
Shadows and Light

- Living with Myself

Copyright © 2023 by Doug Hoppes Studio, L.L.C.

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

For permissions, contact: doug@shadowmyths.com

Some characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

Cover Design and Illustrations by Doug Hoppes

Second Edition, First Printing 2025

ISBN 979-8-9865871-6-5

www.ShadowMyths.com

Shadows and Light

- Living with Myself

Daily Thoughts by
DOUG HOPPES

Table of Contents

Shadows and Light	6
What is this book?	8
How to use this book	9
Living with Myself	13

Gallery



Answered Prayers
Page 14



At Last
Page 16



Balance
Page 18



Birth of an Idea
Page 20



Blind Obedience
Page 22



Bound
Page 24



Captive
Page 26



Dark Voices
Page 28



Darkness Calls
Page 30



Death
Page 32



Death on my Mind
Page 34



Destiny Approaches
Page 36



Elemental
Page 38



Emotional Shield
Page 40



Escape
Page 42



Eternal Thirst
Page 44



Followers
Page 46



For the Living
Page 48



Forever Watching
Page 50



Forgotten
Page 52

Gallery



Forlorn
Page 54



Freedom
Page 56



Gateway
Page 58



Haunting Failures
Page 60



Homestead
Page 62



Imprisoned
Page 64



In Love
Page 66



Inner Strength
Page 68



Inner Demons
Page 70



Invasion
Page 72



Lacking Wisdom
Page 74



Letting Go
Page 76



Lost Soul
Page 78



Lost Friends
Page 80



Madness
Page 82



Maelstrom
Page 84



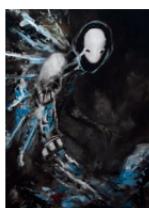
Missing Them
Page 86



Moment in Time
Page 88



Mother of Chaos
Page 90



Nourishment
Page 92

Gallery



Poisonous
Page 94



Promise
Page 96



Road to Perdition
Page 98



Sacrifices
Page 100



Scavenger
Page 102



Secrets
Page 104



Siblings
Page 106



Simpler Times
Page 108



Struggle
Page 110



Tears of a God
Page 112



The Gift
Page 114



The Past Lingers
Page 116



Trapped
Page 118



Unexpected
Page 120



Unforgiven
Page 122



Unwanted
Page 124



Uprooted
Page 126



Who am I?
Page 128



Wings of Darkness
Page 130



World View
Page 132

Shadows and Light

Hi! I'm Jonathan—the owner of the Gallery of Nightmares.

Ever since I inherited the gallery from my mother, I've felt compelled to visit a wing daily to hear the paintings tell me their story. Yes. I'm serious. When I stand in front of the paintings, I can hear a voice in my head telling me the story. Now, these aren't the typical stories about how they were created. These are about what the painting represents and give me a glimpse of what is happening in my life. The stories are the issues that reside in the shadows and the hope brought by the light.

So many times, when I was having a bad day, I would stand outside the gallery wings and listen. I would get drawn to a particular wing, and when I walked into that luring room, a painting would call to me. When I approached the painting, a voice inside my head would tell me its story.

It is scary, weird, and wonderful all at the same time.

Which brings me to this book.

I've tried to read other self-help books, and many of them claim to help you understand who you are. However, they only talk about the positive aspects of your life—things you're happy to embrace that make you feel special. They don't talk about the darkness within you.

But guess what? You're not special. No one is. Life isn't about having everything you want on a silver platter. It's messy. It's dark. It's going to hurt sometimes, and you'll want to give up.

And that's okay.

It should be dark and scary sometimes. During those times, you should dig deep into your soul and understand what you want.

Plus, sometimes, you can't do it alone. You need help from friends, family, and even strangers. Without the help of my mom and my best friend, Lars, I don't think I could have made it in the early days. Just remember not to depend solely on that help. You also have to do your part.

Now, just because the world can be dark and messy, it doesn't mean it will always be that way. More often than not, it's just a passing moment. Granted...that moment may feel like it lasts a thousand years, but it'll pass.

So, what can you do about it? Well, the first step is understanding who you are.

What is this book?

Is this a Zen book? A self-help book? Or an art book with a lot of scary pictures in it?

It's all three and none of them. Like many things in life, it seems too easy to categorize this book into concepts people understand. But that is limiting. By categorizing it, we dismiss other possibilities without considering their benefits.

So, let's review each one.

Is it a Zen book? Well, no. There is nothing in this book that relates to Buddhism. There is no religion or belief attached here. However, like Zen sayings, you can meditate over each idea you read and determine your feelings.

Zen sayings help people better understand life and follow a path to enlightenment. The sayings in this book serve the same purpose. They help you better understand who you are, and if you need to change an aspect of your life, you can meditate on its meaning and how it relates to you.

Is it a self-help book? Again, not really. Self-help books have the premise of giving you ideas on how to overcome situations. I know. I've read a lot of them while searching for answers to my life.

The main issue I have found with self-help books is that the answer doesn't fit everyone. The answers they gave me were okay, but nothing ever stuck. They weren't me. They were for someone else.

This isn't one of those books. This book has no defined answers and I won't say what works for you. I will tell you what works for me. This way, you can see what I did and adjust it for your situation. This book gives you ideas about various topics that may affect you. That way, you can bring yourself to the answer rather than an answer forcing its ideas onto you.

Is it an art book? Yes and no. Isn't that the answer most people hate? I hate it as well. Just tell me the answer and let me go on with my day.

But as with everything else, it's not so clear.

All the paintings in this book were created by Dougie, the unknown artist who left them for me in the attic. I've gathered that they are the visions he sees when contemplating a new piece. Each is an individual oil painting that started as random black-and-white shapes on a digital tablet. As he works those shapes into an image, they tell him a story.

It's kind of like shifting sand. Eventually, he gets the image he wants to paint and the story he wants to tell. Once the digital image is complete, he transfers it onto a canvas.

So, yes... This can also be considered an art book.

How to use this book

This book can be used as a traditional art book, allowing you to enjoy the associated stories.

Or...

You can use this as a daily meditation and thought-provoking exercise that will change how you see the world. And who knows? Maybe your changes will radiate outward, and the universe will smile upon you and your newfound wisdom. You will be the new chosen one, and the universe will bless you with riches and a large following of people who listen to your every word. All your dreams will come true. You may even reverse time and live your entire life again with new ideas.

Just kidding.

Using this book as a meditation book is simple. Just let go. Concentrate on what's bothering you and try to have a sense of calmness. I do this by pushing everything around me out of my mind and relaxing. Once the calmness surrounds my body, I open the book to a particular page.

Remember: The meaning will not tell you how to solve your problem. It will let you know what type of issue you are facing. Once you have decided how to interpret your situation, you have taken your first step toward solving it.

Living with Myself



Answered Prayers

We turn to prayer to help us out of a situation or to cause harm to others. We want *something*. To us, prayer is not a giving of thanks but a service to be performed by a deity. But what if the deity's answer to our prayers is not what we want but what we deserve? Would we still pray if the result is from our nightmares and not from our dreams? Be careful what you pray for, you just may get it.



At Last

What if we spent our entire life pursuing one goal? How will we feel once we finally achieve our goal? Will we be happy? Will we know what to do next? We get so obsessed with reaching a goal that we never think about what happens afterward. We don't realize that the process of getting to the goal is the true joy. While working through the process, see if there are ways to expand past the end goal.



Balance

We strive for balance in our lives and our world. Balance doesn't mean all things are equal all the time. It just means that nothing overtakes everything else over a long period. This is especially true with work and relaxation. With balance, our mind is clear and relaxed, allowing us to adapt easily to changes that may overwhelm us. Learn when to upset the balance and when to reassert it.



Birth of an Idea

Our ideas represent who we are and what we believe. They reflect how we see the world, and it is important to understand that they don't represent an absolute truth but how we understand it. It's good to listen to others and judge if their ideas have merit for ourselves. If so, add them to your collective knowledge. If not, try to understand it from their point of view. We can always build off their ideas to create new ones.



Blind Obedience

We do so many things without questioning because we have faith in those around us who tell us to trust them. Sometimes, it is for our own good. Sometimes, it is not. Like everything in life, it's a balance. Sometimes, you should be wary and consider the source of your information. Other times, you should have faith and believe. Your moral compass is a good guide when making these decisions.



Bound

Everybody has something that holds them back. It may be something that has happened to us or a failure that brought us to our knees. Many times, it is just fear. We are bound to whatever is preventing us from growing and improving. If you ask your friends, most will know exactly what it is. They've seen it in you over and over again. When you feel stuck, reach out to your true friends, for they may have a solution.



Captive

We all are a part of our environment. It shapes, controls, and feeds off us as much as we feed off it. When we see someone who looks or behaves differently, we understand they are not part of the same region as us. Difference is not to be feared but to be celebrated... as long as it is not harmful to us. When we embrace differences, our own environment becomes richer and more interesting.



Dark Voices

It's the voice inside us—the one that tells us to be afraid, the one that tells us that we're awful. If we listen to it for too long, it'll destroy us. However, if we are truly confident and understand who we are—acknowledge our weaknesses and plan to overcome them—we can defeat that beast. Embrace failure and understand that, through failure, we become stronger and more confident. Confidence is our strongest weapon to silence that dark voice.



Darkness Calls

We are not alone in the shadows. The darkness comforts us, wrapping us in a soft embrace, and it hides us from the world, our problems, and those who torment us. Learn to look around for others are hiding there with the same issues we are going through. They understand and won't judge us because they are like us. Learn to reach out to others in the darkness. We may find that darkness holds a ray of light.



Death

We like to think that Death is one-sided. He comes in the night and takes us away. But what if we're wrong? What if Death is always a part of us, and we're a part of him? Will we fear such a thing if we know we are returning to our beginnings rather than being dragged from our current lives? Will we fear him so much if Death is about coming home and becoming whole again.



Death on my Mind

We're all going to die. Sorry. No way of getting around that. However, there are two ways to view this: fear it or embrace it. If we fear dying, we'll be so focused on it that we won't enjoy everything we have. Life becomes a series of events until it happens. If we embrace it, we'll enjoy our moments because we may not experience them again. Life becomes a series of adventures until it happens. Make time to enjoy life, and Death will be held at bay.



Destiny Approaches

There is a path we are meant to be on. That path reflects who we are and what we are meant to do. Everybody is important. Yet that doesn't mean that we are destined to do great things in the eyes of others. It means we are meant to lead an important life for ourselves and others. We define what makes our lives important, and our actions can impact others, whether we know it or not. That is our destiny.



Elemental

We stand among others and say, “This is who I am. I am the reflection of what you did to me and how I was treated.” We all reflect the world around us and what happened to us. We can’t let that bring us down or change how we feel. There is a strength within every one of us, and with confidence and true belief in ourselves, we can overcome what was done to us and show the world that we are stronger than we ever thought.



Emotional Shield

Surrounding us, there is a wall of protection against the things that harm us. Our mental shield prevents someone from taking advantage of us, and we hide behind the facade we project. For some of us, it's because we've been hurt too many times. For others, it's because they are afraid to be hurt. Yet if the shield is dropped, we may also find more joy than we have ever experienced. We may find people who truly understand us.



Escape

We try to be brave and think we can conquer all our fears. We're told that we should always be strong and persevere. Sometimes, we can't. We hide and bury our heads. We want to escape everything and go somewhere safe. Sometimes, life is hard, and we're not strong enough to face it. And you know what? That's okay. Learn to step back, take a breath, and then come back stronger. Running away is okay as long as you don't do it all the time.



Eternal Thirst

It's natural to crave things—we all do. The satisfaction kicks in once we get what we want and are okay with it. However, some never experience that feeling. They constantly crave something, and no matter how hard they try, they are never satisfied. It is important to understand the reason for the need and see if something else can replace it. Otherwise, the desire eventually eats away at them, leaving them with an eternal thirst.



Followers

Responsibility is tough because we must make decisions that could affect others. We have to live with those decisions, carry them out, and support our point of view. So many people would rather follow than lead, go through their lives just doing what everybody else tells them to, and not take any responsibility. But that's the easy way out and leads to a life where we are beholden to others. That's okay, but only if that is the life we want.



For the Living

When someone passes away, it is standard to pay our respects. This is not for the dead. It is for the living. It allows the living to remember all the great things about the person. Before death, though, consider paying respect each day. Listen. Help. Make lives better and more enjoyable. We'll find that, by being there for others, we'll also make our lives more enjoyable. Enjoy the moment with others rather than thinking there will always be time later.



Forever Watching

A weariness flows through our bodies when we constantly wait for something bad to happen. We are so focused on that dreaded future that we never notice all the great things happening around us. When we look back, we realize that the future we feared never happened, but we missed those joyful moments that did. Focus on the great things happening around you now and learn to ignore the things you can't control.



Forgotten

What was once important to us is now forgotten. It is a part of our past. It shaped us. It helped us define who we are. But like the hidden doll in a painting, it became part of the background noise of our lives. We can discard those memories, as we do with many things we purchase. Many people would like to forget their past, but it will not forget us. Learn to embrace the painful memories because they are reminders of our strength when times are troubled.



Forlorn

Unrequited love is one of the hardest parts of life to deal with. In our minds, our negative thoughts justify why the other person doesn't love us. We feel that we both would be happier if they felt the same way as we do. But it doesn't work that way. We can't make anyone love us if we don't love ourselves. Once we learn to love ourselves and live life on our terms, we'll find someone out there who wants us as much as we want them.



Freedom

We like to think we are the masters of our world, that we're free to do whatever we want. Yet this is an illusion. As free as we think we are, there is always something holding us back. Maybe that something happened in the past. Maybe that something is our fears. Maybe that something is some physical or societal limitations. Whatever it is, true freedom can come when we can navigate around those boundaries.



Gateway

“It’ll be better when we get there,” we lie to ourselves. We may even believe it. All we know is that we are unsatisfied with our current situation, and it must be better elsewhere. Life is about taking chances and hoping that everything works out. Not everyone needs to take chances, but for those who are unsatisfied, life won’t change unless it happens. The tricky part is determining if the dissatisfaction is with ourselves or where we live.



Haunting Failures

We all have a past. Most of it is good, but we would rather forget some parts. Either way, the past has a way of reaching out and reminding us of what happened. The hard part is that, in some cases, those bad parts will follow us through our lives. Many people try to forget them. Yet some don't, and others learn to accept their mistakes or forgive themselves. Ignoring the past has a habit of returning with a vengeance.



Homestead

No matter how different our homes are—how lavish or simple they are—they are home. It's where we feel comfortable and one of the few places to truly be ourselves. It's a living entity that constantly stores our memories—the good and the bad, the wins and the failures—a sanctuary. Comparison is the thief of joy when seeing other homes that are more lavish. Remember that a home is more than just a place to impress others. It's a place for you to be you..



Imprisoned

In the night, there is a figure who watches us from the darkness. It follows us through the dark alleys and hidden crevices of our minds as we sleep. We don't know who they are but feel they've been with us our entire lives. We run, and yet they are always there. Some mistakes we've made control us our whole lives. We can't outrun them. We can't hide from them. All we can do is to acknowledge them and move on.



In Love

Being in love is one of the best feelings we can ever experience. Not everybody is fortunate enough to feel this way. It doesn't have to be with another person. It can be our favorite books, hobbies, or pets. It's not a moment of passion but a lifelong adoration where we give part of our lives to our interests, and in return, our interests give a part of themselves back to us. When we share that love and passion with others, we'll find a community that brings more love into our lives.



Inner Strength

We all have a force inside of us that protects us. For some, it's strong and keeps out harm. For others, it's weak and decaying. It eats away at the person until there is nothing left. That force is controlled by our body's health and our mind's strength. Both are necessary to create a strong core and, if appropriately strengthened, will create experiences that enhance our lives.



Inner Demons

A powerful force exists within us, controlling us and our actions. Our experiences and the armor we build for protection shape this force, and if we are lucky, we can purge our inner demons and cleanse our souls. The hard part is determining what parts of our souls we can cleanse and what parts are necessary to exist. Rather than cleansing, sometimes, it may be necessary to control the inner demon so that it can unleashed at the appropriate time.



Invasion

Everyone who comes into our lives is an invader. When they first see us, they come without being asked. A random encounter that, if we allow them to stay, will change us. Some people will take away everything that makes us who we are. Some will come in and heal us so that we come out as a better person. Everyone coming into our lives is a mixture of the healers and the takers. Your strength of character determines how they affect your life.



Lacking Wisdom

Just because we *can* do something doesn't mean we *should*. We like to think we are more intelligent than we are, but our decisions are often based on those we trust. This leads us to a falsehood where our beliefs are the masses' beliefs, not our own. Remember that the masses are not always correct, but more importantly, they are not always wrong. Like the owl on the skull, false wisdom can lead to the death of your true self. Learn to see what is true, not what others say.



Letting Go

Letting go of children so they can grow up, of our childhood, of a favorite balloon—it's so hard. We can't hold onto something forever and expect nothing to change. Life doesn't work that way. So many people try to recreate that same feeling over and over, but over time, we change, and the way we think and feel changes. It's inevitable. We must embrace the change, for that is where growth really happens.



Lost Soul

Ever notice that we don't miss something until it's gone? There is an emptiness that is now ever-present. We can't describe it, but we know we are no longer the person we were before. Whatever that missing piece is, it won't come back. But even if it does, things have changed. We must learn to live with the missing piece or find a way to fill that void. We won't have peace unless we learn to move on past finding the missing piece.



Lost Friends

Remember those friends that we had in the past? When we thought friendships would last forever? Over time, though, everybody went their separate ways, and contact was few and far between. Does it have to be that way? Can you maintain old friendships and new ones at the same time? Can the past and the present coincide? The past can be regained, but only if we reach out and bring it to the present, and there is no time like now.



Madness

Madness is always considered a bad thing. But what if it isn't? What if a person sees a different reality than us? Does it matter? If they are not harming themselves or others, why must that person conform to how everybody else thinks and sees the world? The unique way we see the world can be a beacon for those who are lost. Embrace those thoughts for they may bring peace and joy to others who think the same way.



Maelstrom

Entropy—the natural tendency for things to move toward chaos or disorder. If we don't pay attention, it quickly overtakes everything. Chaos swirls and turns, trying to dislodge us from our path. Rather than controlling the chaos, we should make use of it. Chaos brings unexpected results and changes that we usually wouldn't encounter. Small, chaotic changes every so often make life more interesting, and they can lead us in directions we never thought of.



Missing Them

Ever look up at the sky, see the moon, and wonder whatever happened to a close friend or a past love? Are they looking up at the moon and thinking about us? It's a cliché. Sentimental tripe. A hope that they feel the same about us as we do about them. We all want to feel important and be thought of by others. It lets us know that we are capable of loving someone and being loved.



Moment in Time

That moment lasts a fraction of a second. We don't remember the thousands of hours before or after. We just remember that fraction in time. That moment when we first saw our significant other. That moment when we first laid eyes on our newborn. That moment when we felt the game slip away from us. We just remember that fraction of a second.



Mother of Chaos

Every one of us can create chaos. As more and more things pull us in different directions, it is important to stay focused and centered. Being centered and in control allows us to navigate situations so that the outcome is what we desire or, at the very least, what we can live with. Otherwise, the forces can pull us apart, and we can end up creating more chaos for those around us. How we control the chaos allows us to be a model for others to emulate.



Nourishment

Replace the phrase “You are what you eat” with “You are what you consume, and what you consume is who you are.” Think about it: the news we see, the books we read, the food we eat, the videos we watch, and the games we play. Consider how everything we consume defines us and how we see the world. That is our reality, and, like the food we eat, it is important to understand how this affects the way we react to the world around us.



Poisonous

We can sense the poison, yet we do nothing about it. Initially, we admired the beauty and elegance of our desire, wishing we could hold them forever. Over time, we believe they have changed, but they haven't; we've merely ignored the signs that others noticed. Eventually, we come to recognize their poisonous nature. We must trust our gut, not our eyes, as it will never lead us astray.



Promise

When we make a promise, we are committing to someone else. We have given a part of ourselves. Too many promises trap the giver into a situation they cannot deal with. We are immediately seen as untrustworthy if we break our promises too easily, and if we promise too readily, they see us as a guarantee. Consider promises like our hearts. Be careful who we give them to.



Road to Perdition

We have the goals we focus on and know the path and how to get there. We're often so focused on the road ahead that we never see the world around us. We overlook the dangers until it's too late. We don't notice the beauty surrounding us. All we know is the goal ahead of us. By focusing partly on our surroundings, we may find that the goal is not that important or that something may help us reach our goal.



Sacrifices

What does it mean to be an adult? Do we get to do whatever we want? Is life easy and fun all the time? No. Being an adult means that we take responsibility for our actions. It means that we must make those hard decisions. We can't run away from it or let anyone else do it for us. Being an adult means living with the consequences of our actions—good or bad. Strength of moral character and responsibility are hallmarks of a strong and caring adult.



Scavenger

We've been looking at it for days. Deciding what to do. Everybody who has seen it has just walked by and ignored it. It's not good enough for them, but as we look at it, all we can see is potential. We can see what others cannot because of who we are and how we think. We aren't special because of this. It's based on our life experiences, successes, and failures. Embrace the idea that we see life differently than others and use that new vision.



Secrets

A small cottage sits alone in a large, crowded neighborhood. The person sitting by themselves in a crowded cafeteria. The life of the party who keeps themselves distant from their “friends.” We all have secrets. Some good. Some bad. Sometimes, those secrets prevent us from living our lives to the fullest. We don’t take chances on relationships because we feel that we’ll be judged for our secrets. We may lead a happy life, but could it be better?



Siblings

It's amazing how two people can be related by blood, live in the same location, and become vastly different. It comes down to the little changes. Initially, our friends and environments influence who we are and how we behave. Yet it's a snowball effect. Those little changes grow over time, and eventually, we grow apart and become two people with our own distinct lives. Our changes are from the clashes of our past and our current world.



Simpler Times

Remember when we were young? For most people, life was about playing in the fields with friends and running around without a care. No bills. No issues with work or family. Just having fun. And now, those days are gone, with the complexity of adulthood replacing the simplicity of life. Sometimes though, wouldn't we love to return and be that free again?



Struggle

Every step we take is more challenging than the last. We must wade through so much to get ahead, but we feel it'll never happen. For many, the struggle is real. Others may not see it, but we can feel it in our bones, and every waking moment, we feel we can't go on. Don't quit. Dealing with the struggle makes us stronger and stronger. We can succeed if we are on the path we are meant to be.



Tears of a God

We're always told we should help others and make their lives better. That is a great goal to have. However, what about us? When do we get to take care of ourselves? We are the gods of our lives, and if we allow others to control our lives, when do we get to be who we want to be? Helping others makes us feel better, but it shouldn't be at the expense of what makes our lives better. In the end, would we shed tears for the life we didn't lead?



The Gift

When we receive a gift from someone, it's a personal communication between the two. It doesn't matter what the gift is, it's personal. Most of the time, the gift represents how much that person understands us and values our relationship. Many may judge us or the person giving the gift, but it doesn't matter. They are not part of that relationship.



The Past Lingers

We are all products of our past—the goals we've achieved, the mistakes we've made, the paths we've taken, and those we were too afraid to walk down. The past is always there, and the more we dwell on it, the more power it has over us. It is the shadow that controls us. Learn to step out of that shadow, for it guides us in directions we never thought we would take. The safe path is never as powerful as the paths riddled with risks.



Trapped

Whether we recognize it or not, we all build a cage around ourselves. Most of the time, this mental cage is created by fear and prevents us from venturing forward to explore and enjoy the world. If we look closely, though, the bars are spaced wide apart, and if we take the risk, we can leave the cage. Escaping the cage is a matter of freeing our minds from fear, judgment, and failure. We can easily step through the bars if we truly believe in ourselves.



Unexpected

We do something because we expect something positive in return and know we will succeed. This reward cycle causes us to repeat it, the now-established comfort zone. However, this comfort zone prevents us from trying something that may negatively affect us. There is no growth. Only when we take chances may we see the impossible. Life is a balance of the familiar and the unexpected. The unexpected is not always bad.



Unforgiven

Everybody makes mistakes because, let's face it, we're all human. We need to make mistakes because we learn the most from failures, not successes. The trouble starts when we let those mistakes control our lives and take over our daily routines. We will always be stuck in that moment of failure if we don't learn to forgive ourselves or others who have wronged us. There is no growth.



Unwanted

All we can do is watch. We've tried our best, but they still go off without us. Is there something wrong with us? Are we not funny? Are we not pretty enough? Are we not rich enough? We never know why we're not in that group or asked to join their activities. It's tough to keep putting ourselves out there and not be wanted. By being open, we'll find there is a group for us. One that embraces who we are and is happy that we are there with them.



Uprooted

We all want stability and predictability in our lives. Too often, we are subjected to a major life event that makes us uneasy, and for many, that sudden change causes too much anxiety. Even if the change is good for us and needed, we still feel lost and helpless. Embracing change is always hard and can test even the most stable people, but that is what must happen. That is when we discover how strong we really are.



Who am I?

Are we the bright and colorful people others see? The shining star that is forever outgoing? Are we the loner who hides under the surface? The part we hold back from everyone because we are scared? Are we the demon that lives in the shadows? The darkness that no one knows about that we try to keep hidden? We are all three: the bright star, the loner, and the demon. Embrace all three parts for that makes us special.



Wings of Darkness

We watch the sky turn from light to dark and understand that it is because the planet revolves around the sun. That is a belief borne of science. There are beliefs born of other thoughts that disagree with this. Maybe a Dragon of Darkness sweeps over the world, bringing day and night. Both can coexist in our minds, and as long as our beliefs don't hurt anyone, who cares what we believe? Faith and beliefs are personal and cannot be taken away.



World View

The world is not a nice place. The truth of the matter is...that it's not a terrible place either. It is what it is. How we see the world is often based on our nature and beliefs. If we only think of the horrible, that is what we see. If we only think of the lovely, that is what we see. Focus on the good things surrounding you; you'll see that it is not as bad as you think.

Gallery of Nightmares



Jonathan knew life would never be the same when he entered the Gallery of Nightmares. Inherited from his mother, the gallery flooded his sense of reality with mysterious shadow people and dark voices from creepy paintings. He thought he could handle it until he stepped into the Shadow Nook. In that room, he was transported to a world of nightmares and realized his problems had just begun.

Visit Gallery Gift Shop at shadowmyths.com

Sacramancy Cards



The Shadows and Light paintings present in this book are located in different wings of the Gallery of Nightmares. They are also available as Sacramancy Cards. The cards are used for Tarot/Oracle reading, DnD campaign idea generator, writing prompts, and as therapy tools.

Biomagy Cards



The monsters Jonathan encountered in The Shadow Nook inhabit my fantasy world, Caelith (the world Jonathan enters). The Biomagy deck contains each creature's descriptions, interactions, combat, and attributes. Biomagy is the study of the world's creatures and how other races learn to communicate with one another.