



## Deadly Night (The Flynn Brothers Trilogy Book 1)

By Heather Graham

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*The Flynn brothers have inherited more than a New Orleans plantation. They've inherited a ghostly presence...and a long-kept secret.*

Aidan Flynn, a private investigator and eldest of the Flynn brothers, scoffs at the haunted-house rumors—especially since Kendall Montgomery, a tarot card reader who has been living in the mansion, is the one to tell him the tale of a woman in white. But when he finds a human bone on the grounds and another by the river, Aidan delves into the dark history of the Flynn plantation.

Forced together to uncover the truth, Aidan and Kendall realize that a serial killer whose victims seem to vanish into thin air has long been at work...and that their own fates are about to be sealed forever unless they believe in the unbelievable.

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## **Deadly Night (The Flynn Brothers Trilogy Book 1) By Heather Graham Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Bestseller Graham (*Kiss of Darkness*) spices up a spooky post-Katrina mystery in this solid trilogy opener. PI brothers Aidan, Jeremy and Zachary Flynn have inherited a plantation near New Orleans from Amelia Flynn, a relative they never knew. They consider selling the rundown house, but instead agree to restore it and move in. When Aidan finds human bones on the plantation's grounds, further sleuthing reveals some local missing persons cold cases that might be connected to the house, already haunted by two Flynn cousins who fought on opposite sides of the Civil War. Meanwhile, romance slowly ignites between cynical widower Aidan and Kendall Montgomery, psychic and Amelia's friend and former caregiver. Dream messages and premonitions, ghostly sightings, capable detective work and fascinating characters blend to make a satisfying chiller. (*Oct.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### 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 Killurette in the Killer Thriller Band, along with many fellow novelists she greatly admires.

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*New Orleans*

*Present Day*

"It's a bone," Dr. Jon Abel announced.

"Obviously," Aidan Flynn noted dryly.

The doctor shot him a glance. "A thighbone."

"And it's human," Aidan said.

"Yes, it's a human thighbone," Dr. Abel agreed. He stood on the muddy bank at the side of the Mississippi and shrugged, looking at the faces around him. It was heading toward evening, but it had been a hot, sultry day, and only the breeze coming off the river hinted that a cooling-down was coming. Beyond the muddy shore where Aidan had found the bone, the churning water was an ugly shade of brown. A mosquito buzzed nearby, and the doctor slapped at his arm and shook his head in disgust. He'd never been much for working out in the field.

Aidan was the one who had asked that he be called out, but since Aidan was just a P.I. out of Florida who, along with his two brothers, had just inherited the old family plantation, it was Hal Vincent, parish homicide,

who had actually placed the call. Jonas Burningham, local FBI, had attached himself to the "case," such as it was, too, in case they were looking at a serial murderer taking advantage of the disorder—and all too often violence—left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

"You know," Abel said, "we're still finding all kinds of... remnants stirred up by the storm. That's going to go on for years. We didn't always bury aboveground here, and there are plenty of old family plots along the river. Down in Slidell, there was a woman who had three coffins in her yard for months after the storm. No one knew where they belonged, and she couldn't get any agency to come get them, so she just called them Tom, Dick and Harry, and said hello to them every time she came and went." Jon Abel was a tall, thin man of about forty-five who looked more like a mad scientist than what he really was: one of the most respected medical examiners in the state. He looked out at the brown water. And sighed. "Hell, that river has seen more bodies than you and I could ever begin to guess, and it would take a dozen lifetimes to sort them all out."

"That's it?" Aidan asked him. "No investigation? You're just going to dismiss it out of hand?" As he spoke, the sky darkened. Storm clouds, only hinted at earlier in the day, were boiling into great menacing shadows across the heavens. He pointed at the bone. "Looks to me like there's still some tissue on it, which means it's fresh and there might be more body parts somewhere nearby to go with it. If I thought I'd stumbled on something old, I'd have called in an anthropologist."

Jon Abel sighed again. "Right. I don't get enough people with bullet holes in them. Slashed to ribbons. Mangled in car accidents. Dead under a bridge somewhere. Sure. I'll just take this thighbone that *might* have a bit of tissue on it and get right on it."

"Jon," Hal Vincent said quietly. "There might be something to this. I know your office is busy and you've got a lot of pressing cases, but do what you can, huh?"

"Male or female?" Aidan asked.

"It's just a bone right now."

"Male or female?—your best guess," Aidan insisted.

The medical examiner shot him an aggravated look.

"Female," he said. The man had been at it a long time. Unwilling participant in today's proceedings or not, he was tops in his field. He adjusted his glasses and shook his head. "Offhand, I'd say she stood about five-six." He looked closer. "Probably between twenty and thirty. I can't tell you anything else. Not even guessing."

"I'm guessing she's dead," Hal said dryly.

Jonas stepped in, trying to keep things civil. Jonas was a definite "suit." At forty, he was tall and hard-bodied, with slick tawny hair and attractive features. Even in the muck, he looked impeccable and unflappable. "We'd deeply appreciate it, Dr. Abel, if you can tell us more as soon as your schedule will allow. Look, Jon, we know you're busy. We also know you're the best."

Jon Abel grunted in acknowledgment of the compliment, but he cast Aidan a look of irritation. As far as he was concerned, Flynn was an outsider. He came to New Orleans often to see friends here, but he was still an outsider—at least to Jon Abel.

Aidan had been in the area this time because of a missing persons case. Runaway teens had taken to camping out in the swampy bayou area off the river here. He'd found the subject of his search, and she'd been dirty enough, wet enough, hungry enough and miserable enough to be grateful that her parents wanted her home.

And Aidan had been grateful that he'd found her alive. That wasn't always the case with runaways. And maybe not for the woman whose bone he'd found nearby, either.

Jonas and Flynn went back a long way. They'd gone through the FBI Academy together. Jonas had stayed with the Bureau.

After a few years, Aidan hadn't.

It was mainly Jon's friendship with Jonas that had brought him out here today.

"I'll do what I can," Jon said. He lifted a hand to his assistant, Lee Wong, who had been listening attentively to everything going on. He meant to go places, and working with Jon Abel was the way to do it.

The thighbone was duly tagged and bagged; then, grumbling to himself, Jon headed for his car, Lee trailing behind. Jon waved goodbye and spoke without turning back to them. "I'll get back to you when I know something."

When he was gone, Hal Vincent spoke again. "I'll get a few men out here to search the area." He was a tall man, a good six-four or five, and thin, but every inch of him was muscled. His skin was copper and his eyes were green; his hair had gone white, and he wore it cropped close to his head. His age was indeterminate, and Aidan thought that when he was a hundred years old, he wouldn't look much different. Born in Algiers, Louisiana—right across the river—he knew the area like the back of his hand. He was a good man, solid, no bullshit.

"Thanks, Hal," Jonas told him. He looked at Aidan and shrugged. "You know... that might actually be... an old bone."

"Yeah, it might be," Aidan agreed. "But then again," he pointed out, "it might not." He tried to keep any hint of sarcasm out of his voice.

"We'll search, and let you know." Hal looked at his watch. "I'm off duty as of now, and I could use a beer. Anyone want to join me?"

"Sounds good to me," Jonas said. He'd wanted to be assigned out west, but he'd drawn New Orleans instead, then surprised himself by falling in love with the place. He'd ended up marrying a local girl and moving to the French Quarter. "Aidan?"

Aidan shook his head. "Sorry. I'm late already. I have to meet my brothers downriver."

"I heard you boys inherited the old place out on the Mississippi," Hal asked.

Aidan grimaced. "Yeah, it's quite an inheritance."

"You never know," Hal told him. "The place has one hell of a history. Comes with a legend, ghosts, the whole bit. It's decaying, but does have the original stables, smokehouse— even the slave quarters. If you

want to do something with it, do it fast. The local preservationists will be all over you any day now."

"Yeah, well... I don't know what we're doing. That's part of what we're meeting up to decide," Aidan said.

"I heard the three of you went into the private investigation business together," Jonas said. "How's that working out?"

"Well," Aidan said briefly.

"Floridians. Taking on that old house," Hal said. How he meant it, Aidan wasn't sure. "Let's get that beer, Jonas. Aidan, we'll be in touch if we hear anything about that bone of yours."

Aidan nodded, and they all trekked back through the muck. When they reached their cars, they waved. The other two men headed toward the city.

Aidan started down the river road.

Twenty minutes later, he was with his brothers.

And they stood, the three of them, staring at the house on the rise that wasn't exactly a hill.

Then again, the building wasn't exactly a house. Not anymore. Decades of neglect had left dangling shingles, broken columns, and paint that was flaking and peeling. The effect was of something from a horror movie set.

The promise of a storm wasn't helping, either. In the distance, thunder was rumbling, and the sky had turned a strange color. But at least the coming weather had alleviated the heat. A cool breeze was blowing. It actually had a slight chill to it. And the darkness seemed to have taken on a life of its own, sweeping across the sky and down over the trees, crawling like a fog along the ground, a shadow-mist that smelled of violence and decay.

Aidan was the oldest of the three and, at six-three, the tallest by half an inch. His features were weathered, and he was the most physically imposing of them. A stint in the military had left him fit and wary; his reflexes were quick, and he had retained a suspicious perception of the world around him and an invisible Keep Away sign. Once, he supposed, he had been decent-looking. He had blue eyes, referred to as "icy" these days, and pitch-dark hair. Serena had found him compelling enough. It was his manner rather than his appearance, he figured, that tended to keep people at a distance. Then again, he probably hadn't been as remote and chilly when he had been with Serena. There had been promise in the world when she was alive. Now... well, it was a good thing he had work to do. Lots of it. Keeping himself from falling into the emptiness.

His brothers, his family... them, he trusted, but others... He'd gone through Quantico, but when life had convinced him he was no longer a team player, he'd left the FBI. Given his background, he had opted for private investigation.

Maybe he should have investigated the house.

"Hmm," Jeremy, the second in age, said. Jeremy had been the first to suggest they form a business. When Aidan had left the Bureau, Jeremy had been ready to leave his position with the Jacksonville police divers.

Unlike Aidan, his hell hadn't been a personal one; he had simply been the first to come upon a van full of abused foster children, drowned when their vehicle leapt a median and drove straight into the St. Johns River. He'd been at it a long time; he'd seen horrific sights. But that one had haunted him. Jeremy loved playing his guitar, though, and music brought him through. He'd quietly begun a charity to find homes for abused, abandoned and orphaned children, and discovered a talent for broadcasting along the way. He had come to New Orleans to work with a popular DJ on a dinner-dance to be held at the aquarium to raise funds for Children's House, his charity, which was involved in finding homes for area children who had been orphaned by Katrina.

Jeremy liked people, and had always loved New Orleans and the Gulf region, but even he was speechless now that they were seeing their unexpected inheritance for the first time.

*Plantation*, Aidan thought.

The word summoned up visions of long, oak-shaded drives, rich and verdant fields, pastures—and a Greek Revival house painted pristine white, with beautiful women in long flowing dresses sitting on the porch sipping mint juleps.

If anyone were caught imbibing anything here, it would be derelicts chugging beer out of bottles hidden in brown paper bags.

Oh yeah. He definitely should have investigated.

Zachary, the youngest of the trio, who was a mixture of his eldest brother's hard stoicism and his other's open-mindedness, let out a breath.

"Well, I guess you could call it a fixer-upper," he mused dryly.

Aidan turned to stare at him. Zachary stood a half inch over six-two, just like Jeremy. It was as if the three brothers had been cast in the same mold, then painted in different shades. Aidan's own eyes were a blue that varied from icy to almost as black as his hair. Jeremy's eyes were cloud-gray, his hair a dark brown with a touch of auburn. As a kid, Zachary had fought to toughen up, because he'd been born with strawberry-blond curls. The color had deepened as he aged, but that red tint remained. His eyes were almost aqua. Aidan and Jeremy had teased him mercilessly when they were young, but the truth was, he was as striking as a Greek god. He had grown up fighting—but then, as their mother had mourned frequently, there was a reason for the expression "fighting Irish." Regardless, the years had been good for Zach. He could hold his own in any fight, but his first love had always been music, and, like Jeremy, he turned to it often. *The soul's solace*, he called it.

He had been equally ready to opt into the family business. After years in the Miami forensics unit, he had hit his limit when he was called in after a crack addict dad had micro-waved his infant son. He had already acquired a part ownership of a number of small recording studios around the country, but when he had heard the plan to open an investigations office, the idea had intrigued him, and he immediately quit the force.

Aidan was thirty-six now, Jeremy thirty-five, and Zachary thirty-three. They'd done a hell of a lot of fighting as kids, but as adults, they had grown into being friends.

"We should just sell it," Aidan said.

"I'm not real sure what we'd get for it, in its present condition," Zach pointed out.

"Sell it?" Jeremy protested. "It's our...well, it's our heritage."

The other brothers turned to stare at him, frowning. "Our heritage? We didn't even know the placed existed until that lawyer called," Aidan reminded him.

Jeremy shrugged. "Maybe so, but hey, a whole lot of Flynns lived in that house, and now it's come to us. I think that's cool. How many people wake up one morning and discover that they've inherited an antebellum plantation?"

Aidan and Zach stared at the house, then back at their brother.

"Come on," Jeremy protested. "The land alone has to be worth something."

"Right," Aidan said. "So I say we should sell it for its land value."

"No, we should do something with it," Jeremy said, shaking his head. He stared intently at the house, rather than at his brothers. Then he turned to them at last. "What's to keep us from moving to the area, huh?"

Aidan started to object, but he crossed his arms over his chest, instead.

It was true.

He'd come to New Orleans to hunt down a runaway teen. Now that he'd done that, he'd been intending to return to the place he'd called home for some time now, Orlando, Florida. But why? They could relocate the business anywhere they wanted, and without Serena, there was really nothing to tie him to Orlando.

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