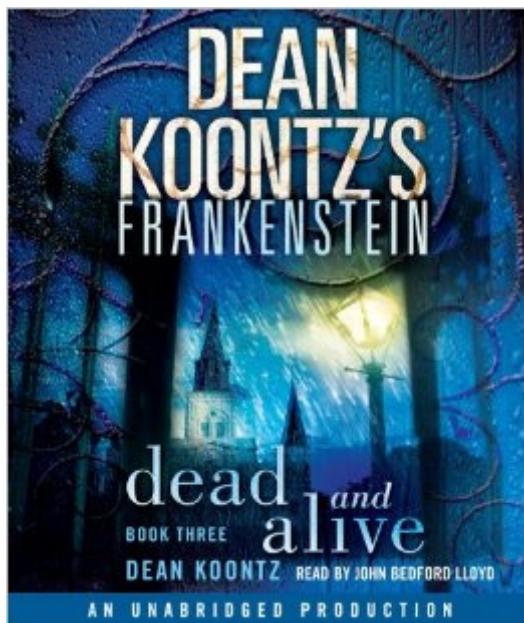


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Dean Koontz's Frankenstein: Dead And Alive: A Novel



Synopsis

From the celebrated imagination of Dean Koontz comes a powerful reworking of one of the classic stories of all time. If you think you know the legend, you know only half the truth. Now the mesmerizing saga concludes. . . . As a devastating hurricane approaches, as the benighted creations of Victor Helios begin to spin out of control, as New Orleans descends into chaos and the future of humanity hangs in the balance, the only hope rests with Victorâ™s first, failed attempt to build the perfect human. Deucalionâ™s centuries-old history began as the original manifestation of a soulless visionâ and it is fated to end in the ultimate confrontation between a damned creature and his mad creator. But first they must face a monstrosity not even Victorâ™s malignant mind could have conceivedâ an indestructible entity that steps out of humankindâ™s collective nightmare with powers, and a purpose, beyond imagining. From the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This novel brings a classic legend up to date by replacing Victor Frankenstein's previously crude monster creation techniques with biotech engineering, cloning, and computer programming. Victor has learned the secret of long life and is still alive and well in 21st century New Orleans. Now a respected scientist and wealthy member of high society by day, Victor practices his high-tech life creation projects by night in order to create perfect beings, totally obedient to his will. He seeds his creations throughout the city so that they can undermine, and eventually replace, humanity and lead to a perfect New Age society. In the meanwhile, Frankenstein's original monster, now called

Deucalion, is also gifted with immortality. He learns of his creator's existence and sets off for New Orleans to seek revenge. When a series of gruesome murders occur where body parts are removed from the victims, two police detectives try to track down the killer. Is one of Frankenstein's creations to blame? The portrayal of Frankenstein's creatures is especially interesting. Created with a carefully controlled blend of human emotion and programmed behavior, they are at times confused about their feelings. Sometimes their human component fights against their artificial one, with interesting results. In a clever turnabout, Victor Frankenstein is portrayed as a monster and Deucalion has evolved to show more human traits than his creator. At first I was amused by the fact that immortality has become a popular pursuit, and that others in the story besides Frankenstein and his creations are capable of prolonged lives and physical perfection. Yet the real-world popularity of plastic surgery, nutritional supplements, and health clubs does prove that art imitates life.

Here's the short version of this review: This book was an incredible disappointment. Fans of the series thus far will no doubt be compelled to read this. And WHEN you hate it, please take solace in the fact that you're NOT ALONE. Like everyone else, I waited patiently for Frankenstein Book 3. When I saw it in the store, I was shocked and overjoyed, as its appearance was completely unexpected. I violated speed laws to drive home, whereupon I immediately dug out books 1 and 2 and began to reread them. Now, I'd read Koontz's "admission of inability to collaborate", and it seemed very... defensive with a belligerent spin. When I saw he'd re-released the originals, sans the co-writers' credits, I was dismayed. Seemed like a real egotistical move. But hey, he's Koontz. I loved the guy. And then I read the first... what was it? 20 pages of the book? Paragraph upon paragraph of "Acclaim for Dean Koontz". The dude actually felt it necessary to reprint every good thing anyone has ever said about him, as if to say "Those co-writers were beneath me, and how DARE you rabble harass me for this book? Well now after 20 pages of accolades, you know with whom you're dealing. So here's your %\$#!ng book; I hope you choke on it. Now I can get back to Odd Thomas 6" I felt kinda like an Erika, put in my place and crying on the floor. Halfway through the book, I realized that the protagonists had spent half the book DRIVING AROUND TOWN. Literally, the fate of the world is ostensibly in their hands, and they're cruising Nawlins in a Honda. They weren't looking for anything or going anywhere in particular... not even evading the assassins who were secretly on their trail. They were just... cruisin'.

Though a fan of Koontz, when I first saw the title of this book I was afraid it would be trite. But I was wrong. This is one of Koontz's best efforts in years. He does not rewrite the story of Frankenstein,

rather, he builds on it. It is the present day and Dr. Frankenstein is alive and well and continuing his efforts. His goal is more clarified. He is no tragic figure, but an evil man bent on building a race of perfect beings that will replace humanity. Over the two hundred years since the events portrayed in Mary Shelley's book (which, in a nice twist, is explained as a semi-historical account based on legends and hearsay), Dr. Frankenstein has amassed a fortune and a vast biotech empire. Through modern genetics and science, he no longer has to piece together his creations from dead humans. He grows them and programs them with directives and information. He and his creations bide their time, infiltrate humanity, and await the time to strike openly. Opposing these efforts is Dr. Frankenstein's first creation. The Monster still lives, but has become more and more human while his creator has become less. Koontz and Anderson do a great job of portraying the monster as a suffering man, noble in spirit yet malformed in body. His path and mission cross paths with two homicide detectives on the trail of one of the New Race who has become a serial killer after he realizes that his programming and superior genetics has left him empty, missing something that humans seem to possess. Koontz and Anderson's decision to place the story in New Orleans was a stroke of genius. They do a good job of capturing the mood of what is perhaps America's most foreign, haunted city. The food, the history, the music, the graveyards.

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