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TITLE INFORMATION

GHOST HAMPTON

Ken McGorry

CreateSpace (466 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

In McGorry's Hamptons-based debut mystery, the first in a trilogy, an unlikable lawyer attempts to save a crumbling Victorian house, rumored to be a haunted former brothel, after experiencing deeply troubling visions.

The 55-year-old attorney Lyle Hall proves to be a paradoxical yet endearing character right from the very beginning of this novel. After he's involved in an automobile accident that kills an elderly woman, he's wheelchair-bound and also inexplicably has a new empathic ability. As a result, the formerly morally bankrupt lawyer now finds that he's far more attuned to people's suffering. After he sees an apparition of a girl and also experiences a premonition of the imminent death of his daughter, a newly promoted Southampton police detective, he's moved to save the old Victorian and somehow free the tortured spirits inside. But the entire community is against him, his daughter thinks he's crazy, and more than a few old enemies set out to discredit and humiliate him. Hall's mission proves even more difficult when one media company, "the CNN of paranormal news," makes him into a pop-culture celebrity and ignites a media frenzy. This fluid, cerebral narrative features a cast of unconventional characters and an offbeat sense of humor. The tone is very much reminiscent of crime fiction writer Charles Willeford's, and the paranormal element gives the storyline a dark, almost surreal feel, especially when the town of Bridgehampton becomes a media circus, replete with tent cities filled with paranormal-activity aficionados. Mystery fans should find this darkly comedic novel not only entertaining, but enlightening as well, as Hall's redemptive, brilliantly plotted journey is both painful and poignant.

A powerful tale about family, forgiveness, and ultimately, salvation.

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