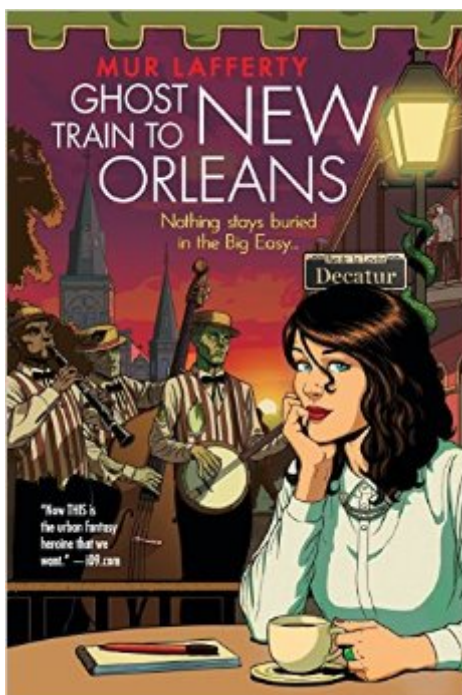


The book was found

Ghost Train To New Orleans (The Shambling Guides)



Synopsis

COULD YOU FIND A MUSEUM FOR A MONSTER? OR A JAZZ BAR FOR A JABBERWOCK? Zoe Norris writes travel guides for the undead. And she's good at it too -- her new-found ability to talk to cities seems to help. After the success of *The Shambling Guide to New York City*, Zoe and her team are sent to New Orleans to write the sequel. Work isn't all that brings Zoe to the Big Easy. The only person who can save her boyfriend from zombism is rumored to live in the city's swamps, but Zoe's out of her element in the wilderness. With her supernatural colleagues waiting to see her fail, and rumors of a new threat hunting city talkers, can Zoe stay alive long enough to finish her next book?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

WARNING: This post contains major spoilers for book 1 in the Shambling Guides series, *œThe Shambling Guide to New York City*. • If you haven't read it, go read that instead of this review. It was a great book, though I never wrote an official review. I am, admittedly, a fan of *Mur* I Should Be Writing podcast, and that was the reason I picked up her first traditionally published novel, *œThe Shambling Guide to New York City* • last year when it came out. That is, however, not why I had this book delivered on release day. That was because *Shambling Guide*, the first book in the series, was a delightful read, and it made me want to read this book as well. (I will buy a single book from an author out of loyalty or interest. If I buy more, it's because I liked the first one.) *The Ghost Train to New Orleans* starts in New York City, not long after the end of the first book. *Zo* is trying to figure out her new city talker powers and come to terms with the friends

she has lost. Before she has time to do this, however, she is sent away to New Orleans by her boss, to write the second shambling guide. Before she leaves, she goes to talk to Arthur, who is now kind-of her boyfriend. They discover that the medicine he needs to keep him from turning completely into a zombie has gone missing, and they have no way to contact the only person they know who can make more. Thus, Arthur decides to accompany Zoë to New Orleans, where the teacher of the man who made his potion "and possibly the only other person who can make it" lives, if she's still alive. The group, including several of Zoë's coworkers, depart on the titular Ghost Train, where Zoë is forced to sit in the human car, a victim of "discrimination".

How would you like to attend a masked Carnival ball hosted by a shady dude called "The One Who Kills and Is Thanked For It" when you've packed only grubby clothes and you're flanked by two omni-gorgeous goddesses? Zoë isn't crazy about it, but it's all part of her job editing travel guides for the undead and immortal. It's a job she's very good at and while, yes, it can be a little nerve-racking overseeing writers who'd love to eat her brains, smite her dead, or drink her blood, times are tough and Zoë needs the steady income. Plus she now has a water sprite, a death goddess, and a Valkyrie as her best friends, which can sometimes be unsettling but is still pretty cool. At least that's what Zoë thinks most of the time. I can't resist this witty urban fantasy series and one of the best things about it is Zoë, a non-paranormal human who recently discovered she isn't quite as ordinary as she thought. It turns out she can talk to the souls of cities--a trick that may come in handy for a travel editor if she can figure out how to master it. In this book she and her team of writers take a high speed ghost train to New Orleans to gather material for their next city guide, but Zoë is also hoping to help her new boyfriend Arthur find a voodoo-like herbalist somewhere in the swamps who may have medicine to stave off Arthur's zombie infection. Right from the start there are difficulties. Zoë is relegated to coach while her writers ride first class because the paranormals in charge don't consider humans quite equal, their train is robbed by a bunch of ghosts in badly fitting cowboy costumes, and Arthur is refusing Zoë's help and has knocked himself out with Benadryl for the trip so they can't talk about it.

Mur Lafferty's "The Shambling Guide to New York City" was a quirky and funny twist on the rapidly-growing-stale ("staling"?) urban fantasy genre. Her follow-up novel, "Ghost Train to New Orleans" is inevitably less of a revelation, but, despite being a bit packed with chaos, it's still a fun journey. Lafferty's world is full of vampires, zombies, voodoo priestesses, golem-makers, demons,

and a wide variety of other supernatural "coterie" that regular humans are too oblivious to notice. In the first book, young, unemployed travel writer Zoe stumbles into the editorship of a tourist guide to New York City aimed at coterie. In the course of producing the guide, she also gets seduced by an incubus, survives a minor zombie apocalypse, and acquires a zombie-bitten boyfriend. The boyfriend, coincidentally, is also her neighbor and an employee of Public Works, the human agency that interfaces with the coterie -- sometimes, with extreme prejudice. Zoe's next project is pretty much what the book's title says: Take a ghost train to New Orleans, then write a guide to the city. To no reader's surprise, this will not turn out to be a simple thing. I won't spoil any of the shenanigans by relating events out in any detail -- partly because there's a lot I can't remember -- but, basically, stuff happens. There's some ghostly robbers to deal with, an enigmatic city-talker to puzzle out, a surly vampire that wants Zoe dead, a missing cat, a very-likely-to-be-ex-boyfriend who lost his anti-zombie pills, a friendly god, a zoetist -- or maybe we should call her a voodoo priestess -- who wouldn't mind having Zoe for lunch, and an at-least-half-crazed city that wants to play games with Zoe's head. The first book was a little bit of a mess.

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