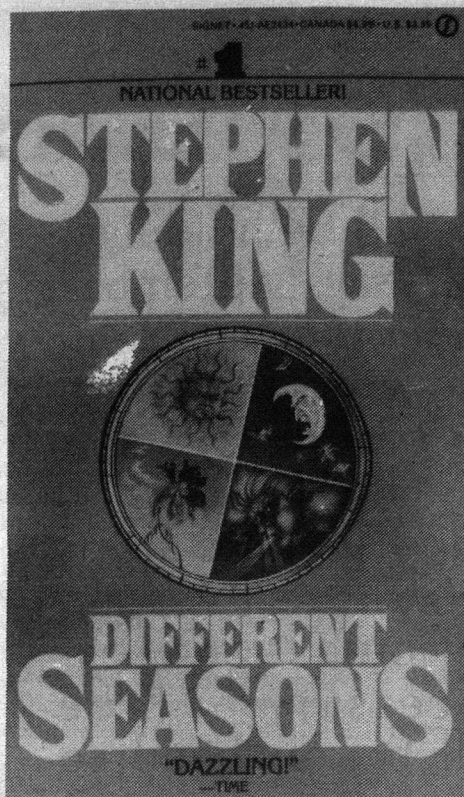


Stephen King tones down ghoulishness



Different Seasons
Stephen King
Signet, 1983

review by Greg Harris

If you're a Stephen King fan you'll probably find the recently released paperback edition of his collection of four novellas, *Different Seasons*, a departure from his earlier works. And if you've avoided King's tales of terror and dread you might wonder what all the screaming's been about.

That's not to say horror buffs should despair and the uninitiated read alone at night - there's still a healthy number of rotting corpses and things unexpectedly going "bump". However, the horrors and monstrosities King creates stem from comparatively normal occurrences: mis-

taken murder convictions (Rita Hayworth and *Shawshank Redemption*), Nazi war atrocities (*Apt Pupil*), childhood encounters with mortality (*The Breathing Method*). He's still dredging the darker catacombs of the human psyche here, but this time he's discovered lurking monsters more universally accessible than ghosts, vampires, or pissed-off telekinetic prom-queens.

The four novellas aren't quite the same adrenalin-filled, roller-coaster rides he's known for, but they're at least as compelling, and linger in the mind long after the ride is over.

The Body and *Apt Pupil* are standouts in terms of both sustained suspense and lasting impact, while *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* shines for its triumphant theme and gritty first-person prison-inmate narration. *The Breathing Method* is the shortest of the four but provokes the strongest emotional response.

While even King admits his writing is "sometimes downright clumsy", he is still an effective storyteller. He is painstakingly sensitive to the diction and nuances of the characters he creates, and his flair for conjuring up graphic visuals succeeds in this genre where more elegant prose would falter. Guess what's on the mind of this disturbed character:

How could anyone stand to eat a fried egg... What you got on your plate at the end looked like a giant dead eye with a cataract over it, an eye that would bleed orange when you poked it with a fork...

It is the tale, not he who tells it, as the reader is advised throughout the book.

King won't go down in history with Dostoevsky or Hemingway and you won't find his works on any English course lists in the near or far future. He is on top of his field, however, and that's just fine with him, as he says in the book's afterward:

"I could, for example, be an 'impor-

tant" writer like Joseph Heller and publish a novel every seven years or so, or a "brilliant" writer like John Gardner and write obscure books for bright academics who eat macrobiotic foods and drive old Saabs with faded but still legible GENE MCARTHY FOR PRESIDENT stickers on the

rear bumper... that's OK... I'll be a horror writer if that's what people want... that's just fine...

I agree, it's just fine.

Roll over, Horatio Alger

Dig these clever "punks"

Starstruck
Princess Theatre

review by Zane Harker
and Ninette Gironella

The latest effort of director Gillian Armstrong, of *My Brilliant Career* fame, is touted as a "modern new wave comedy". While *Starstruck* succeeds as a musical comedy, the music lacks the vibrancy needed to call it "new wave". While hardly a movie for die-hard punk fans, the film does provide some high energy music and choreography.

Jo Kennedy, as Jackie, and Ross O'Donovan, as Angus, deliver appropriately preposterous performances as two teenagers trying to "crack" the music industry. These two are also accomplished singers and O'Donovan, especially, displays a strong dance style.

Jackie and Angus are willing to try just about anything to get attention, including a media stunt like tightrope walking in the nude. This part of the film provides many amusing escapades, as Jackie and Angus play off each other's nutty ideas. Unfortunately, the incidental sub-plot about raising money to save Mum's pub is cliched and insufficiently developed.

The music is a strange mixture of good,

strong numbers, and campy tear-jerkers. Highlights are "Temper, Temper" - a dynamic dance number set in the Lizard Lounge; "I Want to Live in a House", a lively piece enhanced by sharp film editing; and "Tough", for its hilarious pool scene. These three numbers succeed because they are all fast paced and readily danceable/swimmable.

On the other hand, there are the agonizingly slow "My Belief in You", which is actually intended to be awful, and "Turnaround" which sounds dangerously like a top 40 song about a lovesick puppy. These two songs came one after another at what was definitely a tedious section of the film.

Fortunately, the film saves itself in the end with a rousing tune, "Monkey on My Back", a tribute to the wacky and pipedream notions that pervade the movie.

Although billed as a successor to *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Starstruck*, lacks the momentum and novelty to succeed as a cult film. Nonetheless, *Starstruck* leaves a good overall impression and should be filled instead as a "Fulfilled Musical Comedy".

If you missed *Starstruck* at the Princess Theatre, we recommend you catch it in a few weeks at the Towne Cinema.

Books should be tried by a judge and jury as though they were crimes, and counsel should be heard on both sides.

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