



City of the Undead

Voodoo, Ghosts, and Vampires of New Orleans

ROBIN ROBERTS

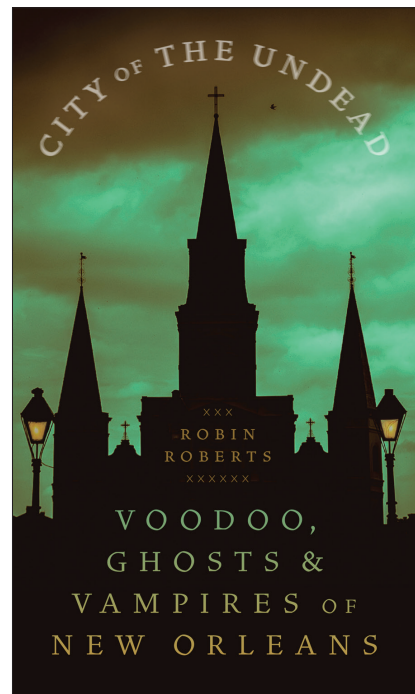
From its looming above-ground cemeteries to the ghosts believed to haunt its stately homes, New Orleans is a city deeply entwined with death, the undead, and the supernatural. The reasons behind New Orleans’s reputation as America’s most haunted city are numerous. Its location near the mouth of the Mississippi River grants it a liminal status between water and land, while its Old World architecture and lush, moss-covered oak trees lend it an eerie beauty. Complementing the city’s mysterious landscape, spiritual beliefs and practices from Native American, African, African American, Caribbean, and European cultures mingle in a unique ferment of the paranormal. An extremely high death rate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and a long history of enslavement and oppression have also produced fertile soil for stories of the undead. Focusing on three manifestations of the supernatural in New Orleans—Voodoo, ghosts, and vampires—Robin Roberts argues that the paranormal gives voice to the voiceless, including victims of racism and oppression, thus encouraging the living not to repeat the injustices of the past.

ROBIN ROBERTS attended Mount Holyoke College, where the presence of its founder’s grave in the center of campus kindled her interest in the otherworldly. After receiving her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, she taught undergraduate and graduate courses with a focus on popular culture and gender. She lives in New Orleans.

PRAISE FOR *CITY OF THE UNDEAD*

“This book takes us from the city’s origins all the way to Hollywood, and it is long overdue. We are fortunate that Robin Roberts decided to write it. As in all her books, her prose is accessible and her research exhaustive; and that she herself saw a ghost in the French Quarter—well, that’s just lagniappe!”—*Nancy Dixon, editor of N.O. Lit: 200 Years of New Orleans Literature*

“This fascinating new study explores New Orleans’s rich tradition of voodoo, ghost, and vampire tales as they have been told in forms ranging from the oral folktale to the urban walking tour to Emmy-winning television shows. While these stories are often told for profit and with the intent of giving audiences a safely contained experience of the supernatural, both individually and taken together they point to an even more terrifying truth: the centuries-old history of racism and sexism that women have braved to claim space for themselves in American history and culture. Highly recommended!”—*Lisa Yaszek, editor of The Future Is Female! series and coeditor of The Routledge Companion to Gender and Science Fiction*



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