



2004

# Shadowmancer

Betsy Spackman

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Taylor, G. P.. *Shadowmancer*. Putnam's, 2004. ISBN 0399242562. \$16.99. 304 pp.

Reviewer: Betsy Spackman

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction; Occult fiction; Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Magic--Juvenile fiction; England--Juvenile fiction; Fantasy--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

A fantasy set in the Middle Ages, *Shadowmancer* tells the story of Thomas and Kate, who join forces with a new friend from a faraway land, Raphah, to fight the evil vicar Obadiah Demurral. Demurral stole the Keruvim, a powerful, ancient golden relic that would allow him to control the world, including God and the forces of good. Raphah came from Africa by ship to England to recover the Keruvim. With many close calls and twists of plot, Thomas, Kate, and Raphah meet both friends and enemies on their quest to stop Demurral. The action is set in a religious world which includes the god Riathamus, the devil Pyratheon, and their corresponding spirit servants.

This compelling story is rife with Christian symbolism, which is both a strength and a weakness. The dialogue and descriptions include many phrases from the Bible, and the plot includes the following specific biblical parallels: Thomas dreams of a king worshipped by seraphim who asks Thomas to serve him; Raphah casts out a devil in the name of Riathamus; and Riathamus, disguised as a shepherd, offers fish and bread to the two friends. Readers from a Christian tradition might enjoy the parallels or find the occult aspects of the story offensive, although others might find the obvious religiosity of the story officious. Readers of all religious persuasions will be drawn in by the fast-paced adventure, the interesting characters, and the unusual approach to the battle between good and evil.