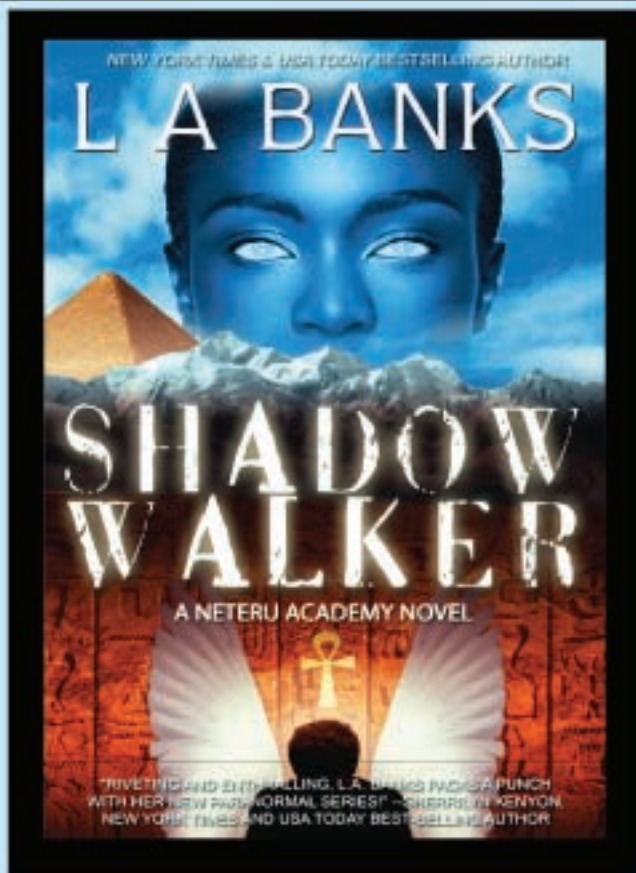


NEW YOUNG ADULT/URBAN FANTASY
NOVEL BY **NEW YORK TIMES**
BESTSELLING AUTHOR L. A. BANKS

Sarah Rivera has a lot going on in her life right now. It's bad enough that she's being shipped off to Temt Tchaas Academy also known as Neteru Academy, a high school for future Guardians of the Light who have special powers, but she has to go there with her cocky twin brother and the rest of her compound brothers and sisters. To make matters worse, everyone has ridiculous expectations of her all because her parents are like supernatural rock stars for saving the planet sixteen years ago. But what nobody, not even her best girlfriend Tami seems to be getting is the fact that, Sarah doesn't think she's special, doesn't want to be a demon-hunting hero, and is even afraid of the dark!



So what that her mother was a Warrior Angel and her Dad used to be a Hell Council-level Vampire? Opposites attract. Go figure. As far as Sarah is concerned, all she got from the combination was a pair of fangs that lengthen at inappropriate times to embarrass her in front of her secret crush; whereas her brother, Alejandro, got the good looks and cool wings. However, what her parents' status has created is drama in her life by ensuring that the mean girls at school will make her life a living nightmare. Sarah knows her family's renowned slayer reputation will also ensure that everyone at school will assume she had it easy and should be able to do everything her famous rebel parents can do, when the heartbreaking truth is, she cant. Not by a long shot.

Once at the hidden boarding school in the Appalachian Mountains, things go from bad to worse as Sarah tries to fit in. Her nightmares increase and it isn't just anxiety; her second sight is suddenly developing at a record pace. Layers of secrets are held in the building, held by her parents, and nothing is as it seems. There is something really bad going on at the school, worse than bad - deadly. Only, faculty and administrators don't know where to begin to look for the cause as students start to disappear. Sarah must then make a choice to stand on the sidelines or to help use her gifts to save someone dear. But to do that means facing all of her greatest fears, along with a demon or two.

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SHADOW WALKER

L A BANKS

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PART ONE

AWAKENING

“May I look upon my soul and my shadow.”

—The Egyptian Book of the Dead



CHAPTER 1

The Compound

Sixteen years after the Armageddon

The demon was so close now that she could feel its icy breath on her neck. Sarah Rivera swung her bedroom lamp at it as she lurched toward the door, yanked it open and dashed into the dark hallway. The corridor was longer than it had ever been, as though something unnatural had drawn it out before her so that she could never reach the end of it to get to safety.

Running hard, she focused with all her might on the tiny emergency exit light that now seemed miles away. That beacon was the only source of illumination in what had otherwise become pitch blackness. Shadows loomed and stretched around the faraway light as though mocking it, mocking *her*, dimming its effectiveness as she reached out toward it.

Then, as if the air around her had become molasses, her legs suddenly felt heavy and mired in a sticky goo of atmosphere, making her struggle just to put one foot before the other. She

tried to scream, even to call for her mother or father, but no sound came out.

Pure panic gripped her as she saw her best friend's bedroom door ajar. Tami would help her. They could fight this beast together.

Sarah slogged through the density that clung to her legs and thrust her way through Tami's open door. Tami was standing in the darkened room, hands on hips, face wearing her usual smart-ass smile. But her friend's eyes weren't right. They weren't Tami's eyes. They were the eyes of the demon!

The bedroom door slammed behind Sarah with a loud bang. Instantly the entire room went pitch black. Not even moonlight shone through the window. Sarah's scream began in the pit of her stomach but never reached her throat. Her heart slammed against her breastbone. She could hear things moving in the dark, circling her, stirring the air.

In the next second, she was awake.

Sarah sat up quickly in the dark, panting. She immediately reached for her nightstand lamp and clicked it on, covering her heart with a hand. A slight sheen of perspiration made her tank top and panties cling to her body. The sheets around her were in a tangle about her legs, and she flung them off her. The pillows were gone from the bed, cast to the floor during the nightmare.

Almost in tears, she leaned forward and rubbed her temples, feeling like her bedroom was closing in on her. Her head ached in a strumming throb. This was the third nightmare in a week.



New York Times &
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L. A. Banks

has written over 42 novels and contributed to 23 novellas. She writes in the genres of romance, women's fiction, crime/suspense thrillers, and paranormal lore. In addition to a busy writing schedule, she is a proud member of The Liars Club, is a Board of Trustee member for the Philadelphia Free Library and serves on the Mayor's Commission on Literacy. Ms. Banks is a graduate of The University of Pennsylvania Wharton undergraduate program with a Master's in Fine Arts from Temple University. She is a full-time writer living and working in Philadelphia.

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