



Vanishing Games

Roger Hobbs

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The gritty, riveting, highly anticipated sequel to the national (and international) best seller *Ghostman*, by the critically acclaimed and award-winning Roger Hobbs

It's just before dawn on the South China Sea when three experienced pirates open fire on a small smuggling yacht. Their target: a bag of uncut sapphires worth millions. But when one of them stumbles across an enormous treasure that wasn't on the manifest, everything goes sideways. Within minutes two of them are dead, leaving the third, a coldblooded psychopath, to claim both the sapphires and the mysterious windfall for himself. If he disappears, he won't just be wealthy. He'll have the power to change the course of history.

His boss, Angela, isn't about to let that happen. She calls in a favor from her onetime protégé: a fixer sometimes known as Jack, or more often as simply the Ghostman. Within hours he's flying halfway around the world to find her in the glimmering neon slums of Macau. Jack has no real name, no address and no fingerprints—but given the right motivation, he can make serious problems vanish. Though the two haven't talked since they botched a job six years ago, as soon as Jack's off the plane they're back together again, facing down a crime boss, a hit man and a conspiracy bigger than anything they've ever encountered and more dangerous than they could've imagined.

Their partnership—between people with no lasting relationships whatsoever—is at the very heart of a novel that will cement Roger Hobbs's status as one of our most talented crime writers.

Vanishing Games Details

Date : Published July 7th 2015 by Knopf (first published 2014)

ISBN : 9780385352642

Author : Roger Hobbs

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Mystery, Crime, Suspense, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review Vanishing Games for online ebook

Stephanie says

A much smoother Jack White than I remember from GHOSTMAN -- but nevertheless, a fast-paced and thrilling high-stakes caper that is enjoyable from start to finish.

Gram says

This book reads like an encyclopedia of crime. You'll learn how to commit scores of criminal acts, from basic fraud to acts of extreme violence - all carried out at an absolutely blistering pace. You'll find out how a master thief/fixer carries out all manner of illegal acts - including how to fashion a basic silencer from an empty beer bottle and strips of newspaper. You'll meet up with Angela, a woman as dangerous as her onetime protégé, who's sometimes known as Jack, or more often as the Ghostman and learn a vast amount of detail about sapphires. There's also a crazed gunman who enjoys killing people and is on a mission to recover a huge amount of "supernotes" - the best dollar bill forgeries ever made. Almost all the action takes place in and around the city of Macau. An absolutely brilliant sequel to Roger Hobbs' debut novel "Ghostman".

Kemper says

Jack is a *ghostman* a professional thief whose specialty is disappearing and living off the grid. He's a master of disguise, has more fake passports than Jason Bourne, knows more about guns than Rambo, and can crack locks and safes as fast as most of us can type in a password. Jack lives for the action and his biggest problem is boredom as he fritters away his downtime posing as a moderately successful professional gambler at a casino.

That changes when he gets a message from his old mentor, Angela. She's the one who taught him all the tricks of the trade, and they were partners and friends as they traveled the world stealing and having fun spending the loot. However, Jack hasn't seen her in six years ever since a job went sideways, but now she's asking for help so he hops the first plane to Macua. There he finds that an operation she'd planned involving stealing sapphires from smugglers has gone horribly wrong. She doesn't have the gems, but she's being hunted by a serious badass named Laurence who believes she has something even more valuable from the boat. Jack is determined to help save the one person in the world who knows his real name, but he and two of them will need all their skills to survive the Macau criminal underworld and Laurence's relentless murder spree.

I enjoyed Ghostman, the first book starring Jack, which at its best made him seem like a 21st century version of Richard Stark's Parker. He's an unapologetic criminal who knows every angle and has a shady connection in every major city in the world. However, it's biggest problem was that Roger Hobbs never quite knew when to stop showing off all the research he'd done, and the book had too much of Jack lecturing the reader on the minutiae of every single bit of equipment or process that came up. It often seemed to be as concerned with telling us all the ways that something could have been done rather than what actually happened.

At first it seemed like this one would follow the same pattern. The first several pages detail smuggling and piracy in the South China Sea, the mining of gems in Myanmar, character traits of the pirate crew trying to steal the sapphires, and a description of what kind of weapon is being used as a sniper rifle including how much it costs. Or in another early part Jack spends several paragraphs laying out all the ways you can be shot through a hotel door including his speculation about the door frames and walls as potential protection, and none of it matters because nobody shoots at him.

That's the kind of stuff that can ground a story and lend it authenticity but use it too much and it just becomes infodumps. Fortunately, this falls mostly by the wayside as the action of the book gets going, and eventually it turns into a pretty well paced action-thriller. At a brisk 289 pages compared to the slightly bloated 400 of *Ghostman* it seems that Hobbs either realized that sometimes less is more, or he got a good editor. Either way, it's an entertaining crime novel with an international feel.

K says

Wow, what a fun ride! This book, the 2nd in a series, was my first foray into Mr. Hobb's work, and it was rewarding and enjoyable. As another reviewer had mentioned, one must suspend, just a bit, one's critical thinking to avoid the implausibility inherent in passages found along the way. Nevertheless, this is, after all, a work of fiction, meant to entertain, and in that respect, it succeeds.

I wanted a change of pace in between reading two Nordic noir mysteries, and this fit the bill. I selected this, the second novel of his series, as my first, based on other reviews here on Goodreads, that indicated the author had improved his pacing, etc. Criticisms of his tendency to slow things down with explanations for the reader of how various illegal activities can be done or how a lock may be picked, etc., are valid, but I found these to be minor annoyances. His larger flaw, in my opinion, is his apparent unwillingness to explore the relationship that seems a bit one-sided, between the two protagonists-- I kept waiting for a romantic interlude, or at least the promise thereof, to break out between them, given the intensity of one's fascination and devotion for the other. On the other hand, I also half-expected the woman to double cross her "pupil" in the end, but I won't spoil anymore of the plot here.

It is a fast-paced ride indeed, fun and full of action-- a quick read and lovely diversion. I will read the first book, "Ghostman," now for comparison. Enjoy.

Maxim Chernykh says

Vanishing Games starts with a bang and after few chapters runs downhill. Runs? It's better to say plows. I envy book critics who're able to put into words why boring book is boring and dull book is dull. Alas I'm not a critic so I'll just say this — Vanishing Games is plain dull with all its' marksman shootings, quick running, coldblooded killings, desperate chases and all this stuff. Moreover, Mr. Hobbs over-saturated his book with protagonists' self-explanations and all kinds of criminal information and details. Maybe he's better off writing tourist guides.

Debbie says

I loved the Ghostman and have been waiting for the follow up. While the Ghostman started out with a bang the first few pages, it took a little further for this one to get going. Not that much further though. Just like his

first book, this one kept me on the edge of my seat. While I think the first one was better than this one, this one did not disappoint.

I love how the narrator, Jack or whatever his name is, steps kinda back out of scene and describes to you the translation for the "Ghostman" terms. Or even just the different ways he could be handling a certain situation. Like he's talking right to you and doesn't want you to loose in the story.

If you haven't read any of Roger Hobbs' books, you are totally missing out!

Thanks Penguin for letting me use my points from the First to Read program so I could enjoy this very thrilling and entertaining book.

Eric says

While not as interesting as Ghostman, the first book in the series, this was a solid crime thriller told from the point-of-view of master thief "Jack White," about his reuniting with an old flame that was also his mentor and partner-in-crime.

Tony says

VANISHING GAMES. (2015). Roger Hobbs. ***.

The last book written by Hobbs was his premier novel, "Ghostman." That turned out to be an excellent introduction to his writing skills, and went on to win numerous prizes and to become a best seller. This novel, which features the same series character, has a smell to it. I think it is testosterone. The premise is much the same, but it seems as if Hobbs has run out of new ideas. The rule then becomes: If you run out of ideas, kill someone. This work lacks the excitement of the first book, and is tediously formulaic. I was disappointed. Often, a writer's second book falls flat on its face. It's the third one that either redeems them or not. I guess I'll have to wait and see.

Kathleen (QueenKatieMae) says

When a trio of pirates ambushes a yacht in the South China Sea they discover the cargo is more than the fortune in sapphires they were hired to steal. There is an incredible find on that yacht, something worth killing for. Only one man returns to shore and texts the "jugmaker", his employer Angela, that he has the stones but doesn't tell her what else was on the boat. Then he disappears. Angela receives a deadly threat: Return what you stole and I will return the sapphires. With her back against the wall, Angela contacts someone she hasn't seen for five years, someone who thought she was dead: Jack, a criminal with extraordinary skills, a Ghostman. And Angela, his mentor, taught him everything he knows.

To tell any more of the book would ruin all the surprises and twists that make it an entertaining and exciting read. The author is obviously having a great time with his characters and the setting, the island of Macau. After hearing the author, Roger Hobbs, speak the other night about the second book in his Ghostman series it was apparent that he loves what he does and intends to keep writing. He has the basics of the third book

lined up and is very excited. His exuberance comes across in *Vanishing Games*.

The relationship between Jack and Angela goes way back and they have what appears to be more than just a non-romantic student/teacher connection. It's an interesting collaborative partnership and I think the author does a good job of keeping it genuine. Unlike the first book, *Ghostman*, which had a team working together on a job, *Vanishing Games* is just the two of them. And it works well.

But what really amused me about this book is that it almost reads like a textbook on how to be a master criminal. The reader will learn the best way to scuttle a boat, destroy the facial features of a severed head, make a silencer out of a plastic pop bottle, the workings of a "Kansas City Shuffle", and how to break into a hotel room using a program off the internet to bypass the card key system. And that is only naming a few of the tricks someone can learn from this book.

It's a fun read with a fast and furious ending. This book does not disappoint. Recommended for those who love thrillers or want to pick up some extra tips on how to become a *Ghostman*.

Darcia Helle says

I loved Hobbs' first book, *Ghostman*. I've been waiting for this sequel, and was thrilled when I was able to receive an ARC. That is where the thrill ended for me.

This second book is something of a mishmash. The first chapter, which is for some reason labeled as a Prologue (it's not), is fast-paced action. Sucked me right in. Had me wanting more. And then...

The pace slows. Dramatically. We're told a lot of things that are too much like research and explanations. These passages are interesting, sure, but they feel a little like the snotty kid who has to show off all his knowledge. These passages don't flow with the book. They take us aside and say, "Hey, want to know how this works? Want to know why this is done?"

Then we have the reminiscing. Much of the content, particularly up through the middle of the book, is Jack and/or Angela looking back at their lives, their crimes, how awesome they were, and what they've gotten away with. Some of this is to help orient readers who haven't read *Ghostman*, but most of it is filler. The plot doesn't have enough going on, so let's bring in bits and pieces of past excitement and show off. I'm not saying that was the author's intent. That's just what it felt like for me. In fact, I think plot development suffered severely because of this.

About midway through the book, the pace picks up again. We have far less reminiscing and the focus is once again on the plot at hand. Parts were riveting. Parts had me rolling my eyes. The plot itself was fascinating. The way the pieces came together held my interest. But then we add the telling again. This is how a pro escapes. This is how a con artist works. This is how you find an off books doctor, and this is why he/she is willing to work on you. It's a how-to instruction manual. It's a criminal handbook. Yes, it's interesting, as an aside. In a Google search. In nonfiction. Not so much within a thriller novel. *Ghostman* handled these aspects better, weaving them into the story. This felt more like show and tell.

The characters aren't developed well. Most of what I know about them comes from having read *Ghostman*, and then from the reminiscing here in *Vanishing Games*. It was hard to really care about what was

happening. I would have loved more time with the characters, in the present, and less time with crime lessons and reminiscing.

Roger Hobbs absolutely is a great writer, which I think is part of what irritated me so much. He is a far better writer than this book shows him to be.

Michael says

Jack the Ghostman is backed, this time his mentor, Angela needs his help. After a heist to steal some uncut sapphires worth millions of dollars goes wrong, Angela finds herself in trouble. An unknown crime organisation seems to be after her and she is stuck in Macau without any help. She turned to her protégé in the hope to get back the sapphires and get out alive.

I remember Ghostman to be a fun, fast paced heist novel so when book two, Vanishing Games was released, I knew I would eventually read it. What worked really well in the book was the setting; Macau becomes this mysterious city full of uncertainty. A sovereign state of China, Macau is one of the richest countries in the world, thanks to housing the largest gambling district. A tourist attraction for high rollers, but still housing a seedy underbelly. I had a lot of fun with this book, it was fun and action packed, but still a typical heist novel which is not a bad thing.

This review originally appeared on my blog; <http://www.knowledgelost.org/book-rev...>

Robin Carter says

Review

I didn't read this book, i devoured it. I began to read it about 9am and by lunchtime it was gone, i just could not put it down, and i could not slow down, it has a plot line like a rip-tide; it catches you unaware, grabs you before you know it and yanks you along on a hectic danger fueled ride. This really is a stunningly successful follow-up to the impressive debut Ghostman.

full review: <https://parmenionbooks.wordpress.com/...>

Robin says

Dang, that was good! Nonstop action, appealing hero and heroine who are both tough as nails, fascinating details on how to decapitate someone or perform self-surgery on an eye, inside information on heists, all set in the fascinating city of Macau. Throughout the book I kept thinking "Geez, that was interesting. I had no idea!" If you haven't read GHOSTMAN, by all means get it ASAP so you can read this when it's released this summer.

James Thane says

I really enjoyed Ghostman, the debut novel by Roger Hobbs, and the second installment in the series is just as intriguing and fast-paced. It begins when a small band of highly organized crooks attacks a yacht in the South China Sea. The crew of the yacht is smuggling millions of dollars worth of uncut sapphires, and the robbers intend to relieve the smugglers of the gems. But once on board the yacht, the robbers get a huge surprise and from that moment, the carefully planned scheme quickly flies off the rails.

The jugmarker who spent months planning this operation and picking the crew is a very tough, clever woman named Angela, and when everything goes sideways, she knows that not only the operation but her life as well is now at serious risk. There's only one person that she can turn to for help--the Ghostman, a former confederate that she first discovered as a young man and trained up to be a master criminal.

It's been five years since the two have seen each other. Angela vanished at the tail end of a bank job gone bad and the Ghostman doesn't even know if she's still alive. But he misses her every day and when he receives her coded distress message, he's off and running, determined to help in any way that he can. He grabs the first flight out for Macau and on arriving, finds himself smack in the middle of a very complex and dangerous situation. Angela's--and now, his--adversaries are brilliant and ruthless, and if the Ghostman is going to save the day, he's going to have to draw on every last resource he possesses.

You really can't say much more about the plot without giving too much away, but this is a high-octane ride that moves at a breakneck pace. Realistically, you need to read it at a breakneck pace as well, otherwise the implausibility of it all might catch up and overwhelm you. But this isn't a problem. The first scene is a real grabber and once you're into it, you're not going to want to put this one down for any silly reason like eating, sleeping, working, or whatever else you might otherwise be doing. I'm already looking forward to the next installment.

Book Addict Shaun says

After reading and enjoying Ghostman I then read that a sequel was in the works, and I couldn't wait to read it. Vanishing Games is that sequel and for me it was even more thrilling and exciting to read than Ghostman.

Vanishing Games is one of those books you really need to read without knowing all that much about it. So the blurb tells us that after a heist in Macau goes badly wrong, a criminal mastermind known only as Angela must call upon her old friend Jack, the Ghostman, to help her fix things before she ends up dead. Jack arrives in Macau and finds himself embroiled in a criminal conspiracy bigger than he has ever seen. Jack and Angela soon have their work cut out for them trying to stay alive and attempting to escape. They are being chased by some very dangerous people who will stop at nothing to take back what was stolen from them. And in terms of what was stolen it makes for compelling reading, and had me reading up further online about real life cases.

To call Vanishing Games all the usual cliches: addictive, heartstopping, thrilling etc would be an understatement. It really is nonstop action all the way through with two of the best characters I have read

about this year in Jack and Angela. I was a little bit confused in the beginning because I was convinced I knew so much about Angela already, but then I remembered about the Angela from Lorenzo Carcaterra's most recent novel, *The Wolf*. Both characters have various similarities however and Roger's Angela is one of the best female characters that I have ever read about. In *Ghostman* Jack was very much an enigma, a truly intriguing character and in *Vanishing Games* we are given further insight into his past, especially his relationship with Angela, somebody he hasn't seen for six years since she quite literally vanished from his life. They are both massively interesting characters, and when they are together on the page you can almost feel the tension yourself.

One of the real strengths of this series is the research carried out by Roger Hobbs, and his obvious knowledge about the subjects that he is talking about. He has captured the settings of Macau and Hong Kong and the various other places our characters find themselves in brilliantly. It felt as if I was part of the book myself, but I was relieved to not actually be a part of it. Roger goes into great detail when discussing technology, drugs, criminals and the underworld, some might say it can be too much detail because it does detract from the action somewhat but personally I want that level of detail and I doubt there will be a thriller released this year more authentic than *Vanishing Games*.

The story moves at a blistering pace as we follow Jack and Angela across this metropolis as they fight to stay alive. It's one of those stories where you never know what's around the corner, you only know that you can't wait to find out. Towards the end of the book in particular things become extremely intense, and I just had to finish the book in one sitting. Jack and Angela find themselves in so many situations that leave you wondering just how the hell they are going to get out of them, but as the masters of disguise they are two of the cleverest and most cunning characters I have ever read about. All too often you can read a thriller that is ruined by its ending, but the ending in *Vanishing Games* was just as good as everything that came before. I highly recommend that readers pick up this book, and *Ghostman* too for those that haven't already. *Vanishing Games* is one of those books that reminds me why I read and I loved every minute of it.
