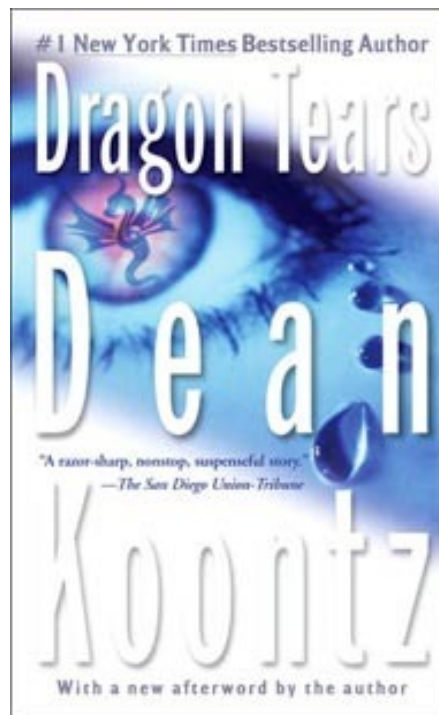




Dragon Tears

Dean Koontz

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Dragon Tears Dean Koontz

Harry Lyon was a rational man, a cop who refused to let his job harden his soul. Then one fateful day, he was forced to shoot a man--and a homeless stranger with bloodshot eyes uttered the haunting words that challenged Harry Lyon's sanity:

"Ticktock, ticktock. You'll be dead in sixteen hours...Dead by dawn...Dead by dawn...Dead by dawn..."

Dragon Tears Details

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From Reader Review Dragon Tears for online ebook

Sara Morris says

5 stars because the main character is Harry Lyon and that cracks me up to no end.

Bethany the Martian says

Dean Koontz books are weird for me. I enjoy them, they're easy to read and very formulaic, and I really liked them when I was a teenager so it's nostalgic for me.

Stephen King describes his relationship to stories in the context of relationships- married to a books, an affair with a book. He calls short stories a kiss in the dark. To stretch that metaphor to Dean Koontz books, I would liken them to a coffee date with mediocre coffee and a companion who is only pleasant in short doses.

In Dragon Tears, Our Heroes are mostly a cop duo who are being haunted by an insanely powerful psychopath with the ability to stop time (or near enough as counts. There's no reason they should triumph over this guy, not even surprise- he can stop time. He is a telepath and can set things on fire with his mind. It's a book with an unusually bleak mindset and outlook for Koontz, with a villain that should not be stoppable through normal means. I've read the book several times since the first time as a teenager, and I'm still not entirely sure how that's supposed to work. The dog saved them? Apparently? Somehow?

Whatever.

Gina says

This is the first Koontz book I ever read. I read it a loooong time ago. Maybe 10 or 20 years ago. From what I read in other reviews, maybe it is like one of those favorite old movies that is not impervious to time...you watch it years later and the jokes are old, the characters are dorky...but I really liked this book.

The first time I tried to read it, it scared me so much I had to put it down. I think it took me 3 tries to get through it. That said, the 3rd time I was like, "what was so scary that I couldn't keep reading?" Maybe it was the cruelty.

As others mentioned, he talks from the dog's point of view at times. The dog perceives the world through smells. The first chapter I read from the dog's pov, I thought it was really annoying. but, it really is an interesting and insightful perspective, and I ended up enjoying it when it came in in the remainder of the book.

There are a few different "victims" - hunted would be a better descriptor - and the antagonist terrorizes each of them in a unique way. He completely steals their peace. The key to his identity is found through the discovery of a relative who he is also terrorizing...I thought this was a really surprising twist in the plot.

I think the ending was somewhat anti-climactic as this antagonist seems invincible and is so horrifying...and then they catch up to him...even though you want them to, you are a little unimpressed with who he turns out

to be.

Anyway, I thought this was great. Scary, suspenseful...I saw very mixed reviews. Some love it, some hate it. After this, I thought I discovered the best author ever, so I read a number of his books. Aside from False Memory (which I liked, but not as well as Dragon Tears), I do not remember much of their plots or characters. I think this is because I didn't feel most of them measured up, I began to tire of the "darkness" inherent in most of his novels (given the subject) and they started to feel formulaic....I felt I would know what the characters would do and how it would end. I think this is pretty typical with authors who write in one genre. It's human nature. I definitely felt that way about Stephen King. I think I prefer Koontz to King, though King did have some really stand-out books.

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

Meh, it's okay. Nothing against the book exactly, but I just am not into most serial killer type of books. They bore me for some reason. This one was unique for sure, and Koontz wrote well, but again it was meh for me. Characters were better than some of his other books though and seemed real, and we did get several scenes with the dog. Review soon

Jim Barton says

Don't know what it is with Koontz: some of his books such as Watchers and Twilight Eyes were delightful reads; others are truly horrible. Dragon Tears unfortunately falls under the latter category. This is one of the few books I have completed that I actually regretted reading.

He was really prolific during the 80s-90s, seeming to have something new every time I went into a bookstore (which was quite often for me). Maybe, his apparent reluctance to adjust the flow from the firehose explained the unequal quality of his work. I have since moved on to other authors, so I'm not sure whether any of this has changed with him.

Zoeytron says

I continue to be disenchanted with Dean Koontz. Although I liked this one better than the last one I read (Deeply Odd), it still fell short of the mark for me. My favorite thing in the book was the small portions written from the dog's point of view, they were fun and seemed right on the money. I also liked the musings of Mickey Chan. According to Mr. Chan, a simple bowl of soup illustrates the true meaning of life. His reasoning behind that made me a believer; unfortunately, he breezily admits shortly thereafter that he was just making it up as he went. Gah!

In all fairness, I was pretty much marking time reading this, awaiting the release of another book. Even so, this may be the last novel I read by this author. I will thank him for his early offerings, and cut my losses from here on out.

Glen says

A couple of LA cops, one a straight arrow, by the book cop, the other a gonzo anything goes type, is confronted by an evil fairy.

Seems very 1980's.

Giselle says

Yes, Mr. Koontz. The 90s are a crazy time full of crazy goings on and off the wall capers. Arguable there was no "moral fiber" no "law or justice" and the youth were obviously "revolting" (in every sense of the word). Yeah. I got it. Wait 'till you get to the ots...

While I always enjoy a good paranormal horror (and Mr. Koontz's are usually top-notch) this one just had me rolling my eyes. Creepiness came from the rare moments when TickTock (our antagonist...worst name for a bad guy ever. It's like naming him 'Fluffy' frankly...) appeared in the next line where he hadn't been anywhere in the scene. When you picture it happening, it is terrifying and Mr. Koontz utilizes this device to its fullest extent. But that was one of the only creep-inducing things to come out of the entirety of this far-too-long novel.

As well, I feel like I shouldn't be noticing all the research the author has done in pursuit of realness. I don't really care about the specific plant types found in this neighborhood, or the precise medical effects of ecstasy (called 'E' now, not 'X'...sign of the change in times?).

I don't think horror books should feel dated but Dragon Tears fairly dripped of the early 90s as well as a huge dissatisfaction with the era. Plus: the whole "disparate characters seem to be completely unrelated but then meet-up and save the day" trope was not really utilized to its best potential here. The story would have read just as well without the frequent side-trips into the minds of other characters it was hard to feel anything for. In this case, these "other main characters" really only served to corroborate the sanity of the Real Main Characters. Something we knew wasn't in question.

The Dog was infinitely more useful.

Susan (aka Just My Op) says

Sometimes life can be as bitter as dragon tears....

This book is good, solid, classic Koontz. It starts with separate stories that quickly intertwine, with the common denominator of a bad guy who seems to appear differently to different people. There are two cops, partners who are trying to stop the bad guy: Connie, a woman who would really like any excuse to shoot someone and who likes chaos, and Harry, who prefers the order side of law and order.

And of course, there is a dog, a stray called Prince or Max or Woofer or Fella. No supernatural powers, just a great sense of smell. I loved the way he talks to himself: Good dog. Good. Not afraid. Not afraid.

Woofer, not surprisingly for those who know me, was my favorite character in the book. He could have been

created only by someone who knows and loves dogs, as Koontz does.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable read. I don't like to read too many Koontz books too closely together because they usually have a common theme and plots that are similar. Still, I enjoy his characters, his creepy creations, and this is one of his books that I have enjoyed the most.

Bettie? says

description: *Harry Lyon was a rational man, a cop who refused to let his job harden his soul.*

His partner urged him to surrender to the chaos of life. But Harry believed in order and reason. Then, one fateful day, he was forced to shoot a man, and a homeless stranger with bloodshot eyes uttered the haunting words that challenged Harry Lyon's sanity...

"Ticktock, ticktock. You'll be dead in sixteen hours... Dead by dawn... Dead by dawn... Dead by dawn..."

My reading tastes have evolved past earlyish Koontz, just as he himself has evolved into a far subtler writer.

NEXT!

Mimi says

Knowing Dean Koontz's reputation, I was excited to read this story. It did not fail to deliver. It was one that I, personally, could not read alone 'in the dark'. It was very descriptive in parts I'd rather not know about, but that's what makes it all the more interesting and frightening.

I was a little bit disappointed by the identity of the "being". I have this feeling a lot when I read Stephen King books as well.

.....
SPOILER-

It seems that most of the "monsters" I read in books like this are just normal people, which is a let down after all of that suspense. True that he has some supernatural powers, I feel like it would have been better if he had to be killed in a strange and exciting way, rather than just killed as a human being.

-END SPOILER
.....

The writing in the book was fast-paced, which I enjoyed immensely. A few of the Dean Koontz books I have read were slow and hard for me to get into which led to me having to restart several times. So far this is my favorite Dean Koontz book to date.

Gary Foss says

This book is not about what I thought it was going to be about. No sad dragons. ::Sigh::

Sometimes it's a good thing when a book doesn't match your expectations. Being caught off-guard by a book—when it isn't the result of a perfidious marketing campaign, or the product of a particularly deceptive cover or dustjacket blurb—can be positive. A book should surprise you. When it's done well, you get one of the heights of literary accomplishment.

This book does not represent one of those heights. It's not a bad piece of work by any stretch of the imagination, but it's also not any stretch of the imagination in and of itself. There are more than a few nicely turned phrases that Mr. Koontz unleashes in his narratives. He has a penchant for detailed descriptions and painting a scene that is often lush, but sometimes crosses that strange, gray line into the tiresome. Normally, the detailed descriptions of character's thoughts and actions builds tension nicely, and gives us a firm mental image. However, we need not know every detail of every move of a character looking around a room, particularly when there's nothing there. Nothing under the couch. Nothing behind the door. Nothing lurking in places where nothing should be and nothing to be done about the nothing in the first place. Surprise! Right behind you all along. Somebody throw that drowning man a trope.

Speaking of tropes. Cops are an overused trope in urban fantasy. Disgruntled cops an overused cop trope. Mismatched emotionally unavailable cops as partners an overused trope of cop tropes. Overall, Mr. Koontz dipping into the trope well isn't all that desperate a writing technique, but if you're looking for something different then the main characters are a fail in this book. Mr. Koontz gives the reader more than enough trope to hang himself.

(OK, I'll stop with the trope puns.)

Mr. Koontz does have a feel for personality that is quite strong, and he spares neither his readers nor his characters the least analysis. The characters are all motivated by personality traits, not just events, and their overall world view is presented consistently and with aplomb. This isn't a character study, though, so readers must be satisfied with "neat freak" as a personality type, "freedom lover" as a personality type, or "battered wife" as a personality type. These are not new forms in modern literary terms, but Mr. Koontz gives them more than enough depth of character to satisfy a thriller.

Where this book often goes too far is in its relentless Millennial doomsday theme. Written in the 90s in an attempt to capture some of the clock rollover angst, Mr. Koontz makes the inevitable creeping decline of human civilization the main backdrop of the book. This was a clear attempt to cash into that lowest order of cultural numerology; the fizzle that was the Millennium rollover. I imagine that when the book was published, that backdrop would have read as fresh and edgy. However, reading this book after the 1990s makes that constant theme something of a chore. Two decades on it reads like a dated and overwrought egoism in the guise of pop culture commentary. The 90s being a decade of collapse, decay and malaise is a constant refrain of the book to the point that those of us who lived through that decade have difficulty reconciling their own experience with the vast banking malfeasance, the complete failure of government leadership, and overall decline in the decade that followed. But the steady improvement that occurred in the 90s was not part of Mr. Koontz's vision. Rather, this book is predictive pessimism in prose.

Worse, Mr. Koontz weaves it right into his characters and narration in every major portion of the book, right up into the finale where it borders on the ridiculous:

(view spoiler)

What the 90s have to do with (view spoiler), I'll never know. But Mr. Koontz started banging that drum, so he might as well finish on the beat. The end of the world is nigh, blah, blah, blah. I imagine a sequel would cash in on June 6, '06 fear, and then there's the 2012 Aztec calendar anxiety. Surely we can milk a little out of some other apocalyptic Gregorian fallacy.... Sheesh.

The story follows mostly the exploits of two police officers who have caught the attention of a supernatural being killing its way along a route to power. There are chapters from the perspective of several other characters: a homeless man, a homeless woman with a child, an invalid in a nursing home, the occasional secondary character related to our main protagonist and, most unlikely, a stray dog. Detailed chapters from the point of view of a dog are much less interesting and amusing than one might imagine, particularly in the context of an urban horror novel. Those who like goofy cuteness interspersed with their horrific murders may find this more palatable than I did. Personally, I found the Prince/Woofer chapters obnoxious.

There always comes a point in an urban fantasy where the reader has to do a form of metasuspension of disbelief. That is, when the characters manage to see through the looking glass into the supernatural aspect of the fictional world they inhabit, the reader must not only accept that supernatural aspect, but must believe that the characters can believe it. In many cases, this is the most difficult part of a story for readers to accept. I found it tough in this book. The hard-bitten, tough as nails, firmly rooted in the real world cops jump straight from their logical world right into *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* with nary a blink. Once they've accepted it, they immediately begin speculating on the superpowers of their godly opponent, and we are treated to rambling explanations and more than a few leaps in supposition as they make their way towards the final confrontation.

At its worst, this occurs during a long, meandering (view spoiler). Though couched in uncertainties, Mr. Koontz could not resist throwing in more than a little of his own thoughts on the physics of time, clearly gleaned from his own reading on the subject. In and of themselves, these thoughts are not necessarily bad, but they do seem strange coming from the mouths of homicide detectives fleeing for their lives from a (view spoiler)

There are long POV chapters from the perspective of our killer and his potential victims. Some of them are quite poignant, though somewhat pointless. Sammy Shamroe faces the villain at, arguably, his most disturbing, and we are treated to some quite well executed examples of horrifying prose. Unfortunately, Sammy turns out to be something of a non-starter as a character. His contribution is minimal. He is literally told to "wait in the car" with two other minor characters at the book's finale, so all that nice character development didn't go much of anywhere. I hope they at least left a window open a crack.

In any case, I am giving this book a star for some of the nice phrasing that Mr. Koontz uses. He occasionally—more than occasionally, to be honest—turns a phrase in an elegant and outright artistic way. I'm also giving it a star for a nice villainous villain, whose development and background are entertaining if somewhat fanciful. The baddy's depravity and cruelty are a little superficial, but he remained interesting and well considered throughout the book. However, I'm not giving it more than 3 stars, because of the 90s theme that just dates the book so badly, and that merits at least -*. Also, the climax was somewhat anti-climactic, and after 300+ pages I want more satisfaction. So, star deduction #2. I can't really recommend this one because of that relentless 90s theme, but if you don't think you'd be bothered by that then it's a pretty decent thriller.

Maciek says

A pair of detectives and three homeless people are stalked by a vargrant, who utters a haunting warning: "Ticktock, ticktock. You'll be dead in sixteen hours...Dead by dawn...Dead by dawn...Dead by dawn..."

Time runs short, and it soon becomes obvious that the vargrant was no ordinary vargrant. Dangers arise everywhere, and the world changes for the five people: they will do anything and try to understand what is going on, a quest which will lead them to the sanctuary of a new, terrible god...

Dragon Tears is typical early 90's Koontz; fast-paced, imaginative and entertaining. Even the "90's are bad" attitude which Koontz sports liberally throughout the text is not too bad. The plot is captivating if formulaic, with enough suspense and twists to hold the reader to the very end. I'm a fan of Koontz's writing style from that period, Hemingwayesque no-frills prose which is sorely missing from his newer output. He could describe the scene like few others in his field, but these days are long gone.

The best thing about *Dragon Tears* is the villain, who's...but you've got to discover that for yourself. Also, as a testament to Koontz's love of dogs there's one in this book, and some chapters are narrated from his point of view. This sounds utterly ridiculous, but Koontz really pulls that off and they are a definite highlight of the novel.

To sum up, *Dragon Tears* is fun. It won't change your life but it's a good way to spend some hours. Back in the day, Koontz was still considered "weird" and this book shows why. If there's something like "Classic Koontz", then this is it.

Kerstin Lampert says

I'm crying dragon tears, because Dean Koontz did it to me again!

For the second time (Innocence) I'm thinking this story is going owhere...even though his descriptive prose is like poetry.

Yet, he manages to spool out an intriguing yarn, replete with essayson modern (the 90's) life....homelessness....the drug culture....young adult behavior going to the dogs, etc.

And speaking of dogs. ho would've thought of turning the whol story over to a dog hero?

Masterful!

Brett says

Welcome to the 1990s.

Dean Koontz welcomes us to that decade probably 20 times throughout this book, which is indeed a very 1990s thing to do. Except in retrospect, the societal decay and continual moral lapses that Koontz carps about constantly are obviously nonsense. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the 1990s were a period of general peace and prosperity, with falling crime rates and probably the last time that you had much hope of finding any decent music on the radio. The 1990s, it turns out, were pretty good. Like any decade-long time

period, not without plenty of problems, but definitely not the stinking hellhole that Koontz evidently believed they were.

Dragon Tears conspicuously calls attention to the time period it was written, which is one of the irritating aspects of the book. It also is hurt by many of the Koontz-ian mannerisms that you may be familiar with if you have read Koontz before. I've read a lot of Koontz, for better or for worse. Therefore, I had to roll my eyes when he went with not only a super-smart and responsible kid, but also an unusually smart and abstract thinking dog. This is Koontz indulging his worst instincts--usually he would limit himself to one or the other of these familiar stock characters. You will also find the sensitive cop protagonist, his emotionally damaged and hard-exteroired (but also beautiful with a heart of gold) female partner, and the bad guy that has no motivation except to cause maximal suffering in the world because he is evil and that's that.

It's all pretty rote, yet I'm giving it three stars, which for a Koontz novel, is pretty much the most that can aspired for. Why? Primarily because Koontz is making better use of language here than in most of his books. Generally in a Koontz novel you get the sense that he wrote it while also watching TV or folding his laundry because it just feels like almost no work went into crafting the language. Dragon Tears is no masterpiece, but it is a cut above much of the rest of his work. Even though the plot is pretty tired (and dependent on extraordinary coincidence) it is made tolerable by this more effective writing.

So, I class Dragon Tears with *Phantoms*, *Winter Moon*, and the *Bad Place*--Koontz novels that I enjoyed in the same way I enjoy a low budget B-movie. They're junk food sure, but can be enjoyed as a small part of a well-balanced reading diet.

Siobhan says

Dean Koontz is one of my favourite authors – if for no other reason than he was one of the first authors I felt an insane need to go and purchase numerous books of, after just my first book. Like any of my favourite authors, though, I have ups and downs with his books. Some I really enjoyed, others I do not care much for. With *Dragon Tears*, we have a case of the latter – this book was enough to keep me interest in how things would come together, but it is far from my favourite Dean Koontz read.

Personally, for me, I feel as though nothing much happened with *Dragon Tears*. We had a story with a lot of potential – cops fighting off the supernatural whilst on a countdown – yet it never quite packed the punch it should have. There was a lot going on, plenty of interesting elements to unfold, but it was never all it could have been. I wanted something more – the action, the one-liners, and the quirky characters I have loved so much in other Dean Koontz novels.

If I'm being brutally honest, there are times when I think Dean Koontz churns out a new book because he is on a contract – and when this happened, the book is never quite to the level it could be. *Dragon Tears* feels like one of those books, one of those books where he didn't quite give his all.

I'm sure there will be many people who enjoy this one, but as a Koontz fan I found this one to be somewhat lacking. Enjoyable, but I wanted much more.

Dustin Crazy little brown owl says

This is not one of my favorite Koontz books. The best part (in the opinion of many Koontz fans, including

myself) is the portion of the story told through the eyes and voice of a dog. The rave and time freezing scenes are interesting, but overall this is mediocre Koontz. The continual references to the story being told in the nineties "these are the nineties afterall" and blah blah got rather annoying.

Marna says

I just love Dean Koontz. His imagination knows absolutely no bounds. He's every bit as weird as I am, which is truly a comfort!

He's a lovely wordsmith, his stories flow so beautifully. I love the supernatural element that frequents his books, mainly because that is a very real part of Life, as far as I'm concerned, and he's not afraid to write about it. This story, in particular, handles the supernatural element beautifully, realistically, and crafts a marvelous story out of some pretty far-out concepts (far out to the average reader, I guess I mean). And the dog! Oh, the dog is a great character in this book, and that's another reason I love Dean Koontz--the animals play wonderful parts. Anyone who has loved a dog, and has had a dog in one's life in a meaningful way, will appreciate the canine element in his writings.

Thank you, Dean Koontz, for keeping me in great reads. (I love a great writer, I love a prolific writer--but a great, prolific writer is hard to beat for a voracious reader).

Fred says

NYT # 1 - January 24, 1993 (hawes.com)

*** second reading notes *** January 2016 group read ***

California police Detectives Harry Lyon and Connie Guliver are the 2 main characters showing the importance of partnership and off-duty friendliness. The theme is Harry & Connie are spooked & track a "bloodless" monster/ghoul named "Ticktock" (20 years old). A challenge to Harry and Connie is stop "Ticktock" and in one instance they must escape when he says "you'll be dead in 16 hours, dead by dawn, dead by dawn". "Ticktock" has killed Ricky Estefan and chased the Marco family (killing Vince, dad). Why has Brian Drackman taken power to kill and get money (over his wife, Jennifer). Harry & Connie track "Ticktock" to Brian Drackman's house on Phaedra Way. It ends in an exciting typical police chase with Harry, Connie and Woofer finding "Ticktock ". A ending surprise to deal with is: The worry of time stopping if "Ticktock" is killed and why worry about hiding Brian's monies at Phaedra Way?

Paul Talbot says

Probably the worst of Koontz's books that I've read. The central concept is interesting, and I liked the Tick-Tock character. The problems are that the plot meanders way too much, and Koontz takes some strange time-outs to moralise about subjects he clearly knows nothing about. For example, a rave sequence where he spouts a lot of debunked "facts" about the effects of ecstasy and decries the morality of drugs just before having Tick-Tock brutally mutilate some of the ravers. It seems hypocritical at best, and slows the story to a crawl.
