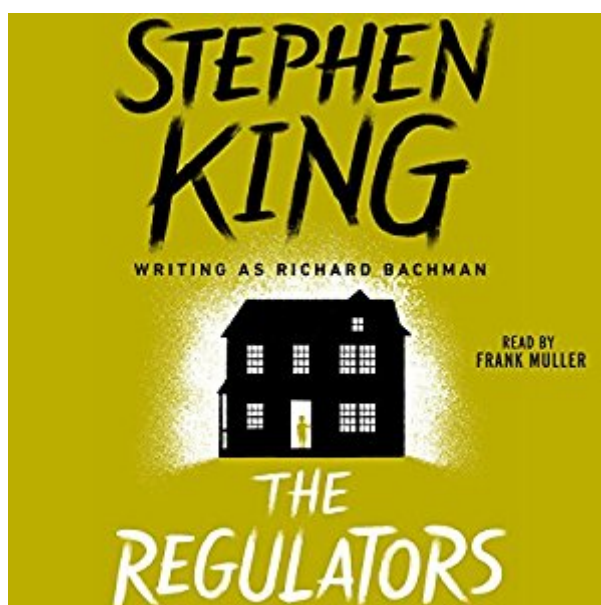


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# The Regulators



## Synopsis

The battle against evil has begun in this "devishly entertaining" (Publishers Weekly) story of a suburban neighborhood in the grip of surreal terror - a number-one national best seller from Stephen King writing as Richard Bachman. Peaceful suburbia on Poplar Street in Wentworth, Ohio, takes a turn for the ugly when four vans containing armed "regulators" terrorize the street's residents, cold-bloodedly killing anyone foolish enough to step outside their homes. Houses mysteriously transform into log cabins, and the street now ends in what looks like a child's hand-drawn Western landscape. Masterminding this sudden onslaught is the evil creature Tak, who has taken over the body of an autistic eight-year-old boy, Seth Garin. "A rip-roaringly violent thriller whose main action takes place in little more than an hour and a half" (Booklist), *The Regulators* features an introduction by Stephen King on "The Importance of Being Bachman".

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Our resident master of horror, Stephen King, chalked up another first with the simultaneous 1996 publication of two huge grisly page turners, "Desperation", and under the pseudonym of "the late" Richard Bachman, "The Regulators." A juxtaposition of the two covers reveals one picture - a menacing suburban landscape overlapping a western ghost town overrun with critters. But the two novels (almost 1200 pages of late nights and disturbing dreams) are each complete in themselves. "Desperation" is set in a tiny Nevada mining town of the same name and "The Regulators" takes place on one block of an Ohio suburb. What the two novels share is their characters and the same elemental evil force, Tak, which has escaped from a deep mine

shaft. Although King has saved himself some work here - the characters have essentially the same personalities and backgrounds in both books - neither book provides a clue to anyone's fate in the other. The books are not sequential but alternate versions, alternate lives. In "Desperation" the characters are assembled by Collie Entragian, an outsize cop whose initially strange mix of friendliness and menace is eerily chilling. Apparently at random, he stops passing motorists and carries them off to jail. Some, however, don't make it all the way to jail, and it gradually becomes clear that Entragian has murdered everyone in town. But something weird is happening to the cop, too. He is literally and gorily falling apart. In "The Regulators" the characters are already assembled as neighbors on Poplar Street. Their glorious summer day is shattered by the arrival of a crayon red van and its armed driver.

I read more than 75 novels each year and have read most of King's stuff. Obviously, with so much output from one writer, there are bound to be hits and misses. This one was a miss, in my opinion but there is still enough here to make it worth the read. I had already read Desperation, the companion book to this volume, and came away with the feeling that I had just experienced a pretty good King novel. It also was far from his best but I enjoyed it none-the-less. So, naturally, I turned to this book, The Regulators, hoping for a similar experience. Stephen King is well known for marketing gimmickry, pushing the envelope in the publishing business. At first it was through using brand names without permission. Then it was the alternate ego, Richard Bachman, followed by the serial novel (Green Mile) and now it is a "dual novel." Frankly, I don't think it worked this time. I just couldn't get the parallel between the two books/settings. Same names but different people and places. What was the point? Really, they are two separate books. In this novel, King definitely displays his famous talent for scene setting. The opening chapter is one of the best I've read, setting the stage for the coming horror. The plot was also pretty good, although the evil 'Tak' seemed somewhat ordinary. King uses a great mechanism to deliver the horror this time. The manifestation of the mind of a small autistic boy. The horrors come in the form of all of those things that frighten young children and, consequently, frighten us. The text is sprinkled throughout with other tidbits as well that help to tell the story: letters, postcards, diary entries, even a script. Another King tool to attack from all directions. But somehow, it didn't all flow well together.

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