



The Shattered Dark

Sandy Williams

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McKenzie Lewis has a gift. It allows her access to a world few have seen, and even fewer can comprehend. It's her secret. And it exists in the shadows...

McKenzie was a normal college student, save for one little twist: she's a shadow reader, someone who can both see the fae and track their movements between our world and the Realm. It's a gift for which she has been called insane, one for which she has risked family and friends—and one that has now plunged her into a brutal civil war between the fae.

With the reign of the king and his vicious general at an end, McKenzie hoped to live a more normal life while exploring her new relationship with Aren, the rebel fae who has captured her heart. But when her best friend, Paige, disappears McKenzie knows her wish is, for now, just a dream. McKenzie is the only one who can rescue her friend, but if she's not careful, her decisions could cost the lives of everyone she's tried so hard to save.

The Shattered Dark Details

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From Reader Review The Shattered Dark for online ebook

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

"If I could undo my past for you, McKenzie, I would. But I don't have that power. No fae does."

Original reaction moments after finishing :

!@%\$&"*%#\$#!

Mother effin son of a basket weaver!!! My heart can't take this turn of events! Review to come later after I've calmed down somewhat.

Hours later :

Hmmm...I might have overreacted a tad.

Actual review :

It pains me to have to throw out another 3.5 star review this week because I really want to commit to a solid 4 star review, but there's no getting around what happened and how much I did not want this development. I honestly thought that the one major issue was nixed in book 1 and I was stupidly optimistic on that front.

Did this aggravating development sour me to the series? No. Not at all.

Do I wish I could reach through the internet and shake Ms. Sandy Williams for what she did? Yes. Sorry, but it's true.

When I put aside my feelings about 'the incident,' I can look at *The Shattered Dark* with a little less frustration. In general, I was happy with my reading experience. Sure, I was a little lost at first over what was going on, but I blame that more on me reading so many books in such a short amount of time that I can't seem to keep much world and/or character building straight in my own head. This series has a lot of characters, so it took me a minute to try and remember who was who. This is one of the only cases in book history where I actually appreciated a little bit of recap.

As I was reading, I realized that I need to make a return to fae-based fantasy and urban fantasy. There's something fascinating about the fae kind which draws me into their lore and magic. Shifters, vamps, etc. all tend to be fairly one-note, but the realm of the fae lends itself to so many possibilities.

Case in point : McKenzie Lewis is a human who reads the shadow portals left behind from the fae. She maps out in her own mind what she sees, which makes her a valuable asset as a tracker for both sides of the factions at war with each other.

Imagine a book of world-jumping, element-bending, ass-kicking, and magical healing. This is what we're dealing with. It's a lot of fun. Sometimes it's just plain amusing. Ah, those silly fae and their ignorance of all things human.

*When I'm able to focus again, I'm staring at my cut restraints. "They were Velcro."
"What?" Kyol asks.
"Velcro." Strong Velcro, but the dagger wasn't needed.*

And for those of us who like the guy-candy...there's a whole lotta lotta that. Aren is still my number 1, but dammit, Kyol was tugging at the heartstrings this time around as well. Talk about complicating matters. I wanted to just sit there and swoon over Aren. Period. But no...Kyol is looking attractive in his own right after I got to witness some lovely flashback scenes with him in them. I swear, I'm having Dorian and Kiyo flashbacks because of the opposite faction thing and I'm not entirely sure I like this because it means I won't ever know if anyone is trustworthy until the very end. My heart was doing gymnastic flips the entire time. I love feeling like this but also hate it too.

"I want to deserve you."

And of course, I couldn't close out this review without mentioning the one thing which had me ridiculously excited when I was writing my review for book 1 : the kimki! Sosch, the cute hybrid ferret/cat/whatever creature was back! I love this mischievous little furball. The books are worth a read just to see what this little scamp is up to. He's quite the active wanderer!

Sosch lets out a sound that's a cross between a chirp and a squeak, then uses my outstretched arm as a springboard to my shoulders. He looks at me and does some weird, crinkly thing with his nose.

Even though this second book took a directional turn that I wasn't completely happy with, I'm still sold on the series and look forward to book 3. There's something about Williams' writing that is easy to read, and the mix of action/adventure and sexual chemistry rivals the style of my favorite author Richelle Mead, which means it can't be all bad. Right?

"This lightning" - she holds up her hand, waits for a chaos luster to strike across it - "I bet it makes kissing a fae explosive. By the way, I totally get why you never let me shake Kyol or Aren's hands."

Sophia Sardothien says

Ehh DNF on 77% it's not that this book is bad or anything I just lost interest in reading it xD

Jamie says

Originally posted at www.Addicted2Heroines.com

Special thanks to ACE for providing a review copy!

Sandy Williams has done it again. The Shattered Dark is an action-packed tale filled with love, betrayal, rebellion and heartache. It is an intense, well-written book that will have you shouting for more when you read the final page. After reading this book, the upcoming third book in this series has become my "most anticipated book" of 2013.

The Shattered Dark begins with the kidnapping of McKenzie's best friend, Paige. McKenzie immediately begins the search for Paige and is convinced that the fae are responsible. At the same time, a battle is waging between the "rebels" (Aren and Lena's group) and the "remnants" (those still loyal to the recently deposed king). McKenzie is in the middle of this war because of her shadow reading abilities, and she is trying to take her relationship slow with Aren, even though in her heart, she seems to want nothing more than time with the sexy fae.

That's just like him, shrugging off the fact that people want to kill him, but I hate that he's a target. I might be trying to take our relationship slow, but losing him would devastate me.

Without rehashing the plot, I can say that there are various plot lines that Williams weaves together effortlessly. One thing I want to touch on are the relationships in this book. There are many relationship focal points, and some of the relationships are not what we thought they were after the first book in this series. The main relationship centers around Aren and McKenzie, although Kyol is present and plays an extremely important role in this book. After The Shadow Reader, I think it's safe to say that Kyol's judgment does not always ring true. There is a scene in The Shattered Dark where his judgment of former Court fae leads to major problems.

The other obvious relationship in this book has developed into one of my favorite fictional couples. Aren and McKenzie grow more as a couple, especially on McKenzie's side of things. However, all is not smooth sailing, and the readers are faced with shocking ending in regards to these two. Although Mackenzie spends a great deal of this book coming to terms with Aren's past, it is obvious what her feelings are by the end.

Aren pulls me gently toward him. "You told me you wanted time. I've given it to you, and I'll give you as long as you need, McKenzie. I love you." He tucks a lock of my hair behind my my ear. "You're worth waiting a decade for."

Another significant plot point is McKenzie's struggle with her life as a shadow reader versus her desire to lead a normal human life. At this point, I think it would be difficult for McKenzie to extract herself from the fae realm. She has been in too deep for too long. However, I think that she does need to find a balance between the two worlds so that she can grow a bit as a person.

I think that the character that shows the most development in The Shattered Dark is Aren. Kyol isn't in this book quite as much as the last one, and McKenzie is still deciding what she really wants in her life. We learn a lot more about Aren and his past, and how he's been spending all of his time making up for past sins. Aren had a difficult past, without a lot of direction. We see why he followed Thrain, what he did when he realized what type of fae Thrain was, and we see the man Aren is trying to become. We see that Aren has a very strong sense of honor, as much or more so than Kyol.

The ending of this book left my head spinning. Decisions are made for McKenzie that she has absolutely no control over. The ending broke my heart. McKenzie sacrificed her well-being for her friends, and is rewarded with something that is a game changer, and something that she really doesn't want. It will be interesting to see how this twist in the story is handled moving forward.

Sandy Williams writes a brilliant story that I couldn't put down. If you are a fan of fae, PNR, and expertly written fantasy worlds, you need to read this series now. I'll be counting down the days until the next book in this series is released.

A million chaos clusters somersault in my stomach, and when he kisses me this time, I'm undone. Nothing matters but him and us and *this*, the way he makes me feel like I'm everything to him.

Christen (GoldiloxReads and Whimsify) says

The Shattered Dark is urban fantasy gold - nonstop action, complex world building, and an absorbing romance. I adored the first book in this series. In fact, I read it in two nights staying up until four in the morning. Reading this sequel wasn't much different. I read it in one day, finishing at 2 A.M. with a sigh. Sandy Williams really knows how to suck me in to her stories and I was completely emerged in McKenzie's world while reading.

In *The Shadow Reader*, Williams set the pace for her series with an energetic plot that never faltered. I worried that book two would not be able to keep up with that pace, but as it turns out I had nothing to worry about. The fast pace continues in *The Shattered Dark*, starting off right away with run-for-your-life action, which in this series means sword fights and fae and appearing out of nowhere through fissures. There is plenty of action in this book, with our heroine alternating between daring to join the battle and being ushered off to safety.

The rebels have defeated the previous king and won the castle, but now the real war has begun. The fae world is in an uproar and everyone is choosing sides between the rebels, including Aren, Lena, Naito and the others that McKenzie works with, the high nobles who oppose the rebels choice of Lena to supplant the king, and the 'remnants', the term the rebels use for those who still support the previous king's Court and are battling with the rebels. These battles provide for much of the story's action and travel from McKenzie's home town, to the Fae realm, to London, and back again.

Amidst all the fighting we have McKenzie and Aren. In the previous book much of the draw was the love triangle between these two and Kyol, the sword master for the previous king and McKenzie's long-term love interest. We watched as their relationship dissolved and McKenzie and Aren's began to heat up. Williams did a terrific job of writing a love triangle that wasn't at all annoying. I was completely lost in what would happen next. In this book we see how McKenzie and Aren's relationship evolves and struggles during the war. All they both want to do is spend some time together and get to know each other more, but the war and everything going on doesn't allow this to happen.

"I'm not a mistake, McKenzie," he says softly, stopping beside me.

His voice is soothing, reassuring. My chest tightens, and a warm, tingling sensation rushes through me. That scares me. I've told myself to take this relationship slowly, but my heart refuses to listen. I'm growing too attached to him too quickly. I shouldn't be on the brink of falling in love with someone I know so little about. I shouldn't want to believe every word he says. That's what happened with Kyol. I loved him so blindly and so completely, I put my life on hold. I never questioned anything he told me, and I regret that so much.

Aren remains one of my favorite men in urban fantasy, with his messy curls, lazy smile, and intense feelings

for McKenzie. He says some of the most swoon-worthy things I've ever read.

Aren pulls me gently toward him.

"You told me you wanted time. I've given it to you, and I'll give you as long as you need, McKenzie. I love you." He tucks a lock of my hair behind my ear. "You're worth waiting a decade for."

My one complaint about this book was the lack of time McKenzie and Aren were able to spend together romantically. But this is urban fantasy, not paranormal romance, and one of the things I love about this genre is how the romantic relationships move at a realistic pace and keep things interesting between the main couple. That is certainly the case with McKenzie and Aren.

The Shattered Dark was everything I wanted in this sequel. This remains one of my favorite series and after the bomb shell ending I am on the edge of my seat for book three. I highly recommend this book and this series!

“Nothing matters but him and us and this, the way he makes me feel like I’m everything to him. Sometime in the last month, he’s become everything to me.”

Recommended for fans of: urban fantasy, stories with Fae, sexy and brave heroes, action-packed plots, and smart heroines.

Wendy Darling says

Nooooooooooooooooooooo! :(

3.5 stars, rounded up begrudgingly.

Cristina Buzoianu says

Posted at Bibliophile Mystery

I finished it an hour ago, and I can't do anything but stare blankly...

Oh Sandy! Why did you do this to me? I'll die until the ARC for the final book is available! And I promise I'll haunt you just to know the ending! One thing is solidly clear: you're an amazing author! I'll convince everyone I can to read your books! The story, the writing style, the feelings you get while reading, they're all incredible!

Oh Aren! *cries*

UPDATE (later, same day)

The Shadow Reader was the first Urban Fantasy I've read this year; in fact, it really was my first 2012 book. You should have seen me then, just after the New Year's, carrying my Kindle everywhere I went, not

sleeping, eating or doing anything else until it was over. No, if I remember this correctly, I think I had these great ideas for the review when I was seven pages away from finishing the book, and I left it to write them down. Crazy, isn't it? I was so in love with the world-building and the characters, the story, everything that I practically begged for an ARC of the second book – it didn't even have a name back then. And I got it! If there's a book more engaging, action packed, more heartbreaking – in a single word, AMAZING – than *The Shadow Reader*, that's its sequel, *The Shattered Dark*. Yes, I must admit, Sandy did it for me twice this year, and I'm certain I won't read a better Urban Fantasy story soon. If I want to keep my sanity, that is. I missed the characters a lot, especially Aren; I've had a soft spot for him from the beginning. But all of them are changed, more mature, more on the edge, and in more danger than before. You'd think there's nothing dangerous than being a rebel in the Realm, trying to overthrow the King, and achieving this goal should bring some peace, but it's never like this, not in real life and not in *The Shattered Dark*. The real hard work comes after that, in trying to convince the rest of the fey that they only want what's best for the Realm and they fought for the right cause. A different kind of war is starting, and nobody knows who will win this time.

"I've missed you. I've been wanting to see you, too, just not like . . ." He stops, clenches his jaw, then continues. "Not here. Not like this."

"He almost sounds pained. I scan him, searching for injuries. He looks okay, but he looks different. He's not the same Aren who held me captive. That Aren was cavalier and sly, always ready with one of his infuriating half grins. This Aren is tense. Stressed-out. I want to help him, but I don't know how."

Even if Aren is changed, one thing remains the same: he still tries to win McKenzie over in every way he can. And she's very hard to convince, because she doesn't want to make the same mistakes again. After loving Kyol for ten years, waiting for and accepting anything from him, she wants her relationship with Aren to be different, she wants them to know each other better and take things slowly.

"Aren pulls me gently toward him. "You told me you wanted time. I've given it to you, and I'll give you as long as you need, McKenzie. I love you." He tucks a lock of my hair behind my ear. "You're worth waiting a decade for."

"...but this is London. There's so much history here. And never mind that this is the homeland of Shakespeare and Jane Austen, King's Cross Station is somewhere around here.

I want to see Platform ¾. I swear, one of these days, I'm going to have a fae fissure me here for a vacation. "You're alive in this city," Aren says. [...] You're more mesmerized by this place than by any place I've seen you in the Realm."

"That's because no one's trying to kill me here," I say.

No one's trying to kill me here yet. I'm surprised Aren doesn't point that out, but he just smiles as he watches me, and my stomach does a little flip. It's as if seeing me here like this makes him happy, and just for a moment, I let myself think about what it would be like to walk down this street with Aren without any worries about the remnants or Paige.

That's what we need, time to be together without all the pressures of the war."

Unfortunately, time is one thing they don't have, because the war is not over, her best friend, Paige, was kidnapped by King Atroth's remaining minions, who are determined to win back the Palace, and there's a part of Aren's past that makes her decisions even more difficult to make.

"If I could undo my past for you, McKenzie, I would. But I don't have that power. No fae does."

"Anything else you want to confess?"

That gets under his skin. The silver in his eyes seems to sharpen, and he takes a step forward, pressing his body against mine so that I have to move back.

"The complete truth, McKenzie, is I'd do anything for you, but you ask for nothing. You won't confide in me. You won't rely on me. You're so preoccupied trying to decide if you can trust your feelings that you won't consider giving in to them."

And if you read the quotes above, you already know why I love Aren so much, why I'm in his team even if he did do bad things sometime in the past. It's because he's...well, Aren. He's unique, one of the best ALPHA's I've ever met. He's all strong, and bad-ass, and reckless, but he also has a soft, loving side, that he's not trying to hide, unlike someone else. Aren is the brightest diamond of this story, the perfect book boyfriend, you can't help but love him and wish the best happily ever after for him.

"Aren has a reputation for crazy plans that work."

"I'm not a mistake, McKenzie," he says softly"

"Nothing matters but him and us and this, the way he makes me feel like I'm everything to him. Sometime in the last month, he's become everything to me."

One character I didn't think I could start to care about after finishing *The Shadow Reader* is Lena. She's way better in this book; in fact, she grew on me a lot. Her attitude is changed, you can feel the huge burden she's carrying on her shoulders, a lot of lives are in her hands, but she's strong, and she's making the right decisions. I couldn't have imagined that she'll start seeing McKenzie as a friend, and she also shows a protective side.

"I'll kill you if you hurt Aren," she says without turning."

"She's confiding in me? What am I supposed to do with that? Never mind that I suck at girl talk, she's Lena."

And I finally got to Kyol. GOD I wish I could be more objective when it comes to him, but I just can't be. I wasn't his biggest fan from the start, even if I know he's the real hero, that he's the one who makes the greatest sacrifices, sometimes he almost breaks my heart – and now there's a big BUT coming – but, I can't get these two words out of my head: "How convenient!" I'm anxiously waiting for your opinion regarding his actions, because in my book, he still says "I'm sorry." too often. I wish I could see him differently, I know some of you will, and I even feel a little bit guilty for not giving him more of my thoughts. I'm going to finish now, because I don't want to spoil anything for you, and I've saved some quotes....WOW! You'll just have to read the book yourself to find them.

I know I should say something about Sandy, but I don't know what, there are no words to describe how magnificent she is! Her writing is flawless, the world-building is incredible, and her story is original, action packed, with strong built characters. When you'd think there's nothing new and unique you could read in the Urban Fantasy and Paranormal Romance genre, try McKenzie's story. I guarantee you'll love it! I just wish for her faery tale to have a happy ending.

"...if I have to fight for him now, I will."

Happy reading!

Steph Sinclair says

Okay, I'm really excited for this book, but another sword on the cover? I mean, McKenzie didn't wield a sword in book one. Is she actually going to use one this time around?!

SheLove2Read says

Almost the entire book would be a spoiler, so I'll just say that I liked it quite a bit. The ending is a shocker, so I'm looking forward to finishing the trilogy.

Sharon ∞💜 is an emotional book junkie 💜∞ says

With the defeat of King Atroth, McKenzie's stuck in the middle of the Fae war. Sides have been switched and it's hard to always tell who can be trusted. Then McKenzie's best friend, Paige, turns up missing and has been taken by the remnants, who are fae that are still loyal to the King. McKenzie has to rescue her even though she has a feeling it might not be easy.

I felt like there was nonstop fighting in this book! Every time McKenzie needed to go somewhere, there was always battles and she was always on the run. On top of that, Aren and McKenzie never got any alone time and when they would finally get together, they were interrupted! What was up with that? It was sooo frustrating!

I still really like McKenzie and I liked that she was sticking up for herself more even though she spent a lot of time trying to help everyone. I was so happy when she was finally coming to term with her feelings.

Aren was great as always. I really warmed up to him even more and I loved how he was always watching out for McKenzie. He really made me laugh when he was helping her in the bath!

My heart still goes out for Kyol. He really put on a brave face most of the time but you could just tell how he really felt.

It was nice getting to know some of the characters more in depth or...just more. It's a little confusing with all the rebel fae, the court fae and the remnant fae but at least a few stuck out. Trev was one I find really interesting and I really like Naito. I can't help but hope things will work out for him.

What happened and what will happen with Paige is really intriguing but I'm not really happy with how her and McKenzie's relationship is being affected. Lorn is another one that's being set up to be disappointing but I'm not really buying it.

And then comes the WTH moment....

really? *really*? Why did it have to go there? I had accepted the way things were and then SW had to go and screw with us!

Well, I did some checking around and it appears this series will be a trilogy and SW did say that she wants McKenzie to have a HEA so here's what I think will happen:

(view spoiler)

The working title of the next book is *The Shackled Night* and unfortunately it won't be out till January 2014.

Favorite quotes:

♥ “You told me you wanted time. I’ve given it to you, and I’ll give you as long as you need, McKenzie. I love you.” He tucks a lock of my hair behind my ear. “You’re worth waiting a decade for.”

♥ “I love you. Sidhe, I know I have no right to tell you this, but I do. I always will.”

mrsj says

Dear Sandy,

BUT...

I don't understand.

Isn't it settled nicely in book 1?

Isn't it?

It was interesting, with the mysteries.. with the twists.. with the betrayals and etc.

BUT THIS?

I am devastated.

That chapter you wrote?

And the whole change of event?

Obviously , I don't take this very well.

I mean...

She..

He...

And he...

Then... they...

So, now what???

We are to wait for book 3?

For answers? For solution to that icky problem you wrote??

I hope you don't use death of a certain character to get out of it.

Very heartbroken,

MrsJ

Renee Sweet says

12/10/12 re-reading the final version! So excited!

I had an opportunity to read an early copy of THE SHATTERED DARK and let me tell you, people: it is a page-turner. What a fantastic follow-up to THE SHADOW READER! I could not put it down. It's super action-packed and McKenzie is put through the emotional wringer all over again. And the ending? ROCKS. Definitely a favorite read of 2012 so far.

I can't wait for book 3.

If you enjoyed THE SHADOW READER, you'll love THE SHATTERED DARK.

Susana says

2,5 stars (grudginly given)

My thoughts after finishing this book:

I'm so, so, mad that i could throw this book out my window...

So after an amazing first book, one has **this!**

Let me start by saying that i **hate** love triangles. I do, i really do.

The only way i can put up with them, is because once they're resolved, that's **it** there isn't more pointless

emotional drama. NO more back and forth...the characters confess their everlasting love, blá, blá, which permits a reader to focus on the story. Which luckily will be interesting enough to grab my interest.

That didn't happen with this one, because the story most of the times was boring.

The first book was great, because of the focus it had on relationships. Mainly Aren and McKenzie, lets face it. But there was also Naito and Kelia who kept things interesting.(i miss her)

The story was interesting, and the action kept me turning the pages as fast as i could. I could even tolerate the love triangle, because it did sound feasible. But this one?

On one side i understand the reason for the slow pacing. The fey palace has been taken by the rebelds, who know find themselves at the position of having to legitimate their claim (Lena's) to the throne. Fae (Aren mostly) are fissuring back and forth, leaving almost no time for romance...

So the first part of the story is very focused on fey politics. Its well described, but after a while, i'm sorry, but it becamed boring...the only times where my interest was piqued was when Aren would make an appearance. To finish this up _ i really, don't even feel like writing a review to this book _ i could probably read almost anything, if the author hadn't finished the book, the way she did.

I haven't forgotten what Aren and McKenzie were like in "Shadow Reader". I haven't forgotten what he tells her in the end of that book:

"If I were a good man," he says, "I'd acknowledge that Taltrayn is an honorable fae, that he loves you and would take care of you. I'd step down and let you have the man you've always wanted, but, McKenzie, I'm not as good as Taltrayn. I never will be, and I can't step down. I'll fight for the chance to be with you."

When to this, one adds all the things that McKenzie and Aren say to one another in this book...when one sees what they meant to one another, **than** the ending of this one, is illogical as hell. (view spoiler)
And the thing is, i may read fantasy, but i want it to be logically driven.

I understand why this was written the way it was ...the thing is, this cliffhanger soap-opera (i'm really trying not to use profanity in this) disaster has had the effect of leaving without the slightest wish of reading the third one. Which i will only buy after thoroughly reading comments with lots of spoilers, because if (view spoiler)

AH says

Slow start, becomes action-packed midway. 3.5 stars.

The Shattered Dark was one of my most anticipated releases of 2012. I loved **The Shadow Reader** and I could not get enough of author Sandy Williams' world of the fae. Oh, and with heroes like Aren and Kyol, what more could I ask? **The Shattered Dark** picks up right after the events of the first book. The fae realm is in turmoil; a group of dissenters calling themselves The Remnants are not happy with the new ruler. There is a lot of political intrigue and jostling for power in this book.

I had difficulty with the first half of the novel. Perhaps it was because some time had passed since I read the first book, or maybe because the pacing was a little slow at first. There seemed to be so many characters and

several story lines to keep track of.

A little niggling annoyance I had with the book was that the love triangle should have been resolved. It was, for the most part, and I agreed with the choice even though I missed the other character terribly. BUT – and I am sorry for shouting – the love triangle has a little monkey wrench thrown into it. Why, oh, why?

The book clicked for me during the second half. Suddenly, I was at the edge of my seat and I had difficulty putting the book down. Now, THIS was the book I was expecting. There were battle scenes, complete with fae against fae, fae against human, swashbuckling sword fights, hand to hand combat, really scary stuff. These scenes were extremely well done.

What draws me to this series is the fascinating take on the fae and the fae realm. The world feels complete with its complex issues and political maneuvering. I liked how the characters were able to travel between the human and the fae realms through fissures and gates.

Overall, I liked **The Shattered Dark**. I'm curious to see where the author takes this series in the next book.

Thank you to NetGalley and Penguin Books for a review copy of this book.

Review posted on Badass Book Reviews.

Check out Sandy Williams' Halloween guest post on *The Five Things I Can't Write Without* on Badass Book Reviews.

Julie says

Posted at Yummy Men & Kick Ass Chicks

Does this ever happen to you while you're reading: You are reading along and think to yourself that not a whole lot of advancement is happening to the story until you get to the end and while looking back on the book you realize that actually a whole hell of a lot happened? That is what happened to me when I read *The Shattered Dark*, the second book in Sandy Williams' McKenzie Lewis series. This book is a typical book two meaning it just trudges along not solving anything really (because why would it – we want the series to continue past this after all) just tugging you along for the ride...but WHAT a ride! I know that this all doesn't make such sense so let's see if I can make things a little clearer for you all.

The story starts off with a bang! A great action sequence that sucks you in right away. McKenzie is back on Earth, in her apartment, gathering a few of her favorite things before going off to her new place. Of course, things don't go smoothly and the action scene ensues. During this scene, McKenzie also notices that her only human friend, Paige, is missing.

We continue on with the 'where's Paige?' plot line but also a whole bunch of others. Lena is trying to convince the nobles in the Realm that she is a good choice as ruler, Aren and Kyol are working hard in their new positions, there is an interesting scientific development that is threatening to affect the fae and there are more fights and more battles mixed in too. When I got to the 85% mark, I was wondering where things were really going. I assumed things were being sort of explained and prepping for book three and that would

basically be what the book was meant to do...until McKenzie looks out and sees blood on the floor. Then holy jumpin'! It's action action action action OMG and oh no and heart breaking then...Shut. Up.

I'm telling you, it's not the sort of ending that makes you want to throw the book across a room but it is the sort of ending that leaves you thinking about all the ramifications that what happened will lead to. It will have your jaw hitting the floor and you having to pick it back up in about thirty minutes after things finally sink in. It's the sort of ending that makes you curse the fact that book three isn't due until January 2014!

I really enjoyed McKenzie in this one. I like how she grew from book one. She is feeling more comfortable with herself and with her role...even if she's sort of making up her role as she goes along. She's taken on some responsibility that she really doesn't need to but that speaks of her heart and of her loyalties. She wants what is right; not only for herself but also for the fae she has come to call her friends. And she is really looking forward to being able to go back to her 'normal' life.

We don't get to see much of Kyol in this book but when he does appear on the page, it's hard to forget. He is just so... *sigh* I wanted to give him a big hug through the whole book! He's not all mopey or anything, just... *sigh*

Aren is just as yummy as in the first book. There is a bit of a love triangle in book one and I can't say it goes away in book two but there was a 'decision' made at the end of the previous book so it's not really a focus in this book. I have no idea who I want McKenzie to end up with more – Aren or Kyol. I like them both and feel she would be great with either. Sometimes I may lean a bit towards Kyol and other times I may lean a bit more towards Aren. If someone asked me who I'm rooting for I would have no idea who to say. What I do know is that Aren is a strong character and, even though we did learn quite a bit about his past (and some of these things were doozies), I still like him. I don't focus on his character 'back then' – I think about how he is now and how he has shown his loyalty to McKenzie and to his cause. As I said, McKenzie and Aren's / Kyol's relationship is not a 'main focus' this time around but I did not feel disappointed because there is still quite a bit of romantic tension and sweet Aren/McKenzie scenes. And maybe even a Kyol/McKenzie scene or two also ;)

Yeah...all that to say I have no clue who I like more for McKenzie so don't ask...lol

Lena got quite a bit of page time and I like where her character went in this book and where it seems to be going. I am very curious to see how Sandy writes her in the next and final book.

There is a bit of repetition here and there but not enough to really bother. And, as I said, the pace varies from good to 'hold-on-to-your-seats'. I can't say that I once felt the book was slow.

Overall The Shattered Dark was a great continuation to the series. The world continues to fascinate me and the characters continue to draw me in. I feel if you liked book one then this book will make you quite happy. And that ending! I cannot wait to see what Sandy has planned with that.

4.5 stars

Alexandria says

SPOILERS!!!!!!

When I first started this novel I was all like....

Yes, freaking ecstatic; like a five year old on their birthday. I was practically drooling on myself to get this book. I was counting down the months, weeks, and then days of this books release. In the first few chapters, I was loving it; eating it up like I eat chocolate when its that time of the month. And the beginning was great. It was action packed and quickly paced just like the last one.

But this novel also helped me realize something very important.
I **hate** McKenzie.

She has to be one of the most annoying, shallow, and naive human beings when it comes to relationships. How could she honestly think Kyol is over her? They spent 10 years together! I repeat, **10 years!!!** Most people don't even stay married that long these days. If you were with him for that long, then there is obviously something you really like about the guy, and it's certainly not his penis, seeing that you've never seen it. And if your willing to wait that long, then what's a few more weeks of waiting while everything in the realm calms down? The guy has practically spilled his guts for you time and time again.

I hate how she can get past Aren's problems so easily. They've only known each other 1 month! And during most that month, she was Aren's prisoner. Yes, that's really attractive. I'm not even going there with the whole Stockholm Syndrome. But it seems like she's forgotten that Kyol killed and betrayed his best friend because of *her* . If that's not love then I don't know what is. I know that McKenzie said that Kyol could be overbearing and authoritative, but maybe that's because he was trying to save your ass all the time! Maybe it's all the hormones raging through her body from being a 26 year old virgin. I mean, really? You either have to be extremely ugly, hate yourself, or be a total masochist to have been a virgin that long. And it's not like she couldn't get any either. She just wasn't trying hard enough. I've seen teenagers go to greater extremes to lose their virginity. For some of us, it becomes our main goal in life during puberty to lose the big V. Having your virginity in this time of day is almost equivalent to wearing the scarlet letter.

And I just find it hard to believe that after having years of this...(My mental representation of Kyol)

..in front of her for years, she hasn't tried a few covert tactics to get him in the sheets.

Once again, I just don't like McKenzie.

So when she tells Aren that she loves him and wants to be with him forever, I was like....

You stupid bitch. What the hell? And then when the going gets tough, what does Aren do? He ditches, like the bastard he is. He said that he would fight for their relationship and for her no matter what. Well, I don't think that's fighting Aren; I think that's giving up before the game even begins. So seeing how things ended, I'm practically compelled to read the next novel. So many secrets to be unveiled and mysteries still to be solved; it makes it pretty hard to ignore this series. And I'm desperately hoping that McKenzie opens her eyes and see's who's *always* been there for her. *cough* Kyol *cough* *cough*.

But besides McKenzie's horrible taste in men, and her annoying danger happy character, this book was okay. And I use that term lightly. Oh, and Sandy Williams, I hope you do not intend on killing off a certain character to rectify what was done at the end of this novel. It would just be too cruel, and I would honestly

have to stop reading this series. Anyway, I'm grudgingly giving this book 2.5 stars.
