



Avi

The Seer of Shadows
ISBN13: 9780060000158

The Seer of Shadows

Author Note

"One picture is worth a thousand words."

To a novelist those are fighting words. But they haven't kept me from having a longtime interest in photography; I think it began when I saw the famous *The Family of Man* exhibit at New York's Museum of Modern Art many years ago.

Much later, I started taking classes in photography. Most of all, I loved my hours in the darkroom. There was something truly mysterious about those times: the dim orange light, the ticking of the timer, the manipulation of light itself, and best of all, watching images emerge from the potent developing solution, like ghosts slipping out of the mist.

That ghost image was worth a few thousand words—ultimately the ones of my newest novel, *The Seer of Shadows*. The story features two nineteenth-century cultural phenomena: the growth of photography as a mass art, and with it, what came to be called spiritual photography—photographs of ghosts.

The Seer of Shadows tells the story of young Horace Carpetine, apprenticed to a professional photographer, one who is quite willing to set up a hoax—the taking of ghost photos. But when Horace takes up his camera, he really does capture a ghost in his photographic images. What's more, the more images he takes, the more the ghost comes back—develops, so to speak—to life. And this ghost is intent upon a murderous revenge.

I added another element to the mix: race in 1870s New York City—complex, volatile, but ultimately moving. After all, I am writing about black-and-white photography.

In short, what I am offering in *The Seer of Shadows* is an old-fashioned ghost story, but one in which you'll find new strangeness, new scary stuff, and yes, striking images.

My hope? That my few thousand words bring forth an exciting picture. **Click.**

—Avi