



## **Fugly**

*K.Z. Snow*

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*When a wizard is happily in love, he tends to get complacent. When he gets complacent, he tends to let magick fall by the wayside. Jackson Spey hasn't thrown around any mojo in a while. Here's his chance.*

What happens to a young man's self-image, and his sex life, when he wakes up one morning to see his good looks significantly altered for the worse? In this modern fable, three gay friends find out the answer when they hit on the wrong guy in a club one night.

Todd, Fallon, and Jake think they're pretty damned hot. As a result, their standards for worthwhile hook-ups are appallingly superficial. The men aren't total jerks; they just need an adjustment in perspective. And they get it, in spades, from a mysterious stranger who's sick of seeing his beautiful partner pawed by dawgs.

As the trio of friends try to understand and cope with their new appearances, the pretty boys they normally pursue continue to shun them. But in the eyes of three ordinary, overlooked men on the sidelines of their lives, it's the heart that matters far more than the hot.

## **Fugly Details**

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## From Reader Review Fugly for online ebook

### Daisiemae says

WOW! Fugly by K.Z. Snow is AMAZING and took me by complete surprise! It's hard to believe the book falls just under sixty pages, because it really packs an emotional punch. I thought the plot was creative and very thought provoking. It's a story that stayed with me hours after I finished it.

The story is a combination first and third person. At the beginning of the story it's told by David's point of view, and then it changes to third person so we can follow the lives and strange happenings of David's friends. You would think that this would be confusing, or would take away from the story, but it does not.

David and his three friends Fallon, Todd and Jake call themselves The Hunt Club. Now even though David is part of this group, he's not as shallow as the other men, nor is he as judgmental or promiscuous as his three friends. He's definitely appalled by some of his friends' shallow behavior, but he hangs out with the three mainly because of an unrequited love he has for one of them.

All of the men in the Hunt Club are very successful, sexy, handsome gay men. One of the favorite things the men like to do is to talk about other peoples imperfections. They are sarcastic and say hurtful things about other gay men who they don't feel measure up to their scale of attractiveness or standards of living. One night David and the three men are at their favorite night club, and as many times before, the three men are falling into the same pattern of snide comments and put downs of other patrons there.

When the men spot the most gorgeous man they've ever seen walk into the club, the three shallow men make their way over to him at the bar, and all three men make failed passes at the sexy man. David is embarrassed by their behavior and is more interested in watching another equally quiet and sexy man watch these friends make total fools of themselves over the gorgeous man.

David strikes up a conversation with the sexy man and he tells David that he had heard all of the hurtful and terrible things his three friends had said about others before the gorgeous man walked in. He then tells David that the gorgeous man his friends are making a pass at is his husband, and he thinks the men need to learn a lesson from their inappropriate behaviors.

Then the fun really begins.

That's when the story switches off of the first person narrative. It's a month later and we then follow the story of the three men Fallon, Todd and Jake. They now have an unusual skin condition on their faces. It looks to be in between a burn and a rash. The strange thing about their skin condition is not only do they see it, but the handsome men they usually go for it can see it as well, so they are now treated as badly as they treated others. But, to most other people, they either don't see it at all or it's very faint.

All three men must learn to look and within themselves and find their self worth. Since they are no longer considered beautiful, their perception of outer beauty changes and they start noticing the beauty that's within other people.

I loved this book! I think we've all known shallow and superficial people who often say and do hurtful things to others. It was very interesting to read what would happen if everything they took for granted changed, and they saw things with a fresh set of eyes. It reminded me of what my mother used to tell me. As a child, she'd tell me a story and always at the end she'd say, "Now what is the moral to the story?" and it would make me think about what lesson I'd learned from the story she'd told. Just like my old bedtime stories, Fugly

definitely has a 'moral' or lesson learned from the story, that I think everyone will appreciate.

I can't recommend this book high enough. For those who has never read a gay romance before, but has been thinking of trying it out, this would be an awesome book to try it out. Even though there is drama and some angst, there are some light and funny moments in the book as well.

I can't believe that this is the first book I've read that's been written by K.Z. Snow! Believe me when I say, I'm about to change that as soon as I finish writing my review. I really enjoyed Ms. Snow's style of writing. Its easy style and witty undertone made it flow smoothly throughout the book. I'm definitely looking forward to reading other works written by her!

I wasn't able to find a website for Ms. Snow, but I did find her blog which looked to be very interesting. Here is the link if you want to check it out: <http://kzsnow.blogspot.com/>

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### **Angel Martinez says**

I was, in the first few pages of this book, quite prepared not to like it. Oh, great, I said to myself with wrinkled nose, the boys are going to learn their lesson that beauty isn't all on the outside. How predictable.

For my rash jumping to conclusion-ness, I owe K.Z. a sincere apology. On the surface, yes, that's the lesson our three young snark-meisters have to learn, but we aren't left to wallow on the surface. Oh, no. K.Z. creates three complex, damaged characters, whose motives and emotional matrices are far more complex than their shallow actions would have one believe. The spell Jackson throws with rather casual arrogance (I'll admit, he knew what he was doing, but, yes, arrogance) forces Fallon, Jake and Todd to confront their inner demons, to face the *why* behind the wide moats they've dug between themselves and others. We come to care for these supposedly shallow cruisers, each with his own poignant fears and self-doubts.

I loved the unconventional structure, as well, starting with our "author" in first person, the man ultimately telling the story, and proceeding to our three afflicted heroes in third person until we return, in the end, to David. It had a personal, intimate feel to it, as if David was letting us into a secret piece of his life.

Perhaps the only thing that keeps this story from perfection for me was a bit of a rushed feeling from time to time. I would have liked to have spent a little more time with each heroes own story. It seemed, twice, that we reached a crucial moment...and then were given only summation. In part, of course, this is testament to K. Z.'s lovely writing and wonderful characterization. If I hadn't become so caught up, I certainly wouldn't have wanted more.

I did manage not to cry. Just. Thank you, K. Z., it was a wonderful journey.

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### **Jenre says**

I have to admit I've been looking forward to reading this book for ages, ever since KZ put up the cover and

extract on her blog. It sounded just a great idea for a book and I couldn't wait to see how it was all going to turn out. I wasn't disappointed.

The book begins with 1st person narrator, David, meeting with his three friends at a club. Fallon, Jake and Todd are handsome men who are used to picking up, and competing for, the most gorgeous man in the room. When a beautiful man enters (named by David as 'Mr Wow') the three men go on the attack. What they haven't noticed is the mysterious man sitting in the corner who was listening to their shallow conversation. The man obviously knows the beautiful stranger, and isn't too pleased at the way that Fallon, Jake and Todd are pawing all over him. One month later, things are looking a bit grim for our three heroes, as they have all been struck down with identical skin diseases that only they, and other hot men, can see. The story switches to the third person narrative as we follow the three men, who are learning that looks are not everything when it comes to finding the perfect man.

One thing I love about K.Z. Snow's writing is her ability to mix humour and drama. This book was a showcase for that as there are several humorous situations and phrases, but also underpinning that is a great serious message about looking beneath the surface, and not judging people by appearances. This meant that I spent much time laughing over scenes such as the terrible drag queen who was built like a bodybuilder, or David's acerbic comments about his friends and his relationship with Jake in particular, or the vastly amusing dark humour which crops up throughout the book; only to find myself moved to tears over some of the scenes between Todd and Gabe, or feeling the tension between David and Jake, or cringing over some of the dreadful things that the men say to each other – out of ignorance to the other person's feelings. It was all very well done, even masterful.

Another part which worked well was the way that each of the three men and their situations were so unique, as they ran concurrently. The most lighthearted of the the three strands was that of Fallon and Tyler, mainly because it contained the most laugh out loud moments of visual comedy, as Fallon tries to teach the bumbling Tyler how to dance in drag. The strand which followed Todd and Gabe was full of gallows humour and some quite intricate descriptions of the embalming process (those of you without strong stomachs may want to skip these bits), and yet it was also the most moving in terms of character development as Todd seemed to have the most to learn about humility, even with what we learn of his background. The third strand following David and Jake was full of yearning, self delusion and posturing, and was the least humorous of the three parts, focusing more on the drama of hurt feelings and unrequited love which led to me feeling a great deal of empathy for David. The three strands are connected to the character of David who tries to discover the source and reason for the skin rash. It was all rather cleverly done in terms of story structure.

There was one slight niggle in the story – other than the fact that the graphic embalming descriptions may be off-putting to some readers (although I didn't mind them too much, mainly because I have a friend who is an embalmer and she loves to try and shock me by telling me all the gruesome details of her latest body) – and that was the final scene of the book where David visits two men who can offer him an explanation as to what had happened. It seemed an odd thing to do, to introduce new characters so late in the story, especially as we are given vague references to their relationship to one another. I wasn't sure whether they were characters from a previous book - if they were I couldn't place which book they were from – or perhaps characters who may be appearing in a future book. It made the ending the weakest part of the book, which is a shame since the structure of the story had been one of its strongest points. Other readers who haven't read KZ Snow's paranormal books before may also get this feeling about the mysterious man and his beautiful companion who are the cause of the heroes' misery. In theory it isn't necessary to have read the author's other paranormals before this one, but I certainly got a kick about seeing some well loved characters have a little cameo.

Despite this niggle, this is a great little book with an amusing, thoughtful and unusual story. It's full of contemplative moments mixed with humour, intelligent writing and empathetic characters and I would

highly recommend it.

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## **Kris says**

Why I bought it: Author + cover + blurb = Sold!

Dislike/like (ending on a high note):

Dislike~ I've said a number of times I'm not the greatest fan of first person POV so when I started reading Fugly my initial response was 'bugger'. Happily, for me at least, this POV was limited to the prologue and epilogue. Even better, despite my gut reaction I was glad for David's (the first person's) insight into friends' behaviour as well as the opportunity to revisit, albeit briefly, two of my favourite K Z Snow characters - Jackson Spey and Adin Swift - through his eyes.

Like~ Call me superficial, but if that's not the best m/m romance cover of 2010 than I don't know what is. I adore it. Original, evocative artwork by Christine Griffin which is a perfect match for K Z's story. The cover gods have been very kind to K Z this year.

Dislike~ More of a warning~ For those of you who may have dismissed Fugly as 'just' a retelling of The Ugly Duckling fairy tale you couldn't be more wrong. To me, this was a story about redemption with the author taking the dark theme of superficiality and exploring what could happen to a young gay man if he suddenly lost the very thing he believed defined him as a person.

Like~ With this kind of theme, the story could have easily come undone by being overly preachy. Instead, the reader is treated to K Z's trademark deft touch and by the telling of the three completely different stories within the short format of a novella. Terrific stuff!

So, what I think: If you're a fan of this author or looking for a recommendation for a book by her, you can't go past Fugly. I highly recommend it. :)

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'Tasting' is my version of a mini-review where I talk a (very) little about what I liked and disliked about a book as well as who I think the story will appeal to. Oh, and I've added a bit about why I picked up the book in the first place – sometimes this can be interesting to know.

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## **Emanuela ~plastic duck~ says**

I don't know why I postponed reading this book so much, I think I was afraid it would be too angsty, but it wasn't. Many complained about the length of the book, saying that it's too short, but I appreciated the way it focused on the pivotal moments of the lives of the characters.

When we meet the three skin cursed friends - and the witness - after the fateful encounter with a wizard, some time has passed. We see how the rash has affected the lives of the shallow Fallon, Todd and Jake. Since they are shallow, but they are not stupid, it doesn't take long for them to realize how empty their ways were.

Fallon, who is a movement coach, begins to appreciate a taxi driver who wants to learn to be a drag queen. Todd, who works at a funeral home, finally begins to see how nice Gabriel, a make-up artist for the dead, is. Jake, an ambitious literary agent, begins to acknowledge his feelings for the writer David, who is the fourth protagonist of the story and our insider.

The moral of the story is clear, and it reads indeed as a fairy tale, but it has a few moments that I found really moving - to the point I got misty-eyed (for example when Fallon wipes away the make-up from Tyler).

The wizard and his lover in the story are recurring characters from another series, that I should bump up my to-be-read pile. I really really like K.Z. Snow's writing style.

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### **Tracy's Place says**

This is a novella that I think every person should read whether they read m/m romance or not - it was so wonderful I can't tell you how much I loved it.

The story involved characters Adin Swift and Jackson Spey (from Snow's Adin Swift/Jackson Spey story arc) but they were in it just a bit. It told the story of 4 gay friends – 3 of whom are always on the hunt for the most beautiful men to sleep with. They're condescending to those they don't feel are pretty enough or up to par and never ever look beneath the surface – in their prey or in themselves. Jackson decides to show them that there's more to people than their looks and puts a spell on them so that they have facial lesions - only not everyone can see them. They themselves can and the people they are attracted to can see them and now the 3 men are the ones getting spurned for not being the perfect specimens of manhood. Watching the three men come to terms with who and what they really are inside and finally seeing other people for who they are and not what they look like was incredible. I laughed, I cried. Just. So. Good!

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### **Zach says**

I was clueless to how much I would adore this book. Holy f\*cking sh\*t! I loved this book and the message it gave. I think everyone should be able to identify with some of the characters and how it feels when we are made to feel insignificant sometimes. Loved it, loved it!

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### **Casey says**

OMG! Fugly was awesome! I didn't think I would like the different narratives, but I did. I swear I KNOW people who are exactly as superficial as the gang. Loved watching them change from total assholes, to decent and worthy men.

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### **Shell says**

This story begins innocently enough, with four friends (Jake, David, Fallon, and Todd) hanging out in a bar together, but in the course of a few pages, Fallon, Jake and Todd become akin to immature children,

commenting on others' physical short-comings. When a gorgeous man walks in, the three men follow him to the bar and proceed to fall all over him. David, who is left alone at table and who happens to be the only unsuperficial one of the bunch, finds himself drawn to another man, who is intently watching the display his friend are putting on. Turns out Mr.Gorgeous at the bar is the man's partner and he isn't all that impressed with Jake, Fallon and Todd and wants to teach the unsuspecting men a lesson. That lesson comes a month later, in the form of a hideous rash that develops on half of their faces. Funny thing is, the rash can only be seen by each other and those that they find attractive. Prior to their man-with-half-a-face syndrome, the three had no problem getting laid and picking up whomever they wanted. Now though, the more they want someone, the uglier they become to that person. Thus, they will either be lonely, ugly old men or they'll find a way past their own shallowness and see the men that each of them already have in their own lives that want them for who they are, as the blessing they happen to be.

I would have rated this story a four, because while I did think it was really good, I wasn't amazed by it. However, it's much like a fable and the moral of this story is worth much more than a 5 star review. People for the most part cannot choose the way they look, we were all born with certain physical features and unless you're willing to fork over a ton of money for plastic surgery, those features will stick with you throughout your life. We all age, we all wrinkle, we are all unattractive to someone. The balding woman down the lane with leprosy may just be the most amazing woman you've ever met and the pockmarked middle-aged, overweight man you see at the grocery store could be a loving, saint of a person. It's like that Andy Warhol quote, "people should fall in love with their eyes closed. Just close your eyes. Don't look and it's magic." I absolutely love that K.Z. Snow found a way to depict this lesson in a fun, very enjoyable story. Way to go, K.Z.!

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## Damon Suede says

A good old-fashioned romantic fable that is shorter than I might wish, but perfectly written for all that. Structure, pace, and pathos aplenty.

You can almost see Snow's flashing, floating pleasure in the high-concept germ of this story: a curse that opens up three shallow bar-hounds to the possibility of real, human connection. And SNOW is unwilling to just crank out a formulaic M/M. Along the way, she gives us little snippets of tantalizing character detail, peeks into odd jobs and odder people (*a mortician? a movement coach? fascinating!*), alongside snappy, winning dialogue that IS clever, without ever straining for cleverness.

Snow is also not content to grind out the tried-n-true. Hers are not worlds populated with paint-by-numbers lawyers and cowboys. She researches her characters and assembles a thoughtful world around them that forces interesting situations to develop. Still, as much as she loves digging for interesting specifics, she is so adept at situating them that without realizing it, you come to feel that these oddities are both familiar and family.

What's interesting to me is that in this little novella there is enough story for a series. The trials and terrors of Fallon, Jake, and Todd could have extended into three or four interconnected novels, spinning the fable out to mythic dimensions, but she opts for precision and focus with wonderful results.

That's because K.Z. Snow is an honest-to-god writer. As in, she happens to be writing homoerotic romance, but I'd imagine she could write pretty much anything she had a mind to. We've all read stories ground out by apparent gay-romance robots, but Snow creates rich characters and articulates their journeys through tangible worlds meaningfully and convincingly. Her love of detail, her eye for irony, and her buizarre sense of humor and eroticism glimmer beneath all her work.

The moral of this story is: if you haven't read FUGLY you should. I loved this little book and you will as well.

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### **Monica says**

After reading this story two morals come to mind: beauty is only skin deep and beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It was a cute modern day fable about three gay guys who were only concerned with looking good and how hot the men they pursued looked. Their shallowness and inappropriate pawing of the wrong man prompts a wizard to "through a little mojo around" and drastically alter all three mens appearances. This is why I gave this story 4 stars. It was a unique twist on the old fable and for the most part was well written and an enjoyable easy read.

However, it did not get 5 stars for the following reasons: 1. the story was too short; 2. some of the characters were not fully developed, which left holes in the plot and 3. Below are examples of what was unclear and didn't make a great deal of sense to me. It might be considered spoilers so beware. Overall, I did enjoy the book and the reminder to look beyond one's physical beauty.

\*Spoilers\* What I didn't understand: 1. the reason for the wizard casting the spell in the first place. It really wasn't clear who the mysterious man was, or why he felt so inclined to cast a spell on the MC's if he wasn't really bothered by them trying to seduce his husband. 2. It also wasn't clear how the voices in the key chain got there and why the wizard sent David to another man (wizard in training, I think ) for answers.

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### **Bark says**

I liked this novella a lot but felt it was far too short to successfully tackle three budding and complicated romances. Just when things were getting good the book came to an end. I'd read this again if it were ever expanded 100 pages or so.

I wrote up a review for JERR which you can find [HERE](#) . You may have to click the "enter here" button and hit my link again. Sorry, a pain the butt I know, but I can't repost it here.

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### **Jeff Erno says**

David Ocho is a journalist who's a member of a circle of four friends. Todd, Fallon, and Jake refer to themselves as "The Hunt Club". They are a hot-looking threesome who go clubbing together, and David is more-or-less their sidekick. Each of them is professionally successful in his own right. Todd's a mortician, Jake's a publicist, and Fallon is a movement coach. As is often the case with attractive, young gay men, they are very focused upon the superficial matters of life. They're proud of their good looks, their status, and their material possessions.

One evening at the local gay club, the Hunt Club sits around a table assessing the crowd. They casually make snide comments about some of the less-than-desirable clientele that surround them. Ridicule and scorn sarcastically flow from their mouths as they berate and degrade those present who do not meet up to their

high standards of physical perfection. David is with the group that evening, and he's embarrassed by their shallowness and their cruelty. When the threesome spots an attractive newbie and swarms him in a contest to see which of the three will score first, David backs off, embarrassed.

This is when Jackson Spey makes his appearance. To David he appears sedate, and David's drawn to him. As he approaches this handsome stranger at the bar, Jackson begins to chat with him, acknowledging that he'd overheard part of the conversation with David's three friends. He was unimpressed, and makes no bones about the fact that he finds their behavior reprehensible. David apologizes, but suddenly realizes his apologies are meaningless—too little, too late. The hot looking guy that The Hunt Club has encroached upon proves to be Jackson's husband, and when Jackson notices one of them groping his man's ass, Jackson's pissed.

The events that follow over the course of the next few weeks are very puzzling to the three attractive Hunt Club members. Astonishingly they each develop a horrific skin condition on their faces. The odd thing about the condition, though, is that only they can see it. When they go to the doctor, it is undetectable. Medical professionals consider them delusional and refer them to psychiatric counseling. They begin to feel demoralized and start to lose their confidence. To their horror, they each discover that when they notice another guy and try to hit on him, this skin condition also becomes noticeable to the object of their desire. Their prospective dates quickly shrink away from them in horror, appalled by the bright-red, scaly dermatitis.

It is during this period of time, while this threesome struggles with the reality that they are being judged solely upon their looks, that they start to look inward. They begin to examine their own perceptions of beauty. They start to understand that true love is not vain and shallow, and physical beauty really is only skin deep.

As I began to read this short, fifty-nine page story, the very first thing I noticed was the amazingly intelligent vocabulary. In fact, initially I was a bit taken aback because I had to stop and look up a few of the author's adjectives in a dictionary. Normally I would find this rather annoying and pretentious on the part of the author, but the narrative was so incredibly well-written, that it didn't seem pretentious or inappropriately phrased in the least. In fact, the prose was so eloquent, that the writing itself nearly brought tears to my eyes.

Not only was the writing superb, but the plot was presented very succinctly, and it was edited very tightly. Two of the seven chapters were presented in the first-person narrative from a secondary character's point of view, in the voice of David. I was so impressed by the uniqueness of this presentation, that I actually went back and re-read the entire story when I was finished. It was an absolutely masterful technique which offered a perspective which would not have been possible had it been written solely in third person.

When a story contains multiple central characters such as this one, it often becomes confusing. There is too much to remember, and I find myself trying to mentally categorize the details of each character, usually at least somewhat unsuccessfully. Such was not the case with this brilliant page-turner. I fell in love with every one of the guys, and I got to know each of their hearts in such a meaningful way that they seemed to jump out of the pages and become utterly real to me.

My favorite scene in the story is when Todd sits down on the floor with his friend Gabrielle at the funeral parlor. Todd is the mortician, and Gabe is his friend who works as a cosmetician, preparing cadavers for their final showings. Gabe is bereft with grief upon discovering that a former lover is dead, and Todd embraces him. They listen to a rendition of Linda Ronstadt's Skylark on Gabe's i-pod as they cling to one another. This scene was so devastatingly beautiful that it nearly tore my heart from my chest!

Honestly, this book is one of the absolute best stories I have ever encountered in my lifetime. If I were wealthy I'd buy up several thousand copies and pass them out at gay nightclubs throughout the country. The

message is so vital, and although it is not a theme that has not previously been touched upon in literature, I've never before seen it delivered so magnificently—in such a moving and beautiful way!

I guess one could say that the story is a combination of Dorian Grey and Sleeping Beauty. It is fantastic and magickal. It is written beautifully and edited flawlessly. It is a book I'm sure to read several dozen times in my lifetime, and one I will encourage anyone and everyone I know to do the same.

I do not know K.Z. Snow from Adam, but if all of her writing is this powerful, henceforth I'm going to be her biggest fan.

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### **Bubbles Hunty Honest & Direct Opinions says**

The writing was good

IMO it felt like we got 3 unfinished stories instead of 1 complete story. Also I never warmed up to Jake and probably could have enjoyed it more without so much Jake. I didn't really like any of the guys but Jake was least favorite. If more time had been spent with the other guys I probably could have started to like them more

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### **Rick says**

Unusual story which uses magick to illustrate the old saw that beauty goes much deeper than the skin. KZ Snow is an amazing writer.

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