



# King of Shadows

By Susan Cooper

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Only in the world of the theater can Nat Field find an escape from the tragedies that have shadowed his young life. So he is thrilled when he is chosen to join an American drama troupe traveling to London to perform *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a new replica of the famous Globe theater.

Shortly after arriving in England, Nat goes to bed ill and awakens transported back in time four hundred years -- to another London, and another production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Amid the bustle and excitement of an Elizabethan theatrical production, Nat finds the warm, nurturing father figure missing from his life -- in none other than William Shakespeare himself. Does Nat have to remain trapped in the past forever, or give up the friendship he's so longed for in his own time?

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## **King of Shadows** By Susan Cooper Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

"Cooper brilliantly weaves past and present together, using London's Globe Theatre as a backdrop, to demonstrate the timelessness of Shakespeare's works and the theater at large," said PW in a boxed review.

Ages 10-14. (June)n

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From Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Orphan Nat Field is chosen as part of an American theater group to perform at the new Globe Theatre in London. Nat's big role will be Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, his debut is pushed 400 years into the past when he is put to bed with a high fever and wakes up in Elizabethan England. Forced to adapt or be discovered, Nat figures out his situation quickly with judicious questions that result in naturally occurring explanations of the times, the plays, and the theater. The time-travel element is well constructed. Through occasional flashes to the present, readers learn that a boy presumed to be Nat is being treated for bubonic plague. Nat Field has switched places with the infected Nathan Field, who is just about to arrive at the old Globe on loan from another company-thus, thanks to modern medicine, Shakespeare and his plays are saved for the ages. Something in the boy attracts the attention of Will himself and Nat soon becomes his prot?g?. The father/son relationship between the two fills a need for Nat, whose suppressed sorrow at his father's suicide after his mother's death is finally expressed. The circumstances of his father's death and Nat's reluctance to deal with it are hinted at rather clumsily in the beginning of the book and dispatched succinctly when finally addressed, and come off as clearly secondary to the involving theater experiences. Still, Cooper's readers and fans of Gary Blackwood's *Shakespeare Stealer* (Dutton, 1998) will revel in the hurly-burly of rehearsals and the performance before the queen, the near discoveries, the company rivalries, and some neatly drawn parallels.

*Sally Margolis, Barton Public Library, VT*

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From Kirkus Reviews

When Nat Field, an orphan living with his aunt, is chosen for an all-boy acting troupe traveling to London to perform Shakespeare in the reconstructed Globe Theatre, he hopes it will help him escape from his family's tragedy. Instead he finds himself switched in time with another Nat Field, who carries the Plague. In the past he performs with the Bard himself, who becomes a surrogate father and helps him deal with his sorrow, while preparing to play Oberon to Nat's Puck in a performance before the Queen. Cooper is in top form here; her confident prose, at once muscular and lyrical, vividly conveys the sights, sounds, and smells of Elizabethan London. Most powerful are her descriptions of the story and imaginative staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which should have readers scurrying for the original. Her poignant characterization of Nat, whose grief is released by Shakespeare and healed by his words, captures perfectly an adolescent in thrall of the theater, in all its grittiness and grandeur. A dramatic and sensory feast. (Fiction. 10-14) -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Irene Vaughan:**

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or maybe read a book allowed King of Shadows? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

**Emily Carey:**

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**Robert Rascoe:**

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