

Shadows



Written by Ashley Udink

Illustrated by Ginger Udink

Dedicated to my parents
and my English teacher,
Mrs. Kimberlee Irvine,
for supporting me and
giving me this opportunity.



The shadows are always there. They follow your personality whether it is stressed or angry. They hang over the heads of people like dark clouds, making them mean and not fun to be around.



The shadows have the power to make you sad, stressed, and very unhappy, but these shadows are not always a curse.



These *anathemas* can, instead of break you down, do the opposite. They can make you stronger just like they did for Evan.



Evan was having a very hard time with school, family, and friends. In his opinion, it was a lot for a twelve year old kid. He had piles of homework, his siblings were always picking on and teasing him because he was the youngest, and his friends were trying to get him to skip his classes. He wasn't very happy.



The shadows found this unhappiness and followed Evan. Everywhere he went, they added on top of the stress and sadness, feelings of uselessness and anger.



Evan didn't know about his shadow until he spotted it trailing behind him as he walked to school. It was dark and evil looking. The problem was, he didn't know how to get rid of the shadow, so his sadness just kept growing.



Eventually nobody at school wanted to play with him, or ask him for anything, and that only made him sadder. Eventually sadness turned to anger.



Evan was angry with everyone around him. He didn't trust the kids he called friends anymore, *assuming* that they had abandoned him. The shadows grew until they had complete control over his emotions. He felt like all hope was lost until a new girl came to school.



She wasn't like Evan. She was always happy with a big wide smile. She laughed a lot and was kind to everyone. She had a sparkle in her eye that seemed to convince everyone to be her friend. One day at recess she noticed how sad Evan looked on the playground, so she decided to be his friend. She introduced herself as Liola.



Evan was *skeptical* about Liola at first, but as the days flew by, he trusted her more and more. As they became closer friends, Evan felt the shadows' grip loosen on him slightly, but only when he was around her.



One day, during recess, Evan and Liola were playing tag with some other kids. Evan was starting to notice that something about Liola was different from the other kids. He could feel she was different than everyone else, but didn't know how until it hit him like his head was a baseball and it had just been hit with a bat.



Liola's shadow was not like his or anybody else's he had ever seen. Her shadow was not angry or *obstinate*; it was happy and danced around with her.



Evan asked Liola about her shadow, and she told him that she was happy and that made her shadow happy. Evan then told her about his shadow and how it made him sad and unhappy. He told her about his life at home, the teasing and pushing, and how he had been feeling abandoned. She told him that everything would be okay, and then the bell rang.



The next day Evan asked Liola about her shadow and how was it that she was so happy? It was at that moment that she told him her secret.



She told him that even though life gets rough and may seem unfair; he can still find some good and beauty in it. All he had to do was change his outlook, his *perspective* on the world, and eventually his shadow would bend with him.



Evan decided to take Liola's advice, and by the end of the year, he was happier and his **outlook**, his *perspective* on the world, was brighter.

Glossary

- *Assuming* – To guess without proof or evidence
- *Skeptical* – Not to trust or believe
- *Anathema* – A curse
- *Perspective* – A point of view



This story is to tell younger audiences that it is okay to feel sad and that they should not be judged because of it. A wise man once said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Sometimes that change can simply be one’s perspective, and sometimes, that is all it takes.