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We Are Legion (We Are Bob): Bobiverse, Book 1



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Synopsis

There’s a reason We Are Legion, We Are Bob was named Audible’s Best Sci-Fi Book of 2016. Unique, hilarious, and utterly addictive, Dennis E. Taylor’s debut novel kicked off an Audible-wide obsession among sci-fi diehards and new listeners alike. Bob Johansson has just sold his software company and is looking forward to a life of leisure. There are places to go, books to read, and movies to watch. So it’s a little unfair when he gets himself killed crossing the street. Bob wakes up a century later to find that corpsicles have been declared to be without rights, and he is now the property of the state. He has been uploaded into computer hardware and is slated to be the controlling AI in an interstellar probe looking for habitable planets. The stakes are high: no less than the first claim to entire worlds. If he declines the honor, he’ll be switched off, and they’ll try again with someone else. If he accepts, he becomes a prime target. There are at least three other countries trying to get their own probes launched first, and they play dirty. The safest place for Bob is in space, heading away from Earth at top speed. Or so he thinks. Because the universe is full of nasties, and trespassers make them mad - very mad. Listener-favorite narrator Ray Porter (14, The Fold) brings the many Bobs into being in all their glory, delivering a performance that listeners have described as "outstanding," "nuanced" and a "dizzying tour de force."

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition
Listening Length: 9 hoursÃ Â andÃ Â 30 minutes
Program Type: Audiobook
Version: Unabridged
Publisher: Audible Studios
Audible.com Release Date: September 20, 2016
Whispersync for Voice: Ready
Language: English
ASIN: B01L082SCI
Best Sellers Rank: #2 inÃ Â Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science Fiction > High Tech #3 inÃ Â Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Hard Science Fiction #5 inÃ Â Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Alien Invasion

Customer Reviews

"We Are Legion: We Are Bob" is one of those rare sci-fi novels that just fires on all cylinders, providing stimulating concepts, well-told and well-plotted storylines, and a fantastic narrator who

brings the whole thing to life. In short, the book is a blast. The tone is witty, thoughtful, and introspective, but this is interspersed with edge-of-your-seat action, and when it’s all over, "Bob" definitely leaves you wanting more.The premise concerns one Bob Johansson, a self-proclaimed nerd, but a very successful one at that. He’s made a lot of money from software designs. Basically, he’s your typical engineering genius and all-around problem-solver, and this serves him well as the novel’s events unfold. At the start of things, all is mostly well for Bob, who, despite some losses in his love life, nonetheless is reaping the rewards from the recent sale of his software company and is just looking forward to a life of leisure and peaceful recreation. Suddenly fate steps in and sends him off into a Futurama-like state of cryogenic limbo. When he wakes up, a hundred-and-seventeen years have passed, leaving Bob stranded in the future without any connections to the life he once knew: family, friends, and even the English language have all moved on.From here the news gets even stranger. As it turns out, Bob is, uh, not exactly himself anymore. Or is he? It’s hard to say, really and is one of the things you as a reader have to work out for yourself. On the one hand, technically, Bob really is not Bob anymore: the entirety of his brain has been scanned and uploaded into a special, high tech cube, so there is nothing organic about Bob that remains any longer. He exists now as a computer program that merely thinks it is Bob. And yet, on the other hand, from this Bob’s point of view, only a few moments have transpired from his last conscious memories to the present moment. So, despite all evidence to the contrary, Bob still feels like Bob.This idea of uploading one’s consciousness is an intriguing concept, and the author does not dodge all of the existential questions that go with it. Does Bob have a soul? Is he truly a conscience being? Or is he just a very clever computer, a "Chinese Room." Bob’s situation, if restricted entirely to these sorts of questions, would still make for a stimulating read; however, this is only the opening salvo. As the novel progresses, many more challenges to Bob’s status are presented to the reader, and all of it is done in such a plausible, sane, and, thankfully, non-overly-dramatic way, that the result transcends into an invigorating, imaginative fantasy that just keeps expanding in its scope. It’s all very satisfying.It might be worth mentioned that the author manages to accomplish all of this without the use of gratuitous profanity, graphic sex, or bloody violence, yet it’s not as if these elements come across as noticeably absent; they just aren’t needed and so aren’t missed. Does this make the novel family-friendly? Surprisingly, the answer is not necessarily. Religion is a major theme of "We Are Legion: We Are Bob," and those who practice it are not always portrayed positively to say the least, so this aspect might prove too mature for younger listeners."Bob" isn’t just a lot of deep, philosophical musings, though; mainly its an epic adventure story reminiscent of classic sci-fi adventures, such as "When Worlds Collide." Other literary influences abound: there’s a bit of Orwell

here, a dash of Arthur C. Clark there, and I detected Andy Weir's "The Martian" in Bob's attitude and general approach to problem-solving. Phillip K. Dick's "Mr. Spaceship" deserves a special nod, as well.I could go on, (references to "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" are everywhere, for example). Suffice it to say that homages are plentiful in "Bob" and are one of the things that make it so much fun. This is not to say, ultimately, that the book is unoriginal; exactly the opposite is true. I don't think I've ever read a novel quite like this one, especially in its approach to storytelling . I did a bit of research and discovered the writer's website, where he describes himself as an "irate reader" who has now become a "nervous author." I suspect that by "irate" he may mean that in many ways stories can irritate us as much as they entertain.I'm always irritated, for instance, at stories that present their heroes with some extraordinary set of circumstances (such as time travel), yet somehow the hero just adapts immediately, as if this sort of thing just happens all the time. I would be completely freaked out if I actually traveled through time. Likewise, at minimum, I expect a few paragraphs of reaction. Just once I'd like to see a protagonist completely freaked out, at least for a little bit. It's just these sort of irritations that the author avoids altogether. His characters take time out to experience the moment instead of moving forward right away to the next plot point. Nothing feels rushed and everything seems to unfold exactly as it should. In many ways the book feels like a sci-fi novel written especially with the fans in mind.Thus, although it may seem like a bold statement to make, it seems to me that "Bob" marks the arrival of a brilliant, new voice in sci-fi. Dennis E. Taylor has written and published one other novel prior to this one ("Outland," published in 2015), but, apparently this was before he got an agent. Although the first novel received highly favorable reader reviews, overall sales were slow, and no audiobook was produced. This new novel, on the other hand, is receiving the full Audible Studios treatment, and its sales rank so far is in the top thirty books sold. With narrator Ray Porter's amazingly nuanced performance, here, I wouldn't be surprised if demand for this title increases dramatically.Author Dennis E. Taylor, may end up having to redo his "about-me" profile, as a result, where he self-identifies first as a computer programmer but only last as an author (right behind "snowboarder"). More about him may be found on his website: [...]

Very fun book, and although I don't think I have ever said this about any other book, more fun in the audiobook version than in print. I started listening to the audiobook while cooking, sat down after dinner to finish it in print and switched back to the audio version because I liked it better. The narrator does a great job of giving each Bob a different voice, as well as GUPI's voice.Read the author's blog and it is good to see that 3 books are planned. Yes, this one ends somewhat abruptly

with many unfinished storylines, but that is pretty much required by the way the story is being told. Some plot lines came to a natural break point, others clearly will be developed more down the line.

Let’s see... what are just some of the words I’d use to describe this book? How about these to start:Bizarre, fantastic, weird, amazing, far-fetched, out of this world (literally), spectacular, and unbelievable. But no list would be complete without including AWESOME! and WONDERFUL!Obviously, you will need to be a fan of both science fiction and fantasy genres. Otherwise, this story is just way too "out there" (again, literally) to hold one’s attention. If you are the type that can read such a work of fiction without constantly stopping to make critical comments to yourself, such as "that’s just ridiculous", or "that could never happen...ever", or "this guy (the author) is a freak", or, or, or, then it shouldn’t be difficult at all to get deeply entrenched in the characters. (oops, or maybe I should have said character). Regardless of any degree of plausibility, this first book in the "Bob" series, is totally entertaining on the "What-If" scale. It is so jam-packed with both factual and theoretical science, it will ultimately become difficult to decide which you want to believe in more.Even if you’ve never been a sci-fi reader much, or you think maybe it could just be fun to try it out, you should really consider giving Bob/Bobs a chance. In this story’s case, the question of "How is the story narrated" could only be answered with "First persons".And, finally, if you’re an Audible fan like me, be sure to add this one to your library, and listen as much as possible. The narrator is outstanding, and totally adds a hugely worthwhile additional dimension to the story.Enjoy!

It’s not often that you come upon a new approach to storytelling. So it was a pleasure to run into one here, and the more so because it was done really well. Looking forward to book #2.Another thing: stories set more than just a few years in the future often suffer from dubious language issues; basically brought about by contemporary modes of speech being used when if one activates a single brain cell, it would be obvious that this is unlikely in the extreme. But this story is done in such a way as to actually handle the problem, and naturally so. Read it, you’ll see why I say that.Great job by the author.

Bob is my hero! What a great concept for a sci-fi novel. It’s so unusual, it’s actually hard to do justice to a description with only a few sentences.This is a story that delivers a character(s) that you would like to be friends with. It’s easy to imagine yourself responding to Bob’s extraordinary situation in much the same way he does. Well, I might not be get a grip on things quite as fast as Bob does, but I’d like to think that I could.Bob begins as a fairly regular person, smart but not genius smart, a bit

insecure but not a basket case and funny but not a comedian. As the situation unfolds and evolves, Bob really steps up to the challenges he is faced with and adapts beautifully to his extraordinary situation.Warning ... if you read this first book, be prepared to go straight through the rest of the trilogy. I made the mistake of starting to read this book at bed time and finally had to force myself to put it down at 2 AM.

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