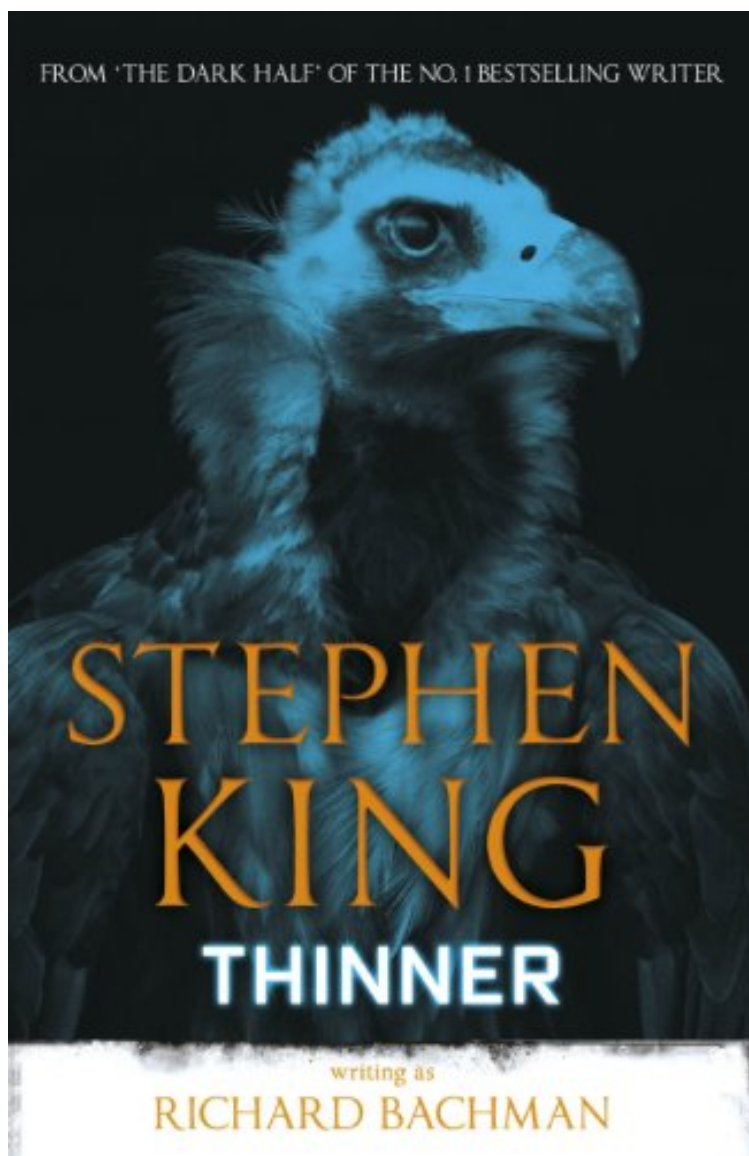


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Thinner (English Edition)



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(Free) Thinner (English Edition)

Par Richard Bachman, Stephen King : **Thinner (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thinner (English Edition):

Description : Description du produitWhen an old Gypsy man curses Billy Halleck for sideswiping his daughter, six weeks later he's 93 pounds lighter. Now Billy is terrified. And desperate enough for one last gamble...that will lead him to a nightmare showdown with the forces of evil melting his flesh away.

Prsentation de l'diteur'Thinner' - the old gypsy man barely whispers the word. Billy feels the touch of a withered hand on his cheek. 'Thinner' - the word, the old man's curse, has lodged in Billy's mind like a fattening worm, eating at his flesh, at his reason. And with his despair, comes violenceExtraitThinner CHAPTER 1 246 Thinner, the old Gypsy man with the rotting nose whispers to William Halleck as Halleck and his wife, Heidi, come out of the courthouse. Just that one word, sent on the wafting, cloying sweetness of his breath. Thinner. And before Halleck can jerk away, the old Gypsy reaches out and caresses his cheek

with one twisted finger. His lips spread open like a wound, showing a few tombstone stumps poking out of his gums. They are black and green. His tongue squirms between them and then slides out to slick his grinning, bitter lips. Thinner. This memory came back to Billy Halleck, fittingly enough, as he stood on the scales at seven in the morning with a towel wrapped around his middle. The good smells of bacon and eggs came up from downstairs. He had to crane forward slightly to read the numbers on the scale. Well... actually, he had to crane forward more than slightly. Actually he had to crane forward quite a lot. He was a big man.

Too big, as Dr. Houston delighted in telling him. In case no one ever told you, let me pass you the information, Houston had told him after his last checkup. A man of your age, income, and habits enters heart-attack country at roughly age thirty-eight, Billy. You ought to take off some weight. But this morning there was good news. He was down three pounds, from 249 to 246. Well... the scale had actually read 251 the last time he had had the courage to stand on it and take a good look, but he had had his pants on, and there had been some change in his pockets, not to mention his keyring and his Swiss army knife. And the upstairs bathroom scale weighed heavy. He was morally sure of it. As a kid growing up in New York he had heard Gypsies had the gift of prophecy. Maybe this was the proof. He tried to laugh and could only raise a small and not very successful smile; it was still too early to laugh about Gypsies. Time would pass and things would come into perspective; he was old enough to know that. But for now he still felt sick to his too-large stomach at the thought of Gypsies, and hoped heartily he would never see another in his life. From now on he would pass on the palm-reading at parties and stick to the Ouija board. If that. Billy? From downstairs. Coming! He dressed, noting with an almost subliminal distress that in spite of the three-pound drop the waist of his pants was getting tight again. His waist size was forty-two now. He had quit smoking at exactly 12:01 on New Years Day, but he had paid. Oh, boy, had he paid. He went downstairs with his collar open and his tie lying around his neck. Linda, his fourteen-year-old daughter, was just going out the door in a flirt of skirt and a flip of her ponytail, tied this morning with a sexy velvet ribbon. Her books were under one arm. Two gaudy cheerleaders pom-poms, purple and white, rustled busily in her other hand. Bye, Dad! Have a good day, Lin. He sat down at the table, grabbed The Wall Street Journal. Lover, Heidi said. My dear, he said grandly, and turned the Journal facedown beside the lazy Susan. She put breakfast in front of him: a steaming mound of scrambled eggs, an English muffin with raisins, five strips of crisp country-style bacon. Good eats. She slipped into the seat opposite him in the breakfast nook and lit a Vantage 100. January and February had been tense too many discussions that were only disguised arguments, too many nights they had finished sleeping back to back. But they had reached a modus vivendi: she had stopped dunning him about his weight and he had stopped yapping at her about her pack-and-a-half-a-day butt habit. It had made for a decent-enough spring. And beyond their own private balance, other good things had happened. Halleck had been promoted, for one. Greely, Penschley, and Kinder was now Greely, Penschley, Kinder, and Halleck. Heidis mother had finally made good on her long-standing threat to move back to Virginia. Linda had at last made J.V. cheerleaders and to Billy this was a great blessing; there had been times when he had been sure Lins histrionics would drive him into a nervous breakdown. Everything had been going just great. Then the Gypsies had come to town. Thinner, the old Gypsy man had said, and what the hell was it with his nose? Syphilis? Cancer? Or something even more terrible, like leprosy? And by the way, why cant you just quit it? Why cant you just let it alone? You cant get it off your mind, can you? Heidi said suddenly so suddenly that Halleck started in his seat. Billy, it was not your fault. The judge said so. I wasnt thinking about that. Then what were you thinking about? The Journal, he said. It says housing starts are down again this quarter. Not his fault, right; the judge had said so. Judge Rossington. Cary, to his friends. Friends like me, Halleck thought. Played many a round of golf with old Cary Rossington, Heidi, as you well know. At our New Years Eve party two years ago, the year I thought about giving up smoking and didnt do it, who grabbed your oh-so-grabbable tit during the traditional happy-new-year kiss? Guess who? Why, my stars! It was good old Cary Rossington, as I live and breathe! Yes. Good old Cary Rossington, before whom Billy had argued more than a dozen municipal cases. Good old Cary Rossington with whom Billy sometimes played poker down at the club. Good old Cary Rossington who hadnt disqualified himself when his good old golfing-and-poker buddy Billy Halleck (Cary would sometimes clap him on the back and yell, How they hangin, Big Bill?) came before him in court, not to argue some point of municipal law, but on a charge of vehicular manslaughter. And when Cary Rossington did not disqualify himself, who said boo, children? Who in this whole fair town of Fairview was the boo-sayer? Why, nobody, thats who! Nobody said boo! After all, what were they? Nothing but a bunch of filthy Gypsies. The sooner they were out of Fairview and headed up the road in their old station wagons with the NRA stickers on the back bumpers, the sooner we saw the rear ends

of their home-carpentered trailers and camper caps, the better. The sooner the thinner. Heidi snuffed her cigarette and said, Shit on your housing starts. I know you better. Billy supposed so. And he supposed she had been thinking about it, too. Her face was too pale. She looked her age thirty-five and that was rare. They had married very, very young, and he still remembered the traveling salesman who had come to the door selling vacuum cleaners one day after they had been married three years. He had looked at the twenty-two-year-old Heidi Halleck and had asked politely, Is your mother home, hon? Not hurting my appetite any, he said, and that was certainly true. Angst or no angst, he had lain waste to the scrambled eggs, and of the bacon there was now no sign. He drank half his orange juice and gave her a big old Billy Halleck grin. She tried to smile back and it didnt quite happen. He imagined her wearing a sign: MY SMILER IS TEMPORARILY OUT OF ORDER. He reached across the table and took her hand. Heidi, its all right. And even if its not, its all over. I know it is. I know. Is Linda? No. Not anymore. She says... she says her girlfriends are being very supportive. For about a week after it had happened, their daughter had had a bad time of it. She had come home from school either in tears or close to them. She had stopped eating. Her complexion had flared up. Halleck, determined not to overreact, had gone in to see her homeroom teacher, the assistant principal, and Lindas beloved Miss Nearing, who taught phys ed and cheerleading. He ascertained (ah, there was a good lawyerly word) that it was teasing, mostly as rough and unfunny as most junior-high-school teasing is apt to be, and tasteless to be sure, considering the circumstances, but what could you expect of an age group that thought dead-baby jokes were the height of wit? He had gotten Linda to take a walk with him up the street. Lantern Drive was lined with tasteful set-back-from-the-road homes, homes which began at roughly \$75,000 and worked up into the \$200,000 indoor-pool-and-sauna range by the time you got to the country-club end of the street. Linda had been wearing her old madras shorts, which were now torn along one seam... and, Halleck observed, her legs had now grown so long and coltish that the leg bands of her yellow cotton panties showed. He felt a pang of mingled regret and terror. She was growing up. He supposed she knew the old madras shorts were too small, worn out in the bargain, but he guessed she had put them on because they made a link with a more comforting childhood, a childhood where daddies did not have to go to court and stand trial (no matter how cut-and-dried that trial might be, with your old golf buddy and that drunken grabber of your wifes tit, Cary Rossington, driving the gavel), a childhood where kids did not rush up to you on the soccer field during period four while you were eating your lunch to ask you how many points your dad had gotten for bagging the old lady. *** You understand it was an accident, dont you, Linda? She nods, not looking at him. Yes, Daddy. She came out between two cars without looking either way. There was no time for me to stop. Absolutely no time. Daddy, I dont want to hear about it. I know you dont. And I dont want to talk about it. But you are hearing about it. At school. She looks at him feafully. Daddy! You didnt Go to your school? Yeah. I did. But not until three-thirty yesterday afternoon. There were no kids there at all, at least that I could see. No ones going to know. She relaxes. A little. I heard youve been getting some pretty rough handling from the other kids. Im sorry about that. It hasnt been so bad, she says, taking his hand. Her face the fresh scatter of angry-looking pimples on her forehead tells a different story. The pimples say the handling has been rough indeed. Having a parent arrested is not a situation even Judy Blume covers (although someday she probably will). I also hear youve been handling it pretty well, Billy Halleck says. Not making a big thing out of it. Because if they ever see theyre getting under your skin... Yeah, I know, she says glumly. Miss Nearing said she was especially proud of you, he says. Its a small lie. Miss Nearing hadnt said precisely that, but she had certainly spoken well of Linda, and that meant almost as much to Halleck as it did to his daughter. And it does the job. Her eyes brighten and she looks at Halleck for the first time. She did? She did, Halleck confirms. The lie comes easily and convincingly. Why not? He has told a lot of lies just lately. She squeezes his hand and smiles at him gratefully. Theyll let it go pretty soon, Lin. Theyll find some other bone to chew. Some girl will get pregnant or a teacher will have a nervous breakdown or some boy will get busted for selling pot or cocaine. And youll be off the hook. Get it? She throws her arms around him suddenly and hugs him tight. He decides she isnt growing up so fast after all, and that not all lies are bad. I love you, Daddy, she says. I love you too, Lin. He hugs her back and suddenly someone turns on a big stereo amplifier in the front of his brain and he hears the double-thud again: the first as the Ninety-Eights front bumper strikes the old Gypsy woman with the bright red cloth kerchief over her scraggly hair, the second as the big front wheels pass over her body. Heidi screams. And her hand leaves Hallecks lap. Halleck hugs his daughter tighter, feeling goose flesh break all over his body. *** More eggs? Heidi asked, breaking into his reverie. No. No, thanks. He looked at his clean plate with some guilt: no matter how bad things got, they had never gotten bad enough to cause him to lose either sleep

or his appetite. Are you sure youre...? Okay? He smiled. Im okay, youre okay, Lindas okay. As they say on the soap operas, the nightmare is overcan we please get back to our lives? Thats a lovely idea. This time she returned his smile with a real one of her ownshe was suddenly under thirty again, and radiant. Want the rest of the bacon? Theres two slices left. No, he said, thinking of the way his pants nipped at his soft waist (what waist, ha-ha? a small and unfunny Don Rickles spoke up in his mindthe last time you had a waist was around 1978, you hockey puck), the way he had to suck in his gut to hook the catch. Then he thought of the scale and said, Ill have one of them. Ive lost three pounds. She had gone to the stove in spite of his original nosometimes she knows me so well it gets to be depressing, he thought. Now she glanced back. You are still thinking about it, then. Im not, he said, exasperated. Cant a man lose three pounds in peace? You keep saying youd like me a little... thinner ...a little less beefy. Now she had gotten him thinking about the Gypsy again. Dammit! The Gypsies eaten nose and the scaly feel of that one finger sliding along his cheek in the moment before he had reacted and jerked awaythe way you would jerk away from a spider or from a clittering bundle of beetles fuming in a knot under a rotted log. She brought him the bacon and kissed his temple. Im sorry. You go right ahead and lose some weight. But if you dont, remember what Mr. Rogers says I like you just the way you are, they finished in unison. He prodded at the overturned Journal by the lazy Susan, but that was just too depressing. He got up, went outside, and found the New York Times in the flowerbed. The kid always threw it in the flowerbed, never had his numbers right at the end of the week, could never remember Bills last name. Billy had wondered on more than one occasion if it was possible for a twelve-year-old kid to become a victim of Alzheimers disease. He took the paper back inside, opened it to the sports, and ate the bacon. He was deep in the box scores when Heidi brought him another half of English muffin, golden with melting butter. Halleck ate it almost without being aware he was doing so.

From AudioFileA fatal accident leads to a gypsy curse and Billy Halleck's efforts to remove it. It's a great plot, but Joe Mantegna disappoints the listener with his clumsy pacing and uneven characterizations. Mantegna's New York crime king, his old gypsy and Halleck characters, while skillfully done, cannot overcome his poor job with the several females in the book. Neither does he capture the nuances of French-Canadian dialect in Old Orchard Beach nor the subtleties of the upper-crust Connecticut accent. Not surprisingly, he also commits the dreaded "Banger" pronunciation of the author's home city. The poor narration of this volume cannot be saved by the startling and appropriate musical accents sprinkled throughout the story. What a disappointing performance of a top-notch thriller! R.P.L. copy AudioFile 2000, Portland, Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, Maine