



Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011

Volume 8 | Number 1

Article 17

1996

Chris Heimerdinger, *Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent*

Chris Crowe

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Crowe, Chris (1996) "Chris Heimerdinger, *Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent*," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011*: Vol. 8 : No. 1 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol8/iss1/17>

This Fiction is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989–2011 by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.



NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title

Author(s) Chris Crowe

Reference *FARMS Review of Books* 8/1 (1996): 176-77.

ISSN 1099-9450 (print), 2168-3123 (online)

Abstract Review of *Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent* (1995), by Chris Heimerdinger.

Chris Heimerdinger, *Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent*. American Fork, UT: Covenant, 1995. 329 pp. \$10.95.

Reviewed by Chris Crowe

A circular gold label on the cover of *Tennis Shoes and the Feathered Serpent* announces: "The Tennis Shoes Adventure Series: Over 150,000 Copies Sold!" This gold-faced proclamation of the series' success jaded envious old me from the outset. Even though I had enjoyed the first book of this (so far) three-book series, I decided I would not like this one. Popular pulp. Can't be any good if it has this much appeal in such a narrow market.

And so I began my search for reasons not to like this Book of Mormon/time travel/historical novel. And I found some: an over-reliance on clichés, an academic *faux pas* (referring to the chair of BYU's Anthropology Department as a dean), calling a *Post-It* note a "stick 'em note," and insensitively referring to a black character as a "Negro." But the reader/writer in me soon overlooked these flaws—minor flaws that should have been detected and corrected by Covenant's editors—because I was caught up in the fast-paced plot. Heimerdinger knows how to write a page-turner and has done it again in this third volume of the *Tennis Shoes* series. Its appeal is doubled for Latter-day Saint readers because of its successful blending of adventure fiction with Book of Mormon fact.

Jim Hawkins is again the central character in this historical fantasy. Now a forty-year-old widower with three children, Jim has nearly forgotten his earlier Tennis Shoes time-travel adventures. But evil Jacob of the Moon, a.k.a. Boaz, has time-traveled from Book of Mormon times through the Frost Cave to frame Jim for homicide, to kidnap his oldest daughter Melody, and to return with her to Book of Mormon times. His plan is to use Melody to coerce Garth Plimpton (Jim's old friend, recent brother-in-law, and fellow time traveler) into revealing information that will give Jacob's Gadianton clan power to overwhelm the forces of righteousness.

With the help of a Nephite and a future girlfriend, Jim escapes from the jail in Salt Lake City and sets out with his remaining two children on an exciting adventure to Mesoamerica in the year 1 B.C. to battle corrupt Nephites and Lamanites and to rescue Melody and Garth from the clutches of the Gadianton gang.

As in the previous *Tennis Shoes* books, Heimerdinger carefully weaves Book of Mormon fact into his story. At times, though, he gives more Book of Mormon exposition/background than is necessary for this story and this audience. The only other disappointment I had as a reader was the discovery, after I was swept up in Jim's adventure, that this is only Book One of this tale. Things are really heating up for Jim and his friends when the novel comes to an abrupt and disappointing end: "Our adventure in the land and time of the Feathered Serpent had only just begun" (p. 329).

In sum, though, this is an entertaining, fast-paced, well-told adventure story, one certain to appeal to Latter-day Saint readers—even to readers as jaded and envious as I am.