

Mountain Secrets

(Sorry, no cover image available)

By Joyce Nowacki

Reviewed by Bob Weldin

The setting for *Mountain Secrets* is Rathdrum, Idaho and vicinity, prior to and during the early days of Prohibition, 1919 and 1920. A young woman is on the run from cops and Chicago mobsters, carrying secrets and a satchel of money. She rides the trains, changing her name and destination frequently, until she ends up at Rathdrum. She meets Ralph, the bartender, and becomes a popular singer at his bar until she is recognized by a mysterious stranger. Ralph hooks her up with moonshiners who take her to their mountain hide away. The locals conspire against the laws of Federal Prohibition. There is a mysterious murder and the young woman's secrets are found out.

The author does a good job of describing the characters and the physical surroundings. Likewise, she does a good job of distinguishing the hickish drawls of moonshiners from the slicksters from Spokane, Seattle, and Chicago. The story is a quick enjoyable read, but my wife and I agree that the sudden conclusion left us with many unanswered questions. However, that seems to be the modern trend for novels... maybe that's the setup for a sequel.

Mountain Secrets is Joyce Nowacki's third novel. She writes historical fiction, combining historical periods with places where she grew up in North Idaho. I look forward to reading her first two novels: *The Other Side of the Fence*, 2010, which is an historical novel about Chinese immigrants, and *The Magic of Ordinary Times*, 2012, which is about growing up in North Idaho during the 1950s,

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