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Frankenstein: Dead and Alive: A Novel



Par Dean Koontz
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFrom 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 Victor's first, failed attempt to build the perfect human. Deucalion's centuries-old history began as the original manifestation of a soulless vision 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 Victor's malignant mind could have conceived: an indestructible entity that steps out of humankind's collective nightmare with powers, and a purpose, beyond imagining.

BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Dean Koontz's *The City*. Excerpt Chapter One: Half past a windless midnight, rain cantered out of the Gulf, across the shore and the levees: parades of phantom horses striking hoof rhythms from roofs of tarpaper, tin, tile, shingles, slate, counting cadence along the avenues. Usually a late-night town where restaurants and jazz clubs cooked almost until the breakfast hour, New Orleans was on this occasion unlike itself. Little traffic moved on the streets. Many restaurants closed early. For lack of customers, some of the clubs went dark and quiet. A hurricane was transiting the Gulf, well south of the Louisiana coast. The National Weather Service currently predicted landfall near Brownsville, Texas, but the storm track might change. Through hard experience, New Orleans had learned to respect the power of nature.

Deucalion stepped out of the Luxe Theater without using a door, and stepped into a different district of the city, out of light and into the deep shadows under the boughs of moss-robed oak trees. In the glow of streetlamps, the skeins of rain glimmered like tarnished silver. But under the oaks, the precipitation seemed ink-black, as if it were not rain but were instead a product of the darkness, the very sweat of the night. Although an intricate tattoo distracted curious people from recognizing the extent of the damage to the ruined half of his face, Deucalion preferred to venture into public places between dusk and dawn. The sunless hours provided an additional layer of disguise. His formidable size and physical power could not be concealed. Having endured more than two hundred years, his body was unbent bone and undiminished muscle. Time seemed to have no power to weather him. As he followed the sidewalk, he passed through places where the glow of streetlamps penetrated the leafy canopy. The mercurial light chased from memory the torch-carrying mob that had harried Deucalion through a cold and rainless night on a continent far from this one, in an age before electricity.

Across the street, occupying half a block, the Hands of Mercy stood on an oak-shaded property. Once a Catholic hospital, it closed long ago. A tall wrought-iron fence encircled the hospital grounds. The spear-point staves suggested that where mercy had once been offered, none could now be found. A sign on the iron driveway gate warned private warehouse / no admittance. The bricked-up windows emitted no light. Overlooking the main entrance stood a statue of the Holy Mother. The light once focused on her had been removed, and the robed figure looming in darkness might have been Death, or anyone. Only hours earlier, Deucalion had learned that this building harbored the laboratory of his maker, Victor Helios, whose birth name was legend: Frankenstein. Here members of the New Race were designed, created, and programmed. The security system would monitor every door. The locks would be difficult to defeat. Thanks to gifts carried on the lightning bolt that brought him to life in an earlier and more primitive lab, Deucalion did not need doors. Locks were no impediment to him. Intuitively, he grasped the quantum nature of the world, including the truth that on the deepest structural level, every place in the world was the same place. As he contemplated venturing into his maker's current lair, Deucalion had no fear. If any emotion might undo him, it would be rage. But over these many decades, he had learned to control the anger that had once driven him so easily to violence. He stepped out of the rain and into the main laboratory in the Hands of Mercy, wet when he took the step, dry when he completed it.

Victor's immense lab was a techno-Deco wonder, mostly stainless-steel and white ceramic, filled with sleek and mysterious equipment that seemed not to be standing along the walls but to be embedded in them, extruding from them. Other machines swelled out of the ceiling and surged up from the floor, polished and gleaming, yet suggesting organic forms. Every soft noise was rhythmic, the purr and hum and click of machinery. The place seemed to be deserted. Sapphire, primrose-pink, and apple-green luminous gases filled glass spheres. Through elaborate coils of transparent tubing flowed lavender, calamine-blue, and methyl-orange fluids. Victor's U-shaped workstation stood in the center of the room, a black-granite top on a stainless-steel base. As Deucalion considered searching the drawers, someone behind him said, "Can you help me, sir?" The man wore a gray denim jumpsuit. In a utility belt around his waist were secured spray bottles of cleaning solutions, white rags, and small sponges. He held a mop. "Name's Lester, he said. I'm an Epsilon. You seem smarter than me. Are you smarter than me? Is your maker here?" Deucalion asked. "No, sir. Father left earlier. How many staff are here? I don't count much. Numbers confuse me. I heard once eighty staff. So Father isn't here, now something's gone wrong, and I'm just an Epsilon. You seem like maybe an Alpha or a Beta. Are you an Alpha or a Beta? What's gone wrong?"

Deucalion asked. She says Werner is trapped in Isolation Room Number One. No, maybe Number Two. Anyway, Number Something. Who is Werner? He's the security chief. She wanted instructions, but I don't give instructions, I'm just Lester. Who wants instructions? The woman in the box. As Lester spoke, the computer on Victor's desk brightened, and on the screen appeared a woman so flawlessly beautiful that her face must have been a digital construction. Mr. Helios, Helios. Welcome to Helios. I am Annunciata. I am not as much Annunciata as before, but I am still trying to be as much Annunciata as I am able. I am now analyzing my helios, Mr. Systems. My systems, Mr. Helios. I am a good girl. She's in a box, Lester said. A computer, Deucalion said. No. A box in the networking room. She's a Beta brain in a box. She doesn't have no body. Sometimes her container leaks, so I clean up the spill. Annunciata said, I am wired. I am wired. I am wired into the building's data-processing system. I am secretary to Mr. Helios. I am very smart. I am a good girl. I want to serve efficiently. I am a good, good girl. I am afraid. She isn't usually like this, said Lester. Perhaps there is an im-im-im-imbalance in my nutrient supply. I am unable to analyze. Could someone analyze my nutrient supply? Self-aware, forever in a box, Deucalion said. I am very afraid, Annunciata said. Deucalion found his hands curling into fists. There is nothing your maker won't do. No form of slavery offends him, no cruelty is beyond him. Uneasy, shifting from foot to foot like a little boy who needed to go to the bathroom, Lester said, He's a great genius. He's even smarter than an Alpha. We should be grateful to him. Where is the networking room? Deucalion asked. We should be grateful. The networking room. Where is this . . . woman? In the basement. On the computer screen, Annunciata said, I must organize the appointment schedule for Mr. Helios. Helios. But I do not remember what an appointment is. Can you help, help, help me? Yes, Deucalion said. I can help you. *Revue de presse* A rarity among bestselling writers, Koontz continues to pursue new ways of telling stories, never content with repeating himself. He writes of hope and love in the midst of evil in profoundly inspiring and moving ways. *Chicago Sun-Times*