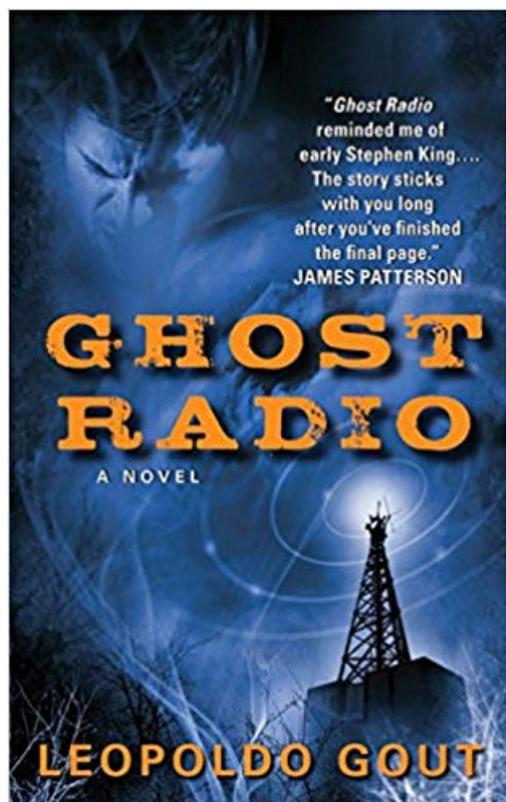


Ghost Radio *by* Leopoldo Gout



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In this chilling first novel by filmmaker, composer, and graphic novelist Leopoldo Gout, a ghost story call-in program opens a doorway into the paranormal.

“Ghost Radio reminded me of early Stephen King. The story sticks with you long after you’ve finished the final page.” —James Patterson

From the cramped bowels of a dimly lit radio station, Ghost Radio is beamed onto the airwaves. More than a call-in show to tell scary stories about vampires and poltergeists, Ghost Radio is a sanctuary for those sleepless denizens of the night, lost halfway between this world and the next.

Joaquin, the hip, melancholy host, sits deep in a fog of cigarette smoke, fielding calls from believers and detractors alike. He is joined in the booth by his darkly beautiful girlfriend, Alondra, and his engineer, Watts. Soon what began as an underground cult sensation is primed to break out to mainstream audiences. When a huge radio conglomerate offers to syndicate the show and Ghost Radio becomes a national hit with an expanding legion of hardcore fans, neither Joaquin, Alondra, nor Watts is remotely prepared for what is about to happen.

When Joaquin notices a curious and troubling phenomenon, he is inexplicably drawn further and further into the terrifying stories he solicits on the radio. As he slowly loses control over his reality and finds himself unable to distinguish between the real world and the world populated by the nightmares on Ghost Radio, he’s forced to confront his past and his own mortality in order to repair the crumbling wall between the living and the dead.



Reviews of the **Ghost Radio** by Leopoldo Gout

Worla

To readers: ghost radio is about a young man Joaquin who has his own radio show whose callers share their own supernatural experiences. These calls are peppered throughout the storyline. Joaquin begins experiencing everything his callers relate as if he's there experiencing it with them, the lines of reality begin to blur. He visits a priest's resident to sort out who has been prank calling him from that phone #, gets into a brawl, and leaves the priest unconscious. When he returns, the priest is savagely stabbed to death and every person and animal appears to have disappeared suddenly. He questions if an atom bomb went off and if he's losing his mind. He ends up finding his way back home and people and animals mysteriously reappear which Joaquin has an even harder time explaining. This is but one example of how reality begins to play "tricks" on him, feeling tortured and hopeless. His best friend growing up was in a tragic accident, and Jaoquin still feels his absence keenly, but it's when Jaoquin starts feeling his best friends vengeful presence that he becomes even more upset. His reality is in a constant flux so that the history he knows can change at any instant, but he isn't privy to the new reality's history he's been inserted into. Keeps you wondering if he's crazy or what.

To the author: obviously really enjoyed reading this diamond in the rough. The peppering of ghost stories was absolutely wonderful but interfered with the flow of the story and I had to remember what was going on before the ghost story. The flashback towards the end to Jaoquin and Gabriel's hospital stay where we learn they listened to a program called ghost radio was a great addition but it was difficult keeping track of all the different things happening at that time to Jaoquin in addition to a flashback. Overall very nice job, I look forward to another engaging read!

Whitehammer

Ghost Radio doesn't fit neatly into the paradigms of the horror genre. The author uses disturbing ambiguities to sustain a constant sense of being off-kilter - a sense shared by both the the reader and the protagonist. Characters and chronology are intricately messed with in a way that screams for resolution; for most of the book we are follow a protagonist who alternately craves The Answer but also seems to run from it. The resolution, when it comes, is specific enough to make the novel feel complete (there is no sense of lingering but cheap mystery) but also true to the elusiveness of the rest of the book.

Wymefw

Leopoldo's masterful storytelling really draws you into the book, and makes you think about the characters, the context and the timing of the book. Not a book to read if you are looking for a light read...

Every chapter has a new angle, changing the narrator and point in time. Was so drawn into the book that "had" to finish it over a weekend. Now I am re-starting the book and unraveling new secrets I had not seen before.

Look forward to more book from Leopoldo.

Wizard

Following the logic that ghost stories are creepiest when read aloud, I listened to an audio version of Ghost Radio. I later found out that the physical copy of the book has illustrations scattered throughout the book, and I'm disappointed that I missed them.

Joaquin and Alondra are the hosts of "Ghost Radio", a Mexican radio program. Listeners call in and share their stories about the paranormal and the scary. It's wildly successful; so much so that Joaquin is given a chance to bring the radio show Stateside. His return to Texas, however, is bittersweet; memories of the deaths of his parents and his best friend haunt him. Or is it more than mere memories? Joaquin finds himself being drawn into the ghostly world described by his callers, and seeing specters of his own. But is Joaquin really being haunted by the dead...or is he just losing his mind, snapping under the pressure of work and suppressed traumas?

The best parts of this book by far were the stories told by Joaquin's callers. Most of them were very traditional ghost stories. A dead relative appearing before a caller after he'd passed away, or a girl trying to see the image of her future husband in a mirror at midnight - that sort of thing. But they were articulated so well on the page - and read perfectly by Pedro Pascal on the audio track - that it was like listening to ghost stories around a campfire, wonderful spooky entertainment.

The main story with Joaquin and Alondra didn't flow so smoothly. The narration constantly jumps characters, which would be difficult enough to follow since each switch isn't clearly delineated. To make things even more confusing, the perspective also changes irregularly; Joaquin might be narrating in the third person for a few pages, only to suddenly change to a few paragraphs in the first person. It's very choppy, and at times nearly impossible to tell who is speaking. Gout also tries to weave Toltec mythology into the story, but it always seems very forced. I think he is trying to use the idea of living in dreams to partially explain the world of ghosts...but it isn't clear at all.

The first half of Ghost Radio is significantly better than the second. Joaquin seems to be losing his grip on sanity, and it's definitely reflected in the structure of the book. By the final third, though, the bizarre, disconnected imagery is overwhelming, and the final conclusion didn't seem to pay off as I had hoped. There are some promising passages here. I loved the short stories called in to Joaquin's radio show - I almost wish Gout had written a collection of spooky short stories instead. I think it would have been so much better than this convoluted novel.

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