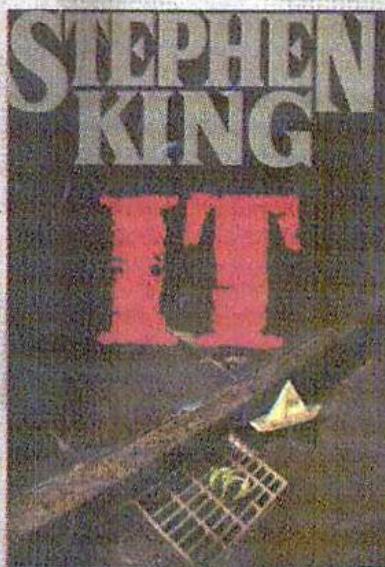


It

*In a crooked little town,
They were lost and never found*

~ Billy Talent

REMEMBER when you were a kid, those fragile, insecure years when once the lights went off at night, the bedroom became a scary place, with monsters under the bed, and in the closet? Remember the little things that seemed so scary, like spiders, or the sight of blood, or maybe a horror movie character that really crepted you out when you were young? Sometimes you outgrow these fears as you get older; sometimes they stay with you, developing into those crazy quirks of personality that make you who you are. That's pretty much the concept behind the Bogart, mentioned in the Harry Potter series. Everyone has his personal Bogart.



When it comes to unleashing that wild animal called fear, no one does it better than Stephen King. We were discussing Bogarts over iftar not too long ago, and I made an offhand comment about psychotic clowns. "Read *It*" Kazim tells me, popping a slice of pizza into his mouth. "You'll never see clowns in the same light again," Tareq intones from beside me. The sheer novelty of having those two agree on a subject was enough to pique my interest, and so I managed to bully one of them into lending me a copy.

The story is centred around a small town called Derry in Maine, where evil things happen on a regular basis; suicides, murders, accidents, kidnappings and more. More often than not, the victims are children and young people. For as long as the town had been there, every time a tragedy of that sort happened, a clown by the name of Pennywise was sure to be present at the scene. This was *It*, the sum of all that was wrong with the town.

Seven children, each eleven years old, all outcasts in their own weird ways, came together, forming a fellowship called the Losers and managed to survive *It*. Shortly afterwards, six of them left, scattered across the globe, and managed to rise to fame and prosperity in their own fields. Suddenly, two and a half-decades later, the seventh Loser contacted the other six with the chilling news that *It* was back. In order to honour a long-ago, half-forgotten promise, they come flying back to Derry, where it all began, for one last showdown.

A large portion of the story is told in flashbacks, flying back and forth across the years, and for the most part, the story is actually nostalgic, not scary. King makes a critical study of a child's world, the cares and concerns that constitute an eleven year old's life.

King's characters are multi-layered and believable, and this particularly rings true for his child characters, as seen in his short stories like *The Body*. Even the villains and minor characters are richly detailed, and somehow seem very real, whether they're zombies or giant birds, or psychotic clowns.

Even aside from the gritty, down-to-earth nature of even the most bizarre of King's work, what's really admirable about the author is how he experiments with different literary techniques, while at the same time, maintaining a very distinct, flamboyant style.

Do you really need another reason to go read the book?

By Sabrina F Ahmad
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LOVE is a gift from God, there is no denying that fact. But how exactly do you describe this unique gift? Or, for that matter, what really is the power of true love? These are the questions that have baffled people for generations and will continue to do so in the future. Being no 'Hitch' (as in the movie) I hardly ever bothered to indulge myself into figuring out solutions to love related stuff. However, I had recently started to give it a bit of a thought and I was frankly amazed to deduce the wonderful impact that love has had on my life.

To start off, I have been in love with this girl for quite a while now. She is the only person that I have ever fallen in love with (of course I did have a few crushes here and there but that is not what you call love) and so it is no surprise that I consider her to be my soul mate. Though we love each other very much, the harsh reality is that we don't get to see each other very often. The reason is, well let me put it this way, we kind of live far away from each other. You guys may be wondering how on earth this relationship is working out! Well, this is exactly where the power of love comes in. We may be far apart but love helps to bridge the gap and keep us together. Not only that, it actually influenced my life so much that I am a completely different person from what I used to be.

Even a few months back, I was a person who had no real self-belief and ambition in life. I always tried to duck away from challenges thrown at me, used to indulge myself unnecessarily into wrong-doings and what not. However, everything changed for good, once she came into my life. I started to feel myself as being more of a confident, determined and responsible individual. Even when we are not in each other's company, the supernatural force that binds us together seems to guide me through even the most difficult of circumstances. For instance, I used to suffer a lot from stage fright, which usually resulted in me forgetting my lines and feeling embarrassed. Nowadays, the scenario is quite different. Every time I go on stage, her

The Power of True Love



sweet voice echoes in my ears, "You can do this, it's no big deal!" Amazingly, those magic words do the trick each and every time. My heart beat returns back to normal, my legs stop shaking and all of a sudden everything about me seems to ooze with a new found confidence. Love really does have magical attributes attached to it!

The power of love doesn't end there. True love brings one closer to God, which is something I firmly believe in. It makes me more appreciative of all the good things that God has given us and it enables me to look at life from a totally different perspective. Furthermore, love has propelled me to scale new heights even in my studies. In fact, her love and belief in me acts as a constant

source of inspiration in my daily life. I feel the least I can do in return, is to keep her happy, so that one can always see the lovely smile on her face that attracted me to her in the first place.

Well, there will always be people who take love for granted and don't view it as seriously as it is meant to be. For them, I have nothing much to say really, except for the fact that they are probably misusing the best gift they will ever receive on earth. One of my friends once told me that true love is ephemeral. I strongly disagree with him on this issue. From my viewpoint, true love is eternal and it is the power of love that makes it everlasting. BELIEVE IN THAT!!!

By T.Z. Charlie

Peace

MY mind raced, like that of a dying man. My life flashed before my eyes. I put the cell phone back in my pocket.

"Honey, I have a meeting," she said "I'll miss dinner tonight."

I walked out of her office. She was not there.

I walked alongside the bridge, glancing down into the icy calmness of the river. It seemed to sing a siren's song, trying to lure me into its watery depths. The relief of death almost seemed too tempting. But there was one last thing I needed to do.

When she came home, she hugged me, and kissed me lightly on the cheek. There



was no warmth in either, and she still had the scent of men's cologne on her.

My eyes shot open. It was two in the

morning. I slowly tiptoed down into the kitchen. The doors refused to creak, the silence forgot to buzz. Only a terminal nothingness seemed to fill the air. I took a knife and slowly walked back to the bedside, my mind torn asunder by the unbearable skirmish between love and hate.

"I love you," I said.

"Mmm. I love you too, go back to sleep." I kissed her again on the cheek and ran the long blade straight through her heart. She let out a small gasp, but was silenced the moment after. I didn't have to endure the pain for long, for I was next. I stabbed myself, blissfully; as I thought, "Nobody, nobody shall love her except me." I fell on top of her. The process was messy, but silent. As I drew my last breath, I felt a drop of tear slip out.

It rolled down her cheek.

By Hu and Crimson Devastation

A piece of paradise

*"To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour."*

-William Blake



SOMETIMES when I come out of my room, tired of everything and intent on being alone with nature, a strange sense of sadness engulfs me. I look at the purple-blue canvas of the sky and wonder how many

other people across nations, across seas, across the globe are looking at it, at the same moment with the same dreams in their eyes. As stray raindrops tickle my face and neon lights across the roads flicker to life, I watch the swallows in flight and breathe in the irresistible smell of fresh soaked earth. Then it strikes me that maybe I don't feel sad at all. Maybe what I feel is the misinterpreted lost sense of peace that is so difficult to identify these days. And then I realize, this is it. This is paradise.

Paradise is the joy of a sunrise. Paradise is the smile of a child and the warmth of love. Paradise is an ice cream on a hot summer's day and the solace of a prayer and the unity of a nation. Paradise is the power of a dream; because you don't need to wait a whole lifetime just to die for a glimpse of paradise. All you need to do is live. Live for yourself and live for others - just let go and live.

They say the best things in life are free. The smallest things are what make life worth it, worth all the hassles and worries of a lifetime. One moment can be what one lifetime is not.

Paradise is all around us, eluding us, delighting in a game of hide-and-seek, waiting to be discovered. We just don't see it because we don't look hard enough.

By Anika Tabassum



**Give it to me straight Doc.
Is it serious?**

Hellish experience

As the lawyer slowly came out of the anesthesia after surgery, he said, "Why are all the blinds drawn, doctor?" "There's a big fire across the street," the doctor replied.

"We didn't want you to think the operation had been a failure."