[PDF] Deadly Harvest (Flynn Brothers Trilogy)

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. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Rowenna saw scarecrows.

They stood above the cornfields, propped on their wooden crosses, and from a distance their faces were blank and terrifying.

The cornstalks grew high, marching toward the horizon in their neat rows seeming to stretch on forever.

And then, like sentinels, rising in a line and towering over the tall stalks that bent and waved in the cool breeze, stood the scarecrows.

She felt as if she were drifting through the corn, borne on the breeze, as the mist settled down over the cornfield, a dark blanket against the burst of beauty and light. She was looking down from above, almost as if she were a camera, coming into focus.

She dreamed, but she fought it and came so near to waking, struggling against the nightmare, against the threatening whisper in her mind.

Light[] She needed light. Needed the spectacular beauty of the autumn colors to drive away the creeping darkness.

She was going home, so maybe it was natural to dream of the place where she had grown up, where the colors of fall were so beautiful that they belonged not in the real world of the unreal, but in a land of dreams.

Golds, oranges, crimsons, deeper reds, softer yellows, all dazzled from the trees stretching from the great granite rises to the windswept seas and calmer harbors, where the whitecaps of the waves warned that winter was on its way.

But before the ice and cold of a New England winter arrived, there was the fall. The glorious fall with its brilliant display. The gentle sweep of the breeze came first, a touch of sweet cool breath on the cheeks. And before that touch became the chilling grip of icicle fingers, there was the reaping, the bonfires of fall, the harvest brought home.

And so, in her dream, they stretched before her, rows and rows of cornfields, the stalks undulating mes-merizingly in the sweeping breeze. She had always loved the cornfields; she could remember racing through them as a child, her grandfather chasing her, her laughter filling the sky.

The crows were always there, too, their black wings shimmering, their wicked cawing carrying high in the air, but the farmers, with a wisdom carried down from generation to generation, knew how to manage the voracious thieves.

They fashioned scarecrows and set them above the fields, and those scarecrows had personalities of their own. Mrs. Abel's scarecrow wore a wild garden hat sporting stick pins to stab the feet of any unwary crow that tried to land. Ethan Morrison's wore a billowing cape and a hideous, toothed grin. Her grandfather's scarecrow was dressed in denim overalls and a plaid shirt, and carried a shotgun; its hat was straw, and it had a mop of white hair.

Eric Rolfe's creation was the most frightening[] and the most remarkable. The most likely to come to

life and speak, for he had created his scarecrow's face from a plastic skull and Halloween makeup. Huge eyes stared out from the bony face, eyes that moved on battery power, and it wore a black frock coat, arms outstretched, barbed wire protruding from its head like a razor-sharp fright wig.

Some of the older residents had a problem with Eric's creation Puritanism was long gone from the area but never really dead. Regardless, Eric loved it, and so did the kids.

Sometimes, though, when she was running in the cornfields, her grandfather close behind, her laughter would die when she came to that scarecrow. The eyes would be looking at her from their sockets, and the wind would seem to rise, not howling, but breathing out a high-pitched whisper of mingled fear and seduction. She would stop and stare, the cornstalks rustling around her, and uneasiness would steal into her heart, a fear that if she opened her mind, she would see something ancient and terrible that had occurred here, would share the evil impulse of its creator and the horror of those it had touched.

She had grown up with the stories of the local witch trials, when men, in the service of their God, tortured and condemned their fellow men, when children wept and accused, and evil was done in the name of righteousness.

In such a blood-drenched land, how could an impressionable child not feel something of the anguish of those times?

Despite that, the cornfields had always entranced her, along with the spectacular color palette of fall.

And now she was going home to see those fields in truth, so it was only natural, in that strange twilight stage between sleep and wakefulness, to see them in her mind's eye, to dream of running through them like the child she had once been. She heard her own laughter as she ran and knew she would soon come upon Eric's gothic monster of a scarecrow, but she didn't hesitate, for she was no longer a child but a woman grown, and the fears of the past could not haunt her now.

But she was wrong. The fear was there.

She saw it now, in the distance, and fingers of dread reached for her heart as she waited for it to see her, because she knew it would.

She didn't want to go closer.

But she had to.

Then the scarecrow raised its head, and a scream froze in her throat. The eye sockets were empty, the head a skull covered in rotting, blackened flesh, and somehow she knew it could see her, though nothing remained of what had once been its eyes.

What was left of the mouth was open, as if in a final scream. A ragged coat hung from the rotting body, the white gleam of bone showing through, dried blood staining fabric and bone alike. And as she stood there, her scream still trapped inside, the skull began to turn toward her, as if whatever evil consciousness still lived within it was drawn to her.

A crow landed on the gruesome figure's shoulder and plucked at the putrid flesh hanging from one cheek.

The skull began to laugh, as the wind rose and the sky was suddenly filled with the fluttering of

brilliant fall leaves. And all the while, those eye sockets stared at her, and then red tears suddenly spilled from them, down the ravaged cheeks, as if the rotting corpse was locked in the field for all time, weeping blood.

Then the fingers of bone and rot began to twitch, reaching out for her, as a chant from her childhood echoed on the air.

"Don't fear the Reaper,

Just the Harvest Man.

When he steals a soul

It's a keeper, so

Don't fear the Reaper,

Fear the Harvest Man,

For when he steals a woman's soul

She'll go to hell or deeper[]."

Rowenna Cavanaugh jerked up to a sitting position in bed, gasping, startled[] and scared.

She took a deep breath and reached for calm. What a nightmare. She was surprisingly shaken by it, and she couldn't allow herself to be. She told herself that she had simply drifted off to sleep while thinking about home, even though she wasn't going back for a few days and Halloween would come and go with her here in New Orleans.

She missed home. Massachusetts was always so beautiful this time of year. And Salem[] Salem was still just a small town in so many ways. She'd been elected harvest queen in her absence. At least that gave her something enjoyable to look forward to after the upcoming debate with Jeremy Flynn, scheduled to raise funds for Children's House, the charity he ran here. Besides, her appearance would help her to sell books. And she had been adrift since Jonathan, the man she'd planned to marry, had died[]had it really been three years ago?[]so she'd welcomed the chance to get away. Not that she really needed an excuse for coming to New Orleans, because she loved the city. But she was ready to go back home now, nightmare or not.

When she'd been a kid, they'd played games like harvest man. The Puritans had believed that the devil lived in the dark forests surrounding their settlements, just waiting to steal unwary souls. Superstition and fear had reigned supreme then, but she knew better, no matter what nonsense her subconscious had decided to dredge up.

Still, she had to wake up, had to get out of bed before she fell into another dream that was as bad or even worse.

She was living in the real world, the world of today. She had to pull herself together and somehow manage another day in the company of Mr. Jeremy Flynn.

Ah, yes, Jeremy Flynn. Ex-police diver, now a partner in a private investigations firm with his two brothers, intelligent, articulate, charming, gorgeous[]and not in any way shape or form attracted to her. In fact, he seemed to actively dislike her, but maybe it was just her opinions he didn't like. To be

fair, he was never rude or actively hostile. Of course, he probably didn't dare, since his sister-in-law, Kendall Flynn, was one of her best friends and had been for years. Tonight there was going to be a Halloween party at the Flynn mansion, which Kendall and her husband had moved into a year ago, and where they now managed a community theater and hosted various charity events. It would be a great party, and Jeremy would politely greet her, then find a way to be on the other side of the room all night.

She got along just fine with Aidan, Kendall's husband, and the youngest brother, Zach, was unfailingly friendly.

Unfortunately, she was attracted to Jeremy and had been since they first met. She had been stunned, because she hadn't dated at all since Jonathan's death. Not that she believed in some archaic mourning period, she simply hadn't met anyone who attracted her enough to want to go out with him, or even to wonder what it would be like to have sex again, to touch another person intimately. But with Jeremy, she all too often found herself watching his mouth when he spoke, or his strong hands, with long fingers, the tips calloused because he played guitar. And he was a phenomenal musician. She knew, because she had seen him play.

But he clearly wasn't interested, so she kept her dreams of wild, rampant, in-the-dark-at-first sex with Jeremy Flynn a complete secret. She wondered if her hidden fantasy meant she was being disloyal to Jonathan's memory or merely human.

She wondered how he could ignore all the heat and electricity whenever they met. It was as if sparks filled the space between them, as if all they needed to do was touch and the very air would burst into a beautiful sizzle of ...

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