



The Back Stairs

K.C. Kendricks

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Fallon Roxbury has a nose for trouble, and the uncanny ability for landing in the middle of it the moment he finds it. While investigating the gruesome murder of a young male prostitute in the red-light district, Fallon gets a whiff of something strange. Forensics has unidentified hairs. Very unidentified hairs, like nothing in any of the textbooks. Following a tip from a person of interest, Fallon meets Sundown, an apparent hustler who apparently knows a lot more than he will admit.

Getting personally involved with Sundown breaks every rule in the police manual, and in Fallon's own personal code. But Sundown is like a drug, and Fallon can't stop at taking only one hit. Yet when Sundown is forced to reveal the truth about the murder, Fallon's world is turned upside down, and he's left with only two options—check himself in for psychiatric evaluation, or accept a new reality with a strange shift.

Shapeshifters, that is...

The Back Stairs Details

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Author : K.C. Kendricks

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From Reader Review The Back Stairs for online ebook

Elf says

A lighter, fun read (erm, despite the dead bodies - the MC is a cop investigating a murder, after all). Very neat "shifter" premise. I really enjoyed this author's writing; the characterization is well-done and the plotting/pacing was superb. Since this was a shorter story, and the shifter love interest 'resolved' near the very end, I'd love to get a sequel to firm up the HEA, and learn more of the "shifter" society!

Grade: 4.5 - 5 stars (dock a wee bit for the rushed 'HEA' - if there is a sequel planned, then I happily award the full five :)

Macky says

Discovered this in a round about way, was looking through books by dates published in kindle books department and found what is the third and newest book in this series. It sounded interesting and so I looked up the author to find the first book and took a chance. Thank goodness I did!

The synopsis given covers the story well enough so I'm not going to rehash it but what I will say is I was more than pleasantly surprised.

This is a short novella that introduces us to the start of a series that gives a refreshing new spin to the shifter world that has become a little stale of late with the same old 'alpha claiming mate' plot line. The new paranormal underworld that KC Kendrick has invented is different and intriguing, with a lot of scope to expand it more.

I loved the writing style, it had the laconic, dry witted humour that tickles my fancy and grabbed my attention from page one.

Loved Fallon, the laidback witty cop and Sundown, beautiful, sensual and mysterious and Juny, Fallons partner/sidekick and a well fleshed out secondary character. The chemistry is perfect between the two leads and even though this is quite a short novella it packed in a lot of actual story therefore making it feel an awful lot longer, cleverly done KC!

Just downloaded the next two in the series so looking forward to getting to know these characters much better. Recommend if you love your paranormal m/m romances but want something a tad different.

Dee says

3.5 stars rounded up, go and read all the series though!

Well, I'm writing this review while reading book 4 Moon dances Sundown 4, having devoured 1, 2 and 3 in swift order. This series is a hidden gem to say the least and I'm very happy to have discovered it.

If I'd read this first book alone I'm not sure it would be as highly rated - I might have been tempted to round it down a touch, it's hard to say, because I was previously prejudiced to mixing SF to paranormal. . . but not anymore! (view spoiler)

Fallon is a great character, the familiar jaded, cynical cop character jolted from his comfort zone by an inexplicable attraction to a mysterious homme fatale (*no idea if that's an actual thing and while yes I probably could say femme fatale* (you know what I mean if you've read this book!) *I don't wanna!*) with a shifty (*pun intended!*) manner. The whole atmosphere felt quite noir to me which added to the story and the ambivalence surrounding, well, *everything*, about Sundown made quite a change.

Now I don't want to spoiler what to me was a great twist, but Muffin was very unexpected and that's all I'll put about that!

Charly says

A fun little read, although I'm not sure it will stand out in my mind

Warning: This review might contain what some people consider SPOILERS.

Rating: 7/10

PROS:

- The narrator relates events with cynicism and bone-dry candidness that is often funny.
- The secondary characters aren't particularly well-defined (how could they be, given the short length of the story?), yet they still manage to pop off of the page because their dialogue and mannerisms are all portrayed so well.
- I didn't figure out that there was a supernatural slant to the story until almost halfway through (I hadn't read a synopsis recently). I found the subtlety of it rather intriguing; it literally snuck up on me.
- The actual murder investigation isn't near as involved as such plotlines typically are, but I still found myself guessing at the murderer's identity.

CONS:

- I don't have much use for sex scenes between strangers, and that's about all that this story contains in that department.
- (This might be a con for some people.) I found the whole story just a little...odd. Many of the things the characters say confused me, like they didn't follow logically from what came before. And some of the things that the characters do are simply weird.

Overall comments: This story is so short that I can't see myself reading it over and over again because I just didn't get to know the characters all that well. The plot isn't terribly original, but it's mysterious enough, and I didn't see the end coming--at least not until well into the story. Overall, I enjoyed this as an hour's worth of fun.

Lasha says

KC Kendricks' The Back Stairs is an innovative and intricate story of Fallon Roxbury, a homicide detective who meets what he thinks is male prostitute and finds out that appearances can be very deceiving. And what starts out as a murder mystery quickly morphs into a paranormal plot, when Fallon finds out Sundown is not a suspect in his murder investigation, but is in fact a shapeshifter.

I loved the world-building in The Back Stairs as it brought a depth and texture to the plot. Although the novella is set in the present, it had an other-worldly feel and the backstory of Sundown was original and intriguing. Bring in Fallon and Sundown's unique love story and this book really begins to sizzle.

And since I enjoyed this first novel so much, I am looking forward to reading the second book in this series, Beneath Dark Stars. Sundown and Fallon are quickly becoming my favorite human-shapeshifter pairing. 4 stars.

Dark Divas Reviews

Cherie Noel says

Loved it!! The characters felt real to me...sometimes vulnerable, sometimes foolish, sometimes brave, sometimes smack-the-back-of-the-head stupid. Real. It's a keeper. Now if only K.C. would write more stories in this world...

Julesmarie says

UPDATE 14 September 2014

First re-read since I just discovered that there's now a #4 in this series. This was just as enjoyable the second time through, perhaps even more since I know Sundown's secret now and wasn't going through as confused as Fallon this time.

I still love the characters and loved getting to go back to the beginning of their story.

Favorite Quotes:

his easy tenor hit every musical note my soul ever knew.

Had I been a cat, I'd have purred. It was wonderful.

There was the truth we tell the world, and then there was the truth we hide from ourselves.

but the part of me that was a simple, lonely, tired man won the moment.

What was it about him that I couldn't keep my mouth shut and my pants on?

"I don't want to fucking talk about it. I'm not calm, okay? I'm just smart enough to know it's done, and getting drunk or bawling or beating someone up won't bring my hearing back."

"'Maybe' is a trap, baby. All the second-guessing in the world can't change what is. Let it go and get on with

your life."

ORIGINAL REVIEW 27 August 2012

This was great fun. I was a little nervous after reading multiple reviews that said that if they'd known what the book was REALLY about they probably wouldn't have picked it up. I was too intrigued by the premise to let that deter me, however, and I just went in with an open mind.

And once I found out what the book was REALLY about, I was still intrigued--enough that I've purchased the other two books and am excited to read more about these two and this world.

I think it's the characters that hooked me. I really liked Fallon--right from the beginning I felt like I could understand him and where he was coming from. It was delightful to get to experience the events and watch them unfold through his eyes. I think perhaps his reluctance to accept what was happening actually made it easier for me to accept it.

And I was fascinated by the new approach to shifter lore. It's been a while since a shifter book surprised me, but this one definitely did.

A fun book, with a fascinating mythology and interesting characters that I can't wait to learn more about.

Elizabeth says

???Well... I found a new author whose books I'll be keeping an eye out for. I love when that happens! The writing was smooth and engaging, the characters well developed and interesting. I was impressed by Kendricks' style. She didn't fall prey to cliches, and her 1st person POV insights were spot on.

Morgan Skye says

Fallon is a cop with a partner who has some "extra abilities" so he's a little more open to the idea of the supernatural than the average guy. One night he meets a young woman at a crime scene where a gay hooker was slaughtered. She offers him some advice about the crime but only if he'll meet her "Up the Back Stairs".

When he arrives, there is no young woman, instead a stunning man who calls himself "Sundown". Fallon thinks both the woman and Sundown are hookers, but can't help but be amazingly attracted to Sundown anyway. Sundown gives him some clues about the crime and some hot sex and the two part ways.

Later, when more bodies are found, Fallon goes back to Sundown for help and he is surprised to find that Sundown is more than he seems, and that these crimes are more than just acts of violence.

**

This is the first installment of the series and is meant to build the world and introduce us to the MCs and it does a great job of hooking you right in. Sundown is a compelling "man" with a fascinating skill set that really makes you want to keep reading.

This is a very unique (cool!) take on the idea of a "shifter".

Fallon is the typical cop/alpha guy thrown into a situation that would make anyone crazy, but it's clear by the end that the two have feelings for each other that just may mean something in the long run.

I highly recommend this book and look forward to the next installment.

Feliz says

Fallon Roxbury, police investigator, likes dogs. Even at work, he usually takes time to befriend them. When he's called to the site of a gruesome murder where a young male prostitute was killed by cutting off his genitals, he meets a dog which obviously belongs to a mysterious girl. As he talks to her, she points him towards a man who calls himself Sundown, a hooker who lives at the top of the back stairs of Montgomery Boardinghouse. Given the name of the man, Fallon expects another hustler. What he certainly not expects is a man so attractive, he literally makes Fallon's brain take a vacation. Or how else could it be explained that Fallon thinks the black dog he encounters at the site of the next cruel murder has got Sundown's green eyes?

The story started very promising. Sure, the jaded cop, the bickering straight friend and partner, the golden - hearted hooker, they were all stereotypes, but nicely done. It was even made believable why a trained forty year old cop would suddenly throw his caution (and his service weapon) to the wind and go at it with a hooker he had barely met. The shapeshifter part was another forte of the story; Fallon interacting with Sundown in dog form was nice to read.

But then Fallon is hurt on the job, and in the hospital, and Sundown reveals his secret to Fallon, and from there on, the story went right to the drain. I mean, dog shifters, ok, I can buy that. Even an entire clan of them. But aliens? Tentacled, gender-neutral beings who can not only shift between animal and human, but also between female and male? It made me itch. The way Fallon dealt with his lover's revelation, on the other hand, was quite nice. Normally, there's only the thought how the alien/ shifter would fulfill the human partner's needs; Fallon at least thought fleetingly about how he could ever be what his alien lover needed. But Fallon and Sundown lost me here. I don't like the thought of tentacle sex, really, thank you very much. So, others may like this story which has its forte. It wasn't exactly for me, though.

Bubbles Hunty Honest & Direct Opinions says

pretty good... too short but look forward to reading the next one

Tam says

I'm getting sick of no half stars. 3.5

Fallon is a frazzled cop who is called to a murder scene of a young man. He talks to a young girl who claims not to know anything but eventually she tells him to go a boarding house and up the back stairs (great book cover tie-in). There he meets Sundown, a super hot guy who he assumes is a prostitute. He asks some questions and get evasive answers and before he knows it he's getting a blow job. He keeps being drawn back and there is also this dog that keeps showing up everywhere he goes. When another murder takes place, Sundown shows up and tells him to follow the dog. Fallon starts to think he's nuts, but he does and they

manage to catch the murderer who claims the murdered boys were shape shifters (trip to the nut house for him). Fallon was injured in the capture and decides to take early retirement and tracks down Sundown to find out what the hell is going on and decide if they can have a relationship or not. The paranormal part was an unusual twist. I found Sundown's evasive answers as frustrating as Fallon did but I think that was part of the charm if you will. So if you want to try a shifter with a twist it's a good read. Oh and Fallon's partner, his beliefs and their relationship added a touch of humour to the book.

Meggie says

When I first had the opportunity to read this story, I loved it. Today by re-reading it again, I can state the same. I really liked both main MC's. Both of them are pulling and well integrated into this storyline. Sundown is a mysterious and puzzling, which is huge part of this book. His playfulness with Fallon was comically enjoyable. I was drawn to Fallon from the start. He is down to Earth, realistic and kind. Both Sundown and Fallon are an interesting couple. I can only say, Highly recommendable story.

Lily says

3.5 stars

Fallon Roxbury is a policeman who's feeling a bit jaded with his life and job. Lately it's as if something's missing from his life and with at least another seven years before early retirement he's not sure if things will be getting better. When he's called to a crime scene he has no idea his life is about to change, in a big way.

When he arrives his partner and best friend Juny Mack leads him to the body of a young man who's been horribly mutilated. While there Fallon meets a mysterious young girl and also makes friends with a stray dog. Before he leaves the girl tells him to meet her back there later on if he wants information. After spending time working on the case he heads back to the crime scene and sees the young girl, and the dog, again. She doesn't give him much to go on other than he will find what he needs if he goes up the back stairs at a once famous but now rundown building. After assuring him that he won't find her again she leaves, taking the dog with her.

When he gets to the building and goes up the back stairs he meets a gorgeous young man named Sundown. Fallon can't understand why the girl sent him to see Sundown, who he assumes is a hooker. As they talk he finds himself drawn to the young man and despite his reservations has sex with him.

Fallon's life keeps getting complicated when finds himself unable to keep away from Sundown and another gruesome murder occurs. When he sees another dog at the new scene he's surprised but things will really get strange for him when the dog appears to be trying to help him. Before long Fallon's conceptions of his world will be seriously challenged and his relationship with Sundown becomes much more complicated. When he's injured while capturing the murder suspect Fallon begins to reevaluate his life and what he wants to do with it. And who he wants to share it with. The answers to these questions may not be easy for him to understand but will ultimately bring him much more than he ever thought possible.

Fallon is a well drawn character, he's likable and believable and I found the conflict between his job and growing feelings for Sundown was presented well. Since the story is in his POV we don't get as much of a

connection with Sundown until the end when his whole story finally comes out. I liked the original concept that the author went with on this story. It's different from many of the books out there and although there were some parts that didn't work as well as others for me overall it was interesting.

I did have a couple of minor niggles with the book. One of them was how quickly Fallon and Sundown had sex despite the fact that Fallon, a veteran of many years, was trying to solve a crime. He does wonder about that himself and it ultimately worked in the storyline but still gave me pause. Also, while I liked the fact that it's not the same old standard plot device I nevertheless wasn't fully sold on Sundown's life story. If the story had been longer and more time had been spent with the protags after the big reveal I think I would have enjoyed it more.

The murder mystery was interesting although due to the length of the story it was quickly resolved. There is quite a bit of humor found throughout the story which helped to lighten the mood of the storyline. The sex scenes between Fallon and Sundown, especially at the end of the book, were well written and interesting. Overall this is an enjoyable story that is sure to please fans of the author and anyone looking to read a different take on the standard shifter storyline.

Kittykills says

@22%. vamp is my first thought. @29% one of the buses subcu or incu. maybe furry Wolf @77% hummm didn't see that coming. @100%...quick read will read the others because.... why the heck not.

can't say I liked it it killed time oh I napped three times while reading this author so may use them as a fallback when I can't sleep.
