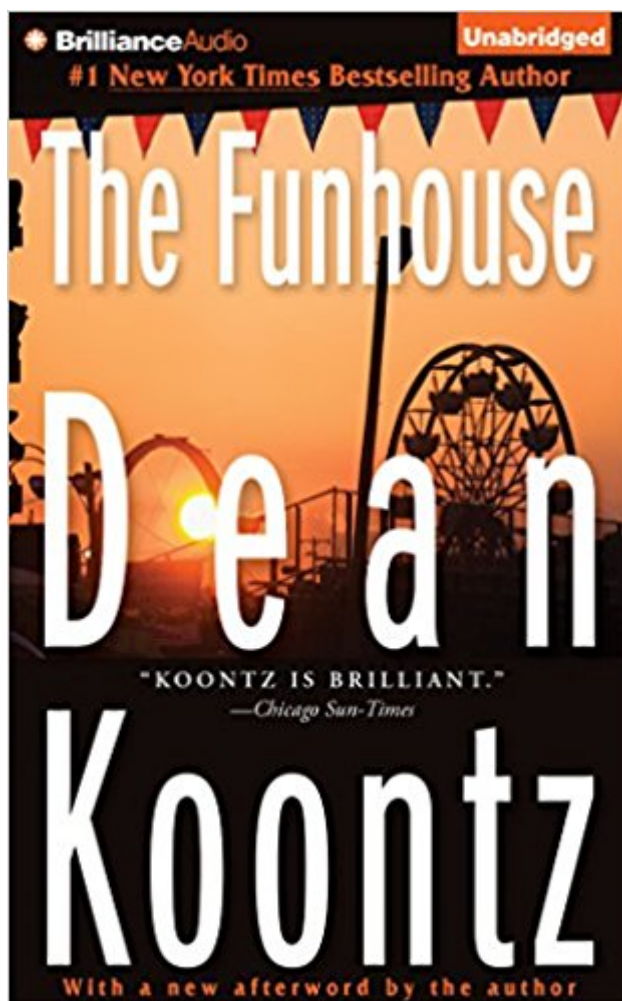


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The Funhouse



Synopsis

Once there was a girl who ran away and joined a traveling carnival. She married a man she grew to hate and gave birth to a child she could never love. A child so monstrous that she killed it with her own hands. Twenty-five years later, Ellen Harper has a new life, a new husband, and two normal children. Joey loves monster movies, and Amy is about to graduate from high school. But their mother drowns her secret guilt in alcohol and prayer. The time has come for Amy and Joey to pay for her sins. Because Amy is pregnant. And the carnival is coming back to town.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Dean Koontz
“Dean Koontz is a prose stylist whose lyricism heightens malevolence and tension. [He creates] characters of unusual richness and depth.”
The Seattle Times
“Tumbling, hallucinogenic prose... Serious writers... might do well to examine his technique.”
The New York Times Book Review
“Lyrical writing and compelling characters... Koontz stands alone.”
Associated Press
“In every industry there exist artists that are not only unforgettable, but know their craft better than the rest. Dean Koontz... is among these artisans.”
Suspense Magazine
“[Koontz] has always had near-Dickensian powers of description, and an ability to yank us from one page to the next that few novelists can match.”
Los Angeles Times
“Perhaps more than any other author, Koontz writes fiction perfectly suited to the

mood of America...novels that acknowledge the reality and tenacity of evil but also the power of good...[and that] entertain vastly as they uplift. — Publishers Weekly --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Dean Koontz was born in Everett, Pennsylvania, and grew up in nearby Bedford. He won an Atlantic Monthly fiction competition when he was twenty and has been writing ever since. Mr. Koontz's books are published in 38 languages. Worldwide sales total more than 175 million copies, a figure that currently increases at a rate of more than 350 million copies a year. Dean and his wife, Gerda, live in southern California.

This is a horror story, which was based on a screenplay written by and then the writer. As Mr. Koontz explains a screenplay had been written and a movie planned. Mr. Koontz was authorized to compose a corresponding novel. This process is known as "novelization". As such, the storyline is not completely the product of Mr. Koontz's intellectual process. Apparently the movie did not do well, at least at first and neither did the novel. As a novelization apparently the fate of the novel is linked to the movie to some extent. I do not intend to write in a way that spoils the story. The story is set in the early 1980s in America. In that this is a horror story, there are some very gruesome situations that occur between human beings. As a retired police detective, I felt there was no way I would have failed to "connect some of the dots" and therefore have had an ensuing avenue of investigation. In that context, I found the storyline a bit weak. Generally I have read relatively few modern horror stories. I seldom go to such movies. Therefore I am not in a position to compare this novel to other modern horror novels. The writing is OK. Obviously there is much dark content. As a parent, I was dismayed about some very dark exchanges between parents and their children. Perhaps this is common in modern horror stories. I did not like this aspect of the novel. According to some research I did, Mr. Koontz may have been the victim of emotional abuse by a parent. Obviously he may have a base of knowledge that makes his writing realistic. I would not want my children to read this book until adulthood. I do not intend to recommend this novel to them. Although a horror story, there is a "morality tale" aspect to this story. I did like that. Mr. Koontz is originally from Pennsylvania, as am I. I enjoy reading authors from Pennsylvania. I wish to study his work further and have already purchased another novel, "Whispers". I wish to read a novel by Mr. Koontz that is fully his own intellectual product. I will not read it immediately. I sort of need a break.

I almost didn't buy this to read because of all of the less flattering reviews of it, but then I had to

remember all of the critical reviews of 77 Shadow Street, which, to me, wasn't as bad as everyone said it was. People were downright trashing it and, granted, there were some hard to understand aspects to the book, but I still think it was an entertaining read. And I say the same for this one. After having read *The Funhouse* myself and reading all of the negative reviews, I think people are being hard on Mr. Koontz. Again, as I've said in other reviews, I defend a person's right to have an opinion, negative or positive, but people are forgetting that this was the novelization of a screenplay. If the plot seemed undeveloped, it's only because the movie itself was. It couldn't have been easy for him to create a backstory for the characters. I heard some people saying that he never explained why Gunther was the way he was and that's something I would have liked to know as well. But was an explanation really necessary? I didn't think so. I mean, how do you explain how someone sires a demonic (or whatever he was) offspring not once, but twice? Conrad worshipped Satan - what other explanation was needed? In the end, the people giving this book bad reviews was taking this story too serious. This book was meant to be fun and entertaining like an 80's slasher flick. You're glad to see the potheads and slutty friend get what's coming to them and the innocent, God-fearing kids escape. It won't win any Pulitzer Prizes, but so what! If you want a memoir, go read one. If you want a good read without all of the rhetoric and fancy word play, well - here you go.

The book was ok. Nothing great but not terrible either. It kept me interested but it wasn't a book that I couldn't put down either. It left some loose ends. I would've loved an epilogue that featured Ellen's feelings on what her children had experienced because of her actions, how perhaps she was going to change because of it. What would've been good was had Ellen been more involved in the revenge pay back. Perhaps the children whom she claimed were so evil could've been her rescuers and she could finally answer for some of her hypocrisy. A big let down was the children never found out why they were being hunted and Ellen never knew her children were in danger. It would've given the story more suspense and depth I think. Perhaps we are to assume this happens. I think more back story could've been done with supporting characters. I also think it left out a lot of details of scenes that should've been more detailed. It kinda felt like someone had taken a short story and added a little to it so that it could be sold as a novel. This is the first Koontz book I've read and I didn't find it great but I would give another of his books a try to see if they are any better.

As with all Dean Koontz books I was excited to read *The Funhouse* and while it started out with a flourish it ended with a fizzle. The main characters lacked any depth that I could see, maybe because there were too many main characters and not enough background about any of them, so

they never really evolved for me. I liken it to a store that sells many different objects but offer very few of each. Too much quantity and not enough quality. This book had so much potential being written around a carnival, with freaks of all natures and a spooky funhouse, but sadly the funhouse wasn't a focal point of the book, it was more of an afterthought. Thrown in because it was the title of the book. Too many details were also left unanswered for me....were Victor and Gunther products of hell or just products of a mad man who saw them as something they were not. I also would of liked to have seen Ellen snap out of her drunken' stupor and confront Conrad and help protect her children, children she emotionally scared. I was also disappointed in the ending as it just stopped abruptly as if a chapter was missing from the end of the book. It left me with a what the heck feeling. All in all not a horrible read but certainly not up to Dean Koontz standards.

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