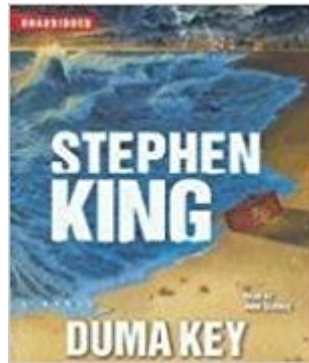


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# Duma Key: A Novel



## Synopsis

NO MORE THAN A DARK PENCIL LINE ON A BLANK PAGE. A HORIZON LINE, MAYBE. BUT ALSO A SLOT FOR BLACKNESS TO POUR THROUGH... A terrible accident takes Edgar Freemantle's right arm and scrambles his memory and his mind, leaving him with little but rage as he begins the ordeal of rehabilitation. When his marriage suddenly ends, Edgar begins to wish he hadn't survived his injuries. He wants out. His psychologist suggests a new life distant from the Twin Cities, along with something else: "Edgar, does anything make you happy?" "I used to sketch." "Take it up again. You need hedges...hedges against the night." Edgar leaves for Duma Key, an eerily undeveloped splinter of the Florida coast. The sun setting into the Gulf of Mexico calls out to him, and Edgar draws. Once he meets Elizabeth Eastlake, a sick old woman with roots tangled deep in Duma Key, Edgar begins to paint, sometimes feverishly; many of his paintings have a power that cannot be controlled. When Elizabeth's past unfolds and the ghosts of her childhood begin to appear, the damage of which they are capable is truly devastating. The tenacity of love, the perils of creativity, the mysteries of memory and the nature of the supernatural -- Stephen King gives us a novel as fascinating as it is gripping and terrifying.

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## Customer Reviews

Significant Seven, January 2008: It would be impossible to convey the wonder and the horror of Stephen King's latest novel in just a few words. Suffice it to say that Duma Key, the story of Edgar Freemantle and his recovery from the terrible nightmare-inducing accident that stole his arm and ended his marriage, is Stephen King's most brilliant novel to date (outside of the Dark Tower novels,

in which case each is arguably his best work). Duma Key is as rich and rewarding as Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption (yes, that Shawshank Redemption), and as truly scary as anything King has written (and that's saying a lot). Readers who have "always wanted to try Stephen King" but never known where to start should try a few pages of Duma Key--the frankness with which Edgar reveals his desperate, sputtering rages and thoughts of suicide is King at the top of his game. And that's just the first thirty pages... --Daphne Durham

Duma Key: Where It All Began A Note from Chuck Verrill, the Longtime Editor of Stephen King In the spring of 2006 Stephen King told me he was working on a Florida story that was beginning to grow on him. "I'm thinking of calling it Duma Key," he offered. I liked the sound of that--the title was like a drumbeat of dread. "You know how Lisey's Story is a story about marriage?" he said. "Sure," I answered. The novel hadn't yet been published, but I knew its story well: Lisey and Scott Landon--what a marriage that was. Then he dropped the other shoe: "I think Duma Key might be my story of divorce." Pretty soon I received a slim package from a familiar address in Maine. Inside was a short story titled "Memory"--a story of divorce, all right, but set in Minnesota. By the end of the summer, when Tin House published "Memory," Stephen had completed a draft of Duma Key, and it became clear to me how "Memory" and its narrator, Edgar Freemantle, had moved from Minnesota to Florida, and how a story of divorce had turned into something more complex, more strange, and much more terrifying. If you read the following two texts side by side--"Memory" as it was published by Tin House and the opening chapter of Duma Key in final form--you'll see a writer at work, and how stories can both contract and expand. Whether Duma Key is an expansion of "Memory" or "Memory" a contraction of Duma Key, I can't really say. Can you? --Chuck Verrill

"Memory" Memories are contrary things; if you quit chasing them and turn your back, they often return on their own. That's what Kamen says. I tell him I never chased the memory of my accident. Some things, I say, are better forgotten. Maybe, but that doesn't matter, either. That's what Kamen says. My name is Edgar Freemantle. I used to be a big deal in building and construction. This was in Minnesota, in my other life. I was a genuine American-boy success in that life, worked my way up like a motherf---er, and for me, everything worked out. When Minneapolis--St. Paul boomed, The Freemantle Company boomed. When things tightened up, I never tried to force things. But I played my hunches, and most of them played out well. By the time I was fifty, Pam and I were worth about forty million dollars. And what we had together still worked. I looked at other women from time to time but never strayed. At the end of our particular Golden Age, one of our girls was at Brown and the other was teaching in a foreign exchange program. Just before things went wrong, my wife and I were planning to go and visit her. I had an accident at a job site. That's what happened. I was in my pickup truck. The right

side of my skull was crushed. My ribs were broken. My right hip was shattered. And although I retained sixty percent of the sight in my right eye (more, on a good day), I lost almost all of my right arm. I was supposed to lose my life, but I didn't. Then I was supposed to become one of the Vegetable Simpsons, a Coma Homer, but that didn't happen, either. I was one confused American when I came around, but the worst of that passed. By the time it did, my wife had passed, too. She's remarried to a fellow who owns bowling alleys. My older daughter likes him. My younger daughter thinks he's a yank-off. My wife says she'll come around. Maybe, maybe not. That's what Kamen says. When I say I was confused, I mean that at first I didn't know who people were, or what had happened, or why I was in such awful pain. I can't remember the quality and pitch of that pain now. I know it was excruciating, but it's all pretty academic. Like a picture of a mountain in National Geographic magazine. It wasn't academic at the time. At the time it was more like climbing a mountain.

### Continue Reading "Memory" Duma Key

#### How to Draw a Picture

Start with a blank surface. It doesn't have to be paper or canvas, but I feel it should be white. We call it white because we need a word, but its true name is nothing. Black is the absence of light, but white is the absence of memory, the color of can't remember. How do we remember to remember? That's a question I've asked myself often since my time on Duma Key, often in the small hours of the morning, looking up into the absence of light, remembering absent friends. Sometimes in those little hours I think about the horizon. You have to establish the horizon. You have to mark the white. A simple enough act, you might say, but any act that re-makes the world is heroic. Or so I've come to believe. Imagine a little girl, hardly more than a baby. She fell from a carriage almost ninety years ago, struck her head on a stone, and forgot everything. Not just her name; everything! And then one day she recalled just enough to pick up a pencil and make that first hesitant mark across the white. A horizon-line, sure. But also a slot for blackness to pour through. Still, imagine that small hand lifting the pencil... hesitating... and then marking the white. Imagine the courage of that first effort to re-establish the world by picturing it. I will always love that little girl, in spite of all she has cost me. I must. I have no choice. Pictures are magic, as you know.

#### My Other Life

My name is Edgar Freemantle. I used to be a big deal in the building and contracting business. This was in Minnesota, in my other life. I learned that my-other-life thing from Wireman. I want to tell you about Wireman, but first let's get through the Minnesota part. Gotta say it: I was a genuine American-boy success there. Worked my way up in the company where I started, and when I couldn't work my way any higher there, I went out and started my own. The boss of the company I left laughed at me, said I'd be broke in a year. I think that's what most bosses say when some hot young pocket-rocket goes off on his own. For me, everything worked out. When

Minneapolis. St. Paul boomed, The Freemantle Company boomed. When things tightened up, I never tried to play big. But I did play my hunches, and most played out well. By the time I was fifty, Pam and I were worth forty million dollars. And we were still tight. We had two girls, and at the end of our particular Golden Age, Ilse was at Brown and Melinda was teaching in France, as part of a foreign exchange program. At the time things went wrong, my wife and I were planning to go and visit her.

Continue Reading Duma Key --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review. King's latest novel is a fantastically eerie tale in line with his best psychological thrillers. John Slattery offers a triumphal performance—his firm, gripping tone perfectly suits this story of the darker side of human memory and creativity. The characters are each so different and complicated, creating a challenge for even the most seasoned narrator. But Slattery does the near-impossible and physically becomes Edgar Freemantle. In fact, the two become so inseparable the listener almost feels guilty listening to his heartfelt confessions. King's vision of Freemantle's fictional personal memoir demands a narrator so believable and solid in his delivery that it seems almost impossible. But Slattery creates a truly moving experience, commanding and truthful.

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Of all of Stephen King's books this one was the least frightening to me at first- I thought hey this isn't so bad. It begins with a man suffering a brain injury on construction site that leaves him unable to continue, he's also seeing a therapist due to black out spells and supreme rage. His therapist suggests a change of venue might be good for him. So the man decides to move to Duma Key in Florida. When he gets there, he discovers he has an artistic talent he never had before. Okay so none of this is scary, right. Yes that is what I thought too, this book's not scary at all. But I was wrong. It just takes awhile to get there maybe about a third of the way into the book, but then oh my lord is it scary! I loved it. I don't want to give away too much of it, but let's just say when things begin to happen like herons flying upside down over one part of the island, this is a good sign of what is actually going on here. It was so suspenseful and a great story. It was really hard to put down. And now I just discovered there is a part two to Duma Key. Wow, I've got to read it. Check it out for a good read.

I wanted to write a review, because those that I read didn't touch on what I found most enjoyable. It's the characters. They're complicated, knowable, interesting, admirable: all of which makes this

one of my favorites - in any genre. I very highly recommend it. If you loved the 2 books of The Black House, you'll certainly enjoy this compelling book.

For me, King has always had great character development and a superior ability to tell a story. This book is no exception. It's scary, it's well written and it keeps you interested. My only gripe is it is a little hard to follow at times with the "How to draw a picture" chapters. However, it's still a great book.

I like painting, and I could relate to the mysticism of the art form explored here. King has explored writing more than a few times in the past, and painting is a lot like it really. With different technical aspects. The source of the muse is where supernatural comes in and that is dealt with exceptionally well. The supernatural component, though it exists throughout the book, the horror is not so on the face. Instead we get to spend a lot more time with Edgar Fremantle and wireman, two of the most colorful characters in King's universe. The rise of their friendship is palpable and lends almost a sitcom like feel-goodness to the plot, which feels surreal considering the grimness that we know is coming. The ending is sort of simplistic, but it's all right. I wish the villain was a stronger and not quite as easy to overcome. But it's a nice change to the otherwise elaborate ruses to defeat the supernatural. Overall, this is one of the better King books for me.

There was too much of 'if this person or thing had this ability why didn't they just do this?' left unexplained. Wasn't riveting and/or page turner and I enjoyed the middle of the book more than the end.

My dad bought this book when it first came out. It has been sitting on the shelf. My girlfriend had picked it out to be the next book to read by Stephen King. And let me tell you I can't thank her enough. I went on a trip and took it to read on the plane. I was hooked after the first twenty pages. Just an all around amazing story. I love the heart that he puts in it, where you just really root for the hero. And his friend is just awesome. I could almost see the paintings in my head. And he throws enough horror in it for his hardcore fans. I can't say enough about this book. Just awesome thank you Mr. King!!!!!!

I chose the book initially because it was Stephen King and for the setting. I love the Florida area, the tropical lushness so I thought it might take me away from winter while I was reading it. The story is

detailed and gripping. The characters are solid and all belong firmly where they have been placed. My criteria for a good read is one where even though I say that I am only going to read to the end of a particular section or chapter, more often than not I find myself reading on because I need to know what was coming next and this book, as do most of Kings, delivers that in spades. I power read it which is something I haven't done for a long time. All in all, if you love Mr. King, you will likely add this to the list of reasons why. A good read because it's a good story.

Hope for a few rainy days, or a case of mild flu so you can call off work for a day to read this cover to cover. I'm a King fan like so many and this book is good or better than his best from the pre-accident days. I think part of the 100 percent enjoyment I get from Duma Key is the fact I am the same age as King and really get all his historical references and observations on life. He describes one character as "on the neck wrinkled side of 50 years old". Just a few words that are so darn real. At the core, for me, the best King books are his buddy books. It's like you and your 14 year old best pal have to fight the evil monster alone and the friendship is that pure early kind of love. The characters in this book are adults, don't want to steer you wrong but that is the best way I can describe it, I'm no Stephen King. Geez I loved this book.

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