



Needful Things: A Novel

By Stephen King

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Needful Things: A Novel By Stephen King

Now available for the first time in a mass-market premium paperback edition—master storyteller Stephen King presents the classic #1 *New York Times* bestseller about a mysterious store than can sell you whatever you desire—but not without exacting a terrible price in return.

“There are two prices for this. Half...and half. One half is cash. The other is a deed. Do you understand?”

The town of Castle Rock, Maine has seen its fair share of oddities over the years, but nothing is a peculiar as the little curio shop that’s just opened for business. Its mysterious proprietor, Leland Gaunt, seems to have something for everyone out on display at Needful Things...interesting items that run the gamut from worthless to priceless. Nothing has a price tag in this place, but everything is certainly for sale. The heart’s desire for any resident of Castle Rock can easily be found among the curiosities...in exchange for a little money and—at the specific request of Leland Gaunt—a whole lot of menace against their fellow neighbors. Everyone in town seems willing to make a deal at Needful Things, but the devil is in the details. And no one takes heed of the little sign hanging on the wall: *Caveat emptor*. In other words, let the buyer beware...

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Needful Things: A Novel By Stephen King Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #23857 in Books
- Published on: 2016-05-03
- Released on: 2016-05-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.50" h x 1.60" w x 4.13" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
- 960 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

With the "Last Castle Rock Story" King bids a magnificent farewell to the fictional Maine town where much of his previous work has been set. Of grand proportion, the novel ranks with King's best, in both plot and characterization. A new store, Needful Things, opens in town, and its proprietor, Leland Gaunt, offers seemingly unbeatable (read: Faustian) bargains to Castle Rock's troubled citizens. Among them are Polly Chalmers, lonely seamstress whose arthritis is only one of the physical and psychic pains she must bear; Brian Rusk, the 11-year-old boy whose mother is not precisely attentive; and Alan Pangborn, the new sheriff whose wife and son have recently died. These are only three of the half-dozen or so brilliantly drawn people met in the novel's one-month time span. As the dreams of each strikingly memorable character, major and minor, inexorably turn to nightmare, individuals and soon the community are overwhelmed, while the precise nature of Gaunt's evil thrillingly stays just out of focus. King, like Leland Gaunt, knows just what his customers want. 1.5 million first printing; BOMC main selection.

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From Kirkus Reviews

The old horrormaster in top form, this time with a demonic dealer in magic and spells selling his wares to the folks of Castle Rock, scene of several King novels including *The Dead Zone*, *Cujo*--and how many others? King locates his hokey *Our Town* in Maine, but as ever it's really Consumerville, USA, with everyone's life festooned with brand names. The cast is huge and largely grotesque, since King--wearing a tremendous cat's-smile--means to close the book on Castle Rock and blow it off the map in one of his best climaxes since *Salem's Lot*. Editing here is supreme. King braids perhaps a dozen storylines--with hardly a drop of blood spilled for the first 250 or so pages--into ever briefer takes that climax in a hurtling, storm-ripped holocaust whose symphonic energies fill the novel's last third. Perhaps only five characters stand out: Leland Gaunt, a gentlemanly stranger who opens the Needful Things curiosity shop; his first customer, Brian Rusk, 11, who sells his soul for a rare Sandy Koufax baseball card; practical Polly Chalmers, who runs the *You Sew 'n' Sew* shop, welcomes Gaunt with a devil's-food cake, and buys an amulet to relieve her arthritis; her lover, Sheriff Alan Pangborn, who buys nothing but is haunted by the driving deaths of his wife and son; and Ace Merrill, coke dealer in a bind, who becomes Gaunt's handydevil and gets to drive Gaunt's Tucker, a car that's faster than radar and uses no gas. As he has for hundreds of years, Gaunt sells citizens whatever pricks and satisfies their inmost desires. But the price dehumanizes them, and soon all the townsfolk vent their barest aggressions on each other with cleaver, knife, and gun: Gaunt even opens a sideline of automatic weapons. By novel's end, the whole town is on a hysterical, psychotic mass rampage that floods morgue and hospital with the delimbed and obliterated. Then comes the big bang. Mmmmmmmmmmm! Leland King's glee, or Steven Gaunt's, or rather--well, the author's--as he rubs his palms over his let's-blow-'em-away superclimax is wonderfully catching. (Book-of-the-Month Main Selection for Fall) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

'An incredibly gifted writer, whose writing... is so fluid that you often forget you're reading' -- Guardian 'A sophisticated literary craftsman...his work anatomises...the social fabric of small-town American life' -- Observer 'You can't help admiring King's narrative skills and his versatility as a story-teller' -- Sunday Telegraph

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jonah Masten:

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