

*Living in the Shadows shows that even in the roughest places, laughter and love still find a way in.*

## **Living in the Shadows**

By Mason Kinard

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The book cover features a stylized illustration of a brick building facade. At the top are two small, square windows with yellow light emanating from them. Below the windows is the title 'LIVING IN THE SHADOWS' in large, bold, white letters with black outlines and a 3D effect. The words 'IN THE' are smaller and positioned between 'LIVING' and 'SHADOWS'. Below the title is a light blue door with a small, round, gold-colored handle. A rectangular window in the door shows a man with curly brown hair, glasses, and a beard, wearing a white t-shirt, standing in a laundry room with washing machines. To the left of the door is a square window with a black metal grate. To the right of the door is a small, rectangular sign that reads 'TED'S LAUNDROMAT'. At the bottom of the cover, the author's name 'By MASON KINARD' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a dark grey rectangular background.

# LIVING IN THE SHADOWS

TED'S LAUNDROMAT

By MASON KINARD

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# Living in the Shadows

**6:29 am Saturday**

Last night, Larry was drinking Corn Liquor with the neighborhood alcoholic, Tammy. Tammy has frequented Ted's Laundromat almost daily for the previous three years or so, yet she rarely washes clothes. But as for Larry, he's taken with her conversational expressions, looks, and dress style. Several times a week, Tammy has had different hairstyles. That's how the women in Philadelphia are. Larry, being an outsider, sees the difference. No Plain Jane's here, just variety.

She's 50 years old and favors Thelma from the 70's TV show Good Times. Larry is dying to ask if they are related.

When Tammy wears her hair in braids, she looks like a queen straight out of Africa, and when she has her hair in a bush afro style, she looks like the prettiest Black Panther fighting for the cause. Whatever she's wearing is perfect for the occasion.

Three years ago, at Ted's Laundromat, an old timer in his 70's saw Larry talking to Tammy, and when she left, the old timer said to Larry, "That's what you call (A Bad Mamma Jamma!)" Whenever Larry sees or thinks of Tammy, that expression comes to mind.

Last night was the first time he had invited her upstairs. He wanted to too many times in the past but didn't have the nerve.

Now, it's total silence in his one-bedroom apartment above the Laundromat. Larry is in a deep sleep. He is a little boy talking to his mother. She is trying to correct his speech. He keeps telling his mother, "That's how we say it in Philly."

And she keeps saying "You're not in Philadelphia."

But mom, we say “I ain’t got it.”

“No Larry, you say I don’t have it.”

“But mom, we say sup?”

“No, Larry, you say, “What’s up? Two words. Larry, you’re not in Philadelphia.”

“But mom.”

Suddenly, the alarm clock rings loudly. Larry jumps up, shouting, “Where’s the fire! Where’s the fire!”

Looking around, he realizes there’s none; he has a severe hangover. He tries to imagine what he did last night but is having difficulty remembering. He’s asking himself, “What did I do, and who was in here?”

Sitting at the edge of the bed, Larry looks from the bed to the kitchen table and sees two bottles without labels and many chicken bones on a plate.

He says to himself, “It’s déjà vu, same old thing. I’m 45 years old, 6 feet tall, thin with glasses, and nerdy for this neighborhood. When can I wake up and feel good about where I’m at and what I’m doing with my life? I’ve been on the run for the last 3 years tucked away in North Philadelphia. I must get out of this life somehow and be far away from this laundromat. Well, I don’t miss paying taxes.”

“If I’m being honest, I think things would be different or even better if I started praying. I just can’t get myself to do it.”

He tries to stand up; his head starts to spin, then he sits back down for a short pause. He tries it again; he stands up, walks over to the front window, and looks out. He notices the sun is trying to come out, yet the glare is intense. As a cloud blocks the glare, he sees the most bizarre thing about this neighborhood. A white girl in her twenties, very shapely, strutting through North Philly. She has the strangest walk, more like a strut. He notices one of her legs could be an inch or

two longer than the other, so it's up and down, but there's no rhythm to the beat. It's just strange. He wonders if this could be a sign or a dream.

As a child, Larry was taught that bizarre and strange things can bring about some good, yet for that to happen, he needs to identify what it is. Now he's thinking, "This could be just what I've been waiting for." He hollers out the window. "Hey, you can't be walking like that up in here! Do you know where you are?"

She looks up at him, but because of the glare of the sun, she cannot see his face, so she keeps on walking.

He says, "Oh, it's like that, all right, all right, easy! Wow, I said that like I've been living in Philly all my life."

Yet, no reaction is not what he was looking for.

Larry says to himself, "I have got to keep looking, and when something good comes my way, I will know it. I'm going to snatch it and not let go."

When she fades from his sight, he realizes he's got to get washed up and dressed to open the Laundromat.

## About The Author

I was born and raised in North Philadelphia. PA. Fast forward. I will be married this January 2026 for 35 years. Happy and satisfied.

Some years ago, I was asked to put lyrics to a song. That turned into an album. Problems by Anything With Bourbon. After that project was up and running I had a friend named Gwen Baptiste who was an author of several books. We talked about doing a screenplay. I got started, but tired quickly of formatting the pages so I wrote a book, and this is it.

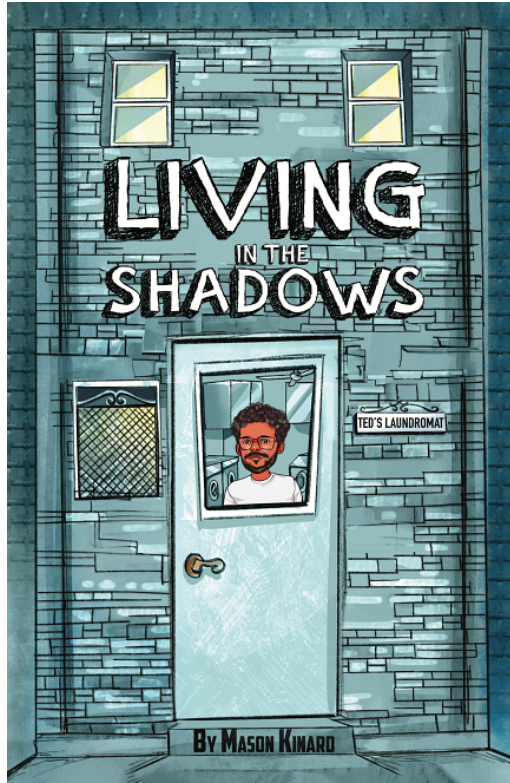
I tell myself all the time. I'm nobody special, but I am special to those that love me.

I've fallen in love with writing, so watch out!

And that's enough about me. Because I prefer the SHADOWS too.

Peace!





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