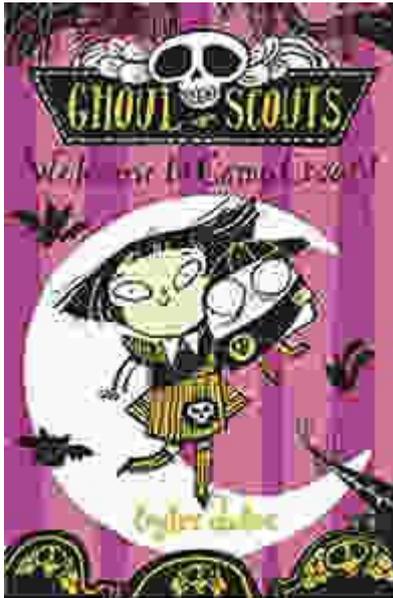


Ghoul Scouts: Welcome to Camp Croak

Taylor Dolan



Er...Okay...Um... What?... Oh! HA HA HA HA HA!

That's pretty much the reading curve of this frankly insane little story, which moves at a quick pace and literarily and visually throws things in your face. The chapters are short, the words are wild and the illustrations are *off the wall!* If you're expecting a traditional story format, it takes some getting used to, so my advice would be to get up, get down, shake it around, shed all your expectations and board the bonkers rollercoaster.

The story centres around Lexie and her unexpected but eventful stay at a scout camp for otherworldly kids. After the initial shock, she quickly makes friends with her freaky campmates and the sisters in charge. It's the best fun ever, only the best fun is about to be challenged by the worst, most loathsome character ever. And we're not talking Dave the Kraken who lives in the bayou.

Ah yes, *bayou*. You may not be familiar with the word. It comes from Louisiana French and means a swamp, wetland or slow-moving section of a river – generally not ideal for swimming in, especially if it's inhabited by a half-blind Kraken who likes a snack. But back to the language, because it's kind of important. The Louisiana tongue narrates the story, shapes the story and makes the story what it is – and I've never come across anything like it.

Although it's a total page-turner, my advice would be to turn those pages slowly and relish the pictures, the Cajun vibe and the bubbling rise and fall of Louisiana porch-talk delivery.

And keeping with the theme, it's only fitting that this supernatural story also plays around with Voodoo, which adds a most mysterious touch. Especially for those less aware of the magic. There's a glossary at the back for terms you may not have come across, and I gobbled it up, fascinated by the unusual words that roll around the story like curious marbles.

There are so many hilarious moments in the book, such as the aforementioned Dave the Kraken and the interesting camp game of Catching A Cold. Lexie's own particular way of communicating – quick and cynical and yet totally open to new experiences – rushes right to the chuckle muscle, and the chapter titles are an utter delight. How could you resist: *Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost, Especially If They Brought GPS. Or: Bless Your Slimy Excuse For A Heart.*

In short, this is a wild and wicked experience. It will pick you up with one hand and tickle you with the other, whilst dragging you through page after page of horrible but hilarious morsels. It's dark humour for adventurous beginners – and like a bungee jump into the bayou, it'll dip your head deep into a supernatural soup of a rather silly temperature.

Magic and misfits with your cup of mirth, ma'am? Then I'd highly recommend a visit to *Ghoul Scouts*.

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