
GHOST SEEKERS

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Published by Blushing Books
An Imprint of
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.
A Virginia Corporation
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

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Melinda Barron
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eBook ISBN: 978-1-64563-621-2
Print ISBN: 978-1-64563-622-9
Audio ISBN: 978-1-64563-623-6
v2

Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's
advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

These stories are for my sister, Janet. I fell in love with New Orleans during a visit there with her many, many years ago. It was a visit I'll always remember and cherish. Now arriving, gate one...

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Quinn's Fantasy
GHOST SEEKERS BOOK ONE

Chapter 1

“**Y**ou could sue him, you know.”

Quinn Nicholas pushed on her end of the mattress and sighed. God bless Dev. She loved him, really she did. But now was not the time.

“Dev. Do me a favor. Let’s get this huge thing you bought up the stairs and then we’ll discuss legal advice.”

“I’m just saying...”

From beside her, a second, deep male voice rang out.

“*Merde!* It’s slipping, Dev. Pull, *ya bioque*, pull.”

Quinn fought back a laugh.

“I’m the idiot?” Dev’s voice was angry.

The mattress slipped further down and Quinn’s laughter died. “Dev! You’re going to crush us. Pull.”

“Take it back, Fletch.”

“*Embrasse mon techeue,*” Fletch said, his Cajun accent strong. “Jus’ move ya’ ass!”

“We’ll see who’s kissing whose ass later,” Dev said, pulling on the mattress.

They made it up a few more steps and Quinn thanked the stars above they’d already set up the frame for this huge bed and

moved the two box springs, which held up the California King bed. Fletch and Dev had decided they needed for the bedroom in the third floor of their French Quarter townhouse. The springs hadn't been hard to move up the stairs. The top mattress, however, was huge, and unwieldy, and was proving difficult.

She peered around the edge to see how much further they had to go. At least ten more steps until the second floor. Then, another flight until the third.

"We're going to have to take a break on the second," Quinn said, panting with exertion.

"No way," Dev said. "If we stop we won't start again. We need to get this done."

"Slave driver," she whispered under her breath. She sighed with relief when Dev pulled the mattress onto the landing and the three of them paused to take a breath.

"Okay. Maybe just a second or two," Dev said, leaning against the wall.

Quinn swallowed a smile and wiped her brow with the back of her hand.

"I've got to hand it to you two. You sure know how to take a girl's mind off her work troubles."

"That *salaud* you work for don't know his ass from his lips," Fletch said. "If he was smart, you'd be the new anchor at WXBJ, no' that bimbo, Stephanie Marks."

Quinn shook her head in exasperation. "Well, Stephanie's a perfect size two, and I'm not, am I? He gave me some excuse about me being too valuable a reporter to put behind an anchor desk, which is a load of crap. You're right, Fletch, he's a bastard."

"Sue them," Dev said, standing up and pulling his end of the mattress toward the stairs that led to the third floor.

Quinn and Fletch both let out weary breaths.

"That was a short break," Fletch said.

“It won’t take long if we just get our asses in gear,” Dev said. “Now push.”

Ten minutes later, the cumbersome mattress was in the master bedroom, which took up almost the entire third floor of the house, except for the bathroom. They placed it on the box springs and the three of them collapsed on top of it, Quinn in the middle, their chests heaving as they fought to get their breathing under control.

After a few minutes, Dev pushed himself up on his elbows and stared down at Quinn.

“So, are you going to sue?”

“For what? Being passed over for a job? That would pretty much make me unemployable in this town, and I love New Orleans. I don’t want to leave.”

“She right,” Fletch said. “I say we contact my Aunt Margrette, she a voodoo priestess.”

“Have you lost your mind?” Dev shook his head and stared at his best friend.

“No,” Fletch said, standing and heading toward the bathroom.

Quinn laughed as Dev stood and stalked after him. She could hear their voices carry across the room as they argued the pros and cons of a voodoo priestess and how she could help Quinn with her problems.

Quinn lay back down on the mattress and sighed. She’d lived in New Orleans for three years now, and she’d loved every minute of it. She’d been very lucky to find a room to rent with the handsome men who were now arguing twenty feet away from her.

Memories of their first day together flooded through her mind. When she’d first been hired at WXBJ, she knew she wouldn’t make enough money to buy a house, or rent a fancy apartment. So she’d asked the real estate agent if she could suggest a place in the Quarter.

The agent had done her one better, and suggested Quinn rent a room from Devlin St. Giles and his best friend, Fletcher Covair. The two men bought and flipped houses, and did ghost hunting on the side.

The realtor had called, made the appointment, and driven Quinn over there. Quinn sighed when she remembered her first sighting of them, both of them strong and muscular, both dark headed and brown-eyed, and both of them extremely handsome. But that was where the similarities had ended.

Devlin was practical, a real thinker who never made a move without wondering where it would lead and how things would end up. Fletch, a Cajun, was very laid-back, and liked to do things on the spur of the moment.

Quinn had liked them both immediately and signed a lease right on the spot for their second-floor bedroom. Since then, the three of them had become the best of friends, something her parents hadn't understood, or approved of. The only thing missing from their lives together was sex.

Quinn moaned as she imagined the three of them in this huge bed, kissing and touching and making love. She'd been having these thoughts, more and more lately, and knew it wasn't a good thing. It would be a complication that might make it that she couldn't stay in her home. At one point she'd wondered if they were lovers, but they both dated, although they'd never bought women home with them.

She sat up just as they came out of the bathroom, still arguing about the pros and cons of visiting Fletch's aunt.

"No voodoo," Quinn said. "I appreciate the thought, but no."

Fletch's shoulders slumped, then his face brightened. He put his fingers together to where they were close, but not touching. "Jus' a little?"

"No," Quinn said, her heart beating faster as they sat on either side of her.

She put her head on Fletch's shoulder and took Dev's hand as he tickled her knee.

"I still say you should sue," Dev said. "You have seniority over the woman they moved into the anchor spot. It's discrimination because of your..."

His voice trailed off and Quinn sighed.

"Because of my size? Yes, you're right, it is. She's a perfect size two and I'm a perfect size fourteen. Not fat, but not thin enough to be the anchor. And if I sue, then I get a bad reputation in the television world, and it's a small world as the old saying goes."

"There' gotta be somethin' you can do," Fletch said. He leaned down and kissed her forehead and Quinn wanted to make a suggestion about what they could do. Instead she sighed and shifted her head to Dev's shoulder, who kissed her forehead.

"I'm thinking it would be a good night to drink. I'm also thinking it would be a good night to work on my resume."

The men stood, almost as one, and pulled her to her feet. It amazed her they were so close they could almost read each other's minds, such as standing at the same time.

Dev turned her toward him and cupped her face in his hands. He kissed her lips lightly and Quinn's eyes bulged. She wanted to scream at him not to do that; that it would take them places they probably shouldn't go. But it felt so good.

When his lips left hers, Fletch tipped her head back and took Dev's place.

What was going on here? Sure, they'd kissed her before, but never like this. And never in the new bedroom, with the huge, comfy bed they'd just moved up there waiting to be initiated into the world of carnal love.

Don't go there, Quinn, don't go there. They're just trying to make you feel better.

"Maybe we should..." Dev's voice was interrupted from a shout from the staircase.

“We’re coming up.”

“Shit,” Dev said at the same time Fletch said, “*Merde.*”

The three of them moved apart as Martin Vandreen, a friend of theirs and fellow ghost seeker, appeared in the doorway.

“Hi. I’m inviting myself to dinner so we can discuss our Halloween hunt.”

Quinn had to laugh. Martin was sweet, and very fun to be around. He was also a medium who went with the guys on several of their trips. She knew they’d already discussed what they had planned for Halloween and what he really wanted was free dinner, in the shape of Fletch’s jambalaya.

“Yeah, I figured you be here,” Fletch said. “Mooch.”

Martin laughed. “Proud of it.” He held up a loaf of French bread. “But I brought food to go along with dinner, so I’m not a total mooch. So, let’s eat. I’m starved.”

He bounded back down the stairs and Quinn let out an exasperated breath.

“No ghost talk at the table,” she said, looking between her two friends. “You know I don’t believe that crap.”

“You will one day,” Dev said. “And it may happen sooner than you think.”

The early morning sun drifted through the gauzy curtains in Quinn’s bedroom. She lay in the middle of the bed, her eyes focused on the ceiling. She hadn’t slept very well last night, her thoughts drifting between a crappy situation at work and the strange happenings of last night.

Had she given off some sort of sexual vibes her landlords had picked up on? That could be the only true reason for the kiss—or kisses? One scorching kiss from each of them.

Did they feel sorry for her and just wanted to make her feel better? The touch of their lips had seared her all the way down

to her toes. She'd wanted to suggest to them that the three of them test out the new bed, but she knew that would have been the wrong thing to do. They had just felt sorry for her, for the things going on in her life. That's why they'd kissed her. It's not like they hadn't done it before.

But last night had been different. Passionate yet tender.

The smell of coffee drifted up the stairs and she sighed. Fletch was the cook in the household and she was sure breakfast would be tasty. He knew her favorite was what he called his 'breakfast temptation', a mixture of herbs and eggs mixed with rice and a special spicy sauce only Fletch could create.

She sniffed and recognized the smell of the sauce mixed in with the aroma of coffee. Her eyebrows furrowed. The smell was close. The kitchen was on the first floor, and the delicious aroma was coming from just outside her door.

The door opened just as she sat upright. Fletch carried a tray heaped with food, and Dev carried another, with a coffee carafe and a plate of beignets.

"Morning, Boo," Fletch said. "Time to eat."

"You don't have to baby me, you know." She watched as Fletch rounded the bed, setting the tray on the nightstand. Dev set the other tray on the nightstand near her side of the bed and they both sat down, squeezing her in between them

Quinn shivered when Dev caressed her arm and Fletch leaned over and kissed her cheek.

"We want you in a good mood for our proposal," Dev said with a smile. He turned and poured large cups of café au lait, handed them out and took a sip. His eyebrows went up and Quinn knew he was waiting for her to ask about the proposal.

"Okay, I'll bite," she said, taking a sip of her coffee. The proximity of these two delicious men was driving her crazy. One thing was for sure. Something was going to have to give around here, because she wasn't sure she could take much more of this.

"You're going with us," Fletch said.

“Where?” She turned to him, and as the silence grew, understanding dawned. “Oh no I’m not. Call *me* a cocotte if you want, but I’m not spending Halloween in a haunted plantation house.”

“Oh yes you are,” Dev said. “You’ve got plenty of vacation time built up. A few days without you at the office will convince them of how valuable you are. They’ll beg you to stay. And, they’ll reconsider their decision.”

“No, they won’t,” Quinn said. “They’ll just find someone to replace me.”

“N’body could replace ya,” Fletch said. He reached behind him and grabbed the plate filled with eggs, sausage and bacon. He placed it on Quinn’s thighs. Dev placed the beignets next to it, taking one and devouring it in two bites.

Quinn stared at the powdered sugar left on his lips and fought the temptation to lean over and lick it off. It was a feeling she’d fought for quite some time lately, with both men.

She picked up her own treat and took a bite. Powdered sugar dusted the T-shirt she’d slept in. “I’m not going.”

“Listen to us, Boo. We know what we’re talking about,” Fletch said. “We had a nice long discussion about it last night.”

“Fletch, Dev. I appreciate it, but...”

“We’re not taking no for an answer,” Fletch said. “You eat your eggs while Dev tells you the story of this house. It’s a beauty. We’ve stayed there before, but not on Halloween. It’s gonna be fun.”

Dev licked the sugar off his fingers and took another sip of coffee. “The house was built in 1805 outside Baton Rouge by a man named Gerard Facet. He and his wife had come from Paris to build their sugar plantation. Soon after they arrived, their family started to grow. They had seven children, Marie, Charlot, Aramis, Alison, Thierry, Daphne, and Delphie.”

Fletch reached for a beignet and nodded at Dev. “All of the children except for Alison and Delphie died young. Some sort of fever took them all. Very sad.”

"So, we're going to a house full of haunted babies?" Quinn held up her hands. "I'll pass."

"Oh no," Fletch said. "The babes, they've all moved on. The house is haunted by Alison, who would have inherited it had she lived past the age of twenty-five."

"Geeze, thanks for the uplifting tale, guys." Quinn swallowed a bite of eggs and took another.

"Just listen," Fletch said.

Dev chased his own bite of eggs with a swig of coffee. "So, Gerard had no male heirs. The house would be Alison's, but she would need a husband to help her run it. Gerard chose a man named Amedee Badeaux, a younger son from a neighboring plantation. Alison was not happy with his choice because she was in love with a man named Cyrille Trotter, who worked for her father."

Despite her dislike of haunted houses, Quinn nodded. "Go on."

"Well, in those days a daughter did as she was told. Mostly Alison and Amedee wed in 1829. Her father built them a 'small' house on the grounds, near the cane fields. The house has ten bedrooms, four living areas, a kitchen and now has three bathrooms added. The couple lived there for a few years."

"They lived there while Alison was meeting her lover, right?"

"You're so smart," Fletch said.

Quinn smirked at him. "So, Amedee killed his wife and her lover?"

Dev nodded. "On Halloween night, 1832. He caught them making love in Cyrille's house. He killed Cyrille and set his house on fire. Then he made Alison watch as it burned before he dragged her to her house and killed her there."

"Horrid," Quinn said, dropping her fork on her plate. "So, she haunts the house?"

"Yes," Dev said. "But let me finish. Amedee married Alison's sister, Delphie."

“Are you serious?” Quinn shook her head. “The man murdered her sister and she married him?”

“Well, they considered it justified,” Fletch said. “She was cheating on her husband. And old Gerard, he still needed an heir. And Amedee needed to be compensated for being made a laughingstock.”

“He was a murderer!” Quinn knew times were different back then, but she would think killing someone wouldn’t be dismissed so easily. She guessed she was wrong.

“Different times, Boo,” Fletch said.

“Can I finish?” Dev asked.

Quinn turned to Dev and offered an apologetic smile. “Sorry we’ve interrupted you.

“So, on Halloween 1833, good old Amedee was found at the bottom of the stairs, his neck broken. Delphie swore she saw Alison’s ghost push him down the stairs.”

Quinn wiped her mouth with a napkin. “And you want us to stay there?”

“Oh yes,” Dev said. “The house was closed up for quite some time, and then went through several owners. The current owners, the Forshees, bought it for back taxes. They say Alison is quiet for most of the year, except for October. She always makes her presence known, and it’s not always pleasant.”

“The Forshees usually close it down for two weeks around Halloween, and then everything is fine until next year. They want us to try and make contact with Alison.”

“They want you to send her toward the light?” Quinn asked.

Dev shook his head. “No. She’s good for business. People love ghost stories, especially when it involves a love story. They want us to get some sort of concrete proof she exists. Photos, readings, or something. Plus, we’re having a séance on Halloween night.”

Quinn nodded and took a slow sip of her coffee. “So, you want us to spend Halloween with a murdering ghost?”

Fletch laughed. “She hasn’t killed anyone since Amedee, and

you can't say he didn't deserve it."

"True, he did," Quinn replied.

"It's gonna be fun," Fletch said. "You know you wanna go."

"I don't know, guys. I mean, I understand your fascination with the paranormal, but I don't share it. You know that."

They scooted closer to her and Quinn felt her clit twitch in response. One more reason not to go, because if they were put in close quarters at the resort, or whatever it was, she might not be able to control herself. She still had plates on her lap, which kept her from jumping up and getting away from the gorgeous men on either side of her.

"Look at it this way, Boo," Fletch said, gently rubbing her arm. "It's a few days of vacation. A few days away from the city. A few days of clean air and free time to relax. Do some reading."

Do some fucking, maybe? Stop that, stop that! Don't touch me like that. I might jump you both.

"Plus, you can take your laptop and send out resumes," Dev said, his finger tracing her other arm. "You need this time. You know you do. So just say yes, and we'll be on our way."

Quinn took a bite of her sausage, chewing thoughtfully. A picture of Mark's face as he told her she'd never be an anchor popped into her brain. Maybe Dev and Fletch were right. If she left for a while, they'd see how much she did there. How popular she was with the viewers. The idea just might work.

"Yes, I'll do it. But, one floating candlestick and I'm out of there. I mean it!"

They laughed and Dev poured more coffee into the cups. They clinked them together and both took a sip.

Quinn whipped her head back and forth between them. "I mean it. Tell me you understand when I say I mean it."

The men stood and picked up the dishes and trays, heading back toward the door.

"Hey, answer me!" At the doorway, they both blew her a kiss and stepped outside.