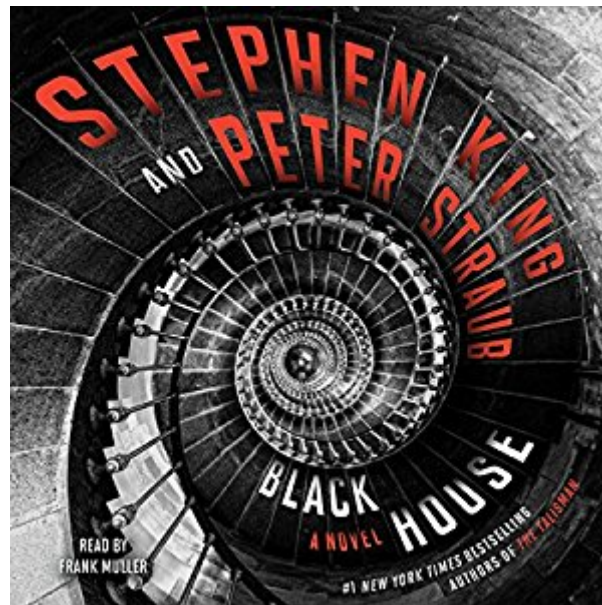


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# Black House



## Synopsis

Twenty years ago, a boy named Jack Sawyer traveled to a parallel universe called the Territories to save his mother and her "Twiner" from an agonizing death that would have brought cataclysm to the other world. Now Jack is a retired Los Angeles homicide detective living in the nearly nonexistent hamlet of Tamarack, Wisconsin. He has no recollection of his adventures in the Territories, and he was compelled to leave the police force when a happenstance event threatened to awaken those long suppressed and dangerous memories. When a series of gruesome murders occur in western Wisconsin that are reminiscent of those committed several decades earlier, Jack's buddy, the local chief of police, begs Jack to help find the killer. But are these new killings merely the work of a disturbed individual, or has a mysterious and malignant force been unleashed in this quiet town? What causes Jack's inexplicable waking dreams - if that is what they are - of robins' eggs and red feathers? As these cryptic messages becomes impossible to ignore, Jack is drawn back to the Territories and to his own hidden past.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was extremely excited when I first heard this book was being released, but as the release date grew closer I began to have feelings of trepidation. The Talisman has been one of my favorite books since it was released when I was fourteen. Jack Sawyer has always been one of my favorite of Stephen King's characters (ok, I realise that this is a collaboration, but I tend to view it as more of a Stephen King creation. This is probably grossly unfair to Peter Straub, but there you have it.)My

great fear was that I wouldn't like Jack as an adult. That there was no way that these two could top the marvelous quest that was *The Talisman*. Then I heard that *Black House* would be tied into the *Dark Tower* series. I wasn't sure how to feel about this either. While I feel that the *Dark Tower* will prove to be the greatest of Stephen King's works, I have always viewed *The Talisman* as something altogether separate, and magical. My trepidation increased. Then I decided to just let it go, made a conscious effort to view *Black House* as something unto itself, to not hold it up to the *Talisman*, or anything else for comparison. I am very glad I did this. I spent Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning reading this book, and let me tell you it was wonderful. Jack Sawyer, a little older, a little wiser, a little more lonely and scared, but still the boy with the good heart, grown into a man of integrity. I will not give away plot points in this review, but let me just say a couple of things. The connection to the *Dark Tower* series is done very well, revealing some important information without taking you too far afield, and making this into an actual *Dark Tower* book. It is more akin to *Insomnia* - related, but not overwhelmingly so. The characterisations in this book are wonderful.

If you're a casual Stephen King (or Peter Straub) reader, or just a fan, this book may disappoint you. Likewise if you're expecting further adventures of Jack Sawyer in the Territories. Jack spends very little time in the Territories in *Black House*, and most of that comes near the end of the book. I prepped myself for *Black House* by rereading *The Talisman*. If you're planning on doing this, too, I won't tell you to reconsider, because it's a very entertaining way to spend your time. And it can help you to understand the authors' otherwise obscure references to events of twenty years ago and their use of seemingly odd phrases like "right here and now" that appeared in the first book. But most folks can get their money's worth from *Black House* without spending a week (more or less) reading the 700+ page prequel to this novel. And if you're a hardcore horror nut, neither *Talisman* nor *House* is up your alley anyway. Another caveat: King experiments here with a different style of writing that may be off-putting to many readers. (It may not seem so different to Straub fans. I don't know; having read only *The Talisman* and *Koko*, I don't consider myself an authority on his works, but I can say I sensed more of his presence in *House* than I did in *Talisman*.) The authors use the simple present tense throughout *Black House*, and yet refer to past events in the past perfect tense, whereas simple past seems more correct to some of us English teachers. (King himself taught English before making a name for himself as a writer, so not all academicians will agree with me on this admittedly minor point.) And I found that their constant use of the first person plural, far from getting me personally involved, kept me from losing myself in the story.

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