



Faithful Shadow

Kevin J. Howard

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Faithful Shadow takes you beyond the splendor of nature to the terror that lies beneath, one that should have never been discovered. Yellowstone is suffering from the largest forest fire in the park's history. Ranger JOE RAND, once passionate about nature and now drowning in alcohol after the recent death of his son, notices something is very wrong within Yellowstone after a string of disappearances. But when a fireman is found dead in the Old Faithful Inn after falling into a hole earlier that day, his body mauled and deprived of all its fluids, Joe knows he has no choice but to set down his flask and investigate. Joe and Lieutenant DALE CAFFEY of the Billings Fire Department go into the woods to search the hole the fireman had fallen into. They discover a series of tunnels lined with bones, the air thick with smoke. Joe and Dale conclude that the creature that had killed the fireman had left its subterranean dwelling to flee the overwhelming smoke from the fire above. The creature takes shelter inside the Inn, concealing itself within the darkened crevices, emerging to feast on passersby. After staging an evacuation of the park, they lock themselves inside the Inn to hunt the creature. After just a short while it becomes frighteningly clear that it is, in fact, the creature that is hunting them.

Faithful Shadow Details

Date :

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Author : Kevin J. Howard

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From Reader Review Faithful Shadow for online ebook

Jean says

It's summertime in Yellowstone National Park, but it's far from a pleasant escape for the park's visitors and staff. First a wildfire threatens nearby, inching closer and closer to the visitor's area and leaving a thick smoke hanging in the air. Then people start disappearing, but there is no sign of a struggle; it's as if they simply vanished. After days of searching, Rangers Joe and Andy finally stumble upon a watch in the underbrush from a missing staffer.

"The watch was almost stuck to the plant with some sappy, black liquid. Joe held it up to his nose and took a whiff, pulling it away instantly. The smell was foul. Like mold and bog water rolled into one."

But what could leave such a substance? Not any animal the rangers are familiar with. Unfortunately this is only the beginning of their interaction with a mysterious shadow creature that feasts on human flesh. As more people go missing, those left must decide how they can possibly find – and destroy – this beast. But how can you find something that lurks in the shadows?

Though I rarely read the horror genre, I do enjoy “creature features” like the SyFy original movies, and Faithful Shadow unfolded in a similar fashion. It was a little gory for me, especially towards the end, but regular readers of horror may have less of a problem with that. In a former job I read a great deal of self-published novels that were so bad I could barely understand what the author was trying to communicate, much less enjoy them – but Howard's writing is truly professional. Not only was the story enjoyable, but it was free of the usual errors one would expect to find without a professional editor on hand. The author obviously put a lot of time into crafting not only the plot but the language to create a picture in the mind of the reader. He used great skill in writing horrifying descriptions of the monster and his wrath throughout the novel. He also kept me turning pages by giving so little information about the monster early in the story. I kept wondering what we were dealing with, and that kept me reading. Faithful Shadow should appeal to anyone who enjoys dark tales of evil creatures unknown to man.

Igor says

This is a classic horror story and it was pretty much good one too. I really enjoyed first 80% of the book where everything was put up as it should be but the end was somehow out of focus. I prefer full action pack especially in books like this one but, although it was ok, it could be much better if focus was on pure action rather on random thoughts of certain characters or eating ice cream in the middle of the mayhem. Nonetheless, I enjoyed it as it's interesting and light read. Read it if you need some break from your sci-fi/fantasy series.

Shelly says

This book would make a great horror movie, without a doubt. It's definitely something I would watch! It's a hard book to review though. The synopsis covers the basic plot really well and gives you a great idea what it going to happen during the story.

There are a ton of characters in this story and it's hard to keep them all straight in the beginning, but then once you figure out who is who they start getting picked off by a mysterious killer. One thing I will tell you is this...don't get connected to any one character because if you do, most likely, they will be the next one to die. While this isn't always a good thing, it's what makes this book really great. I love a writer who isn't afraid to kill his characters off!

I have to say that even though there are a lot of characters, they have been developed pretty well. The ones we do get to know a little better have really great back stories. Joe, the ranger, is the obvious pick for lead character. He is a bitter alcoholic dealing with the sudden and preventable death of his only son. He has to suck it up and do his job and he ends up doing it pretty well once he is able to put down his vodka long enough. He works side by side with Dale, a firefighter who has lost a couple of his men.

The only thing I didn't like was the vagueness in dealing with the creature. I wanted to know all about it and we really don't ever get any satisfaction from that angle. I think that was probably the writers intention and while it plays well in the story, I wanted more.

The setting of Yellowstone is beautiful, but tainted by this creature who seems to surface at the same time as the fire. This really is pretty action packed and the plot moves right along. I was hooked from the very beginning and really read through this book pretty quickly.

Since this is classified as horror there is a fair amount of blood and gore. I would recommend it for anyone who likes a story full of suspense with a dash of scary.

Carl Mayo says

Some months ago, I listened to a radio talk show about another book, called Missing 411. It was a true account of disappearances in national parks. As a result of that show, I became more than a little nervous about visiting wilderness areas. Kevin Howard has skillfully aggravated that fear.

Faithful Shadow starts out somewhat like an early 1980's slasher film. (Whenever 19 and 20-year-olds go camping, drinking, and sexing, the killer is not far away.) From there, it takes a different turn. Instead of a crazy guy with a knife and a ski mask, the victims face a non-human, but very believable, cryptid threat.

Going camping? If so, you probably shouldn't read this. If not, then turn the lights on and settle in for a gloriously nerve-wracking trip.

Rich Stoehr says

Mysterious killings in a beautiful, natural setting - *Faithful Shadow* has the makings of a classic *X-Files* episode, but with the characters and predictability of a b-horror movie.

The premise of the book is solid and interesting. Yellowstone Park is subjected to a serious forest fire, with tourists and park employees trying to get by while fire crews try and put out the blaze before it gets worse. At the same time, something has come from the depths of Yellowstone, hiding in the shadows and coming after people and animals alike. The pacing of the story, though hampered at times by ham-handed predictable plot points, works reasonably well and wraps up with a satisfying conclusion over the last 50 pages or so.

Unfortunately, it's a story peopled by largely unlikeable, shallow, and inconsistent characters. Joe, the park ranger, is an alcoholic trying to pull it together after the death of his son, though his demons are never really put to the test. Dale, the firefighter is a dedicated leader, but often stubborn and angry for unspecified reasons. We're told several times that Stew, one of several interchangeable twentysomething park employees, is a "good guy" and "a deep intellectual" though his actions range from contemplating the next time he's going to get laid to insulting whoever happens to be nearby. The only character I came to appreciate was Rita, the female park ranger, who was in the story far too briefly at the beginning and again at the end, but inexplicably missing from most of the narrative. Other than her, the characters ranged from mildly interesting to downright annoying.

Ultimately, *Faithful Shadow* is a good idea, executed as a decent story, but with characters I could never really invest in. Where are Mulder and Scully when you need them?

I received a free copy of *Faithful Shadow* for review purposes.

Jessica Bronder says

A creature unlike any other, nothing more than a shadow, has been living in tunnels and caves until Yellowstone National Park. It has survived decades on animals and tourists that fall into the tunnels and pits. But now Yellowstone is on fire. The smoke has chased the shadow out of its tunnels. Now it is looking for a safe place to hide. But it is stuck in man's world, where can it go.

Joe Rand is a ranger for Yellowstone. He once cared for his job but now dwells on the loss of his son and drowns himself in alcohol. But when a firefighter is discovered sucked dry, he knows something odd is happening. Joe is going to have to surface to find the killer before it strikes again. But how do you fight a shadow?

This is a great thriller. First, you can tell Howard has spent time in the national parks. There was so much imagery that I felt right there with Joe. Joe was a great character, it broke my heart about him losing his son but I was glad that he could pull it together to stop the shadow.

I was just a kid and lived in northern Montana when Yellowstone was on fire so I don't really remember much except the smoke and hearing about all the firefighters. But I was in western Nevada when Yosemite fire was on fire. Just thinking about forest fires scares me. Then you have to add in a mystery creature hunting, yep I was thoroughly scared. I had to finish this book in one night. I was NOT going to be trying to go to sleep knowing that it was still alive even if it was just in a book.

This is a great thriller/horror story that anyone would like. I recommend that you get a copy; you will be adding it to your collection.

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

Sage Adderley-Knox says

Kevin J. Howard does not waste any time introducing readers to the horror that lurks within the forest of Yellowstone National Park. While the park is experiencing the largest forest fire in its history, visitors and

locals begin to disappear without leaving much evidence of their existence behind. It's up to long time park ranger, Joe Rand, to get to the bottom of this mystery while dealing with his own personal issues and alcoholism. With the help of fellow rangers and dedicated firemen, the group uncovers a darkness that shakes up their solid team.

Within the first few pages I was hooked on Howard's story. I couldn't help but get sucked into finding out about the evil that roamed Yellowstone claiming its inhabitants. I appreciated the realistic dialogue between the characters and the development that took place. The gruesome and eerie details kept me hanging onto each page wanting more and ultimately I was satisfied with how the plot unfolded.

Faithful Shadow consists of 392 pages. Sometimes in text heavy books, I find that I reach slower areas that lack excitement and I can confidently say that I did not experience this at all in Faithful Shadow.

Donald Armfield says

How often do you really notice a shadow? How do you kill something that lurks like a shadow?

A large forest fire is underway. Employees and residents are being evacuated, but that is not the only reason. A monster of some sort lives under the camp grounds, tunnels dug out lined with bones from years and years.

Joe long time park ranger is teamed up with local firefighters trying to destroy the monster from below. Missing people, friends and colleagues killed right before their eyes, can they stop this monster?

Kevin Howard has created a monster like no other its not Yogi Bear testing the ranger but a bear like creature in Yellowstone National Park. A horror story that gives you reason to be afraid of your own shadow.

Grampy says

This book was Reviewed by Lee Ashford for Readers' Favorite.

"Faithful Shadow" by Kevin J. Howard tells the tale of one fictional, but terrifying, result of the major fires in and near Yellowstone National Park several years ago... or in any year yet to come. Smoke from the main fire, several miles from park headquarters, has invaded a massive network of undiscovered tunnels below the park. Living within this network of tunnels is a previously undiscovered "thing"; not animal, not human, but best described as a "shadow" monster.

For untold centuries this beast has survived on hapless animals it hunted after dark, along with the occasional "missing" tourist who happened to fall unaware into one of the many access and egress holes the "shadow" has situated at numerous locations along its tunnels, or just set up camp in the wrong place at the wrong time. But smoke in the tunnels has forced this "thing" out into the surface world to seek the cover of darkness wherever it can. Will it find a safe place to wait out the fire storm? Will the park staff and visitors be safe with this "thing" evicted from its tunnel home?

Faithful Shadow is crafted by an author who quite obviously worked for a season or more at Yellowstone during his younger days; his detailed depiction of the seasonal park aide life is precise and totally accurate. I was a seasonal park aide myself; I vouch for the accuracy of the author's descriptions. I can also vouch for the sentimental attachment Park Rangers have for their parks, for I had the same connection with the natural

beauty and wonder of the various parks and refuges where I spent more than 25 years.

Kevin Howard has an impeccable talent for building a story around the reader. You are more than just an observer; you are on the scene, a part of the action. In spite of the horror unleashed by the unidentified creature, Kevin still manages to make you want to visit the park, to inhale and absorb its beauty. I look forward to more of Kevin Howard's artistic way with words. This book is a must read, not only for horror fans, but for fans of nature and the wondrous natural world.

Lily at Booklvr's Haven says

Originally Featured on Booklvr's Haven.

Those eyes. Glowing an unnatural green from the darkness of the forest. Staring at you. Urging your primal instincts for flight, as the hair on your arms and the back of your neck raise. Terror blinds you. Your hearing is hindered by the frantic beating of your frightened heart. There is no stand to fight. You are gripped in your terror, and you run. Run faster than you thought you could possibly run. But you can't run fast enough. Because it is hungry and it screams for your blood.

A shadow crosses your path. A long limb emerges from the darkness, talons extended. You open your mouth wide to scream, but you don't make a sound. The last thing you see is the glow of those unnatural eyes, before life escapes you, and you know no more....

If I had an interpretation of some of the last moments of hundreds of deaths hinted at in this novel, I imagine many of those moments would be such as I imagined above. Because for decades, a shadow monster made its underground home in Yellowstone. With a park as large as this, with so many visitors over the seasons, some in groups, others alone to backpack and reflect, that disappear over the ages never to be found.... Surely they were lost forever due to the elements, getting lost within the kilometers and kilometers of land. Who would ever think to attribute any of it to a monster that may even defy the imagination. Definitely not Ranger Joe Rand. That is the furthest thing from his mind.

But as this immense fire rages through the park, and disappearances increase, it is undeniable to some of the characters in this novel that something very strange and unnatural is out and about. And when a mysterious death occurs that defies all explanations, even the biggest skeptics must finally concede that the shadows are alive with a beast the likes no one has ever seen.

From the very first page of this novel, Kevin J. Howard had me completely captivated. Only showing me a little glimpse of a creature I struggled to imagine, and almost didn't want to imagine so I could sleep well at night. He isn't interested in readers with sensitive stomachs either as he doesn't have an issue giving you graphic descriptions. Heads rolled, guts spilled, blood sprayed.

Horror lovers will understand when I say that I love a good scare. I love the adrenaline rush that a descriptive horror scene brings. When you are in the dark room with your characters, watching a shadow move faster than your brain can capture. The shock you feel as a reader, when you realize that just a sentence ago a character was speaking, only to understand that their sudden silence is due to them missing their head in the blink of an eye. Your heart pounds with the carefully woven intense tension and anxiety of not knowing where this thing is going to come from next. And you wonder... How do you kill a shadow? Will it ever end?

One of the best monster novels I have read since picking up Michael Crichton's 'Congo', and I read that ages

ago! HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!

I received a eBook copy of this book for free to review from the author; this in no way influenced my review, all opinions are 100% honest and my own.

Doris Fletcher says

My go-to authors for horror and suspense are the usual suspects...King, Koontz & Hill. After reading "Faithful Shadow" I can add Kevin J. Howard to that list. Interesting characters, good developing plot with just enough revealed each time to keep you going and a body count to rival the best slasher films. I am very much looking forward to more from this author.

Kevin Howard says

No one ever thinks of Yellowstone National Park as anything but a place of beauty and amazing landscapes. But Faithful Shadow shows us just how dangerous the world can be.

Bob Milne says

Faithful Shadow is novel I find myself having a difficult time reviewing. On the one hand, the structure frustrated me to no end, especially Kevin J. Howard's use of short (sometimes exceptionally so) chapters. I've never been a fan of short chapters, preferring instead to be drawn in and deeply immersed in the story, so that kept me at a distance. The third person omniscient narrative bothered me as well, especially when the POV shifted characters within a scene, or divulged too much information to which the characters aren't privy.

On the other hand, I liked the uniqueness of the setting, and the novelty of the monster. There's a reason so many horror movies are set either in the wild, uncontrollable expanse of the outdoors, or the close, claustrophobic confines of an abandoned building. Howard takes advantage of both settings, dragging the reader out into the woods above and caverns below Yellowstone National Park, à la Friday the 13th, and into the shadowy halls of the Old Faithful Inn, à la The Shining. Both work very well on their own, and the contrast between them adds a really exciting edge to the story. As for the monster, the less you know going in, the greater the horror, so I won't say much more than I liked it a lot.

As for the characters, they fall somewhere in between. Reasonably well-developed, if not necessarily likeable, they're sufficient to move the story along, but never really endear themselves to the reader. Like the characters in one of those horror movies I mentioned earlier, they primarily serve as fodder for the monster, leaving the reader to play the old guessing game as to who will die first, and who will survive to the end. They're clearly defined, and have their own personalities, I just didn't find myself caring much about them - which, in the case of a story like this, is perfectly fine.

Overall, an above average concept, with an average execution. Readers who don't share my structural pet peeves will likely find a greater enjoyment in the story, but even those who do will find enough originality here to warrant a read.

Originally reviewed at Beauty in Ruins

Laura Thomas says

Yellowstone National Park is on fire. The skies are smudged with smoke and the air is filled with the pungent scent of burning brush.

Underneath Yellowstone, the creatures maze of tunnels are filling up with smoke. It has to find a safe place until the fires are put out. One unlucky fireman gives it that opportunity.

For Joseph Rand, a park ranger, things are heating up, and not only because of the fire. People are disappearing mysteriously. They seem to just vanish, leaving no trace.

Taking advantage of the lack of business at the Old Faithful Inn, a landmark in the park, some of the summer employees head up to the hot springs to soak in the warm waters and camp out for the night, and do a little partying. When they wake up the next morning, two of their group are missing. Their belongings are still there but there's no trace of their friends. After much searching, it's decided they need to head back and notify the park rangers.

Joseph is nursing a bad hangover when the kids rush in, talking over each other, claiming their friends are missing. He doesn't see it as an emergency and patronizes them, saying maybe they went off to be together. This infuriates the group. They can see his shaking hands and smell the reek of stale booze on him.

When Joseph tells them he'll go check it out they leave to report to work. What he finds isn't much. No trail to follow, but a few drops of blood are on the ground. Perhaps he was too hasty in writing this one off as young people having fun. Another call pulls him away from the hot springs, it'll have to wait.

Now a fireman has gone missing. One second he was standing by his supervisor, the next he was gone. With the fire line close by, there's no time to waste and the firemen and Joseph spread out to look for anything he could have fallen into. There are plenty of sinkholes in the park.

They find one and when they holler down, the fireman answers. It's a ways down, so they rig a harness and lower a man down to get him. Strangely, he is now farther down the tunnel and in bad shape, too weak to help himself. When they finally get him topside, he's so weak they have to take him back to the Inn. One man notices the injured man's jacket is bulging in the back, like somethings underneath, but then he's distracted and thinks of it no more .

What piggybacks the fireman is now a guest in the Inn. It's cunning, malicious and hungry. Always hungry. And it gets a devilish delight in terrorizing its prey.

Hell has come to Yellowstone and it's just getting started.

Creature stories are my favorite reads. Whether they're on land, under the sea, or on another planet doesn't matter. As long as there's carnage and terror I'm happy.

I know, "I ain't right." Can't help it.

Faithful Shadow has all the carnage you could ever want, and once it starts it doesn't stop.

I could take or leave the young group of friends. I found most of them shallow and self-centered. Probably a good thing I didn't warm to them, as many meet bloody ends.

Joseph, the park ranger, has a huge drinking problem and a lot of baggage. It took a while, but I started to get him and was really pulling for him by the end.

There are a couple other characters I really liked, you'll know who I'm talking about when you read the book. They added depth with their own stories.

Now, the creature! It's something else. I kept trying to picture what it looked like and never really got an image in my mind. Maybe it was too dark:)

If a story makes me rub my hands together, chuckling with evil delight, it gets 5 Stars!

Congratulations Kevin. Your debut novel gave me shivers! I'm first in line for your next one.

Sherry Fundin says

I absolutely adore monsters; whether it's Jaws, Godzilla or the creature from underground in Yellowstone National Park.

Alex and Emily went to Yellowstone camping, even though there was a major fire going on. Little did they know, it would end so badly for them.

Since his son's death, Joe was angry at the park and was nipping at the bottle to get through the day. He and Andy responded to a call about vandalism at the cabins at Old Faithful Inn. Blood filled the cabin, but the scene didn't make any sense. They chalked it up to a bear attacking a bird. (Yeah, right) They left, but both of them were thinking of the missing hikers.

It was tradition for the Foster family to work at the park and Kelly was angry that the fire was happening while she was there. She was from Mobile, Alabama. A true Southern Belle, blonde-haired and blue-eyed with sparkling white teeth. A real Hottie.

A group of the young employees were going to the hot pots to party. They had some marijuana, booze and sleeping bags. Kelly had to stay behind. It was her night to close the ice cream shop.

When Richard came to meet her, she told him about being watched by someone. Of course, he went to check it out and was pulled into the woods. I sat here shouting, don't go in the woods. It's one of those things, you know he's going to do it and the monster is going to get him. lol

But he was just pranking her, a practical joke.

In the morning, at the hot pots, Doug and Rowena were gone. Everyone knew they didn't like each other and they sure wouldn't go off together.

Dale was working on the fire at the west line, but he told Cameron they were to go to Old Faithful Inn. When he turned around to find out what was taking Cameron so long, he was just gone, vanished. The crew

searched for more than an hour and found no clue.

Dale couldn't just let it go, so he went back to see if he could find Cameron. He had fallen into a sinkhole. When Dale called to him, he responded. Bob went down to get him. As they pulled Cameron out, Bob looked around. He looked down and saw thousands and thousands of bones, human and animal, large and small. He practically crawled out of the hole on his own. Bob had never been so terrified in his life, wondering what was down there with him. What created all those bones?

Dale watched Bob and Cameron walk away. There was something really odd about Cameron. His coat looked funny, like it wasn't fitting properly. He had slapped at himself and yelled about the dark. Bob thought Cameron felt very heavy and he had a rotting stench radiating from him. The smell was so rank, he thought he would vomit.

Natasha was cleaning rooms, most of them empty, because of fire. She came to Cameron's room. He didn't look right and when she looked closer, she knew why. She could feel something watching her, but it couldn't be Cameron. As she looked around, she saw two green eyes peering at her from the closet.

More people are missing. Joe is forced to deal with it. Will his drinking be the death of him and by failing to do his job, others? He knew, whatever it was, wasn't human. It was all connected. It rode up from the hole - piggybacked on Cameron. Joe is given a purpose. It is his job to protect everyone in the park. He is determined to do it. It is his park and he will deal with the creature. Stew, Richard, Kelly and Sonia were just as determined to help.

How do you kill a shadow? How many would be left standing?

4 STARS - Would Highly Recommend To Others

An awesome cover. I love the colors and the flames, with the eeriness of the water and the mountains in the background. Get a shiver just looking at it, wondering what is to come.

I love that it started being creepy from the get-go. Kept my undivided attention throughout the book. The plot and writing were very entertaining and engrossing. A debut novel that will leave you wanting more.

The characters were well-developed and their personalities made you either like them or not. I felt sorry for Joe and really hoped he would turn himself around and be the hero. Of course, you will have to read it for yourself to find out. lol

Remember the fears of childhood? I remember the monster under my bed. I couldn't let anything hang over the edge of the bed, because it might get me. I had to stay completely covered. I just knew it was under there, waiting for me to put my feet down.

Amazing how the monster comes back, when you are sitting in the dark, getting creeped out by the critters running rampant in the book you're reading. Every creak and noise of the house has you looking over your shoulder, wondering.....

I received this book in return for an honest and unbiased review.

Faithful Shadow Kevin J. Howard
