



When a Stranger Comes

Karen S. Bell

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Would you be willing to make a deal with the devil to have your hopes and dreams come true?

Witnessing a lightning bolt on a sunny day, author Alexa Wainwright doesn't realize she's been transported to an alternate universe. Here, she meets media mogul and publisher King Blakemore who offers her a lucrative book contract that will guarantee her comeback.

This publisher seems odd. This book deal is too good. Suddenly, the contract's been signed. Now what can she do?

Desperate to get her life back, Alexa devises schemes to untether herself from this hellish existence but to no avail. Can Alexa find her way out of this nightmare?

When a Stranger Comes Details

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Author : Karen S. Bell

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From Reader Review When a Stranger Comes for online ebook

Marissa says

Goodreads Kindle Win

A writer finds herself in a midst of reality and fiction as she signs a new writing contract. She is quickly thrown into a world of evil as she must fight to save herself or be entrapped by everything.

The author takes you on a wild ride full of imagination as you question what is real or make believe. Full of suspense and drama.

Ever Leigh says

Such a large cast of characters, but I felt like I got to know all of the main ones very well.

I liked how this Fantasy novel managed to be fresh and exciting and wasn't too overly predictable. I saw a few things coming, but was definitely surprised at points too.

Definitely a lot of action going on that will have readers flipping pages furiously.

Ronald Keeler says

Imagine yourself a successful, published author. You have had at least one book that soared to the top and you liked the feeling of being number one. Money is no longer a problem; you have an upper-class lifestyle that includes people who work for you so that you don't have to do routine stuff. Others buy and prepare food, make appointments, and plan your daily schedule. There are not many helpers and you don't want many. Margaret is one important helper acting as both an agent and a close friend. Your lawyer plays an important legal role but is also a friend. Your editor is your fiercest critic but is also a friend; she criticizes your writing, not you. Other people are not important, and you prefer the company of self. Your only need is to write another best-selling novel. The muse is arriving less frequently these days. One day Margaret arrives with the muse in human form, Alex. He is perfect.

When a Stranger Comes ... by Karen S. Bell begins with a conflicted author. This entire novel will appeal to the budding novice writer, perhaps even to more polished veteran writers. Alexa's angst over rewrites, the state of the publishing industry, and her vow never to descend to the level of offering her works for free will resonate with present-day indie authors. For this novel, Alex will supply the needed inspiration for Alexa's next novel. Alexa (notice the name play) is initially annoyed. She didn't ask Margaret to bring anyone for a visit. She retreated to a bedroom but reemerged naked to find only Alex, no Margaret. How annoying! This is almost, but not quite, how the novel begins with chapter one. There is a violent prologue with a stark description of physical violence toward Jodie in a prologue but that doesn't seem to include Alexa, so the reader doesn't care for the moment. It will interest many to see how this foreshadowing of violence ties into the story of Alexa.

In the immediate present, the reader wants to know what the near naked Alexa is going to do with the Adonis-like figure of Alex, a person present in her living room. A first, vague feeling of something wrong, confronts the reader. Alex is perfect physically and has a perfect personality that meshes completely and satisfies Alexa. And then there is the sex which, although perfect and incessant, is described in very modest, non-offensive language. The problem (there must be one) is that Alex looks and acts exactly like the protagonist of one of Alexa's novels. Cue the scary music, but at a low level.

Alex is there to present an opportunity for Alexa to work for his boss, King. As the name implies, King is a nearly omnipotent businessman occupying many fields, one of which is book publishing. Alexa's writing has attracted King's attention. Alex is one of King's agents employed to convince Alexa to join Trinity Publishing. Alex will be as accommodating as possible toward Alexa and give her his personal attention to influence her to sign with King. Eventually, there will be meetings with King. There will be lavish parties during which Alexa worries a bit about losing control over anything she might do. But Alex is there for her protection, nothing bad can happen. Alexa is surprised, however, by the fact that she seems to have signed a contract during one of these parties, a contract that sounds good but gives Trinity Publishing, and King, virtually one hundred percent control over her creative life. In return, she has assurances that she will be a success, that everything she does will receive unbelievably high rewards. Does this sound like a deal with the devil?

As the reader encounters even odder situations, it seems that the Devil may have an active presence in this agreement. First, there is Trinity Publishing, the "trinity" is given in a shorthand, "666." Alexa also notes that everyone she meets from King's enterprises mirrors a character in one of her novels. Some are so similar physically that Alexa is shocked, others have personalities that could have been lifted from her novels. Even their physical appearances serve to suggest and support characters from her books. Alexa had been warned not to sign a contract without advice from her lawyer; he had mentioned there were some provisions that needed clarification. But he had died in an accident before she could discuss the advice and now the contract was signed. Alexa's sense of creepiness caused her to attempt to get out of the contract. She discovered the contract was ironclad, breaking the contract would result in her financial ruin. She felt she had been tricked. But there was Alex and she felt good enough to go with the flow for a while. She could at least wait until she contacted her close friend Margaret. But Margaret also died in a very freakish accident. Alexa was on her own.

Then a series of odd events begins. As if the similarity of appearance to her novel's characters wasn't bad enough, she found herself physically manipulated, and not just by Alex. There was an invitation to a party on King's island that appeared to be more an order than an invitation. Arriving at the island, she found there were places she could not go. When she tried to explore a nearby village, she was almost attacked and then warned never to go to the village again. No explanations. There were things she saw and heard such as occasional screams in the night. No explanations. The house where she was virtually confined, although luxurious, had secrets. Sometimes the house would reveal some secrets. Walls and a basement would appear and reappear. No explanations. The basement strongly resembled the basement of her childhood, complete with toys and clothing from her youth. Was this a drug trip or something more sinister?

It is the careful layering of strange and creepy events that led me to give this five Amazon stars. There is an interesting psychological component in which some of the look-alike characters try to explain to Alexa why she thinks so many characters look like those in her novel. There is the third element, one in which the Devil, or evil, is an active player in our everyday lives. The language describing the sexual component, necessary for Alexa's initial entrapment, is not graphically offensive. This is an entertaining novel with big surprises in the final few chapters. The reader interprets what the final ending is. Bell provides incidents that have consequences, but it is up to the reader to determine what might be true and what can't be true.

This novel sells on Amazon for USD 2.99 but I read it for free on Kindle Unlimited. It was a find that made KU worth the subscription price.

One of my favorite types of novels, I don't consider this a genre, is a novel written by an author writing about being an author. This is one of those and it is only after reading the final chapter that I highly recommended it. Before the final chapter, the novel is superior. Giving the reader a part to play interpreting information to form an ending satisfactory to the reader makes it superior "plus."

Samantha Turley says

Karen S. Bell has written an imaginative and descriptive novel that does a great job of pulling the reader into the world she has created.

The flow of the novel was well executed and everything as far as pacing went felt smooth.

I enjoyed getting to know the characters both primary and secondary. They all felt like they had their own purpose and had depth that made me care about them.

Lynelle Clark says

I received this book from the author for an honest review.

Reading this book it becomes frightful to be an author, wishing for all the wealth that comes with that. The power of words and thoughts becomes very real for the main character of the book and soon she realized that she is living in a world created by herself.

This original story really touches a lot of important issues in life and where the priorities for most lies. Sometimes we have to be careful what we hope and wish for because it can be more than we thought initially and the implications to that can play havoc in our lives. In an instant everything you hold dear changes and there is no pint of return to the old.

A meaningful story with a deeper message.

The author's writing was at times tiresome. There are simply to much descriptions in that draws out the story but yet well written.

The main character, Alexa Wainwright were a constant budding experience that took you at a roller coaster ride as you explore her ever changing world. She is very much self absorbed until her reality changes so much that she had to fight for her mere existence.

It is tense, filed with suspense and thought provoking.

Arlena says

Title: When a Stranger Comes

Author: Karen S. Bell

Publisher: K.S.B.

Reviewed By: Arlena Dean

Rating: Five

Review:

"When a Stranger Comes" by Karen S. Bell

My Thoughts....

All I will say is that this author really knows how to keep the reader in suspense in this 'magical realism, paranormal and supernatural read. It was quite interesting seeing Alexa Wainwright born [Gladys Lipschitz] as she 'soared to the number one bestsellers list and became an international sensation.'

What will Alexa have to do remain on high as 'she vows to do whatever it takes to attain the heady ego-stroking success of her debut?' Now this is where this story will take a switch as the character Alexa realizes that 'this vow will be tested as she's magically transported to a alternate reality.'

I liked how this author was able to present such a unique magic, paranormal and supernatural read that will keep you on pins and needles taking this read all in. The characters were all so well developed, portrayed and delivered to the reader. There are a lots of questions that are needed to be answered such as ..how will Alexa make it in this world that is so full of loopholes [especially after 'she finds herself in this iron-clad book contract that even changes its wording on her novels?' All of this happens after she becomes involved with the publisher King Blakemore... signing a contract Alexa doesn't even remember and why were the people Alexa meets seemed to come right from her novels? How and why was King Blakemore able to do all the things he was doing to Alexa? What was Evangelina and Kips play in all of this so important to this read? Who was in the tale that was truly a big help to Alexa in understanding her background and why was this so very important in this read? What will happen as Alexa finds herself into a situation she sees no way out of? What all will come of this reveal as Alexa gets 'a second chance to save herself from eternity with Blakemore and be free?' Now, to finds all of the answers to these questions and so much more in this well written story you will just have to pick up and read "When a Stranger Comes" and see how it is presented and comes out.

In the end after being given a second chance will Alexa to get it right this time will she be able to make a more a more sensible choice or will she make the same mistake again by going after the money? Well, as this story end at least Alexa has someone new in her life...her dog Trinity who definitely seems to care for her especially after coming back to reality[or was it?] and also having her mom and Margaret back in her life after all is said and done. What was now going on with Alexa's publishing company that had been sold to Blakemore Media head by CEO King Blakemore and the email that was sent saying "Enjoy your second chance. Make wise choices in this rewrite of your life, milaya moyna." Will Alexa be done with her 'Darkside Trilogy?' Again, to know what this story is all about you will have to pick up "When a Stranger Comes" and would definitely recommend as a good read.

To the author....Thank you for the privilege of reading your novel and giving my honest review of it.

Susan Angela Wallace says

When a stranger comes by karen s bell.

Alexa Wainwright is a writer. She has just finished her 10th book which is the 3rd in a trilogy when she gets a deal from king blakemore. She signs with his publishing firm for a movie deal of her trilogy. Has she just signed a deal with the devil himself? She is aided by an angel evangelica. She is on her side to protect her. Can she discover a loophole and get out of the pact she has made with king?

A fantastic read. Bit slow to start with. Then bam couldn't put it down. I was rooting for alexa. 4*.

Linda says

I came ThisClose to quitting this book about a quarter of the way in. The writing is sophomoric, and the main character is unlikable. But ... stubborn me ... I continued to read til the end. Sadly, my opinion on the book did not improve.

Misty says

Alexa Wainwright also known as Gladys Lipschitz was an enjoyable character. I loved how she was a writer and how that part of her played such a large role in her character and in the story line itself. The idea of the King Blakemore was also interesting as well as how he interacted with Alexa. Overall, this was a unique story that I greatly enjoyed!

C. Gonzales says

I liked the diversity and originality of this novel. You think that you are going to know what you're getting, but Bell really manages to surprise her readers.

I really enjoyed the pacing and how it was steady throughout. It is fast paced and doesn't let up and didn't have moments that dragged. It made for a fast and furious read.

Karen says

Quite a different read from what I am used to. I did not expect this book to turn out like it did. I liked the book and hated to put it down. I needed to find out what was going on in the story and try to understand Alexa's story.

I have to say that in the beginning I wasn't sure if this was a book I would like or not. The prologue was good, and drew me in, but the first chapter made me question the rest of the book. Wow, was I wrong. After I got through the first page of the first paragraph, I was really drawn in and wanted to hurry up and read the book to find out what was going on.

An author who is writing a trilogy and has just finished the third book in the trilogy when things go awry for her. Alexa's reality comes into question after she receives a phone call from her copy editor and friend Margaret. Is Alexa dreaming, is she writing a new story, or is this her new reality? Who is real and who is a figment of imagination? These are all questions that were going through my mind while reading this book.

A story full of angst, mind games, and questions of reality. If you enjoy a book that keeps you on the edge of your seat, once you get into it, then you really need to read "When A Stranger Comes". I give this book a 4.5 star review.

Bailey Ember says

The plot flowed nicely and the mystery kept me guessing and flipping pages. Overall a great suspense.

What a clever story with a wonderful balance of fantasy and suspense.

Karen S. Bell has created a novel in which the main character shows growth. For me that is always something I look for in my favorite main characters. I liked flawed characters and if they can overcome things, it really speaks to me.

This was a quick read for me. I felt like the words and plot just flowed long effortlessly. I found myself flipping page after page, laughing, and guessing the whole time.

Gina Stamper says

This novel has a very mysterious element to it. This was an unexpected read for me. The synopsis was intriguing, but I sure wasn't sure exactly what kind of world I would be taken in. Karen S. Bell manages to draw the reader in from the very beginning.

Even from the synopsis you are not sure what you are going to get. I would like to say that Bell does a great job of bringing to life her characters. These characters each have their own personalities and depth to them. None of them felt one-dimensional or forced, they all shined through as individuals.

Richard Bunning says

Writers enjoy having the power of God over their characters, but what if they also attract the forces of the devil? What if the power of life and death in a fiction translates into a 'real' existence, if some elements of the authors omnipresence on the page slips into physical life? The book is very much paranormal, some of a magical realism bend and some with a quasi-religious one. Through excepting the premise that many good versus evil, religious/paranormal boundaries collide in mystical ways one can enjoy the book. Most of us have little trouble suspending belief to enjoy a good yarn. I preferred to read this is the imagined world of a psychotic personality in total meltdown. This was easy given that the book is written in first person. I enjoyed this as a false reality from which we are supposed to hope the character voice, Alexa, will escape. I was a bit underwhelmed by the lengths Bell went to in exploring the threads of the story as it drew to the end, as for me the detail rather reduced the power of resolution. Climatic events, both in life and books, are best enjoyed without distracting reflections on the rationality of the mechanics.

This book is well written, describing Alexa's world in a way that easily paints strong scenes in one's mind. As a writer, I can appreciate the mind games as Alexa the well-established, if quite famous, author, struggles to complete her trilogy. Some of the other characters, especially Margaret, her book editor, are very well-rounded. I may have enjoyed the book more with a few chapters written from the mind of Margaret, watching the mental breakdown of her number one selling author.

This is the second book of Bell's I have read. She is a very gifted writer who might achieve greater success with psychological thrillers without the distraction of paranormal elements. Provided, of course, she could find the discipline of scripting her stories without occasionally falling for the convenient escapes of the unrestrained supernatural.

It should be obvious that I enjoyed this book more for the qualities of Bell's descriptive writing than the story it tells. However, I am sure that those that relish the buy-in to the paranormal will find this to be a great

read. There are plenty of original elements as well as standard themes of the paranormal and mystical realism genres. We have here a, 'watch what you wish for' morality tale. The allegorical foundations of the theme resonate throughout. The four stars rather than five isn't a devaluation of the Bell's work. Rather, it reflects my view that this book, despite all its qualities, didn't do talent full justice.
