



Altered Life

Keith Dixon

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Making a killing in business is one thing - doing it for real is another.

Private Investigator Sam Dyke turns down a job that would require skills that he doesn't have - patience, computer-literacy, tact. Then he finds that the skills he does have - tenacity, aggression, street-smarts - are exactly the ones he needs for his next case - hunting down a cold-blooded murderer who seems to know what his every step will be.

To solve the case Sam must negotiate with his ex-wife, cement a relationship with a new love, unravel an office-based financial fraud and fight off an arrogant murderer armed only with a pen-knife.

Altered Life Details

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Author : Keith Dixon

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From Reader Review Altered Life for online ebook

Richard Burke says

Sam Dyke is reluctantly drawn into an investigation. Within a few hours his client is dead and so begins a twisting tale of death and deception. An excellent read.

Allan Ball says

Excellent Read

The book is well written and keeps your interest throughout. The story line is believable and the ending leaves you with a real twist.

Uwe says

Pretty good story with a lot of twist and turns and a very special main character. It could have a bit shorter, more to the point and less info about not so interesting details. A few flaws concerning the police, but all in all a good story nicely told!

Greta Halliday says

I really enjoyed this descriptive and well written book with a pretty good storyline that kept me guessing all the way through. Now to find out if there is a follow on

Keith Withers says

A thoroughly thrilling mystery

A great mystery from start to finish. An impossible who dunnit in the Agatha Christie class. Not to be missed and I look forward to further books in the series.

Joan says

Complex, well written and intense. Not a romance story in any respects, just a solid decent crime thriller. Great dialogue, believable characters and set in a familiar world for once! One or two clunky sentences, but otherwise very enjoyable.

Patricia Burton says

My first book by this author.....absolutely loved it, PI books are not my usual read but this one I have to admit, I fell in love with Sam Dyke. The writing in first person is incredibly well done, Sam to me is so laid back, as to be almost horizontal.

Imagine a PI and yourself having a drink together in comfortable surroundings, and he's relaying all that's been happening to himself in his quest, to get to the truth. That's exactly how I felt reading *Altered Life*!

Had to download book 2.....it was a compulsion.

Roddy Williams says

Sam Dyke is a Yorkshire Private Investigator based in Crewe, which is not immediately apparent.

Admittedly this had been in my 'to read' queue for quite a while and I had forgotten the details I would have checked when I first downloaded it. The front cover gave me the subliminal impression of the US and I began it on that assumption only to be soon transported to Waverley in England rather than some American Waverley. This is no fault of the author's and was in fact a pleasant surprise since Crewe is very much under-represented in the murder genre.

Dyke is called in by software company owner, Rory Brand, who feels that his wife is in league with other parties to take over his company and a lucrative software application. Dyke, feeling this to be outside his area of expertise is not keen to take on the case. The next day Brand is found murdered in his office with the message 'Who's the Daddy Now?' posted on his laptop screen.

Dyke is retained by the company to investigate the murder in parallel with the police, who are not happy to have an amateur detective interviewing witnesses.

Dyke is a very likeable character, with the obligatory issues of his own baggage. He's an updated Sam Spade, less bleak, less harsh, but harassed by the police and finding himself unable to trust anyone's word, with his life and work further complicated by the presence of his *femme-fatale* ex-wife, her bitter father, the Major - who holds Dyke in no high regard -and a son he had no idea existed.

Dixon perhaps does not emphasise Dyke's position as the outsider enough, being a blunt Yorkshireman in a town far further South near the Welsh border. This would have added to Dyke's sense of isolation on a case where he faces hostility from nearly all sides.

The plot is well thought through with a minor twist at the end. Not enough of a twist to give it the wow factor but at least something one wasn't expecting.

For a first novel it's a good one. Fast paced and without padding, it rattles along and keeps one engrossed.

Edward says

I'm ordinarily not much of a crime fiction reader, but *ALTERED LIFE* was written by a friend who is a crime fiction enthusiast. The book was self-published and available as a Kindle download (very cheaply, Keith is not getting rich with this book), so I felt as a friend the least I could do is read his first effort. He has since written another, *THE PRIVATE LIE*, which I haven't read.

This first novel is quite readable, aside from a few too many strained descriptive similes, involving a British detective, Sam Dyke (an homage to Sam Spade, obviously, but "Dyke"?) who is contacted by Rory Brand, a

computer firm executive. He fears a clandestine and hostile corporate takeover and wants to know who is behind this suspected maneuver. Dyke doesn't much like Brand and puts off giving him a commitment. Vague, so far, but Brand is soon murdered, found with his neck broken in his office, and from there, the novel picks up momentum in a hurry. What's particularly interesting is that Dyke didn't know that his former wife was married to Brand, so he becomes emotionally involved in the crime, something that a private eye should avoid, or at least that's my impression of how the genre works.

He solves the case eventually, of course, usually working at odds with the police, and there is a nod to a romantic convention, sparks flaring between Sam and an office assistant at the firm.

What appealed to me most about the novel, though, was Dyke's social commentary on the people he comes in contact with, mostly a shallow "clientele that was young and wealthy" who like to show off their affluence in expensive cars, clothes, and homes. He has a dim view of "companies training people who didn't want to be trained in skills they had no use for..." Dyke's values are different - he is the outsider who comes from a working class background, where a man's values lie in what he does, not flashy appearances, and one reason, Dyke became a private investigator.

A concern of the book, aside from the murder plot, is a lament about what England is becoming. "The wide roads and spacious architecture of mansion and church had since been overrun by the mini-community of Chinese takeaway, laundromat, and video store, but if you half-shut your eyes you could still see the outlines of the Palladian refuges that the bearded philanthropists had created for themselves and their families." A vanished England where life has indeed become "altered."

Jack says

Competent, if unbelievable, mystery featuring single handed and foolhardy private investigator Sam Dyke.

Burke Hodgson says

I got Keith Dixon's *Altered Life* as a freebie Kindle book and was quite impressed by it. Therefore I looked it up in Goodreads and read the following in one of the comments.

"I'm ordinarily not much of a crime fiction reader, but *ALTERED LIFE* was written by a friend who is a crime fiction enthusiast. The book was self-published and available as a Kindle download (very cheaply, Keith is not getting rich with this book), so I felt as a friend the least I could do is read his first effort. He has since written another, *THE PRIVATE LIE*, which I haven't read. "

Then I was really impressed because the *Altered Life* is a first published and self published book and it is a highly accomplished effort.

Most of the first books that are self published that I have encountered have been disheveled cozies that read like the *White Queen* looked and featured ladies of a certain age who, though supposedly witty and spunky, usually come across as insufferable smartasses.

A dashed off first draft may on occasion be quickly produced but that is scarcely the mission of an author. The mission of an author is to be read and that usually means finding someone willing to put their money where your mouth is, or actually, since unsolicited manuscripts rarely fare well, someone willing to put their

time into finding a publisher.

Taint easy.

I would think that self publication works best for previously published authors who are well aware of the behind the scenes work (mostly work that a creative mind would find stultifyingly boring) that is involved in turning an initial submission into a viable book.

Other reviews will tell you about the substance of Altered Life. I will tell you to go to the Kindle Store and download it as a really first class freebie that will closely hold your interest for quite a few hours.

Also, I put my money where my mouth is. The minute I finished The Altered Life, I went to the Kindle Store and bought The Private Lie, the second book in the series.

Keith Dixon should have gotten rich with The Altered Life. I certainly hope #2 is more financially encouraging.

However, I do believe I'll pass on hoping Tom Cruise portrays Sam Dyke on the Silver Screen, though, to be fair, Cruise's performance was fine --- it just bore no resemblance whatsoever to Jack Reacher.

John Thys says

Recommend

This book was recommended to me and I'm glad it was or I would have missed out big time it follows the life and work of a private investigator called Sam Dyke who manages to complicate things with personal stuff getting in the way it's an easy book to follow and get into and quite hard to put down the good news is this is book one in a series and with me starting a bit late in the day there is several already written so no waiting for the next one so for me it's book two straight away so if you are looking for your next series this may be for you so try it you won't be sorry

Janet Schuhknecht says

Good Read

Really like this author's new detective Sam Dyke. He's strong but hides it. Great ending but I have 2 unanswered questions. What did Sam want to tell Laura? What about Daniel?

Connie Bredernitz says

Spellbinding

Great story. Very well written. I couldn't put it down. A must read for anyone who likes mysteries. Kept me guessing till the end.

Joan Barstad says

I liked this book except for the times that Sam Dyke gets philosophical on us.

The story is gritty and fast moving. With lots of possible bad guys.

I would recommend Altered Life.
