in a well told coming of age story. Gordie Lachance, a twelve year old from a lower class family living in small town Maine, tells the story. Gordie is a great story teller; his friends often ask him to share with them his latest tall tale or horror story. Stephen King knows this character well and enjoys using him to share with us an exciting adventure Gordie has with three other of his friends. We find out right at the beginning of the story that a young lad has been hit by a train, killed, and the body as yet is

undiscovered by the authorities. Gordie's friend Vern overhears his older brother tell a friend where the body is located; Vern shares this information with Gordie and the other two friends who all decide to head up the railroad tracks and find the body for themselves. The adventure begins. All the boys are lower class and all have problems. Starting with Gordie, it appears that his parents loved his older brother Dennis, who died before the story begins, and now appear to be indifferent to Gordie or anything he does. Chris Chambers is Gordie's best friend. Chris comes from a very poor family living on the wrong side of the tracks. Chris's Dad is a drunk and beats Chris, often for no good reason. Poor Teddy is the worst off of the four friends. His father deliberately burned Teddy's ears on the stove and then the father was committed to a mental institution. Sadly, Teddy is in need of serious psychiatric help himself.

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