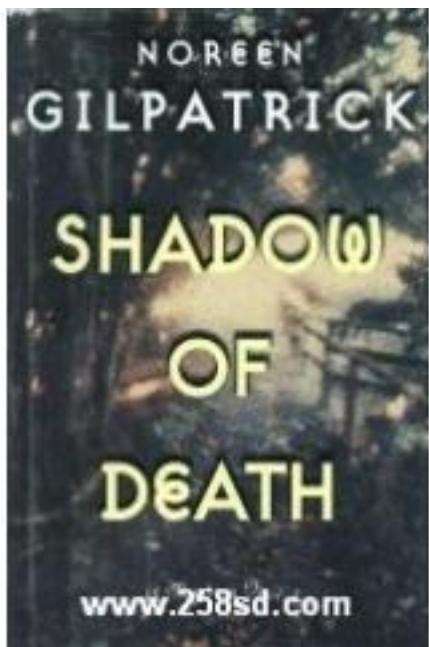


Shadow of Death



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出版者:

出版时间:2008-8

装帧:

isbn:9780749079369

'The past weighs heavy upon me, yet have I breathed no word of this to a soul...' Agnes is up to her neck in books. Having been asked to help sort out the library of the nearly defunct Order in Bermondsey before the building is sold, she is trawling through piles of tatty Victoriana and mawkish lives of the saints. However, the seventeenth-century Hawker archive, a collection of beautifully preserved books on spells and magic as well as hand-written journals, does catch her eye. These tell the story of Alice, her husband Nicolas and their son who died in infancy. Alice did not long survive him. Alice's story seems to haunt the present. The building, now an NHS day centre for the mentally ill, is the backdrop for a modern mother's fears for the safety of herself and her child. Agnes is increasingly drawn into the predicament of Tina-Marie and her daughter Leila as well as Alice's narrative. The line between past and present grows hazy as Tina-Marie, like

Alice before her, falls prey to the men in her life and depression. When unexplained and horrible things start happening, culminating in Tina-Marie's murder, Agnes becomes convinced that buyers are after something more than the obvious in the Hawker archives. She realises she must hurry to protect Leila and lay some ghosts to rest.

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