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General

A Dream of Drowned Hollow
Lee Barwood
Double Dragon Publishing
978-1-55404-320-0
(September 30, 2007)

Humans are paying the price for their gluttony, greed, and reckless use of the earth's natural resources in high gas and oil prices, but the cost could be much higher. In this novel, winner of Andre Norton's Gryphon Award, the question of just how far man will go in raping the earth that sustains him in his avaricious pursuit of money is answered: Until the earth decides to fight back.

April Rue Stoner, an orphan, is studying folklore at a college in Arkansas. She leads a solitary life until a photographer befriends her, and April Rue makes his profession her own. Her maternal grandmother makes contact with the young woman, binding their lives together, enriching them both in a familial covenant. In her grandmother April Rue finds a confidante—someone who can explain the strange visions that haunt her.

As April Rue strives to improve her skill as a photographer, she pursues the apparitions of ghosts, spirits, and elementals, capturing their images on her film. The specters she sees are usually harmless, but they may not stay that way, as April Rue's grandmother warned: "So far, from the looks of your pictures you've only seen the good or the sad things that can be seen. You haven't yet run into the ones that frighten, or the truly evil ones, or the ones that can send a body over the edge."

When land developer Trevor Dalton and his scout Owen Ferris come on the scene, April Rue is thrown into mysterious cataclysmic events. Her second sight and her ability to capture the visions in pictures allow her to reveal the truth of Dalton's repulsive crimes—a truth she's determined to use to expose him for the criminal he is. It is one picture, of five ghostly figures and a flooded meadow—a drowned hollow—that gives many clues to the future.

The author is a prolific writer of fantasy and horror novels and short stories, including a series titled *The Ribbons of Power*. Here, she relies more on narrative than dialog; and the writing could have been improved upon by more freshness of fiction and reduction of repetition

and backstory. However, Barwood's language is beautifully wrought and the premise of the work engages the imagination with its uniqueness, successfully capturing the reader's piqued attention.

The book is more of a thriller with fantasy elements than the other way around, and, while the beginning may sputter a bit, the ending rushes to a satisfying conclusion, one in which evil gets its comeuppance and balance is achieved in a most unforeseeable manner.

Donna Russo Morin