



Jazz Funeral: An Action-Packed New Orleans Mystery (Skip Langdon #3) (The Skip Langdon Series)

Julie Smith

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The THIRD book in the **Edgar Award-winning Skip Langdon mystery series**

"A genuinely moving mystery ... a no-nonsense, level-headed heroine." *–The Baltimore Sun*

"A super protagonist, well-defined characters, and musical highlights make this essential." *–Library Journal*

NEW ORLEANS JAZZFEST PRODUCER STABBED! TEENAGE SISTER MISSING!

Everybody loved easygoing Ham Brocato, producer of the famed New Orleans JazzFest. So how did he end up stabbed to death on his kitchen floor?

New Orleans Homicide Detective Skip Langdon just happens to be on hand when Ham's body is discovered in the middle of his own party the evening before the Fest. To complicate the already murky case, the victim's sixteen-year-old blues musician sister has disappeared, and Skip suspects that if the young woman isn't the murderer, she's in mortal danger from the person who is. So Task One is finding Melody, ambitious, unhappy at home, and determined to break from her family.

As she probes the victim's tangled relationships, Skip finds a Southern family to rival any in Tennessee Williams, including Ham's live-in lover, feisty and swiftly rising star Ti-Belle Thiebaud; his father George, enmeshed with family members in a bitter disagreement over the family's lucrative Po' Boy chain; and Patty, his distraught stepmother.

In this tale of southern kinships gone awry, she's assisted by her long-distance love, Steve Steinman, and her gay landlord, Jimmy Dee. Meanwhile, Melody's dangerous yet exhilarating journey tugs at the heart and raises the pulse rate.

"Smith's Big Easy setting is a **lively blend** of big city and gossipy small town." *–Publishers Weekly*

Fans of Laura Lippman, Ace Atkins, James Lee Burke, and the HBO series TREME will adore this satisfying and complex cop whodunit. And fans of YA fiction will fall in love with Melody!

Excerpt:

"At \$250 a pop," fumed a red-faced man, "you'd think we'd at least get a drink."

The shrill, uncertain buzz they'd noticed was developing a hysterical note. This was a party that wasn't fun. Bemused, Skip and Steve worked their way back around to the front.

"Ham I could see," said Skip. "He could have had to work late—it's his busiest time. But where's Ti-Belle?"

"Oh, 'bout two houses away, I'd say. Approaching at a dead run, having just parked a Thunderbird with a squeal of wheels."

Skip had heard the squeal, but had paid it no mind. Now she saw a very thin woman coming towards them,

hair flying, long legs shining brown, sticking out from a white silk shorts suit. Over one shoulder she carried a lightweight flight bag. Golden-throated Ti-Belle Thiebaud, the fastest-rising star on the New Orleans music scene.

Steve said, “I’d know those legs anywhere.”

She never performed in any garment that wasn’t short, split, slit, or halfway missing. Some said the whole country would know those legs soon. They said she was going to be bigger than large, larger than huge.

Thiebaud was approaching at a dead trot, fast giving way to a gallop. She was wearing huge hoop earrings. She had giant black eyes and shining olive skin, flyaway blond hair that looked utterly smashing with her dark complexion. Her skin clung to her bones, hanging gently, as naturally as hide on a horse.

“How’d Ham get her?” she blurted.

A black man waved at the singer, tried to slow her progress, pretend it was a party: “Hey, Ti-Belle.”

Thiebaud paid him no mind but cast a look at the crowd in general. Skip saw twin wrinkles at the sides of her nose—one day they’d be there permanently if she worried a lot in the meantime.

“Hi, y’all.” She was trying to smile, but it wasn’t working. “Excuse me a minute.” She let herself in and closed the door behind her.

Almost immediately, a scream that could have come from anyone—the hottest Cajun R&B singer in America or any terrified woman—ripped through the nervous buzz.

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