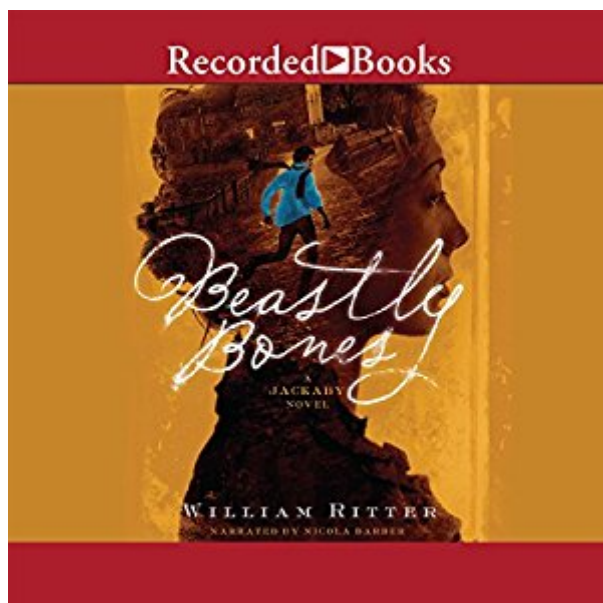


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# Beastly Bones: A Jackaby Novel



## Synopsis

In the highly anticipated sequel to the acclaimed Jackaby, Abigail Rook and Sherlockian detective of the supernatural R. F. Jackaby are back and on the trail of a thief, a monster, and a murderer. "I've found very little about private detective R. F. Jackaby to be standard in the time I've known him. Working as his assistant tends to call for a somewhat flexible relationship with reality." In 1892 New Fiddleham, New England, things are never quite what they seem, especially when Abigail Rook and her eccentric employer, R. F. Jackaby, are called upon to investigate the supernatural. First, a vicious species of shape-shifters disguise themselves as a litter of kittens, and a day later their owner is found murdered with a single mysterious puncture wound. Then, in nearby Gad's Valley, now home to the exiled New Fiddleham police detective Charlie Cane, dinosaur bones from a recent dig mysteriously go missing, and an unidentifiable beast starts attacking animals and people, leaving their mangled bodies behind. Charlie calls on Abigail for help, and soon Abigail and Jackaby are on the hunt for a thief, a monster, and a murderer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Overall Rating 5 Stars-Book Description: 5-Cover: 4-Plot: 5-Creativity: 5-Grammar: 5-Simile Use: 4(little to none)-Description: 4 (well-balanced)The second novel in the Jackaby series continues to follow the eccentric Jackaby and his intrepid assistant Abigail on a new adventure. This novel ties nicely in with the first, thickening the plot of the series along the way. It also gives us a deeper look into Abigail and how she is going to develop as a person. The character development of this novel focuses mainly on Abigail learning how to balance who she wants to be without allowing too many

people to influence her. As always, Jackaby is there to guide her but never pushes her in any one direction. We have intense excitement and twists in the plot that you'll never see coming. Overall, Ritter delivers another fantastic read that is Sherlock Holmes meets the supernatural. Bravo!

The second Jackaby book has proved to be as charming as the first, if even more verbally anachronistic. Never mind all that. As *The Housemate* quite rightly pointed out, "It's an alternate universe!" Nowhere in ours do we find cranky toads that spew sulphurous smoke from their eyes, and at no point did Darwin decide to keep secret creatures that morph into the animals they prey on. Or as Abigail Rook herself puts it, "Working as his (Jackaby's) assistant tends to call for a somewhat flexible relationship with reality." In this volume the two leave New Fiddleham to investigate the theft of a fossil and the murder of the wife of the man who discovered it. They join officer Charlie Cane, who has changed his name to Charlie Barker (If you haven't read the first book, you won't understand why this made me hiccup with laughter.) after leaving New Fiddleham under a cloud of suspicion. Abigail is sweet on Charlie, Charlie is sweet on Abigail, everyone thinks they should just get on with it, including Jackaby who is notoriously obtuse about such things. But before they can, events surrounding the fossil discovery heat up. You have a lot of people telling a lot of lies, dueling paleontologists, an intrepid female reporter who also thinks Abigail should put the moves on Charlie, and a whole lot of cryptozoology going down. In short, it's a Jackaby novel. These stories are like potato chips. I could read one after another and still want more. They're decently written, funny, fast-paced, but they're not just mind candy. There are decent mysteries at the heart of each one. However, in spite of Jackaby being the eponymous hero, these are actually Abigail's stories. She's a true partner to Jackaby, the emotional heart of each book, and in this one in particular, her expertise drives a good bit of the plot. I've heard a sad rumor that Jackaby #4, *The Dire King*, is the final book of the series, and I hope that's not the case. The world Ritter has created is such fun, and filled with so many possibilities that I'm sure he could produce many more adventures. Still, never say never, right? I'll keep hoping he changes his mind. Until then, I have two more to read, and you, dear reader, have a delightful mystery series with which to become acquainted.

Okay, so I'm working my way through the Jackaby series. While it is interesting enough to keep me reading and totally worth the time, it also is such a mash-up of two of my favorite series, I just have to mention it. If you've read Stroud's *Lockwood* series, this is so similar, it's almost spooky. Also, this particular Jackaby novel (*Beastly Bones*) gave me a crazy Harry Potter vibe. Let me just say: big hairy loveable character who likes wild animals; nosy, somewhat invasive reporter woman;

magical bird that attacks reptile and saves main characters; loveable, quiet character who turns into a wolf; dragon & other magical creatures; vampires. I wouldn't call this book a copycat by any means, but I feel like it is a mash-up of Lockwood and Harry Potter. So, if you like those series, give Jackaby a try.

One of my favorite books from last year was Jackaby by William Ritter, a young adult novel of weird happenings. R. F. Jackaby is an eccentric supernatural detective living in New Fiddleham, New England. He sees things that go bump in the night as well as in the daytime. Through extraordinary circumstances, he acquires an assistant/protagonist, a young independent minded woman named Abigail Rook who was not content to sit at home while her parents looked for a suitable husband for her. When she was turned down for the position of assistant to her father in a paleontological dig, she left England in disguise and world her way to America. As Jackaby's assistant, they solved a vexing and complex murder involving the supernatural. I enjoyed the first book thoroughly and immediately ordered the second one to be delivered upon publication. It came the other day and I began to delve. The characters lived again as they had last year. Jackaby was still an odd mix of Sherlock Holmes, John Silence and Carnacki. Abigail was headstrong and plucky. The house where Jackaby lives is filled with many things. There is the ghost of the owner Jenny Cavanaugh who is Abigail's closest friend since Jackaby has some less than sociable tendencies. Jenny has been murdered and the murder has never been solved. Jackaby has vowed to do it when Jenny wants him to but that time has not yet come. The case begins with a woman who is upset that her cat has had kittens and then turned into a fish. The kittens are far from normal. They are chameleomorphs, animals who take on the form and characteristics of their food source. The mother cat has been fed fish, ergo she begins to change. Jackaby is concerned because these are seriously dangerous beasties and he has plans to turn them into fish and then feed them insects within a confined area. As trapped insects they are not nearly as tough. They attract the attention of Jackaby's friend Hank Hudson, a trapper of oddities and an old friend. He is hunting something big and odd in a neighboring county. While trying to determine where the dangerous kittens came from, they are asked to check out the mysterious death of a farm wife nearby. Her husband has found dinosaur bones and is trying to get some help and publicity. This brings in two rival paleontologists who hate each other. Then bones start missing and Jackaby becomes sure that the bones represent a mystical beast that should not be there. And then the strange footprints appear. It was a fun story and I got suckered deep into it so that I missed a few of the vital clues. But in the end I was very satisfied and horrified that it will again

be a long time before the next book is available. The characters are fun, even Jackaby's former assistant who is now a duck. The ghost is likable most of the time. The policeman, Charlie Barker from the first book, provides a suitable romantic interest for Abigail, though they are both incredibly shy and inexperienced, much like the intended audience for this volume. I can heartily recommend these titles. There is a short story available for Kindle only that I have not yet read, but the weekend is coming soon. Check it out.

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