



Intensity

Dean Koontz

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Past midnight, Chyna Shepard, twenty-six, gazes out a moonlit window, unable to sleep on her first night in the Napa Valley home of her best friend's family. Instinct proves reliable. A murderous sociopath, Edgler Foreman Vess, has entered the house, intent on killing everyone inside. A self-proclaimed "homicidal adventurer," Vess lives only to satisfy all appetites as they arise, to immerse himself in sensation, to live without fear, remorse or limits, to live with "intensity." Chyna is trapped in his deadly orbit.

Chyna is a survivor, toughened by a lifelong struggle for safety and self-respect. Now she will be tested as never before. At first her sole aim is to get out alive--until, by chance, she learns the identity of Vess's next intended victim, a faraway innocent only she can save. Driven by a newly discovered thirst for meaning beyond mere self-preservation, Chyna musters every inner resource she has to save an endangered girl...as moment by moment, the terrifying threat of Edgler Foreman Vess intensifies.

Intensity Details

Date : Published October 31st 2000 by Bantam (first published 1987)

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Author : Dean Koontz

Format : Paperback 436 pages

Genre : Horror, Fiction, Thriller, Suspense, Mystery

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From Reader Review Intensity for online ebook

Skyler Autumn says

3 Stars

Chyna is taken to her best friend's family home for a mini break during the school year only to spend the first night hidden under the guest bed as a home invader proceeds to murder all the occupants. Having both an unusual and terrifying childhood Chyna has developed a skill set that has made her a survivor both then and now. As she peers out the window of the guest bedroom she hears a muffled scream and creaking footsteps heading towards her room, instinct takes over and she is under the bed, and out of sight. Chyna is fully aware that the bed has not been slept in and her things are safely hidden in the closet so that the room appears unused and hopefully the intruder will move on.

Edward Vess lives life intensely his senses are primed for optimal absorbance. He basks in both pain and pleasure and believes to live without fear is too truly embrace life. Tonight like many nights before he has entered a home that is not his and plans to kill everyone inside.

This novel started out exactly as advertised In-FUCKING-Tensity. I read this book alone at night and found myself startled at every little noise thinking Edward Vess was in my home. It was eery and terrifying and you couldn't help wonder how you would react thrust into a similar life threatening situation. I know one thing I'd do for sure, is stay in the house after the killer leaves, count my lucky stars I wasn't discovered by him and then immediately call the police because I, unlike Chyna, am not a crazy person!

The first 30% of the novel I was immersed and you would have to pry the book out of my cold dead hands to stop me from reading it, but then the author took the readers out of the claustrophobia and tension that was the home, into a road trip, into other environments and unfortunately out of the part of the story I was enjoying so immensely.

It took me so far out of the novel because our protagonist has now gone from survivor to Rose McGowan in *Scream* trying to escape the killer through a doggy door.... like really?? WHAT ARE YOU DOING IDIOT!! The protagonist began to make poor decision after poor decision and even though the author tried to explain it a way with thin ass logic, as a reader I was left with the running inner dialogue of: WHAT ARE YOU DOING IDIOT!?

Also weirdly enough for someone like myself who LOVES reading inside the mind of a serial killer I actually didn't care for it in this novel. I wanted to be completely in the dark on where the killer was and what he was doing, thinking, and feeling but instead I got to know exactly where his head was at all times which took away from the creepy suspense. I'd rather of had this entire novel in the protagonist perspective instead of jumping back and forth. I think it would have made me a lot more unnerved by just the plain unknowing. I would be left with the same frantic question of; did he spot her? But instead I always knew the answer to that question which brought down the intensity of the novel.

Overall I like Dean Koontz, I went into this novel thinking he'd be like trashy Urban Fantasy writing but it was full of such deep descriptions, complex characters and vivid imagery. This novel was dark and not at all light and fluffy as I originally suspected. Although I didn't love this novel I really would like to read more Dean Koontz in my future. If you like'd this novel may I suggest *You're Next* a great horror film with survivalist girl as the lead (#GIRLPOWER); I'd also recommend *High Tension* but it is a well known

plagiarism of this book and other than the different endings it is basically a carbon copy of Dean Koontz, and I don't support people who steal other's creative property.

Bethany says

Intensity. More like intensely boring. I started this, got not even half way through and stopped reading it to read a Heather Graham book that i finished faster and enjoyed way more. Yes, it was better than this long drawn out storyline. It wasn't gross, didn't make me feel sick, wasn't disturbing at all like the other reviews claim. Maybe it just takes more to get to me. I actually liked Vess as weird as that may be. Well, I liked how he viewed things. It was a little weird that it Chyna found him attractive? Did that throw anyone else off? She was attracted to the man she was trying to kill? Oh well. It took me over a week to read this, maybe about 2 weeks i cant remember when i started but it usually only takes a couple days for me to finish a book so that says plenty.

Shelby says

The last 200 pages of this book are what makes me want to give it 5 stars but I didn't enjoy it as much as I hoped to, so four stars it is. The end plot twist was something I did not see coming and for that I applaud Koontz; I read this book relatively quickly and I didn't have to force myself to keep reading.

J.K. Grice says

I suppose many people feel that Koontz's books are a dime-a-dozen. But INTENSITY is as good a thriller as I've ever read, and that was 16 years ago. Very visceral and very scary. It reminds me a bit of the recent thriller, , which was one of my favorite books of 2017.

Stacy says

I think I have sadly hit my limit with Koontz. My first book by this author was AMAZING. The second was just as amazing. Then somewhere down the road, the villains all started to meld together. The villains became a little predictable for me because they all shared the same qualities.

Now that doesn't mean that this book didn't entertain me. There were times that my heart was racing and I was scared to death for the MC. The first 60% of the book was the best. I just wanted it to be over after that point. To be honest, I sped read the rest. I predicted everything that happened, which is bad because I can't predict much of anything. **I make it a point to not look ahead during a story, but the plot in *Intensity* slapped me square in the face.**

If you enjoy thrillers and haven't read many (or any) Koontz novels, then you will probably love *Intensity*. My first and favorite Koontz novels Lightning and The Good Guy.

I'm giving this 3 stars because I loved the first 60%. I'm still going to give Odd Thomas a go later on, but I think I'm done with his other novels.

Katie Ziegler (Life Between Words) says

I have never read a more action packed book in my life. It never once let up - almost from page one. In some ways it was a little disorienting because you never had a moment to breathe, but at the same time that's also what you really want when you read a thriller. The writing was meh, nothing special. But the story itself was skillfully told. And obviously unsettling. You get in the head of a serial killer, and who really wants to spend any time in that place!? Not me. And yet, I read the whole book in two days. The book was very aptly named: it was intense. And thrilling.

Also, the main character makes really dumb decisions. So...just know that going in.

Phrynne says

An excellent book, full of suspense. It kept me on the edge of my seat the whole way through and the temptation to rush to the end to see what happened was huge! But I was good and enjoyed every word of it. There is a very surprising little twist to the tale at the very end which was nice. It is always good to leave a book on a high and that is certainly the case here. Dean Koontz's books do vary in quality but this is one of the good ones,

Josh says

I decided that I would write a little about the books that I finish for now on. This was a very scary story! I have to say that it actually scared me sometimes and that is pretty hard to do. "Intensity" is a very appropriate title for this book, I couldn't stay away from it. Definately a plesant surprise after reading Dean Koontz's "Life Expectancy". This book never let up on it's suspense from beginning to end. If anyone is looking for a good horror, "Intensity" fits the bill. Be warned though, this book has a lot of adult stuff and has a lot of situations that are difficult to swallow as the story is centered around the actions of a sociopath and depicts instances of severe child abuse. However, I gave it five stars becuae I couldn't put it down, it kept me guessing, and it was actually scary and not cheesy like many horror novels.

Sifat's Book KingdoM says

The intense of the “intensity” initiates from the long drawn out somewhat terrifying scenes of Chyna hiding from Vess in attempts to go unnoticed and to survive, and the intense of the “intensity” continues with fiery...

“...Chyna Shepherd, Untouched and Alive...”

Chyna Shepard had a hard and candidly distressful childhood and she opened up to nobody. The main

companion she knew and trusted was Laura. Chyna voyaged home with Laura for spring break and keeping in mind that gazing out the window amid her restless night, Chyna heard something peculiar. It seem like an interloper, and returning to youth she instantly covered up under the bed. The gatecrasher had butchered the entire family in their rest and the just a single saved was Chyna.

From learning perspective, The bottom line of the story is; "Do not give up if you ever find yourself as a victim in such a scenario. Bite your time, count till the last second. There is always a chance to survive."

Emma says

Chyna needs to make some better life decisions.

Wasee says

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AmnesiaLab says

I hate Dean Koontz, but I go through books quickly and have to have something to read at work, and when it comes down to it, I'll read anything you put in front of me even if it's bad just for something to do. Allegedly, this was one of his better books. The best book I've read of his, I would give two stars. Don't even remember what it was called. It pains me that this man is the second best selling author in the US. Seriously.

Why? Well, where to begin? Let's start with characters. Dean Koontz doesn't create characters; he just creates caricatures. The main characters stories of childhood trauma aren't remotely believable. If her mother didn't give a shit about her and was constantly moving around, why would she even bother to bring her for

16 years? Everything is so extreme in her character that there's never any remotely realistic motivation for any of it. The villain is concerned only with *intensity*, mostly written in italics, because italics are apparently *intense*. His philosophy is that any *intense* experience is worthwhile. Basically, he should be on the X-Games doing flips on motorcycles and appearing in Mountain Dew commercials. The way Koontz beats the shit out of the *intensity* motif, I find it hard to believe more people aren't rolling their eyes and saying, "Gimme a break."

How about his craft? Clunky, uninspired, repetitious prose with awful dialogue. I don't remotely understand why people buy this guy's books. There is nothing compelling about his craft. For a guy they call "The Master of Suspense", he lacks all sense of subtlety. He constantly holds the reader's hand unnecessarily as if afraid they won't get it any time he uses some kind of symbolism. Not that it's common with Koontz. He's always saying more than is necessary and it gets a little insulting over time, as if he thinks his readers are so stupid they can't possibly pick up on the things he's writing without help.

So, his plots must be super-awesome to make up for it all, right? Let's face it; with most pulp, people don't give a shit how it's written. They only care about the story. This story is about some chick who goes to a friend's for the weekend, only to have the entire friend's family killed and end up the sole survivor riding along with the killer, trying to come up with a way to take him down and save some girl she's never met that the killer has locked in his basement. The upside of this story is most of it leaves the heroine alone, so you're not subjected to the cringe-worthy dialogue that the book opens with. It also means that Dean Koontz has to find some way to create his particular breed of melodrama through sometimes very slow events, so he prattles on for pages about a cramp in the heroine's ass, or she freaks out talking about how she will surely sustain a grievous spinal injury by slamming the chair she's chained to into the stone fireplace wall by backing into it. Every time she takes a whack at it, "OHHHHHHH GOD THE PAIN IT HURTS SOOOOOOO BAAAAAAD!" Gimme a fucking break. It's make of PINE. Fuck you, Dean, it's not dramatic that you have no grasp of physics whatsoever. Half of this book is her considering a fairly simple action and then contemplating the multitude of ways it could go horribly wrong and leave her critically injured. There's no real drama and nothing to care about, so Dean Koontz tries to manufacture some by telling you how you should feel about what she's doing.

I can't even begin to convey how inane this book truly is. Hopefully I've given you some idea.

Alejandro says

Intense!!! All right!!!

PERFECT TITLE

The title for this novel, *Intensity*...

...is truly well selected since this book is indeed...

...intense!!!

You are barely getting comfortable, starting to read the book, just a few pages, when...

Bam! Kapow! Tomá guacho!

The horror begins!

So, if you are a horror novel where you don't have to wait much to be full immersed in the action, don't look anymore! This is it! You found the book!

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

I have read quite several books by Koontz and...

...I was shocked by the crudity of the very first scenes.

I told myself (back then in 2007): "Dang! He (Koontz) is not fooling around! The villain, in this novel, is truly a grim, dark and twisted sonofa...".

Another of the most shocking things in this book, since you don't have any paranormal/sci-fi elements here (that's an usual trait by Koontz), all the horror here is made by somebody that it's quite "just" a human being...

...but don't fool yourself, since the villain here can scare more than the fiercest demon that you may encounter in other novel.

Even when you think that you can't get surprised anymore by him...

...wrong!

You'll get even more surprised...

...oh, yes...

... and even more afraid.

Trust me.

You'll meet true evil, truly human.

BOLD HEROINE

And since you have a really scary bad man...

...the only fair thing is to have a really awesome great woman.

I like the heroine here since I think that she acted in very logical way and every action that she does is well motivated and reasoned.

She doesn't have special skills like martial arts or anything, but she certainly have guts, have brains, and have

common sense.

The story actually has very few characters beyond the villain and the heroine, but still you will have plenty of reading, plenty of development,...

...plenty of intensity!!!

Brace yourself!

Naomi says

This book is well written, I'm sure. From the moment I started reading it I felt sick to my stomach from the overly detailed homicidal and torturous events, but also I could not stop reading it because the author held a small hope of the heroine doing some lasting good by helping the 16-year-old girl who was locked in this crazy bastard's basement. And of course getting herself out of this situation in which the reader found her.

I am glad I finished it. But I'm not going to hurry to read another Koontz book. He even dedicated this gorefest of a novel to his mother!

Debbie Floyd says

The title definitely describes this book. Dean Koontz really nailed this book.

Debbie "DJ" says

OMG, I haven't read a book like this in years, and don't think I'll be reading one again any time soon. Intensity is the perfect name for this one. It starts right off with an intruder on a killing rampage, and never lets up. I know, how can I keep reading, but the suspense was beyond belief, and the writing incredible. Just the other day I was driving in the mountains, noticing a blue truck was constantly behind me. He even made the same turn I did on a dirt road. Was he coming to kill me? How will I escape? Oh, he just passed me, whew! Yup, this is gonna stick with me, just hopefully not too long. Awesome read for horror and suspense fans!

Jane Stewart says

Fabulous. Scary. Incredible heroine.

Readers who liked The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo should like this. The two heroines (Lisbeth in Dragon Tattoo and Chyna in Intensity) were similar in their actions. Chyna chose to fight what seemed impossible.

Instead of running and trying to get away (like normal people) she went after him with the barest of weapons. She was resilient, resourceful, brave. She called it reckless caring. In the beginning of the story, Chyna is trying to get away from Edgler a serial killer. But when she hears that he has kept a sixteen year old girl prisoner in his basement for a year, Chyna decides to follow him, go to his home, and free the girl. A theme I liked is Lisbeth and Chyna refusing to be victims. In Dragon Tattoo I was scared at times. In Intensity I was scared almost all the time.

About a third of the way in I was so scared that I considered stopping unless I had assurance that there would be a good ending. So I jumped to the end and read the last half hour. It was great! The author tied things up well including the aftermath. Then I went back and read the rest of the book. It was still terribly frightening, but I was able to survive because I knew the ending would be good. Reading the end early in no way hurt the story for me. It made it better.

Just because I liked this does not mean it's my preferred genre. I do not want a daily diet of constant scariness and intensity.

Edgler enjoyed destroying beauty. He would torture victims with knives and tools. The author does not show the torture/killing scenes in detail. Instead they are told or referred to and the reader sees the bodies after. I was fine with that. But I also would have been ok with more details and gore.

A few times Chyna recalls life with her mother Ann. Ann lived a nomadic life with different boyfriends, drinking, and drugs. One boyfriend killed people in Chyna's presence. Ann enjoyed watching murder. Chyna growing up with Ann was a story of hiding, self protection, and not being cared for. In contrast, I loved the way Chyna treated and cared for Ariel.

I love that Koontz does not use tired cliches. He creates his own. They please me. Here are a few examples:
She was in an old testament mood, unwilling to turn the other cheek just now.
She was baking and nourishing a loaf of panic, plump and yeasty.
The car will tumble ass over tea kettle if it goes over the edge.

The narrator Kate Burton was fabulous. She used a style so appropriate for the intense sentences with pauses. She enhanced the experience.

DATA:

Narrative mode: third person. Unabridged audiobook reading time: 11 hrs and 35 mins. Swearing language: (rarely used) strong including religious swear words. Sexual content: one scene vaguely described, no details. Setting: current day California and Oregon. Book copyright: 1995. Genre: suspense thriller. Ending: good guys win.

Karen B. says

Re reading for September 2015 with Koontzland group. As with many Koontz novels, I enjoyed this one more the second time around. First of all I liked Koontz' descriptions, vivid but not too long. His use of simile and metaphor enhanced the reading for me. I won't go into the plot because many other reviewers have done that. As for characterization, Chyna is one of Koontz' strongest female characters. She fought for herself as a young girl and continues to fight the obstacles in her path. Chyna is as intense in her determination to free herself and another as Edgler Vess is in his attempt to spread destruction. For Edgler

(love the use of the "d" in his name as he points out that he is on the "edge") what matters is sensation. He has synesthesia (described in the book) the ability to observe with more than one sense. ex - taste colors) He is about the sensation of whatever he does. The feel, the taste, the smell, the sound of whatever he does including his murders. All of life for him is about sensation. Chyna pushes herself physically and in doing so builds an interior strength that keeps her going. She is about living and living UNHARMED. There are really just the two characters, Chyna and Vess and it is a battle Koontz often explores in his novels ... between good and evil.

Update June 2017

This was a re-read for me this time and I enjoyed it just as much as the first time. Koontz has a way of describing the dark side of human nature that you know even though this is fiction, human depravity is out there and there will always be those who find inner strength to fight it in one way or another. A lot of Chyna's victory in this novel is finding that inner strength as she struggles with herself.

Dustin Crazy little brown owl says

[my favorite part is the female elk which are portrayed as mysterious guardian angels - really the only supernatural element - so you can see what attracts me to Koontz stories :-)

"The elk's heart-shaped face was barely visible from a distance of only eight feet. It's eyes, however, shone."
(hide spoiler)]

Briana Patterson says

This is thriller suspense at its best. Dean Koontz knocked my socks off with this one, and as soon as I started reading, I could not get through it fast enough. Pages burned and I might have had to stomp my book out a few times.

In a way, this is not entirely typical for Dean Koontz. Don't expect anything supernatural or overly bizarre. It's about a killer and a survivor.

The title holds true to its pace. This book does not slow down once it kicks into high gear. It'll freak you out, and there's some great twists along the way. One of Koontz's best!
