

[PDF] Ghost Shadow (Bone Island Trilogy)

Angela Dawe, Heather Graham - pdf download free book

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Description:

About the Author New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Heather Graham has written more than one hundred novels, many of which have been featured by the Doubleday Book Club and the Literary Guild. An avid scuba diver, ballroom dancer and mother of five, she still enjoys her south Florida home, but loves to travel as well, from locations such as Cairo, Egypt, to her own backyard, the Florida Keys. Reading, however, is the pastime she still loves best, and she is a member of many writing groups. She's currently the vice president of the Horror Writers' Association, and she's also an active member of International Thriller Writers. She is very proud to be a Killerette in the Killer Thriller Band, along with many fellow novelists she greatly admires.

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"Personally, I think you've taken on way too much," Clarinda said, voicing her opinion in a loud whisper next to Katie's ear. She had to come down to Katie's ear to be heard so close to the sound

system. A drunken frat boy from Omaha was in the midst of a soulful Alice Cooper song, the bar was full and the noise level was high.

Katie shrugged and grinned, looking up at her friend. Maybe she was taking on too much, but an opportunity had come up, and she hadn't been able to resist.

"It will be wonderful, it will work out—and it will be good for Key West," Katie said in return.

Clarinda arched a doubtful brow, set down a glass of water with lime on the small table at Katie's side and shook her head. "I'll help you, of course," she said. "And, you know, Danny Zigler will be delighted to come and work for you. He was heartbroken when the place shut down years ago. People say that it's haunted, of course. You know that, right?"

"So I've heard," Katie said.

"Sweetie, can we get another round over here?" a man shouted above the din.

"Just don't call me sweetie," Clarinda said, exhaling a sigh of exasperation. "What is this tonight? We usually get the locals who actually know how to hold their liquor."

"Gee. We're in Key West and we've been discovered by tourists. Go figure," Katie said.

"Yeah, well, I wish I were the karaoke hostess and not the waitress," Clarinda said.

"Hey, I've told you that you can work for me—"

"And when the place is slow and the hostess is supposed to sing, I assure you that I'll clean out not just the bar, but the entire street. No—eventually, I'll make my fortune doing caricatures on Mallory Square, but until that day, I'll be your support by helping drunks get drunker and therefore hand out big tips. Okay, that helps both of us."

"Sweetie!" the man called again. "Another round!"

"He's going to get the round on top of his head," Clarinda promised and strode toward the bar.

The Alice Cooper tune was winding down. Next up was a fellow who wanted to do Sinatra. Katie applauded both the man returning to his seat and the one walking up to the microphone.

Stumbling up to the microphone. What was it with tonight? It was true—the strange and totally inebriated seemed to be coming out of the woodwork. Well, it was Key West. Home to some, but mainly a tourist town where the primary activity was drinking too much.

Key West has much more to offer, she thought, defending her native territory. The fishing was excellent, diving was spectacular and many visitors came for the water sports. But it was true as well that young and old flocked from far and wide to Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville for the sheer pleasure of a bachelor party, or just wild nights along Duval. Duval was the hub of nightlife, and it was the main place for cheap hotel rooms.

Her place—or her uncle Jamie's place, O'Hara's, where she ran Katie-oke—was off the southern end of Duval while most of the more popular watering holes were at the northern end. She did tend to draw a lot of the locals. Many of the entertainers who worked at the festivals—Fantasy Fest, Pirates

in Paradise, art fests, music fests, Hemingway Days and more—came in to practice their newest songs with Katie. She operated Katie-oke four nights a week. She also worked at O'Hara's when she wasn't doing karaoke, helping set the sound and stage for performers working on their own music, or doing easy acoustic and vocal numbers on Monday and Tuesday nights.

She had received a degree from Juilliard and taken work with a prestigious theater company in New England, and she had loved New England, but it hadn't been home. She'd eventually discovered that she couldn't take snow and sleet, and wanted to make her living in Key West.

She realized that she was good at the heat, good at sweating. She just never learned to layer properly.

And the water! How she missed the water when she was away. Her own home, a small Victorian—one of more than three thousand houses in the area on the state's historic roster—wasn't on the water, but on Elizabeth Street. She was in Old Town, and surrounded by tourism. She got her fill of water, however, because one of her best friends, an old high-school mate, Jonas Weston, now dating Clarinda, owned and operated the Salvage Inn, a place on the Gulf side with its own little stretch of man-made beach. She was welcome there, whenever she wanted to go.

"Those fellows are being quite obnoxious. Want me to take one of them out?"

Katie heard the question, but she didn't even look over at the speaker. Bartholomew knew that he irritated her when he decided to converse in the company of others.

Unaware of Bartholomew casually and handsomely draped upon a bar stool near Katie, Marty Jenkins, local pirate entertainer, came to her side. "Will you play a sea-shanty disc for me, Katie?"

"Of course, Marty," she said.

He handed her his disc and she slid it into her system. "No words can come up on the screen, Marty. But you don't need them, right?"

He grinned. "Gearing up for the next pirate show, my sweet. No words needed. Thanks."

"I'm sure everyone will love it, Marty."

"Hey, I heard you bought the old wax museum, Katie," Marty said.

"Marty, it's not a wax museum. It's full of robotics."

"Isn't that supposed to mean that they all move?" Marty asked.

"I believe that they all can move. They're just not operating right now."

"Actually, none of them work, from what I understand." Marty wagged a finger at her. "That place has been closed down for five years now. Craig Beckett tried to keep it going after that girl's body was found, but he threw in the towel. If you can get your money back, young lady, you ought to do it."

"I want to open it, Marty. I loved the place when I was a little kid," she told him.

He shook his head. "They say it's haunted, and not haunted by good. You know what happened there. Murder!"

"It was very sad, and a long time ago, Marty. What happened was tragic—some idiot making use of someone else's dream for a dramatic effect, but it's all in the past now. I'll be all right, Marty."

"They never caught the killer, missy," he reminded her.

"And I'm thinking that the killer moved on, Marty. Nothing like it has happened again."

Still shaking his head, Marty left her.

"I think he must be right. It doesn't sound like a good place to be," Bartholomew informed her, leaning near and whispering, though why he whispered, she didn't know. "Hey! That man is still behaving in a rude and disrespectful way toward Clarinda. Should I do something about it?"

Katie grated her teeth and looked toward the bar and the revenant of the man who stood next to her. She was sure that to the rest of the people present, there was nothing to be seen.

Or heard.

She lowered her head and spoke in an intense whisper. "Bartholomew, if you wish to maintain a mortal friend, I entreat you to cease and desist—shut up! You make me appear unbalanced, talking to myself all the time."

"That chap is an utter ass," Bartholomew protested. "Oh, and there *she* goes again, out on the street."

Katie looked up. She couldn't help herself.

It was true. A woman in white was walking along the sidewalk, staring straight ahead. She was in a Victorian white dress, and she knotted a handkerchief in her hands. She looked so sad that Katie felt a pang in her heart, and she bit her lower lip to remind herself that it was a curse seeing ghosts, that she couldn't become involved with all of them—there were simply too many in Key West—and that the woman was long dead and needed only to discover some kind of inner peace to move on.

"She haunts me so," Bartholomew said. He grimaced. "No pun intended."

Katie looked around as Bartholomew chuckled. His long-dead state did not seem to dampen his good spirits.

He'd been an adventurer in life—and *a privateer*, not a pirate!—and his sense of curiosity and longing for new experiences had not deserted him in death. He stared at Katie. "You really don't know who she is? And she won't talk to you?"

"She never has," Katie said.

"Watch it," Bartholomew warned.

She realized Clarinda was staring at her with concern in her eyes.

Katie knew that thus far in her life, only she seemed to be blessed by Bartholomew's presence.

He was quite the dandy. His shoes were buckled and bore heels, his hose didn't display a single knot and his breeches were impeccable. He wore a ruffled shirt, red vest and black jacket. His hair was jet-black and neatly queued beneath his tricornered hat. She knew he was especially fond of the Pirates in Paradise festival himself, and he insisted that they spend their time watching the musicians and joining in with the festivities because he loved to comment on the modern-day pirates roaming Key West.

"Are you all right?" Clarinda asked, coming back up to Katie's equipment stand and sidling around to stand next to her chair. "You're talking to yourself again," she warned. "One of the fellows over there wanted to buy you a drink. He thought you were already well on the way."

Katie looked over to the group where her would-be admirer was sitting. She frowned, recognizing the man, but not knowing why. "I don't want a drink—thank him for me. I was singing under my breath to the song, that's all. Clarinda, who is that guy?"

Clarinda turned and waved a hand. The fellow shrugged. He had tawny-blond hair, a neatly trimmed beard and mustache, and appear... --This text refers to the edition.

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