



Shadow Man

Cody McFadyen

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Once, Special Agent Smoky Barrett hunted serial killers for the FBI. She was one of the best until a madman terrorized her family, killed her husband and daughter, and left her face scarred and her soul brutalized. Turning the tables on the killer, Smoky shot him dead but her life was shattered forever.

Now Smoky dreams about picking up her weapon again. She dreams about placing the cold steel between her lips and pulling the trigger one last time. Because for a woman who's lost everything, what is there left to lose?

She's about to find out.

In all her years at the Bureau, Smoky has never encountered anyone like him a new and fascinating kind of monster, a twisted genius who defies profilers' attempts to understand him. And he's issued Smoky a direct challenge, coaxing her back from the brink with the only thing that could convince her to live.

The killer videotaped his latest crime, an act of horror that left a child motherless, then sent a message addressed to Agent Smoky Barrett. The message is enough to shock Smoky back to work, back to her FBI team. And that child awakens something in Smoky she thought was gone forever.

Suddenly the stakes are raised. The game has changed. For as this deranged monster embarks on an unspeakable spree of perversion and murder, Smoky is coming alive again and she's about to face her greatest fears as a cop, a woman, a mother and a merciless killer's next victim.

From the Hardcover edition.

Shadow Man Details

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From Reader Review Shadow Man for online ebook

Jan says

3.75 ***** Run for your life stars

Shadow Man was not my usual read but

it was certainly what I was craving for.

Gory, brutal, horrifying and frightful to the extent of wanting to go to bed with the lights on.

I thought I spotted the killer pretty soon which surprised me as I am usually clueless.

However, I've got distracted. Distracted by madness.

FORTHELOVEOFGOD, how frightening can an insane person be with no boundaries in her mind whatsoever about what is RIGHT and WRONG?

At this point, I don't know any more who the killer is because this shit is too bat shit crazy to be who I thought it was.

The killer had his own truth, nothing else mattered, he was detached, cold, clever, meticulous, calculating and had his own truth to justify all murders as if he was God.

My only complaint: there was no romance, not even a lightly touch. My personal taste needed something to give it a certain balance.

Mohikanos says

Ήχοντας διαβεί αρκετ? αστυνομικ? μυθιστορ?ματα δεν μπορ? να πω ?τι ενθουσι?στηκα απ? το?το εδ?!

Ο συγγραφέας εστι?ζει πολ? στην ψυχοσ?νθεση της βασικ?ς ηρω?δας, μ?σω της πρωτοπρ?σωπης αφ?γησης που χρησιμοποιε?, ωστ?σο πιστε?ω ?τι ?νας ?νθρωπος που ?χει περ?σει τοοοοσα πολλ?, σ?γουρα θα ε?χε εντελ?ς διαφορετικ? ψυχολογ?α.

Τα εγκλ?ματα ε?ναι ?λα αποτρ?παια, με λεπτομερε?ς περιγραφ?ς των σκηνικ?ν τους, ωστ?σο θεωρ? ?τι αυτ? γ?νεται περισσ?τερο για να προκληθε? το α?σθημα του αναγν?στη, παρ? για να στηθε? π?νω τους η ιστορ?α.

Οι λοιπο? χαρακτ?ρες του βιβλ?ου ε?ναι καρικατο?ρες, χωρ?ς να αναπτ?σσεται περισσ?τερο η συμπεριφορ? τους, και ο ρ?λος τους ε?ναι περισσ?τερο για να γεμ?σουν οι σελ?δες του βιβλ?ου (π.χ. η πολυπληθ?ς ομ?δα ?ρευνας δεν ?χει σοβαρ? λ?γο ?παρξης, εκτ?ς αν οι χαρακτ?ρες τους

αναπτυχθούν στα επόμενα βιβλία της σειράς).

Από την άλλη, τα κίνητρα του θύτη και οι αιτίες που τον οδήγησαν στα εγκλήματα με πείσαν, καθώς ήταν βσιμα και τεκμηριωμένα, ενώ και η σκηνή της τελικής αναμνηστικής είναι εξαιρετική δοσμένη, με τον συγγραφέα να καταγράφει λεπτομερώς τόσο τα συναισθήματα της ηρώδας όσο και την περιρρούσσα ατμόσφαιρα, τοποθετώντας τον αναγνώστη μέσα στη σκηνή, να αγωνιεί για την εξέλιξη της.

Πάντως, η αποκάλυψη του θύτη δεν με εξέπληξε, καθώς είναι ένας από τους χαρακτήρες που από την αρχή σε προδιαθέτει αρνητικά.

Αν το βρείτε στο δρόμο σας με €5 που το πήρα κι εγώ πείτε το, αλλιώς πείτε κανένα από τα τρία άλλα καλύτερα του που κυκλοφορούν...(6/10)

Janet says

I came to this not having had heard of the author before but on very high recommendations from trusted reading friends. I did some research; discovered that the author seems to have disappeared from the public writing arena (which is mysterious in itself) and that there are four books written in this particular series. So in I went and came away mostly happy - mostly! It was wasn't perfect, but here's what I thought.

It's clear from early on that McFadyen can write. His writing reads well with elegant prose that flows along at a compelling pace that hooks when necessary. Character depth is pretty deep here as we're given backstory to most of the people present. Quite unusual I found and I'm not sure where I sit with it. In some instances I can see why it was necessary; others, not so much. It did feel a bit like plodding occasionally to get to the good bits. From the blurb we know that the main protagonist is Smoky Barrett, an all singing and dancing FBI agent at the top of her game, well usually, until she's beset by a huge tragedy that knocks her sideways and is compelled to undertake counselling. On the whole I liked the character. My sticking point was the name, Smoky?!?! I mean, seriously?!?! Couldn't get my head around that one and for one that was lacking somewhat in stature (same as my eldest daughter who I seriously couldn't picture taking on the bad guys in spite of her tenacious spirit!), she made up for in gun toting skills and a drive that seemed a tad unrealistic given all that had happened to her. Putting that aside, I liked all the cohorts and the fiendishly bad guy that was without any remorse in his quest to prove his intelligence.

The plotline is good and it's clearly well researched. I have to say it reminded me of Patricia Cornwell's earlier books in the descriptiveness at times which is no bad thing. And I can see other authors creeping in too, namely Robert Harris with Hannibal. It certainly had a feel of those types of books and I know much has been said that it's not for the faint hearted. Well, no, it's not - but if you can handle those authors I've mentioned and the likes of Slaughter, Hayder, Bauer then this is fine. Though it is shocking so be prepared.

With all that said, I shall leave it there and finish by saying that overall I really did enjoy this book for the most part. Some great characters, a good story in which I didn't guess the end and a curiosity to see what is going to be in store for particular characters further down the line. Especially Bonnie, the little girl tragically caught up in all the horror and hopefully rescued - rescued enough to find some peace and happiness that she thoroughly deserves. Bless her heart.

I shall be reading more. Highly recommend.

Phrynn says

This is a book that I quite liked but cannot rave over. It gets lots of five star reviews but it didn't really hit the spot for me.

I enjoyed the story and it had some tense moments. The characters were okay but I felt as though I had met them in many other crime books before. What bothered me the most though was the melodrama. Everyone seemed to be overcome by their feelings about something and the main characters alternated between vomiting in waste baskets and fainting due to extreme stress. Repeatedly.

I thought the mystery itself was good and I did not guess who the murderer was.

I guess my final conclusion will be three stars for a satisfying but not overwhelmingly good crime thriller.

PirateSteve says

Greetings Thrill Seekers,

You've stumbled upon this message so perhaps you'll take the time to learn of who I am.

I hope you don't mind but I've chosen FBI Special Agent Smoky Barrett to introduce us. Smoky is a scarred woman, inside and out, but she is said to be the best violent crimes agent within the FBI. Her L.A. based team is said to be the best of it's kind at solving horrendous crimes. So Smoky Barrett will have to do.

She will acquaint you with my torture, rape, murder ... genius.

You see, Smoky rides the dark train just as I do. There is a high price to pay for this but don't let her fool you. She is as addicted to it as I am.

The only difference being that it's my heritage to be the Shadow Man and I chose her to be my Abberline. The blood of my ancestry will again make history.

From Hell,
Jack Jr.

a little background music to enhance the mood.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbmS3...>

Excerpts are spoiler(ish)
(view spoiler)

David Staniforth says

Not one for the squeamish!

This is the kind of book that makes me glad I joined Goodreads and that I have friends whose recommendations I trust, for without that I would never have read "Shadow Man". The cover wouldn't have drawn me in and I'd never heard of the author, so not something I would have selected while casually browsing in the library.

Brilliant writing style that gripped me from the opening paragraph and never let go. Fantastic character development. Intense action. Perfect pacing and plot. And an exhilarating conclusion. The last 25% is simply unputdownable and I will certainly be reading the follow on.

Thank you all my Goodreads' friends for recommending this read, which is now among the books I've read that are easily five stars.

Sherri says

Today on Cooking With Plagiarism, we're going to work on a little recipe called "Shadow Man." This is a pretty spicy dish, and will be too hot for those of you who are sensitive to too much gore and pretty much unpalatable to those of you who like your plots without holes. For the rest of you, let's get started. First, when cooking with plagiarism its important to start of right. Pull your very COVER from another source to give your audience a head's up on what to expect. Don't be too blatant though or they might not try the dish. So, instead of a white video-game cover with a black half profile, try black-on-black. It'll look cooler anyways. Next, take a handful of things sure to sell well and combine them into a bowl. Here we tried a handful of Disney "kill-off-mom" sauce, a dash of "sterio-typical strong female lead" (remember, she must ALWAYS be under 5 feet and horribly traumatized!). Add a HUGE dollop of Thomas Harris plots (go especially heavy on the "Red Dragon" and quite heavy on the "Hannibal" death-scene spices). Stir until they have completely lost anything that made them tasty or original. Now the important touches. If you'd like, you can throw in some scars, but make sure they don't actually interfere with anything that makes your lead physically function-able or less attractive. Throw in a pat of half-melted two-dimensional support characters. As in all these recipes, you must have the sassy female, the @\$h0le, the innocent computer guy and DON'T FORGET the token minority! These are only there for plot pieces, no no worries if the only ones you have around the house are stale. You'll need a character motivator: In this case may I suggest "traumatized but tough urchin." You may have to marinate it in its mother's corpse first to make it cook-able, but no worries, its only there for texture anyways. Its not like it had any real personality to start with, so you shouldn't feel bad for it. Finally, you should make sure to add some sex, because that sells. If you don't have any, its okay. Just pull out whatever open box of "crappy romance novel" you have in the cupboard and toss it in. Now, strain this glop through a colander. The size of the strainer is especially important. You need one with slots small enough to leave in the "excruciating gun details" but large enough to strain out any feelings of realism in your plot. When in doubt, err on the size of too large. Losing a few gun facts is worth getting rid of as much realism as possible. Once you have your straining done, slap it between two covers and bake. Makes 373 pages.

Christine says

Five stars vastly underrates this book. I give the brilliant Shadow Man 10 stars. Easily. Cory McFadyen's Shadow Man is the best thriller I have read. In my life. Ever.

By the time I reached the 5% mark, I knew this book was going to be special. I paused long enough to race over to Amazon to order the other 3 books in the series. I was instantly transfixed in chapter one, and the book did not lessen its grip on me from that point on. The last 25% of the book was simply unputdownable. Truly.

Shadow Man is a masterpiece thriller, in my humble opinion. It ticks off all the boxes important to me. The character development is simply stunning and unlike that I have ever seen in any other thriller. We even learn about the minor characters. Deep stuff. Psychological stuff. The stuff that makes these people who they are and what they do and think. There are whole chapters devoted to where the team members are psychologically. Boring, you say? Far, far from it. This is deep, meaningful, and dare I say, moving storytelling.

Agent Smoky Barrett is the female leader of a team of FBI agents. The team members' interactions are real, and though certainly not all a bowl of cherries, reflect steadfast loyalty and respect when it counts. Even the assholes have integrity. I came to love every member of the team.

Smoky has been through horrendous trauma for which she is receiving psychiatric help. These sessions are shown to us and are fascinating, even to me--a survivor of a 3-month rotation in lock up psychiatry during my medical residency. The encounter in chapter 2 is the best written, most powerful and moving patient-psychiatrist encounter I have ever read in a novel. I must extend my praise to the psychological aspects throughout the entire book. If I didn't know otherwise, I would definitely think that the author was a board-certified psychiatrist.

Even though this book was written in 2007, I learned a lot about police work. I now know about cognitive interviewing of witnesses, neurolinguistic interviewing of suspects, what a "confrontational statement" is and when it should be used, how to detect whether or not a package contains a bomb, how latex gloves do not always prevent the leaving of fingerprints, what makes up the psyche of a serial killer, and more. And these techniques and facts, like the psychological aspects of the novel, are shown and not just told to us. I cannot stress what a difference showing, rather than just telling, makes to a story.

There is a hint, just a hint of a budding romance, but I have to say chapter 39 holds the most beautiful and emotional sex scene I think I have ever read.

I must issue one warning. The thriller aspects to the story are intense, dark and depraved. It takes a lot to scare me off, and I had no major issues tolerating the degree of evil and debasement depicted in Shadow Man, but I do understand it will be too much for some readers. Otherwise, the plot was complex and suspenseful. It was intriguing watching the FBI team go from nearly no leads at all to cracking the case. The clues are there if you are smart enough to follow them, but I was fooled big time in the end. If I have one criticism, it is that the case broke on a clue that I'm not sure was good enough to earn that honor, but that was more than made up for by the very original and touching as well as explosive final scene with the killer.

Do I recommend this book? Are you kidding me? I want to go to each and every one of my thriller-loving friends, especially those who love thrillers with strong character development, such as Angela Marsons' Kim Stone series, and COMMAND them put this book on the very top of their lists. Do you hear me, people??? In regards to the darkness factor, I do believe if a reader can handle Karin Slaughter's works, then he or she can get through Shadow Man. Thriller fans, do not deprive yourself of this most brilliant book.

Final thoughts:

1) Cory McFadyen has apparently disappeared off the face of the literary world. There is no Google data on him for the last several years. This is tragic.

2) There are 3 (4 if you can read German) more Smoky Barrett books for me to read; this simultaneously pleases me and disappoints me.

3) I want to thank my friend Jan for suggesting we read this book together or I may have never gotten to it. Thank you, buddy!!

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

I just loved this book. **This book isn't for everyone. It was definitely for me! This book is very horrifying! Its not for the faint of heart. I had to put it down a couple of times because in some parts I just could not handle it. It is an excellent book. The author writes so well! It is very suspenseful. Its so hard for me to say what its about because I don't want to spoil it. Also I can not put in words the justice that this book deserves. I can tell you that if you are a fan of Karin Slaughter, this book is definitely for you. It can get violent but the author also for a man writes very well for woman. This book does have sugar added to it. The book starts out with a bang that does not stop. The suspense just about killed me.**

The character development in this book is so awesome. I loved each character except the villain. I loved Callie, and just adored the little girl Bonnie who is a very strong and tough girl. I just loved Smoky Barrett. And I can't forget Elaina who adds the sugar. She is just sunshine.

Shadow Man will grab you by the throat and yank you along for a hell of a ride, so hold on to your seat. A spell binding read from the first page to the last.

I cannot wait to read the next book in the series. It definitely meets the Wow factor. It really Wowed me and want more.

Krystin Rachel (Here's The Fucking Twist) says

This is the kind of story *I love*, unashamedly.

A super tough female heroine, with a traumatized past, who has become the main target of a twisted serial killer's bloody game that gives you lots of gore. I mean sure, it's a tale as old as time in this genre. It's been done to death, but when it's done well? **Who gives a fuck?** It's a wild, tense, dark and twisty ride.

I have a hard time believing this is the first novel ever written by Cody McFadyen but that's the line I'm being fed, so sure, ok, Mr McFadyen *this is your first novel ever, riiiiiggghhhttt*. McFadyen infused the pages with psychological insight into the main character, Agent Smoky Barrett, and police procedural factoids that cut the horror and evil with human qualities and a sense of reality. It created a story that was really well rounded in so many ways.

The crimes were pretty dark, bloody and gory. The chase for the killers was fast paced and fun, with lots of procedural insight into serial killers and the people who catch them. The characters were well thought out, dynamic in their unique personalities, giving you a real sense of family/team and a vested interest in the outcome of their journey. My only real gripes with the books would be the Jack the Ripper line, which felt a little *too easy* as a plot device and the sense of timing...

The first part of book sets up Smoky and her past, her journey in recovery, and quite frankly, she's fucked up. Nightmares, panic attacks, only 6 months has gone by since her family was murdered and she was tortured almost to death. She's right where you'd expect her to be emotionally, which is barely hanging on. And then, it seems, overnight, the death of her best friend spurs her into an unprecedented 180 recovery and she's back leading an FBI team and solving crimes and adopting children who are coming out of their own personal horror way to quickly. Relationships are forged, things are wrapped up and life is moving on all within the span of a week or so. It was too fast, and I kept thinking, *yeah, that wouldn't happen*. Took me out of it just a little bit.

Extra points for making me cry into my wine because of Leo's dog, though. I hardly ever cry. I'm pretty much dead inside.

I wouldn't necessarily call this a mystery, as the police drama/thriller aspect overshadowed who Jack Jr was. By the time he was revealed I felt I didn't care all that much, I just wanted to see him die and see Smoky win.

I'm super excited that this is a series, though. It was a really promising start that creeped me out, surrounded me with darkness and poked at my emotions.

4 ½ stars!

?Susan? says

This book was recommended to me by a reading buddy because she loved it and because she knows I like Karen Slaughter books. It is the beginning of a series that is not at all light reading. A brutal tale with all the suspense and twists that make up a good crime thriller. On to the next book, I hope the series gets better as it goes.

Linda Strong says

SHADOW MAN (FBI AGENT SMOKEY BARRETT, BK 1) by CODY MCFADYEN

This was probably the third or fourth time I've read this book, and this entire series of four books. It is possibly one of the best series I have ever read. YES! It is that good!

Shadow Man introduces Smokey Barrett 6 months after a brutally traumatic experience. A killer she had been chasing breaks into her home, rapes and tortures her, leaving her with horrific facial scars. He also kills her husband young daughter.

Six months later and she still hasn't decided whether she wants to live or die. And then something happens that changes the game. Her very best childhood friend is found brutally murdered and her young daughter, Bonnie, was tied to her mother's dead body for 3 days until they were found. Bonnie has been catatonic since then ... and according to her friend's will, Smokey is to have guardianship.

Even though she hasn't been cleared by her psychiatrist to return to work, she manages to talk her supervisor into letting her investigate the crime along with her team, but only on the fringe of things.

Thus begins the hunt for one of the nastiest, cruelest killers known. He taunts Smokey and her team by promising to take away something from everyone on her team .. he wants them at their best when they go to look for him. The things he does to this team is heinous.

All the books in this series is extremely well written. You cannot tell from the writing that this is the author's very first book. The characters ... you will follow them from book to book to see how they grow and change. And you will want to read the others in this series after reading this one.

I feel sad that there are only the 4 books. The author disappeared a time after his 4th book ... and to this day, no one seems to know what happened to him. Just took a walkabout? Died? Writing under a different name? I look off and on for more information..and there's just nothing there.

If you like atrocious, evil bad guys, you will certainly like this book. 5 stars for the book... 20 Stars for the series.

Jean says

George Eliot, Isak Dinesen, J. D. Robb...Cody McFadyen? I truly mean this as the highest compliment, *Mr.* McFadyen. As I read the opening pages of your spectacular thriller, Shadow Man, I had to look back to see your name again. Yes, I had read it correctly; I simply could not believe that the emotions and sensations that were emanating from my Kindle had come from the psyche of a *man*. I know that I am not the first reviewer to say this, but this was my overwhelming first impression, and I was awestruck.

Smoky Barrett is no ordinary FBI agent. What makes her special is not that she leads a violent crimes unit in LA or that she fires her Glock more accurately than almost any other agent in the Bureau or even that she has

lost her husband, child, and good looks to a vicious killer. What makes Smoky Barrett one of the best agents, male or female, is that she has the ability to read her prey – almost get inside the head of the perpetrator. Then look out! Here comes “the dark train”! Chug-a-chug-a-chug. She feels the dragon inside...the dragon that is her anger, her strength, and her hunger for justice.

Smoky’s crime-chasing is made more masterful by her team of two genuinely wonderful human beings, Callie and Alan, who also happen to be extremely skilled at what they do, plus James, a man who is a big jerk but is able to get in the zone like Smoky can and “feel” the perp. They are joined on this case by a rookie, Leo, who is a computer nerd. Poor Leo has a rude awakening at his first crime scene, but he toughens up in a hurry.

This is a good place to warn the reader: This is not your sweet grandma’s cozy mystery. It is brutal. There is violent sex and torture of women (and a dog). Karen Slaughter and Tess Gerritsen’s killers have nothing on this evil butcher. He is smart, careful, confident, and extremely cruel.

Fortunately, there is some balance. It comes in the form of kind, caring people. The supporting cast consists of fabulous characters. Even though there is a lot of pain in their lives, they bring love and stability into one another’s lives. Even Matt and Alexa, Smoky’s dead husband and daughter, speak to her in her head and guide her.

The plot is strengthened by solid details of Smoky’s therapy sessions, FBI interview techniques, and forensics nuts-and-bolts that are quite fascinating. Then there are the gruesome descriptions of the videos. These are definitely not for everyone.

As a mystery, *Shadow Man* isn’t exceptional. I had a strong hunch early on as to the identity of the psychopathic monster. It is the depiction of the terror – the sights, the sounds, the heart-stopping fears that makes this story a top-notch thriller. When Smoky wakes up from a nightmare, I felt her jolt. I saw her drenched with sweat. I heard her sob. When McFadyen describes the dark train, I was there. My heart was pounding, my fists were clenched, and my senses were heightened. This total immersion was not an occasional occurrence; it was a constant state from start to finish.

I had a very few minor peeves about this book. One, I got extremely tired of Callie’s “honey love” phrase every time she spoke to anyone. I loved Callie, but that phrase started grating after a while. Secondly, while the killer made a mistake or two, the biggest one seemed too manufactured to be accidental. I don’t know whether that was intentional on the author’s part or not, but it didn’t quite fit. Still, that in no way ruined the story for me, as the final chapters were amazingly pressure-packed. Really good stuff. Great, actually. This is a very easy five star rating.

There is good news and bad news about Cody McFadyen. Good news: There are three more Smoky Barrett books, plus one in German (which I hope, hope, hope will be translated some day). Bad news: McFadyen seems to have vanished from the world of books. Wherever you are, sir, I hope you are well. Thank you so much for sharing your gift.

5 stars

Brenda says

First, a warning. Future readers should be aware that there is an abundance of gore, depravity, and evil in this book, and it is not left to the imagination! It is also countered with love and hope and loyalty.

By the end of the first chapter, I was completely hooked by this book. For me, it was very emotional. I melded myself with everything Smoky was feeling: fear, sorrow, depression, suicidal. And a few chapters later, I loved her team as she did. The cast of characters in this book are just fantastic! But there are some head butts in this book, and oh, God, did they hurt!

The villain in this book causes much psychological damage as well as physical damage. Every member of the team is personally affected. It is sickening. Heartbreaking. It ramps up the tension and makes them angry. Accomplishes what the villain wanted.

I was so immersed in the story, in the investigation, in Smoky's thoughts and feelings, that I never even thought about who Jack Jr. was. And when a name was finally mentioned, it was unfamiliar to me and I had to think back through the book to see if he'd been mentioned yet!

The author has written a rather unique description of how Smoky gets inside the head of an evil psychopath. Smoky calls it "the dark train." I liked it and want to remember it. I am happy to ride the dark train with these characters in the remaining three books!

Laura/Mystery in Minutes says

Spoiler-Free Review

Are you a fan of the often very dark and edgy show "Criminal Minds"?

The show about the Behavioral Analysis Unit at the FBI (read: profilers)?

I haven't watched the show in years (for reasons having nothing to do with the quality of the show), so I don't know if it has changed since then, but, for me, the tone of Cody McFadyen's first Smoky Barrett novel is very reminiscent of that show that I remember.

So, what did I love about Shadow Man?

I loved the depiction of camaraderie and loyalty that Smoky's immediate, and extended, FBI team has toward one another.

That "I have your back, no matter what" bond that so many in law enforcement share. The acceptance of one another's quirks because they are all highly skilled at what they do and passionate about it, and because their very lives often depend upon that level of acceptance and trust.

I loved Smoky's feeling of responsibility toward her team. In fact, her devotion to her team and their families - these men and women that the reader experiences as fully "fleshed-out" characters - is what ultimately brings Smoky back to the FBI, after an incident with a perpetrator left her unsure as to whether or not she would be able to return to work. Throughout the novel, the reader watches Smoky gradually becoming stronger, and healing in various ways from that devastating event. I grew to care very deeply for *most* of the characters. And for those of you who have already read the novel (not a spoiler),

I even came to find the expression "honey-love" endearing.

Prior to starting the book, I was a bit apprehensive about the level of violence that I had been advised of, but I did not find it to be drawn out, or gratuitous.

Cody McFadyen's debut novel is so much more than "just genre fiction".

Combining character-rich psychological exploration and suspense, top-notch investigative procedure, red herrings of subtlety and finesse, as well as passages of literary prose evoking great emotion, Shadow Man is an example of what truly great crime fiction can be.

Will I take another ride on the "dark train" with the next book in the series?

Absolutely.

Six stars for Shadow Man by Cody McFadyen.

Diana says

Wow ... extremely dark! I can't really add anything else for a review that others haven't covered already. It is dark, complex and suspenseful ... I raced through it and was surprised at the end which I always enjoy that. If you like Angela Marsons books then this will be right up your alley. Not for the faint of heart ... definitely for dark suspense fans! Don't pass this one up!

Jan says

One of the most scary, intense, mess with your mind, psychological thriller's I've ever read!

This book was recommended to me well over a year ago, and while I went and purchased the book right away, it quickly became lost amongst the other patient books waiting to be read.

When my favorite buddy reader suggested we tackle another one, this book was hands down our first pick. The reviews were strong, and with the recommendation in my mind, I took this one on with high expectations. Apparently they weren't high enough though, because after just the first few chapters my expectations were blown away!

What I loved:

-This book is rich with strong characters that really come to life. I can't stress this enough--McFayden really knows how to write characters with depth, realistic emotions and emotional responses that will make you wonder how in the world this wasn't written by a woman?

From the main protag to a potential murder victim, McFayden didn't skimp on character development.

-While I obviously loved all the characters, I have to give recognition to the protagonist Smokey Barrett and the antagonist, the Shadow Man himself. Smokey, who has lost so much and is still healing physically and mentally from an extreme home invasion is someone I won't soon forget. If she is based on a real life

detective, then the world is a much better place. The Shadow Man, holy #*%> is this one messed up psycho! The mind games, manipulations and psychological warfare he uses to throw Smokey and her team off their game is unlike anything else I've read. **Keep in mind there are some scenes that are not for the faint hearted!!**(Don't you always wonder where an author comes up with this stuff?)

-McFayden's writing style...it's beautiful, smooth, eloquent, and creative. Whether writing an emotional moment or describing a crime scene, McFayden has a unique way of really making you feel what the characters are experiencing. My favorite? Has to be 'the Train'...Describing Smokey's internal brain preparing her for the investigation ahead.

-Last, I'd have to say I was really impressed with the research that went into this book...my buddy and I were amazed at some of the things we learned, both police procedural as well as about the psychology behind some practices. I love a book that makes me feel smarter when I'm done.

What I didn't love:

-Not a whole lot!! But no book is flawless, and I did find some areas that left me wanting more. There were a few scenes that the author glossed over without providing details, and I felt a bit robbed. There were also a couple of loose ends not addressed at the end that I wish had been cleaned up. But, all is forgiven...he certainly makes up for it and then some!

You will notice that I haven't written one word about what this book is about. I didn't want to waste my review on that...the synopsis does a fine job. I really just wanted to give credit to this author and his writing. It's something you need to experience, so go---get your hands on this book and settle in for a wild ride!

***TANYA* says**

Brilliant book!! I was engrossed the entire time. Can't wait to read the next book of the series.

Kevin says

Smoky Barrett wakes up most nights screaming, reliving the torture and murder of her husband and daughter by a serial killer. She has been away from the FBI on leave and frankly doesn't know if she will ever be able to go back to work. She can barely make it through a day. But when her best friend is killed by a serial killer who believes he is the ancestor of Jack the Ripper, she is pulled back in to the FBI by the killer himself. She soon finds her team helps make her feel needed as she chases the murderer.

I read a lot of mysteries and thrillers but I must say this one took me to uncomfortable places. Smoky has a talent that allows her to see a crime scene through the killer's eyes which she calls "riding the dark train." This particular killer is the epitome of darkness and evil, relishing in torturing the innocent. The FBI team is an interesting mix and the writing truly makes you care about these characters.

Not since "Silence of the Lambs" have I become so engrossed in a storyline which was almost impossible to put down. I read the last 100 pages until late this morning and can't wait to read the next in the series. An

outstanding debut!

Angela DeSilva says

This is a very good serial killer fiction book. I loved Smoky Barrett! This is a very talented author. Just excellent writing. Author is well versed in forensics and profiling. I'm starting the second in the series straight away, The Face of Death!
