"We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones."

– Stephen King

Stephen King was born on September 21, 1947 in Portland, Maine. He graduated from the University of Maine and worked odd jobs while establishing himself as a writer. His first horror novel *Carrie*, was a huge success. He published his earlier work under the pseudonym Richard Bachman. His books have sold more than 350 million copies worldwide and have been adapted into numerous successful films.

Early Life

Born in Portland, Maine, Stephen King is one of the most famous and successful horror writers of all time. His parents split up when he was very young, and he and his brother David divided their time between Indiana and Connecticut for several years. King later moved back to Maine with his mother and brother. There he graduated from Lisbon Falls High School in 1966.

King stayed close to home for college, attending the University of Maine at Orono. There he wrote for the school's newspaper and served in its student government. King published his first short story while in college, which appeared in *Startling Mystery Stories*. After graduating with a degree in English in 1970, he tried to find a position as a teacher, but he had no luck at first. King took a job in a laundry and continued to write stories in his spare time.

King of Thrills and Chills

In 1973, King sold his first novel, *Carrie*, the tale of a tormented teen who gets her revenge. The book became a huge success after it was published the following year, allowing him to devote himself to writing full time. It later adapted for the big screen with [Sissy Spacek](http://www.biography.com/people/sissy-spacek-9542445) as the character. More popular novels soon followed, including *Salem's Lot* (1975), *The Shining* (1976), *The Stand* (1978), *Cujo* (1981) and *It* (1986). *The Shining* was made into a movie starring [Jack Nicholson](http://www.biography.com/people/jack-nicholson-9423081), and the film has become a classic horror thriller.

For much his career, King wrote novels and stories at a breakneck speed. He published several books per year for much of the 1980s and 1990s. As with his earlier works, his compelling and thrilling tales continued to be used as the basis of numerous feature and television films. Actress [Kathy Bates](http://www.biography.com/people/kathy-bates-9542641) starred in the critically and commercially successful adaptation of *Misery* in 1990. Four years later, *The Shawshank Redemption*, based on one of his stories, became another smash hit.

King continues to produce fascinating works. He has worked in television, writing for *The Dead Zone* series (based on his own novel) and for *Stephen King's Kingdom Hospital* series among other projects. King remains one of the most popular writers working today. In 2011, he published *22/11/63*, a novel involving time travel as part of an effort to stop the

assassination of President [John F. Kennedy](http://www.biography.com/people/john-f-kennedy-9362930). King has written *Joyland*, a pulp-fiction style thriller, which is set to be released in 2013. He is also working on *Doctor Sleep*, a story that explores a battle between good and evil.

Personal Life

King and his novelist wife divide their time between Florida and Maine. They have three children: Naomi Rachel, a reverend; Joseph Hillstrom, who writes under the pen name Joe Hill and is a lauded horror-fiction writer in his own right; and Owen Phillip, whose first collection of stories was published in 2005

Outside of writing, King is a music fan. He even sometimes plays guitar and sings in a band called Rock Bottom Remainders with fellow literary stars [Dave Barry](http://www.biography.com/people/dave-barry-20699073) and [Amy Tan](http://www.biography.com/people/amy-tan-9542574). The group has performed a number of times over the years to raise money for charity.

<http://www.biography.com/people/stephen-king-9365136>

What Stephen King movies have you seen?

What Stephen King books have you read?