



## Frankenstein Takes the Cake

*Adam Rex*

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No one ever said it was easy being a monster. Take Frankenstein, for instance: He just wants to marry his undead bride in peace, but his best man, Dracula, is freaking out about the garlic bread. Then there's the Headless Horseman, who wishes everyone would stop drooling over his delicious pumpkin head. And can someone please tell Edgar Allan Poe to get the door already before the raven completely loses it? *Sheesh.*

In a wickedly funny follow-up to the bestselling *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*, Adam Rex once again proves that monsters are just like you and me. (Well, sort of.)

## Frankenstein Takes the Cake Details

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Author : Adam Rex

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## From Reader Review **Frankenstein Takes the Cake** for online ebook

### **Kathrina says**

My 11-year-old brought this home from the library, drawn to it as it is written by his current FAVORITE AUTHOR EVER, Adam Rex. The plan was that he would read it aloud to me and his 8-year-old brother. The result was not expected: 11-year-old loved the humor, got most of the jokes, appreciated the satire, but frequently bound himself up in grammatical misreadings and inattention to requisite punctuation. We learned that reading poetry aloud, even guffaw-causing casual rhyme, is not the same thing as reading prose aloud. I found myself frequently reading over his shoulder to clarify missed meanings caused by run-on sentences and overlooked wordplay. Meanwhile, my 8-year-old was zoned out and bored, the humor so out of bounds from his own experience, and locked out by rather sophisticated grammar gymnastics. Spoofs of Edgar Allan Poe are a hard pass for 8-year-olds reading Silverstein. Really, I think I enjoyed this one more than they -- I felt almost guilty snickering at such things as the Melting Witch Diet -- what, what's so funny? Once I explained the advertising writing style, the mail-order con, the literary allusion to witches and Oz, well, admittedly, it just wasn't funny anymore. E-mails from Martians extolling performance-enhancing drugs? Not part of a kid's world. So beware, this is sophisticated humor for experienced readers, camouflaged in a goofy picture book format.

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### **Jim says**

Holy crap. This was almost as hilarious as *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*.

After realizing Adam Rex is quite a prolific artist and writer (and of course reading the aforementioned book) I checked out every Adam Rex book out of the Huntsville, AL library. This being the "sequel", we had to read it first. So worth it! Hilarious poems, and everyone in the family is cracking up.

Can't wait to read his other books.

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### **Abigail says**

Adam Rex returns in this second collection of monstrous poems, following upon his initial *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*, presenting nineteen selections that are brimming over with his trademark brand of sly humor. Formatted in much the same way as the first *Frankenstein* book, with a number of parallel themes - here we have the Headless Horseman's blog, in which he complains of the people who constantly stare at his pumpkin head, or imitate it; there we have Bigfoot and Yeti, and their pique at being confused with one another; here we have Edgar Allan Poe, and his hilariously poetic flights of fancy (much to the chagrin of a local raven); there we have the Phantom of the Opera, with a tune stuck firmly in his head - *Frankenstein Takes the Cake* is an amusing foray into the world of some of the world's most famous monsters, and other creepy creatures.

That said, although it is an enjoyable read, and a wonderful selection for the Halloween season, I didn't find *Frankenstein Takes the Cake* to be quite as appealing as Rex's earlier title, and I've been trying to figure out just why that is. The zany humor is still there (although I didn't giggle aloud with this one, as I did with

Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich), and the artwork is in the same appealingly eclectic mixed media style, with its blend of painted elements, drawings, and photographs. But somehow the result didn't have quite the same magic. I suspect that this is partly owing to the more adult concerns displayed, from the centrality of the wedding (with a focus on the actual planning of the wedding) between Frankenstein and his bride, to the reference to Tipper Gore (which already feels dated). In any case, despite these issues, I would still recommend this one to young readers who enjoyed the first collection, and to anyone looking for suitably monstrous reads for Halloween.

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### **Sarah says**

Witty. Clever. AND IT RHYMES. well, mostly. My favorite poem is a haiku about the author. It reads:

He knows Frankenstein's  
the doctor, not the monster.  
Enough already.

Genius.

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### **Jennifer says**

I bought this book for my nephew, flipped through it, read it, admired the illustrations, and then kept it for myself. I'm not the least bit sorry.

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### **Stephanie says**

I truly enjoyed this book! The illustrations are fantastic and the poems (some rhyme and some don't) are hilarious and very clever. Probably more catering to the adult readers than the children. Still a fun read for any time of the year but definitely has a Halloween focused theme...vampires, witches, headless horseman and so on. Unless you are like me and love Halloween all year! \*cackles\* I've heard his first book in this series "Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich" is very good as well and wished I read that one first but I'm guessing it doesn't really matter since I adored this one so much.

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### **Leslie says**

Shelia nails it with the “fantastically weird collage;” Frankenstein Takes the Cake will appeal and will impress. Rex adopts different styles and media and it is really kind of disgusting how successful he is with each. The creativity is inspiring and inspired to say nothing of entertaining. The opening pages feature a fun interactive comic in which the reader is at first mistaken of identity, and after the confusion is cleared, they get the closer look they need and—I won’t spoil it for you. But it is a brilliant opening because it reminds fans and introduces the new readers to Rex’s excellent sense of humor and comedic timing—which he confirms, just in case, by following the comic with a letter from the author.

A story can be found amidst Headless Horseman's blog posts, the advertising section, Edgar Allen Poe and his increasingly frustrated Raven, a Peanuts inspired comic strip...if one is interested. I haven't read Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich the first book in this series, but I will. But then I learned of Adam Rex from a Guys Read anthology, and then the brilliant novel True Meaning of Smekday [N recommends Cold Cereal, too]. But if you've a 5-10 year old, go ahead and start them here and keep Adam Rex on their shelves from here on out. Not that you'll need the excuse to have him around as well. He is such a talented author and illustrator and should not be missed.

L (omphaloskepsis)

<http://contemplatrix.wordpress.com/20...>

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### **Ze'Amora says**

such a good book read it easily to my siblings kinda a fake children advertisement

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### **Betsy says**

I like cake. I like Frankenstein. Ipso facto: I like *Frankenstein Takes the Cake*. Oh fine. Maybe it's a little more complicated than that. Maybe I like other things about the book too. Perhaps the art. Maybe the characters. And there's always the off chance that what I really like about is that it's a picture book/poetry sequel that takes cool monsters and makes them loveable. Rex's first Frankenbook, Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich was an odd little puppy. Poems about monsters, a weird variety of artistic styles, and quickfire punches of humor along the way. Rex probably could have copied the format of his first book poem for poem and nobody would have blinked an eye. *Takes the Cake* goes in a slightly different direction, however. Sure we have a lot of similarities (the black and white Edgar Allan Poe bits replace the Phantom of the Opera glimpses, for example) but for the first time Rex has added a bit of a plot to his story as well. Now you end up with a story, illustrations that pop the old eyeballs, and humor. Not, oh-gee-isn't-that-droll humor, but stuff that kids and adults will find positively hilarious. And yes, there's an obligatory poop joke too.

Well, it's just about time for The Bride of Frankenstein to get married, and you know what that means? Letting her parents know that she is A) Alive again and B) Marrying a fellow who's green. Meanwhile there are catering questions to take into account (some advice... do NOT offer vampires "steak" or a werewolf silverware). There's a flower girl to freak out (not hard). And there's a buffet line with some delicious and unfortunate (for Dracula) garlic bread on the menu. Other poems in the book discuss varied topics as the Headless Horseman's dilapidated head, the dangers of answering your door the day after Halloween, and alien spam. It all ties together by the end, until you're left with a cranky raven badgering you to finish the book. An oddly pleasant experience.

I'm just gonna stop myself right here and tell you why Rex deserves some attention for this book. I can already see some of you out there thinking, "Ah. More of the same." Fair enough. But what if I told you that in this title Rex has expanded his range of visual styles? Then publication page isn't much help in listing them since all its says is, "The illustrations in this book were done in pencil, charcoal, oils, and, in many cases, in Photoshop with a Wacom tablet. And probably some other things." Grrr. Well let's count 'em down anyway. You've got some comic book inspired panels and speech bubbles with a flat cartoonish style to

match. There are the lush oil paintings that are what the people pay their money to see. There are basic pen-and-ink sketches, of course. There's photography, which is new (and *somebody* had to design the Headless Horseman's rapidly decomposing head). There's a fellow straight out of an Egyptian painting, gorgeous Japanese inspired inked images, some graphite (I think), and a comic strip that is perhaps the best paean to Charles Schultz I've seen in a long time. There's also a candy colored computer created sequence of panels unlike anything else in the book.

One of the advantages of having a versatile artist like Mr. Rex take a book like this in hand is that you can sometimes see the same character rendered in a variety of different styles. Frankenstein and the Headless Horseman are good examples of this (though Dracula gets the serious face time here that he lacked in the last title). Old favorite characters from the first book that didn't end up with their own poems appear in the group scenes during the wedding. They also are mentioned in the list of Poems That Do Not Appear In This Volume, which struck me as both a joke and (in at least a couple cases) probably actual rejected or cut poems.

Plus you get the old attention to detail. When we see little Medusa in school, I for one really appreciated the stained drop ceiling in the classroom. Smacked of realism, it did. I liked how the poem "No One Comes to Skull Island Anymore" tried to replicate ye olde postcards circa 1955. And the advertising section (which somehow manages to rhyme the entire time) is worth the price of admission alone. Tofu gets its due.

If there is something to criticize about the book, it would have to be the poems themselves. Now now! Down! I still like the poems. Nobody's saying they aren't fun. But I'm a fan of precise rhymes and lines that scan perfectly. For the most part, Rex's poetry does this too. It may take two or three read alouds to truly understand what he's trying to accomplish, but mostly it works. Lines like "But the poem Poe composes poses problems, 'cause he knows his / line on roses being roses has been written once before." It works, but you have to work on it. It isn't necessarily that these poems don't scan. They go through, but only after a little tugging and pulling on the readers' part. It would be nice if they flowed sure and smooth, but that doesn't always happen. Rex's dialogue-turned poetry may be a bit clunky and hard to read, but his haikus practically redefine the genre. If you aren't swayed by the book's backflap "A Haiku about Adam Rex" which reads, "He knows Frankenstein's / the doctor, not the monster. / Enough already," then try his Kaiju Haiku section. There you will find oddly lovely pen and inks done with just a hint of red. One that I was particularly fond of featured red blossoms, falling upon the barren earth. It's only when you refocus your eyes that you realize that you're looking at a scene of devastation, as Godzilla tramples Tokyo. It is accompanied by the poem "An autumn rampage / the sound of leaves and soldiers / crunching underfoot." Good work.

The real reason to buy the book? Where else are you going to encounter the line "Quoth the raven: 'Tipper Gore'"? When I reviewed the first *Frankenstein* book, I pouted over Rex's overt use of random celebrities and pop culture. That's been scaled back a fair amount in this title, but not so much that he hasn't allowed himself to be silly in that way once in a while. No other author would ever think to combine the term "peep" with Edgar Allan Poe. And the Headless Horseman's blog? Maybe I'm biased, but I thought it was just swell.

I was talking with a colleague about the first *Frankenstein* book the other day, and she happened to mention that the problem with the book is that libraries like to shelve it in the poetry section and not with the picture books. She worried that kids would miss it entirely if it were relegated so far far away. I understand her point, but judicious hand-selling (to say nothing of Poetry Month recommendations) mean that our copies certainly circulate as much and as often as I can make them. The case will be the same for its sequel as well. By going in a new direction and pulling out artistic genres and styles hitherto unthought of, *Take the Cake*

does its predecessor proud. Gross, cool, weird, and fun. Everything, in fact, that kids look for in a book.

Ages 5-12.

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### **Elaina says**

The entire title is: *Frankenstein Takes the Cake*: which is full of funny stuff like rolling heads and giant gorillas and zombies dressed as little girls and Edgar Allan Poe. The book, we mean - not the cake.

I'm almost tempted to give this one five stars! My ten year old loved this book. It's zany (even though I hate that word) and strange and hilarious and novel. There is just something fresh and new about the way the book is written and illustrated.

The only reason I'm giving it four stars instead of five is that I think the book is hard to market. It's being marketed towards kids, but I think most of the greatness of the book would be over most chidlrens' heads. My ten year old is pretty savvy and witty and artsy, but even she didn't fully appreciate the humor in it. She did, however, appreciate the illustrations. She said it's inspired her in her own art. So kudos, Mr. Adam Rex! Well done!

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### **Qt says**

Deliciously funny book of monster-related poems, illustrated in a wide range of styles. A perfect Halloween book, but, for us monster lovers, also great any time of year :-)

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### **Paul says**

Another wonderful book from Adam Rex. The poem format bothered me a little in this one, because Rex's humor and creativity are so out of bounds that it seems a little ridiculous to then constrain them within the "box" of poetry, but overall it's kept pretty lively. Like some other reviewers, I do question if this material would appeal to kids as much as it does to me, but as I am generally a selfish knave, such thoughts will not cause me to delete stars from my rating. In other words....

Suck MUD, toddlers! I'm **reading!!!**

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### **Julie Suzanne says**

Absurd stories, poems, blogs, and advertisements from monstrous characters of our favorite movies and poems. Many references to Poe's "The Raven" and other things that the supposed target audience (ages 5-10 ???) wouldn't get. I found the humor much more clever than my son did in this one... I personally LOVED it and hope to own it someday. I'll pull it out again when my son studies "The Raven" at an age when he gets it better.

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### **Sam Bloom says**

Just a notch down from his first collection, but still truly funny. Personal favorites: "Off the top of my head: the official blog of the Headless Horseman;" the "Edgar Allan Poems," especially "Edgar Allan Poe should be writing or sleeping, not doing a crossword puzzle" (the answer to 7-down: Tipper Gore); "Dracula Jr. wants a big-boy coffin" (done in the style of a Peanuts comic, with Dracula Jr. as the Charlie Brown character and some pitch-perfect Peanuts mannerisms); and especially the book's centerpiece, "The Frankenstein Wedding Suite" (I especially love "The Bride of Frankenstein wrote her own vows," where she basically talks herself out of marrying him until finally realizing, "let's face it-I'm not getting any less dead." Yep, I'm a big old Adam Rex fanboy.

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### **Burbank Library Children's Department says**

This is a hilarious collection of poems, including the super funny Frankenstein Takes the Cake, that will keep both mom & dad and the little ones rolling on the floor. Don't wait for Halloween, check out this book today!

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AR 3.7  
.5 points

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