



## Minnow

**James E. McTeer II**

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Among his adventuresome friends, Minnow is perhaps the only boy who does not need to ask “Is it true?” of magical tales. He’s seen enough in his young life to be able to separate out the literary chaff from the truly wondrous. When the witch doctor Crow sends him on a quest into the barrier islands for some dirt from an old hoodoo specter’s grave, he knows to go forth quickly, leaving his questions behind him. If he succeeds, he’ll be bequeathed an elixir for his dying father. If he fails, his world will continue to leak hope, and all that is magical with it.

Along the way, Minnow must face down a series of mysterious elements and dark figures, all of which put his fortitude to the test. A dog becomes his occasional guide, and his wits a necessary tool in his arsenal. Though the buried hoodoo man seems to turn the elements against Minnow to keep his resting place undisturbed, Minnow presses on, willing to stare down any horror out of the conviction that what awaits on the other side might save his family.

James McTeer’s work revives Southern gothic themes to create a milieu both elegant and disturbing. Minnow is a character well worth walking alongside; although the end of his quest finds him in undesired territory, the circumstances that test him forge a hero both capable and kind. McTeer’s bayou magic will stay long after the storm clouds part.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (Summer 2015)

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