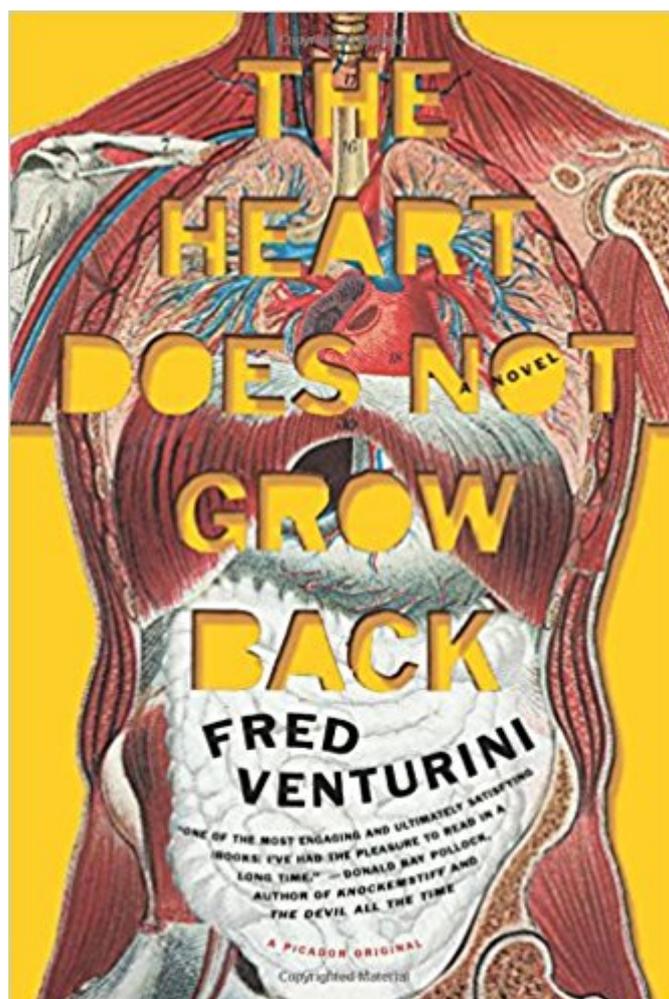


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The Heart Does Not Grow Back: A Novel



Synopsis

EVERY SUPERHERO NEEDS TO START SOMEWHERE...Dale Sampson is used to being a nonperson at his small-town Midwestern high school, picking up the scraps of his charismatic lothario of a best friend, Mack. He comforts himself with the certainty that his stellar academic record and brains will bring him the adulation that has evaded him in high school. But when an unthinkable catastrophe tears away the one girl he ever had a chance with, his life takes a bizarre turn as he discovers an inexplicable power: He can regenerate his organs and limbs. When a chance encounter brings him face to face with a girl from his past, he decides that he must use his gift to save her from a violent husband and dismal future. His quest takes him to the glitz and greed of Hollywood, and into the crosshairs of shadowy forces bent on using and abusing his gift. Can Dale use his power to redeem himself and those he loves, or will the one thing that finally makes him special be his demise? *The Heart Does Not Grow Back* is a darkly comic, starkly original take on the superhero tale, introducing an exceptional new literary voice in Fred Venturini.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Picador (November 4, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1250052211

ISBN-13: 978-1250052216

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,096,932 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #120 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Rural Life](#) #562 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Humor & Satire > Dark Humor](#) #1770 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Superheroes](#)

Customer Reviews

I've been looking forward to reading this novel ever since I first came across Fred Venturini's short story "Gasoline" in the Chuck Palahniuk anthology "Burnt Tongues." What starts out as the story of a high school misfit quickly shifts gears into overdrive and becomes the tale of a man who discovers his unique and unexplained ability to regenerate lost body parts and organs. Despite the somewhat misleading synopsis on the back cover of this book, the story is far more complex, heart wrenching, and unique. The back cover states that "every superhero needs to start somewhere" and gives the

impression you'll be reading a sort of "Batman Begins" of a nobody. This novel is so much more. In an interview Fred Venturini mentioned that Stephen King and Chuck Palahniuk are two of his biggest influences, and it's those two names that immediately spring to mind. Venturini has King's grasp of small town politics, body horror, dialogue, and command of a fairly large cast of characters. Combined with Palahniuk's visceral writing and page turning plots, THDNGB is a stunning achievement that is one hundred percent Venturini. Fiction does not get much better than this. The plot moves head long in directions you never see coming with an emotionally charged core that affected me more than I care to admit. Themes of loss, forgiveness, and coming to terms with yourself as a human being all weave together. This is a fast and fun read, entertainment at its absolute best, but more than that it is a mature and accomplished work that sets the wheels in your head turning, and keeps them spinning long after the final page. There's not much else to say.

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