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Backwoods Genius (Kindle Single)



Synopsis

Like countless other small town portrait photographers across America, Mike Disfarmer lived and died anonymously, in a tiny, remote village in the shadow of the Ozarks. After his death, the contents of his studio, including thousands of glass negatives, were sold off for five dollars. For years the fragile negatives sat forgotten and deteriorating in cardboard boxes in an open carport. How did it happen, then, that the most implausible of events took place? That Disfarmer's haunting portraits were retrieved from oblivion, that today they sell for upwards of \$12,000 each at posh New York art galleries; his photographs proclaimed works of art by prestigious critics and journals and exhibited around the world? The story of Disfarmer's rise to fame is a colorful, improbable, and ultimately fascinating one that involves an unlikely assortment of individuals. Would any of this have happened if a young New York photographer hadn't been so in love with a pretty model that he was willing to give up his career for her; if a preacher's son from Arkansas hadn't spent 30 years in the Army Corps of Engineers mapping the U.S. from an airplane; if a magazine editor hadn't felt a strange and powerful connection to the work? The cast of characters includes these, plus a restless and wealthy young Chicago aristocrat and even a grandson of FDR. It's a compelling story which reveals how these diverse people were part of a chain of events whose far-reaching consequences none of them could have foreseen, least of all the strange and reclusive genius of Heber Springs. Until now, the whole story has not been told.

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Customer Reviews

I didn't expect to download a coffee table book, but I did expect to have access to a few more than the four images I viewed in the sample before I looked at before I bought the book. BTW, four includes the cover. Disfarmer was a brilliant photographer and that is clear from the four images shown. So we'd like to see a little more as we read. Reading the text we learn he was quirky and elusive. Very. Okay. The detective work uncovering who he may have been is fascinating, although becomes a bit redundant. a) He didn't talk about himself. b) He was quirky. So there's a lot of filling in the blanks. But for all your reading, there is none of his work besides those four images in the front of the book. I found this frustrating because I'd find myself wondering about an being discussed and it happens a lot. So after a while, I felt I was supposed to buy the other book...the book with the images. It's a given that it's not practical to buy or sell a coffee table book in Kindle format (particularly at the prices they charge). So if you're going to offer a mini book introduction in a Kindle format AND charge readers for it, give us a little meat please. It makes good business sense, particularly when it's not possible to increase size in Kindle books to view closer, or details, etc and since a reader doesn't get possession of a physical book, all you'd be giving is a few small images on a phone, pc or tablet to view. I mean Kindle doesn't allow resizing of images, so you're limited to the images as they're shown on your device. So reading the book today the text referenced a number of specific portraits and I scrolled forward hoping to find at least one or two of them in the middle maybe?.

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