

# The good and the bad: New author takes readers on heart-stopping journey

By Melanie Tucker

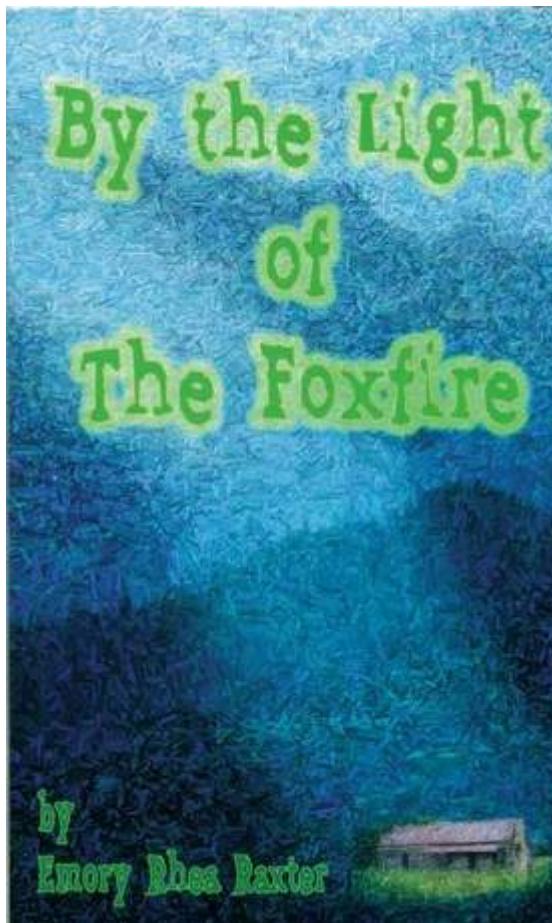
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With her first novel in print and ideas for others still colliding in her head, Maryville resident and author Emory Rhea Raxter hasn't time for a social life.

"This is what I spend my weekends on and my weeknights," she said. "I don't go anywhere. This is all I ever wanted to do."



Raxter now has the reward for all of that dedication and determination. Her first novel, "By the Light of the Foxfire," was just released in print and is now available at The Book Rack and Blount Discount Books. It can also be ordered online at createspace.com and amazon.com.

"By the Light of the Foxfire" is set in the mountains of Western North Carolina and quickly takes readers on a terrifying journey with its main character, Tabatha. The recent college graduate takes a job as a social worker in a mountain community but doesn't show up for her first day of work. Her car plunges down a curvy road in icy weather and when she makes it back up to the road to flag down some help, she becomes the most unlucky of travelers.

## The Daily Times News Article

Tabatha gets kidnapped by two men who take her back to their homes. There begins the horrific nightmare for this naive and innocent girl who must fight for her life.

There are some cruel scenes of brutality and heart-stopping moments as Tabatha tries to merely survive.

Raxter, whose photo appears on the book's back cover, said she begged her publisher not to include it on this suspense thriller. She doesn't have the look of someone capable of writing such a dark tale. A children's author, maybe, but not one who delves into murder and monstrosities.

A native of Asheville, N.C., Raxter grew up in Greeneville and has lived in Maryville for over two years, following a career in advertising. Her book is full of research she conducted in familiar territory as she set out to learn all there is to know about moonshining and cock fighting, two of the activities enjoyed by her "Foxfire" characters.

She even interviewed a local moonshiner from Townsend years ago before ever dreaming she would live here. Charlie Sellers has since passed away.

Some reading the book might say Raxter is taking old stereotypes of mountain people and adding another negative coating. She begs to differ, saying the folks she is writing about are her own.

"There are good and bad everywhere," she said. "Are there some terrible characters in this book? There most certainly are. Are there some terrible characters in those mountains? I researched enough murders -- there most certainly are. Are there good people in those mountains? My people are from those mountains. They are as good as any people you will meet."

This author said she didn't develop her style of writing by emulating other successful novelists. She worked in her family's fast-food business for many years and said there was no time for reading. When she did finally find time for herself, it was writing that got her devotion.

"I'm not saying I recommend that people not read," Raxter said. "But in some weird way it worked out for me. I developed my own unique style."

Her style includes writing "By the Light of the Foxfire" from the viewpoint of several of its characters. Readers feel the desperation of a young woman held captive and the bullying ways of her captor, Rally. There is also a small boy in the book who can steal your heart.

Raxter has another book "Madstone" ready for publication and has several ideas for others. She said she may even consider doing something humorous along the lines of the late Lewis Grizzard, just to prove to readers she has another not-so-dark side.

Right now she is enjoying all that comes with being a newly published author. The comments, so far, are encouraging. Raxter said the words she loves to hear the most are: I couldn't put it down.

"This is all I've ever wanted to do," the author said. "All I've ever wanted was a little space, a lot of ink and a lot of paper. Ink, paper and space. That's all I need."



Mark A. Large/The Daily Times

Emory Rhea Raxter holds a copy of her first book, "By the Light of the Foxfire," as she stands in front of the Blount County Public Library. The Maryville resident has at least two more novels in the works.

### **Summary**

Maryville resident and author Emory Rhea Raxter hasn't time for a social life.

### **To buy the book**

To purchase "By the Light of the Foxfire," by Emory Rhea Raxter, go to [www.createspace.com/3422144](http://www.createspace.com/3422144) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). Cost is \$16.95. Raxter will also have a book signing from 3 to 6 p.m. Feb. 26 at Blount Discount Books on Gill Street in Alcoa.