



The KeyMaster: In the Beginning

Ruth Evelyn

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The spiritual background and exciting climax of this novel are sure to be crowd-pleasers for New Age readers.

In this sweeping tale of spiritual discovery, *The KeyMaster* by Ruth Evelyn, angelic beings play a cosmic game with human souls at stake. Ely Elyohm, brightest champion of the Light, incarnates as a mortal human boy to battle the evil mastermind of darkness, Roth Rothyanomon. But Ely's deep rage toward Roth may prove disastrous for humanity as good and evil struggle for supremacy.

This first installment in the KeyMaster series draws very heavily from New Age spirituality, incorporating angels, chakras, and crystals into a single system. Though it could be considered science fiction or fantasy, its religious aspects are of primary importance to the plot, characters, and settings.

The KeyMaster: In the Beginning balances the story of Ely's mortal incarnation, Tucker Elliot Mills, with the happenings in the heaven-like spiritual realm of Etherea and in Roth's Shadow Worlds. As the story builds to a climax, the interactions between these realms intensify, but each remains distinct and sticks to its own rules well. Part of this is due to the author's tendency to state very clearly exactly what is happening, where, and when.

This tendency to relate the plot directly is both a strength and a weakness in this book. On one hand, there is never any question as to where the story is taking place, what is happening, or how characters feel at a given moment. On the other, both characters and plot are often dictated, not shown defining themselves through their actions. This is particularly true during the backstories that crowd the first half of the book. As a result, the story is fairly slow and occasionally muddled. However, after a long buildup, *The KeyMaster* features a cinema-ready, action-packed climax that is sure to entertain.

Characterizations are generally good for main characters like Tucker, Jake, and Anna Rae. Though the book does tend to tell and not show their development, each emerges as distinct and likable during the second half of the book, and each is dynamic in his or her own way. Tucker's progression from messianic golden boy to a wrathful Achilles is particularly interesting and suggests the later need for a more realistic dark-horse hero, or even a complete adjustment of the requirements of the battle between good and evil. *The KeyMaster* also takes the interesting step of calling into question some spirits' blind obedience to the cause of the Light, solidly addressing what would otherwise be a serious problem in character motivation.

Sweeping several galaxies and many millennia, this mystical tale is an interesting exploration of the struggle between good and evil. Its spiritual backdrop and exciting climax are likely crowd-pleasers for New Age settings.

ANNA CALL (April 21, 2014)

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