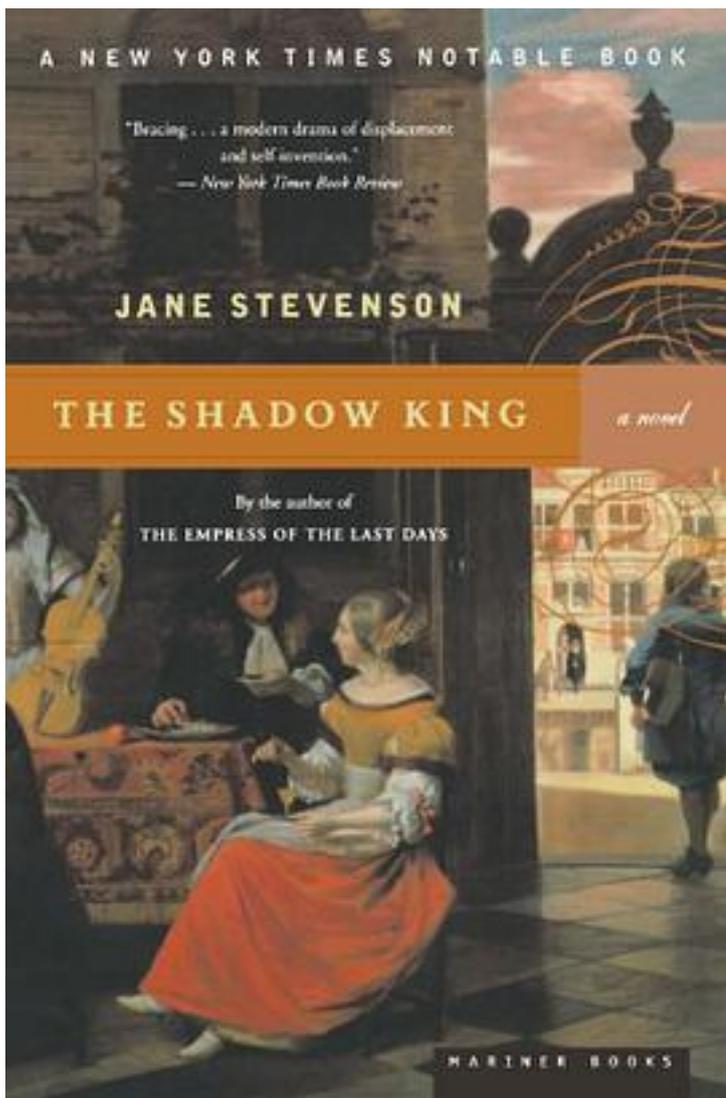


The Shadow King



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著者:Stevenson, Jane

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In *The Shadow King*, Jane Stevenson illuminates the world of the intriguing Balthasar Stuart, the secret biracial child born of the illicit love between a queen of Bohemia and an exiled African prince. A gifted young doctor in the late seventeenth century, Balthasar struggles with very contemporary issues of identity, brought into play by his difficult heritage. Driven out of Holland by the plague, he makes his way first to the raffish, cynical world of Restoration London, where he encounters Aphra Behn, the English spy and sometimes playwright. He leaves to seek prosperity in colonial Barbados, a society marked by slavery and savage racism. Utterly absorbing and deeply perceptive, *The Shadow King* brings the past radiantly to life in people's habits of speech, their food and fashions, and their medical practices.

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