



## The Shadowcutter

*Harriet Smart*

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## **The Shadowcutter** Harriet Smart

Police surgeon Felix Carswell has joined Major Giles Vernon and his convalescent wife, Laura, for a few days in the elegant spa town of Stanegate – it's a welcome holiday from the summer stench of Northminster. But no sooner has he arrived than a Spanish colonial gentleman, dying of consumption, requires his urgent care, while Major Vernon is called away to Lord Rothborough's country house, where a lady's maid has been found drowned in a secluded pool.

Major Vernon investigates above and below stairs in the great house, assisted by Lord Rothborough's eldest daughter, Lady Charlotte. When a quantity of valuable jewellery is found missing, the cause of the dead maid's death only becomes more mysterious.

Meanwhile, when his patient dies in his arms after confiding a secret, Carswell is drawn into baffling intrigues involving the government-in-exile of the dead man's homeland, the Caribbean island of Santa Magdalena. And strangest of all, Dona Blanca, the widow of the president, seems to know exactly who Felix is.

Over the course of the summer, Vernon and Carswell together doggedly search for the truth behind these troubling events, but their determination leads to a shocking personal tragedy for both of them, one which will force them to reassess their lives and their careers, and leave them changed forever.

From the grand hotels of a fashionable spa town to a sordid illegal dog fight; from back-stair intrigues in a great country house to political conspiracies and fencing matches, The Shadowcutter sees the welcome return of early Victorian detectives, Major Giles Vernon and Felix Carswell.

## **The Shadowcutter Details**

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## From Reader Review The Shadowcutter for online ebook

### **Mary Beth says**

#### **Mr. Carswell and Major Vernon**

Make progress personally and processionally while solving the murder of a lady's companion. No spoilers.. I'll just say I cried.

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### **Susan says**

The summer of 1840 and Major Vernon with his wife, along with Dr Carswell, are visiting the town of Stanegate. While Carswell is taking care of a Spanish colonial gentleman suffering from consumption, Major Vernon is called to Lord Rothborough's country house, where a maid has been found dead.

Another enjoyable story in this series where we found out more about the central characters while they are trying to solve some of the mysteries that surround them.

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### **JK says**

#### **Another good tale**

This episode of the Northminster Mysteries has a group of dead bodies and Giles and Felix again need to thrash out the truth.

This time it is personal

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### **Kathy says**

Having spent considerable leisure time reading the first three books of this series, it is time I noted a few features that appealed and kept me reading. These books are available through Kindle Unlimited, so that helps me justify the subscription fee since it is challenging to find books I can like in that program. The time period: Victorian Era - The location: Northminster and environs, setting it apart from other Victorian murder mystery series and adding interest.

The first, The Butchered Man, introduces us to Felix the surgeon, the young bastard son of Lord Rothborough as he arrives from Scotland to serve in the newly formed position of police surgeon in Northminster Constabulary under the direction of Major Vernon. The cooperation between these three central characters sets the foundation for the pursuit, investigation and analysis that leads to resolution and sometimes capture of those who commit murder. We learn more about the background and family members of each of the three men as the series continues through the second, The Dead Songbird, and now the third, The Shadowcutter. The murders in each book present interesting challenges as the talents of each become essential and evolve to where we now find Major Vernon launching into a new role as Superintendent of the Northern Counties Criminal Intelligence Office. "To have found, at the age of forty, what he had been put on Earth to do. He was not to be a soldier, nor an administrator, but this strange beast: a man who hunted

murderers."

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### **Judy says**

This is the third book in this series that I have read, and I continue to enjoy the characters and the setting. Although the name of the series is the Northminster Mysteries, the action in this one takes place away from Northminster, as Giles and Felix are ostensibly on vacation at a spa town helping Giles's wife continue her recovery from depression. However, vacation or not, they can't help jumping in when an exiled noble from a Caribbean island collapses during a fencing match with Giles, and subsequently dies under Felix's care. In addition, they are called in to Lord Rothborough's estate when not one, but two bodies are found there. It's a fairly convoluted plot with some interesting revelations about the private lives of the characters, which made it another page turner for me. On to number 4!

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### **Yvonne says**

Another excellent Northminster Mystery.

The pace of this one was slower than the two earlier novels in the series and the main plot less sensational. Overall this novel spent more time fleshing out further the characters of Giles and Felix and some of the more minor regular characters. I enjoyed the novel for that reason. This is not really a standalone novel. It needs to be read as part of a series.

As before, Harriet Smart creates a believable mid nineteenth century world set in provincial and rural Northern England. She is one of few writers not to annoy me with anachronisms. She clearly researches her subject matter well and has a real feel for the period in which she sets her novels. In this novel it became clear that she also does not fear doing heart-breaking things to her characters. You have been warned.

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### **Laurie Way says**

I really enjoyed this book in the Northminster Mysteries. It was less about the murders and more developing these wonderful main characters!

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### **Beth Wynne says**

The Northminster Mysteries are excellent, with twisted plots and great characters. Highly recommend.

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### **Shelby says**

#### **Excellent**

Wonderfully executed plot, characters are believable and representative of the time period. I would highly recommend this book. I would say start at book one and read in order.

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### **Lexie Conyngham says**

A rather rambling plot to this one, though I was heartily glad to see the back of one character. I agree with another reviewer that I find Felix's relationship with Sukey a bit unbelievable, and the intervention and connexions of the 'Spanish' party were unlikely, too. However, at the centre of these books is the relationship between Felix and Giles, and that is well written and interesting enough to keep me going, that and the setting.

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### **Ron Steranko says**

#### **Enjoyable**

This series is really outside my norm. I enjoy the deep character development. The dark side of each character is slowly revealed, and the personal tragedies of each are unforeseen and moving.

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### **Jayne dArcy says**

So good but be prepared, there is a bit of a shock in the story. I shall not say but do not let that deter you from reading this story.

A series of murders cause Giles Vernon and Felix Carswell to truly think as they receive clues that baffle and enlighten. More is learned about the personal lives of the two men and a prospective relationship between Felix and a maid might just strain their friendship.

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### **Tea says**

#### **Strongest of the series, so far...**

Harriet Smart has outdone herself with this addition to her Northminster Mysteries. The plot was more engaging and the mystery more complex than those of its predecessors. And, as before, the characterisations were deeper.

Readers are offered fuller pictures of both both Vernon and Carswell as Smart not only showed more of who each is inherently but also allowed each to grow through their experiences.

The mystery harkened back to -- and exceeded -- that of the first novel. It was a welcome change from the second book, where my chief pleasure lay in getting a better idea of who our protagonists were and are.

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