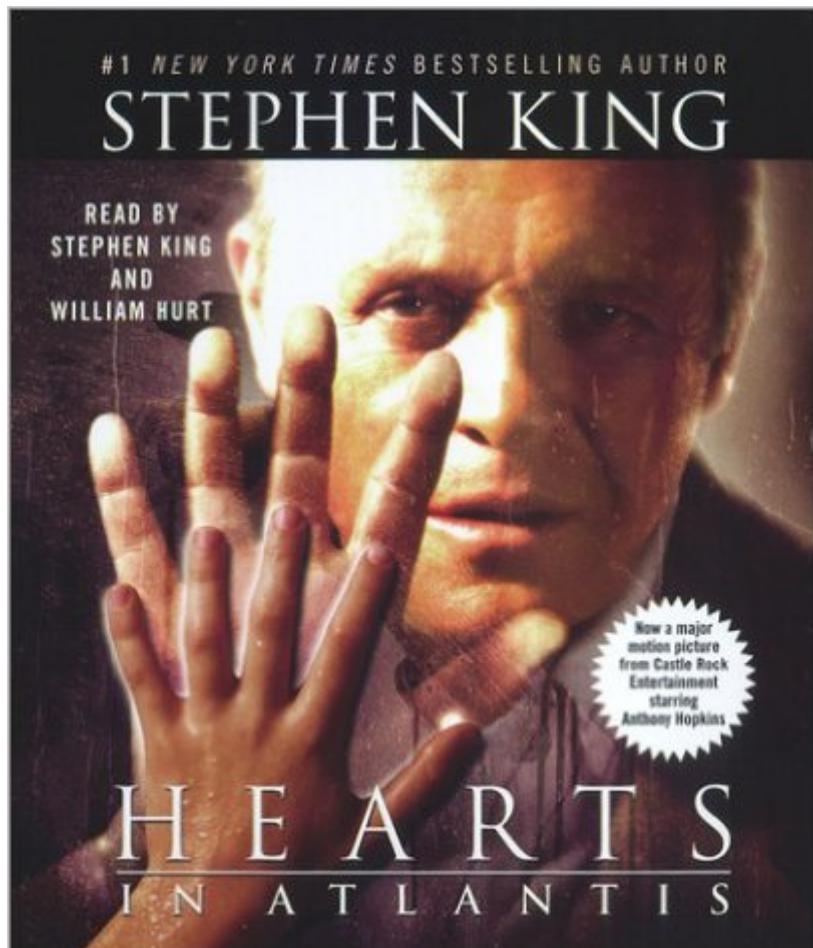


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Hearts In Atlantis



Synopsis

Stephen King, whose first novel, *Carrie*, was published in 1974, the year before the last U.S. troops withdrew from Vietnam, is the first hugely popular writer of the TV generation. Images from that war -- and the protests against it -- had flooded America's living rooms for a decade. *Hearts In Atlantis* is composed of five interconnected, sequential narratives set in the years from 1960 to 1999. Each story is deeply rooted in the sixties, and each is haunted by the Vietnam War. In "Low Men in Yellow Coats," eleven-year-old Bobby Garfield discovers a world of predatory malice in his own neighborhood and that adults are sometimes not rescuers but at the heart of the terror. In the title story, a bunch of college kids get hooked on a card game, discover the possibility of protest...and confront their own collective heart of darkness, where laughter may be no more than the thinly disguised cry of the beast. In "Blind Willie" and "Why We're in Vietnam," two men who grew up with Bobby in suburban Connecticut try to fill the emptiness of the post-Vietnam era in an America which sometimes seems as hollow and haunted as their own lives. And in "Heavenly Shades of Night Are Falling," Bobby returns to his hometown where one final secret, and his heart's desire may await him. Full of danger, suspense, and full of heart, *Hearts In Atlantis* takes some listeners to a place they have never been...and others to a place they have never been able to completely leave.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In his final novel of the 1990s, Stephen King has shut the door on his normal assortment of nightmares and created a series of stories that deals with another kind of horror. In *Hearts in*

Atlantis, King writes about loss of innocence, struggles of conscience, and the Vietnam war. The first thing readers will notice is that *Hearts in Atlantis* is not a novel, but five stories. The first two are long novellas (which together constitute 400 pages), while the last story is a mere 13 pages long. But all of the stories are interconnected, spanning the lives of four Connecticut youths from their pre-teens in 1960 to 1999. The first story, "Low Men in Yellow Coats," is traditional King. In fact, the story is something of a companion piece to King's popular *Dark Tower* series. Here the reader is introduced to three kids, Bobby Garfield, Carol Gerber, and John "Sully-John" Sullivan. Although it doesn't deal directly with the Vietnam war, it helps set the backdrop for the stories that follow. In the summer of 1960, eleven year-old Bobby takes first steps out of childhood innocence. He begins to see the evil of which men are truly capable, a parallel to the book *Lord of the Flies*, given to him by his new neighbor Ted Brautigan. But the old man has another kind of evil chasing him. The "low men" are tracking Ted and want him to return to their world, a place where "All things serve the Crimson King." "Hearts in Atlantis," the second story, changes to a first-person narrative. Pete Riley, a freshman at the University of Maine, and his friends become obsessed with the card game *Hearts*. Many jeopardize their grades and thus their scholarships as a result, but the real threat is greater than flunking out.

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