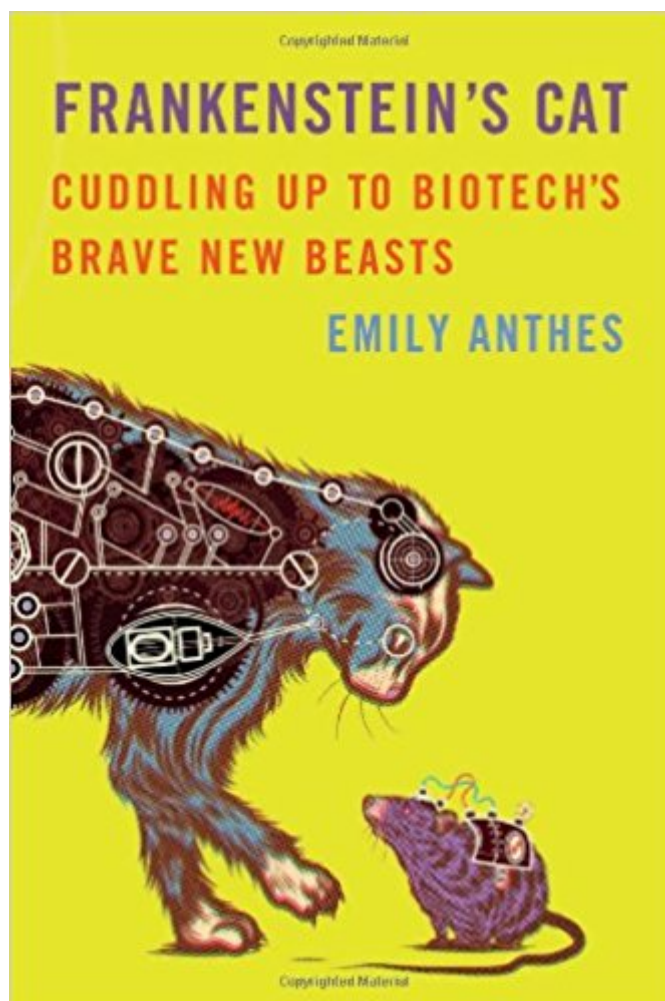


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Frankenstein's Cat: Cuddling Up To Biotech's Brave New Beasts



Synopsis

Winner of 2014 AAAS/Subaru SB&F Prize for Best Young Adult Science Book
Longlisted for the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award
One of Nature's Summer Book Picks
One of Publishers Weekly's Top Ten Spring 2013 Science Books
For centuries, we've toyed with our creature companions, breeding dogs that herd and hunt, housecats that look like tigers, and teacup pigs that fit snugly in our handbags. But what happens when we take animal alteration a step further, engineering a cat that glows green under ultraviolet light or cloning the beloved family Labrador? Science has given us a whole new toolbox for tinkering with life. How are we using it? In *Frankenstein's Cat*, the journalist Emily Anthes takes us from petri dish to pet store as she explores how biotechnology is shaping the future of our furry and feathered friends. As she ventures from bucolic barnyards to a "frozen zoo" where scientists are storing DNA from the planet's most exotic creatures, she discovers how we can use cloning to protect endangered species, craft prosthetics to save injured animals, and employ genetic engineering to supply farms with disease-resistant livestock. Along the way, we meet some of the animals that are ushering in this astonishing age of enhancement, including sensor-wearing seals, cyborg beetles, a bionic bulldog, and the world's first cloned cat. Through her encounters with scientists, conservationists, ethicists, and entrepreneurs, Anthes reveals that while some of our interventions may be trivial (behold: the GloFish), others could improve the lives of many species—including our own. So what does biotechnology really mean for the world's wild things? And what do our brave new beasts tell us about ourselves? With keen insight and her trademark spunk, Anthes highlights both the peril and the promise of our scientific superpowers, taking us on an adventure into a world where our grandest science fiction fantasies are fast becoming reality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Medicine-producing goats, a glowing beagle, and remote-controlled rats seem like science fiction, but not only are they scientifically possible, they're already here. Welcome to the weird world of animal biotechnology presented by journalist Anthes. Genetic alteration has allowed us to change animals in ways never before possible. The book is a quick, often surprising review of current advances, giving accessible treatment to a weighty subject and employing clear descriptions of complex science. Anthes not only explores what is being done but also asks why and if it should be done. Along the way, the book reveals much about humans and our connections to animals and the world we all inhabit. These animals are not just in labs. Glowing fish and steerable cockroaches are being sold, and a cloned cat has been accepted into a home after her research days were finished. Cyborg beetles and much more are a reality today, and their existence prompts us to wonder where our responsibility lies when pursuing our ever-growing power to play with the animal kingdom.

--Bridget Thoreson

Witty and well-researched . . . Despite her scientific expertise, Ms. Anthes can't resist playful perkiness herself. The New York Times [Frankenstein's Cat is] far more than just a fascinating read about animal manipulation. As it touches the third rail of 'manipulating Nature,' which seems to irritate non-religious liberals as much as evangelicals, its implications go far beyond controversies associated with animal biotechnology to the ethics of "positive eugenics" in humans. [Anthes] colorfully explores all the fascinating and in some cases gruesome ways humans are reshaping the animal kingdom . . . she thoughtfully pleads for reasoned contemplation and discussion rather than knee jerk reactions. Forbes In a fascinating romp through laboratories, barns, and pet stores, science journo Emily Anthes interviews the innovators pushing biological limits, and offers elegant explanations of neuroscience and genetics. Ryan Jacobs, Mother Jones Genetically engineered glow-in-the-dark fish for your fish tank. Cyborg beetles concocted by the Defense Department. Five hundred different strains of transgenic mice caged in a Chinese laboratory. Science journalist Emily Anthes has a knack for ferreting out such eyebrow-raising specimens, and she makes the details of her complex subject matter highly readable in Frankenstein's Cat. The Washington Post Anthes, a gifted science writer who lives with her

cavapoo Milo, takes us on a journey from "petri dish to pet store" and beyond . . . this is a serious book with a light touch.ââ •Bloombergâ œA witty exploration of the many ways in which humans are reshaping animal bodies in the twenty-first century . . . an entertaining, intelligent book that casts new light on the shady gulf between man and beast.ââ •Natureâ œFascinating, sharp and a bit scary.ââ •New Scientistâ œA profoundly hopeful and often funny book about how the dividing line between human, animal and machine isn't as clear as you might think . . . This is a must for animal lovers, as well as anyone curious about the future of biology.ââ •io9.comâ œFascinating . . . A heartwarming chapter is devoted to the dolphin Winter, whose injured tail was replaced with a prosthetic one . . . with legislation regulating the animal biotech industry highly inconsistent . . . Anthes eloquently explores the arguments framing the debate.ââ •Nautilusâ œCharming . . . the science is accessible and so, mercifully, is the ethicsâ | a breezy introduction to a complex and controversial issue." Four stars.ââ •BBC Focusâ œWitty and intelligent . . . If Anthes had simply opted to flit from one biotech vignette to the next, Frankenstein's Cat would be impressive enough. But she gives us much, much more, straying at every turn to reflect on historical precedents to these brave new beasts and to ponder the troublesome philosophical and ethical questions they raise.ââ •BBC Wildlifeâ œ[Anthes] has a gift for blending reputable science with humorous anecdotes in a sparkling writing style that makes reading this book a real delight . . . The book bubbles with provocative bioscience and fascinating examples of important advances that are presented in a witty and absorbing fashion. You will be introduced to a wide range of emerging technology that has compelling applications to future health care . . . It is a gem of a book . . . pick it up and enjoy a peek into this brave new world of biotechnology!ââ •Oncology Timesâ œA lively, engaging, and intensely researched overview of where animal science has gone in recent decades and where it might go. All who value both human and animal welfare may think it worth their while to give it a read.ââ •The Futuristâ œThe great merit of Frankenstein's Cat is its balance. It could have been a gee-whiz paean to the genius of genetic engineers. It could have been a soulless expose of the bizarre features of its subject. It could have been a cry of fright at the possibilities unleashed by scientists in this field. Anthes, often humorous but never insensitive, portrays their products neither as masterpieces nor as monsters. What she does say, in many different ways, is that we must understand the consequences of genetic engineering and be prepared for them practically, philosophically and ethically--not after the startling and perhaps irreversible fact, but in advance.ââ •The Valley Advocate (Massachusetts)â œAn elegant tour of the wild and fraught sideshow of animal biotechnology . . . Learned, entertaining and illuminating.ââ •Kirkus Reviewsâ œThe book is a quick, often surprising review of current advances, giving accessible treatment to a weighty

subject and employing clear descriptions of complex science. Anthes not only explores what is being done but also asks why and if it should be done. Along the way, the book reveals much about humans and our connections to animals and the world we all inhabit.

•Booklist

Animals are fascinating if reluctant soldiers in the biotech revolution, writes journalist Anthes in this witty and thought-provoking book.

•Publishers Weekly

With wit, high intelligence, and a lively writing style, Anthes portrays the new world of biotechnology in which we control the bodies and brains of other animals and the moral and philosophical issues so raised.

•Alan Lightman, bestselling author of *Einstein's Dreams*

Frankenstein's Cat is smart, lucid, and full of surprises. There was hardly a page that didn't contain something new or unexpected.

•Anne Fadiman, National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

Smart, funny and deep: *Frankenstein's Cat* is a report from the frontiers of the scientific campaign to re-engineer animals to fulfill human desires. At the same time Anthes, whose love of animals shines through on every page, takes her readers on a rich and challenging quest of self-discovery: what rights do the animal objects of our creativity possess and what obligations to them and to ourselves must we accept as we reshape (again!) the living world? A great read.

•Thomas Levenson, Professor of Science Writing, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and author of *Newton and the Counterfeiter*

Emily Anthes gets the balance just right . . . There are brilliant stories of the entrepreneurs who want to bring glowing fish and remote controlled cockroaches to market, contrasted with the potentially lifesaving work of 'pharmed' animals modified to produce medicine in their milk . . . Always enjoyable, a page-turner of a popular science book with a surprise around every corner.

•Brian Clegg, author of *Inflight Science* and *The Universe Inside You*

This book came today and I just can't put it down. It's past 2am already. I'll probably finish it on the second read tomorrow. This is a book everyone needs to read to understand synthetic biology. It's amazing, scary, shocking, exciting. Synthetic Biology, and Evolutionary Developmental Biology are favorite topics of mine to read. Emily writes in a style that is very easy to understand even for a layman on this subject. She clarifies misunderstandings about genetically modified animals and also contrasts them to the hybridized animals which we have had for hundreds of years - especially dogs. She gets deep into the ethics and puts forward both sides of all the issues raised. The book starts out describing how they can easily grow a mouse with tusks with a slight genetic modification. This book seems like science fiction from 100 years into the future but it is real and now and today.

Interesting and engaging.

Just as one would expect from a Scientific American Book, this is a very good general survey. It covers the trends in cloning and other aspects of biotechnology. In doing so, it might disappoint those who are already a bit more informed, either by reading other books on the issues or by following the general science magazines. For those, who want a quick survey, though, this is a good choice.

Eye-opening and fascinating coverage of biotechnology advances. Covers many topics, not just cloning. Is very thought provoking. My son needs to write a paper on this topic and this book gave him lots to think about.

I listened to an interview with the author on NPR and wanted to learn more. The author delivers information on genetic manipulation in an easy to understand fashion and does so with clever writing and wit. Had the book stayed on the topic of gene manipulation and delved a bit deeper into this subject I would have been happier. The second section of the book moves on to animal prosthetics -- man-made flippers for injured dolphins -- that sort of thing. The last section of the book are author research notes. She's done an impressive amount of research, but at this point the book feels a bit like a college dissertation -- an excellent dissertation, mind you -- but not exactly what I was hoping for.

I loved this book. I studied bioethics in school, so I am used to books with very academic discussions of this complex issues. This is great for anybody to read. It has the science, the societal implications, and the humor and heart of Emily Anthes. I do wish there were more counter arguments, showing the possible dangers, but the reader just has to be aware of that them self.

Great, very readable book! Science for everyone to understand and science we need to know about in our animal's future

Very interesting survey of advances in robotics , genetics etc with animals. The author does a good job of staying going to be impartial all still having an interesting point of view. Worth reading.

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