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Relentless



Synopsis

Bestselling novelist Cullen *•* Greenwich is a lucky man and he knows it. He makes a handsome living doing what he enjoys. His wife, Penny, a children's book author and illustrator, is the love of his life. Together they have a brilliant six-year-old, Milo, affectionately dubbed *•* *•* and a non-collie named Lassie, who's all but part of the family. So Cubby knows he shouldn't let one bad review of his otherwise triumphant new book get to him *•* even if it does appear in the nation's premier newspaper and is penned by the much-feared, seldom-seen critic Shearman Waxe. Cubby knows that the best thing to do is ignore the gratuitously vicious, insulting, and inaccurate comments. Penny knows it; even little Milo knows it. If Lassie could talk, she'd tell Cubby to ignore them, too. Ignore Shearman Waxe and his poison pen is just what Cubby intends to do. Until he happens to learn where the great man is taking his lunch. Cubby just wants to get a look at the mysterious recluse whose mere opinion can make or break a career *•* or a life. But Shearman Waxe isn't what Cubby expects, and neither is the escalating terror that follows what seemed to be an innocent encounter. For Waxe gives criticism; he doesn't take it. He has ways of dealing with those who cross him that Cubby is only beginning to fathom. Soon Cubby finds himself in a desperate struggle with a relentless sociopath, facing an inexorable assault on far more than his life. Fearless, funny, utterly compelling, *Relentless* is Dean Koontz at his riveting best, an unforgettable tale of the fragile bonds that hold together all that we most cherish *•* and of those who would tear those bonds asunder.

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Customer Reviews

Dean Koontz has changed, and not for the better. OK, I'm a Koontz fan from way back. I've read all of the Koontz novels, including most of the Brian Coffey, Leigh Nichols, and Owen West stuff. I've re-read my favorites (*Watchers*, *Whispers*, *Lightning*, *Strangers*, *The Bad Place*) over and over. Lately, though.... Let's start at the beginning. Koontz's characters used to be normal people, for the most part. Often they were wealthy, which allowed the story to progress outside of a 9-to-5 job. But they were still ordinary. In *Watchers*, the protagonists are a retired real estate agent and a terminally shy hermit. In *Whispers*, they are both cops. In *Phantoms*, she's a doctor and he's the county sheriff who responds to her distress call. In *Strangers* there is a couple who own a motel, the couple who run the attached restaurant, a two-bit author and college professor, a doctor, a cocktail waitress, and a priest. In *The Bad Place*, they run a detective agency. These are ordinary people. Recently, Koontz's characters have been larger than life. Whether it was Odd Thomas and his necromancy or the only one of many to walk away from a military rescue mission in *The Husband*, his characters are superlative. In making them so, Koontz renders them boring and two-dimensional. In the beginning, *Relentless* looks like a return to the earlier characters of depth, but sorry, they aren't. The story focuses on a family. The family consists of a fabulously successful author, his fabulously successful children's book author wife, a child of startling genius, and a dog with apparently odd powers. Here's a clue, Dean.

Short review: The usual Koontz cardboard-cutout characters, a story that could have been good but dissolves into whimsy, absurdity, and outright assault upon the reader's willingness to suspend disbelief. The longer review: I've read a number of Koontz's novels. His early ones were entertaining, and one of them was seriously creepy. However, I've never thought Koontz was all that good. His "good" characters are often so cloyingly "lovable" that you want to choke them, and his "evil" characters are one-dimensional, unbelievable, and often more absurd than scary. He also has the annoying tendency to throw in pages and pages of banter that isn't a fraction as clever or funny as he apparently thinks it is. Well, take all that and multiply it, and throw in a dose of "deus ex machina" and you've got this piece of drivel. The story has great potential. A novelist named Cullen Greenwich manages to offend a vicious critic named Sherman Waxx, and Waxx is now out to destroy him-- literally. Greenwich ignores warnings that Waxx is dangerous, but quickly find that the warnings are true: Waxx is a murderous psychopath who doesn't just want to destroy Greenwich's writing career, but to murder him and his whole family. Now, that could have been developed into something on a par with John Katzenbach's *"The Analyst"*-- but Koontz isn't Katzenbach, and the story quickly devolves into a mind-numbing mess of improbability, absurdity, and impossibility. A teleporting dog.

A genius kid who fashions teleportation devices out of salt-shakers. No, I'm not making that up.

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