



Shaman

By Noah Gordon



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In a saga set against the backdrop of the Civil War and the wide-open prairie of frontier Illinois, Rob J. finds love with a strong pioneer woman, and their sons grow to manhood. Reprint. *NYT*.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this quietly absorbing tale, set in 19th-century Illinois, a doctor raises a family and confronts racial injustice and religious prejudice.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Gordon (*The Physician*, *The Jerusalem Diamond*, etc.) offers two fictionalized generations of doctoring on the Illinois frontier from 1839 to 1865, covering such medical history as the advent of hygiene and anesthesia. Rob J. Cole, political agitator in Scotland facing banishment to Australia, decides to migrate to the US. A doctor, he lands in Boston and can find work only in the Irish ghetto, making hovel calls for a charity. Disillusioned with the politics of the charity and intrigued with Indians, he heads west, stopping in Illinois at Holden's Crossing. Rob finds his Indians in the Sauks, who have fled the reservation and are now starving nearby. He treats and feeds them, becoming their "white shaman," and eventually Makwa- Ikwa, their healer, goes to work with him. He travels the countryside, snipping off fingers and enlisting household help to pinch off spurting arteries. He removes kidney stones from a recluse named Sarah, who has holed up because she thinks she's dying from cancer. After he removes the stones, she blooms, and they marry. Sarah gives birth to a boy, and Makwa tags him "Little Shaman." At age five, Shaman develops scarlatina and loses his hearing, a disability that makes his road to a medical practice difficult. Both father and son end up doctoring during the Civil War, the carnage of which is graphically described. The story moves too fast to develop either characters or scenes deeply, but it's a good read and has a refreshing approach to the frontier as part of a larger culture, not an isolated place where people did nothing but murder each other. -- *Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

What a book! It's a joy to read. Noah Gordon has given those of us who like good, strong, warm-hearted novels a wonderful gift. SHAMAN leaves you with that warm and satisfied feeling when you've finished. Tony Hillerman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Tibbs:

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