



Once Shadows Fall

Robert Daniels

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After years of paying her dues on the force, Beth Sturgis has earned her place as a detective for the Robbery-Homicide division of the Atlanta PD. Now, she's heading up a major manhunt for a potential serial killer who's working his way inward from the outskirts of the city. The copycat elements in the first crime scene lead Sturgis to retired FBI agent Jack Kale, who was responsible for apprehending and nearly killing the murderer known as the Scarecrow, the same Scarecrow who appears to be this new killer's terrible inspiration.

A reclusive single father and university professor, Kale is trying to keep the demons at bay through therapy and avoidance. That is, until Sturgis shows up asking for his help. Against his better judgment, Kale is drawn into the most dangerous cat and mouse game of his life. Robert Daniels's *Once Shadows Fall*, is a gripping thriller in the bestselling tradition of *Silence of the Lambs* and is sure to become a crime fiction classic.

Once Shadows Fall Details

Date : Published December 8th 2015 by Crooked Lane Books

ISBN : 9781629533834

Author : Robert Daniels

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Mystery, Thriller, Suspense, Crime, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review Once Shadows Fall for online ebook

Margaret says

I am pleasantly surprised when a new author debuts a book and I see promise in his writing. As with wine I suspect this author will improve as he hones his writing skills and sharpens his story lines. Although the story did not hold any great surprises for me, it was entertaining.

The story revolves around Beth Sturgis who is the lead investigator on her first major homicide case, a copy-cat serial killer who seems to be modeling himself after a convicted serial killer, a current inmate at a mental health facility housing the worst of the worst.

Beth contacts Jack Kale, a former FBI agent who while with the FBI headed the manhunt for "the Scarecrow". Jack proves invaluable to the investigation team as he has honed his abilities to unravel the clues left by the killer. The description of what the killer does to his victims is pretty graphic.

Throw in the expected developing personal relationship between Beth and Jack which creates some departmental issues rounds out the story.

Machelle says

One of the BEST books I've read in 2017!! I'm excited to read more of his books!

Linda Strong says

A debut novel by Robert Daniels, this is a terrific psychological thriller. Being a clinical psychologist, I expected a touch of realism . and boy! did I get it.

Beth Sturgis is a fairly new Homicide Detective in Atlanta, Georgia. Being lead detective on a serial killer case leads her to Jack Kale, retired FBI. He was responsible for the capture of Scarecrow, aka Howard Pell. Whoever this new killer is, he's mimicking Pell.

Being inexperienced, and having made a few mistakes in her investigation, she hopes that Kale can bring his experience and they can shut the copy cat down.

There is nothing new about this particular book, but it is extremely well crafted. The characters are finely drawn,, the bad guys are really bad and the good guys are really good. Kale comes with some baggage,mostly about the death of his former partner, which was why he retired .. or was forced to retire ... from the FBI.

The tension is palpable, especially as Jack and Beth try to rescue victims before they are killed in horrendous ways. The ending is stirring and action-packed.

I look forward to reading the next book featuring these characters, WAKE THE DEVIL.

Marie says

In *Once Shadows Fall*, Detective Beth Sturgis is heading up her first major manhunt for a potential serial killer. Seeing similarities between this new killing and ones from years ago, Sturgis enlists the help of the retired FBI agent, Jack Kale, who headed up those long ago cases. Kale, now a university professor, is at first reluctant to get involved. Demons from the past still haunt him, but he is soon helping Sturgis on the new case.

I really enjoyed this police procedural, a debut novel from Daniels. There's tons of action, lots of entertaining twists, and some pretty good characters. Once I picked it up, I didn't want to put it down. It turned out to be quite the page turner. Some of the details are a little gruesome, so this one's definitely not for the faint of heart.

I liked both Sturgis and Kale. I think they make a pretty good team. I hope we learn more about them in subsequent books.

One thing that struck me as odd was the lack of urgency towards the end of the book. I don't want to give too much away but I would have thought that with a missing person you'd think there'd be a mad scramble to find them. No holds barred. I just didn't feel that build up in intensity. That's not to say it wasn't a good ending. It just wasn't as intense as it could have been.

This book and its main character, Kale, a retired FBI agent, reminded me a little of John Verdon's books and his character, Dave Gurney. This one isn't quite as good, but it's still a wonderful read.

Recommended. I'd definitely read another work by this author.

For more information about this book, please visit the Crooked Lane Books website.

For more information about the author and his next books, please visit Robert Daniels's website.

Thanks to Sarah from Kaye Publicity for this review copy.

Once Shadows Fall by Robert Daniels, Crooked Lane Books (The Quick Brown Fox & Company LLC), ©2013. ISBN 9781629533834(Hardcover), 343p.

This review is also available on my blog, Daisy's Book Journal.

Fran Banks says

I just finished *Once Shadows Fall* and the words jumped off the page at me. I'm so glad to find there are more books featuring Sturgis and Kale, I highly recommend Robert Daniels and look forward to adding all his books to my library.

Sandy says

3.5 stars

Lynn Pribus says

I listened to this book, loaded on my iPod by my son who is a great supporter of Audible because he goes in to his store very early to make ham biscuits, muffins, and soup.

His tastes are not entirely aligned with mine and here was another sadistic serial killer trying to imitate an incarcerated serial killer who tried to imitate a historical serial killer in old Atlanta.

It's hard to skim on an iPod, but as it dragged on, I kept inching around on the little dial and was glad when I finished it because of (a) the way it dwelt on evil and (b) the truly unlikely deductions of the detectives on the trail.

Kristen says

Definitely a GREAT read. Well-written, great characters, twists. Looking forward to more.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

One thing I love about my job as a Library Assistant is being in Check In - the area where books are being checked in from patrons, other libraries and NEW BOOKS! I love seeing books come in, period. I see books I have read and loved - and read and not loved- and books that look interesting enough to add to my TBR list or a new book I need to put on hold. I also come across books (cough Kardashians cough) that make me doubt the publishing world - thank gawd that only happens once in awhile. And, then there are moments I know the Book Fairy exists - a new shiny hardcover with the phrases "A Thriller" and "debut novel" comes in from our technical department and there is NO hold on it. I feel guilty at first and look around me and see if anyone else is experiencing this miracle with me. No, it's just me. I caress the cover and slowly open it without cracking the spine. It has me from "Beth Sturgis...Atlanta PD...manhunt for serial killer". This book is going home with me...done. I take it home and put it on the TBR shelf on my bookshelf of books and tea and jewelry. I cannot wait and start the book a night later.

ONCE SHADOWS FALL

(Sturgis and Kale: #1)

Written by Robert Daniels

2015; Crooked Lane Books (352 Pages)

Genre: series, fiction, mystery, suspense, romance

RATING: 4.5 STARS

Beth Sturgis has worked her way to the Robbery-Homicide division of Atlanta PD as a Detective. With her partner out of commission, Beth is the lead on a murder case that has all the markings of a past murder spree complete with two women missing. As the serial killer, the Scarecrow, has already been caught Beth is now looking for a copycat. For more insight into the case she looks to Jack Kale, a former FBI agent, to help her discover where the women are and who has them. Kale's reluctant advice leads Sturgis to the bodies of the women and she is afraid there will be more to come.

Kale, who left the FBI due to the Scarecrow case does not want to help Beth or the Atlanta PD and tries to walk away. The killer has other plans for Kale and soon he finds himself in the middle of the manhunt with Beth by his side. In trying to uncover the killer's identity Kale must keep his demons at bay and keep him and Beth alive. Beth just wants to capture the killer before more bodies pile up and her job is jeopardy.

It has awhile since a new-to-me book and author has had me flipping pages deep into the night. As I was reading this one in hardcover I could not sneak extra minutes in the dark like I can with my eReader. Right away this novel had me hooked! Beth is a strong female lead that any reader can relate to - yet she has some secrets that come out slowly but I don't think we have the full story yet. Kale, flawed as Will Trent (from Karin Sluaghter's series Will Trent), is the ying to Beth's yang. They have great chemistry among the thrilling plot. I enjoyed the secondary characters that help balance this book from just being a mystery/suspense. Like a good series we are introduced to these characters but Daniels has kept back things that will have you coming back to find out more. I enjoyed the suspense in this story and the mystery had me guessing to the last clue. And, when you think back it all makes sense...I am so happy to sear that this will be a series and the second book will be out later this year. I don't want to reveal any spoilers so I apologize for my vagueness. I highly recommend this book to ANY mystery lover that can take a bit of grittiness.

My Novelesque Blog

Kat Delima says

3.5 feels more like a movie then a book. Got bored by the end and skipped through

Chris says

A new, female homicide detective gets handed a case that looks like a copycat - a copycat because the deranged killer of what look like the same type of serial murders is locked away in a psychiatric hospital. As more similar murders appear, she teams up with a brilliant - though reluctant - ex-FBI agent who is now a college professor. Of course rapport between them grows as we slowly learn his story, which is deeply imbedded in the original serial killer's story. Oh, these dark, twisted minds! This was a satisfying mystery, though quite easy to figure out early on if you've read a lot of murder mysteries. I look forward to reading more in the series.

Emily Higgins says

Detective Beth Sturgis is now a detective in Robbery/Homicide after working her way up the ranks. There is murder in a small town near Atlanta and Beth is assigned to assist the local police. The murder has characistics similar to a serial killer who is currently in custody after being caught several years ago. Former FBI agent Jack Kale worked the older case, so he is brought in as a consultant. The killer quickly escalates his crimes and the chase is on!

Bonnie Brody says

Beth Sturgis is new on the Atlanta Police Force and her first case involves searching for a serial killer who may be acting alone or might be a copy-cat. Years ago, there was a serial killer known as 'the Scarecrow' who put fear into all of Atlanta's residents. This new killer appears to know things about the Scarecrow's M.O. that were never made public.

Jack Kale, the lead investigator for the Scarecrow case, left his job with the FBI shortly after the case was solved. He settled into a comfortable professorship at Georgia Tech teaching psychology. It is not long, however, that he is called back to the police department and asked to be a consultant on this new case. Jack's psychological health is fragile. He suffers from panic attacks and has a tendency to abuse his medications. No one doubts that he is a brilliant profiler with profound and perspicacious insight.

Jack and Beth work together on this case and Beth even interviews the Scarecrow who has been jailed for many years. He toys with them and, naturally, is happy to make them turn in circles. What is different this time around is that the killer is leaving clues for Jack, almost as if this is a chess game.

The chapters are short and filled with good action-packed sequences. The new killer calls himself 'The Soul Eater' and enjoys watching his victims suffer. He especially likes to take them to subterranean places and do his deeds in the dark.

My problem with the book is that the ending was too pat and I could see it coming. I don't like to guess the killer or come close to guessing. I want the string of connections to be tight and taut. That wasn't the case with this novel.

Kathy says

4.5 stars.

Robert Daniels' debut mystery *Once Shadows Fall* is a riveting psychological thriller about a series of copycat murders. The original killer is safely locked away in a mental facility so when Detective Beth Sturgis notices similarities in a current case, she contacts the agent who worked the original case, now retired FBI profiler Jack Kale. Despite his reluctance to assist her, Beth gently coerces Jack into lending his considerable expertise to the investigation.

New to the robbery-homicide division, Beth is assigned as the lead detective to the grisly murder. A little out of her depth, she is hoping Jack's insight into the mind of serial killer Dr. Howard Pell aka Scarecrow will help her capture the copycat killer. After taking a quick look at Kale's FBI folder, she is rather confused about the series of events that led to his retirement, but this does not stop her from tracking him down. He offers invaluable insight that leads to overlooked evidence at the crime scene, but when she returns to ask him to take a look at what they uncovered, he immediately shuts her down. After a little underhandedly maneuvering by Beth, Jack eventually joins the investigation as a consultant. Jack and Beth, along with the other Atlanta PD detectives, remain one step behind the diabolical killer as they are in a race against time to locate his next victims before it is too late.

Although Beth is extremely intelligent, her inexperience shows as she begins her investigation. She is a determined and tenacious detective but in her eagerness to prove herself, she makes a few strategic errors. Bold with a hint of fearlessness, she interviews Pell with ease and while he does not reveal new information, Beth picks up on a few clues that take the investigation in a rather unexpected direction. After making a precipitous decision about the wrong person, she makes every effort to ensure her facts are correct before bringing new theories to the rest of the team. In doing so, Beth unwittingly places herself in danger but she remains cool under pressure and refuses to give up on getting herself out of what appears to be a hopeless

situation.

Jack is a brilliant profiler with an uncanny knack for putting the most miniscule clues into the proper context which leads to some fairly astute predictions of the killer's next move. But the investigation of Pell's crimes years earlier left a horrific mark on him and Jack has only just begun to put those events behind him. He still continues to suffer from PTSD and although his anxiety is much improved, he remains plagued by nightmares and panic attacks. His involvement with the current case brings his unresolved issues to the surface and his new co-workers cannot help but worry that Jack will become a liability to the current investigation.

The murders are macabre and each new victim is subjected to horrific torture. With no clear motive for the crimes and very little evidence, the police have no suspect but it soon becomes painstakingly clear that Pell is somehow involved with the deaths. Trying to find the connection takes valuable time that is nearly impossible to spare, but with dogged determination, the investigators meticulously follow all leads until they discover the killer's identity.

Once Shadows Fall is a fiendishly clever police procedural with an intriguing storyline. Although there are a few similarities to other novels in the genre, **Robert Daniels** does a fantastic job of keeping the plot fresh and unique with unexpected twists, turns and revelations. The novel thunders to a pulse pounding and satisfying conclusion that will leave readers hoping *Once Shadows Fall* is the first of many mysteries starring Jack Kale and Beth Sturgis.

Maureen DeLuca says

As much as I really liked this book- I do have to say that there is nothing really all that 'new' here as far as your very dedicated psycho , serial killer type stories. (Which I happen to really enjoy!)

You have a dedicated, slightly traumatized and brilliant profiler turned professor (Jack Kale) who is approached by the attractive female investigator (Beth Sturgis) who is trying to prove herself by solving a series of high profile murders. Sturgis needs Kale's help to find the killer that is patterning himself after "the Scarecrow" , a serial murderer that Kale unmasked and captured. The new killer wants to pick up where the old left off. As the body count rises and danger mounts, Sturgis and Kale find romance and must follow some obscure clues to catch a killer or killers before it is too late.

The writing was very good, I really enjoyed the two main characters and learning about their past experiences and then seeing how they now can work together moving forward. Another good "psycho serial killer" book and a start to a good series, which I most definitely will keep on reading!
