

SHADOWHOUSE FALL

SHADOWSHAPER
CYPHER
BOOK 2

DANIEL JOSÉ OLDER



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For Sam

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In addition to the ordinary problems of a Puerto Rican teenager in Brooklyn, Sierra Santiago is working on developing her shadowshaping skills, and she is beginning to think she may need all the skill she can summon because it seems that when she channeled hundreds of spirits through herself in order to defeat Wick she woke up something very powerful and very unfriendly and put her family and friends at risk.

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THE BROOKLYN OF THE SHADOWSHAPER CYPHER

UPPER
MANHATTAN



WILLIAMSBURG

THE SANTIAGO
BROWNSTONE

THE
JUNKLOT

BUSHWICK

CLINTON
HILL

VON KING
PARK

OCTAVIA
BULLER
HIGH

BEDFORD-
STUYVESANT

SCHOOLYARD



RED
HOOK

THE
RED EDGE

PROSPECT
HEIGHTS

CROWN HEIGHTS

CALEB'S
TATT HOUSE

PARK SLOPE



PROSPECT
PARK

LEFFERTS
GARDEN

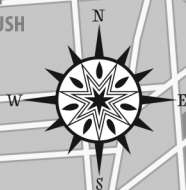
SUNSET
PARK

GREEN-WOOD
CEMETERY

WINDSOR
TERRANCE

PROSPECT
PARK
SOUTH

EAST
FLATBUSH



KENSINGTON
& PARKVILLE

FLATBUSH

BOROUGH PARK

CONEY
ISLAND



BENSONHURST

ONE

Sierra Santiago closed her eyes and the whole spinning world opened up around her. A brisk wind whispered songs of the coming winter as it shushed through browning leaves and then whisked along the moonlit field, throwing Sierra's mass of curls into disarray. Up above, the first round of overnight flights leaving JFK cut trails across the cloudless sky. Traffic whirred along just outside the park walls, and beyond that the shuttle train sighed and screeched to a halt; doors slid open; weary passengers collected their personal belongings as instructed, adjusted their earbuds, and headed off into the night.

But that was the simple stuff. Sierra had learned to expand her senses out farther than any normal person. It wasn't easy, but when she quieted her mind and the spirits were close, she could hear the city's clicks and groans half-way across Brooklyn. Tonight wasn't about meditation or the ongoing urban symphony, though. Where were her spirits?

As if in response, a vision sizzled into view in her mind's eye: There in the forest, not too far from her, a figure crouched. She could make out the silhouette leaning against a fallen tree, see the person's fast-beating heart telegraph frantic pulses out into the chilly night. The person scratched something onto the tree and looked around for nearby spirits.

I see you, Sierra thought, tensing her face into a smug smile. *Whoever you are. Now who else is out there?* She let the image go and immediately another appeared: in the field she sat on the edge of, a figure lay facedown in the grass, breathing heavily. After a few seconds, the person hunched up on their elbows and peered into the darkness. *Okay*. Sierra nodded. *Got it. What else?*

The next vision appeared so suddenly it almost knocked her over. Dark trees whipped past, and someone was panting. Running and panting. Sierra felt her own heart thunder in her ears. The other views she'd seen had been through spirit vision: a cadre of shadows she'd come to think of as her own Secret Service detail. But this was different — it was someone alive. Or *something* . . . Branches whisked out of its way as it bounded across the forest. *Which forest? Was it . . . was it close?* Sierra tried to scan for clues, but everything was moving too fast.

Spirits, Sierra beckoned. *Find this . . . thing*. She didn't remember having stood up, but she was on her feet. A wave of dizziness rushed over her as the half dozen views of

Prospect Park swimming through her mind veered suddenly skyward and then turned toward the shadowy fields and forests below.

All but one.

Whatever it was kept storming through the forest, panting, its whole body tensed with intent. It was . . . it was hunting. Sierra felt its hunger deep within herself; saliva flooded her own mouth. Flesh would be torn, a panicked heart would race and then falter and finally fail in this monster's jaws. The thing lunged, and Sierra's eyes popped open as a hand landed on her shoulder.

"Gotya!"

Sierra screamed and spun around, elbows first. She hit something soft and jumped back.

"Ow! What the hell, Sierra?" Big Jerome stood there rubbing his chest and pouting.

"I . . . Jerome . . ." Sierra scanned the field behind him, the forest beyond. Nothing. "I don't know . . . what happened."

"I do: You were so surprised I actually won a practice round you damn near cracked a rib."

"No . . ." Sierra rubbed her eyes. A branch snapped in the woods she had been facing. She turned, probed the darkness for movement.

"Sierra?" Sierra's mom, María Santiago, called. "¿Qué pasó, m'ija?" She walked up next to Jerome. "I was hiding and then I saw this guy barrel past and actually reach you and I knew something had to be going on."