

# SHADOWSHAPER LEGACY

---

SHADOWSHAPER  
CYPHER  
**BOOK 3**

---

DANIEL JOSÉ OLDER

SCHOLASTIC PRESS / NEW YORK

# *For Anika, brave and brilliant*

Text copyright © 2020 by Daniel José Older  
Map copyright © 2017 by Tim Paul  
Frontispiece copyright © 2020 by Nilah Magruder

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC, SCHOLASTIC PRESS, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

## Library of Congress Catalog-in-Publication Data

Names: Older, Daniel José, author. | Older, Daniel José. Shadowshaper cypher ; bk. 3.

Title: Shadowshaper legacy / Daniel José Older.

Description: First edition. | New York : Scholastic Inc., 2020. | Series: The shadowshaper cypher ; Book 3 | Audience: Ages 14 and up. | Audience: Grades 10–12. | Summary: A war is brewing among the different houses, some of Sierra's shadowshapers are still in jail, and the House of Shadow and Light has been getting threatening messages from whisper wraiths, and even though one spy was exposed Sierra is not quite sure who she can trust — but the deal with Death made by one of her ancestors has given her power, and she will need to control it and confront her family's past if she has any hope of saving the future.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019030317 (print) | LCCN 2019030318 (ebook) | ISBN 9780545953009 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780545953016 (ebk)

Subjects: LCSH: Magic — Juvenile fiction. | Puerto Ricans — New York (State) — New York — Juvenile fiction. | Puerto Rican families — Juvenile fiction. | Paranormal fiction. | Brooklyn (New York, NY) — Juvenile fiction. | CYAC: Magic — Fiction. | Occultism — Fiction. | Puerto Ricans — New York (State) — New York — Fiction. | Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.) — Fiction. | LCGFT: Paranormal fiction.

Classification: LCC PZ7.1.O45 Sj 2020 (print) | LCC PZ7.1.O45 (ebook) | DDC 813.6 [Fic] — dc23

10987654321

2021222324

Printed in the U.S.A. 23  
First edition, January 2020

Book design by Christopher Stengel

# ONE

The last streaks of a strange, greasy sunset slipped into darkness as night stretched across the cold New Jersey skies. Sierra Santiago grinned through chattering teeth and pulled her maroon hoodie up over her fro against a chilly breeze that swept across the field toward her, rustling the tall grass and sending tiny waves through a nearby puddle of murky water.

“You ain’t nervous?” Bennie stepped up beside her.

“Excited, honestly,” Sierra said.

She didn’t have to look to know her best friend was rolling her eyes. “Okay, girl.”

So much work had led up to this one moment, and Sierra was mostly relieved it was finally going to happen, regardless of how wrong it might go for them. Anyway, it had reached a point where it *had* to happen: It was simply, undeniably time, and if she’d tried to maneuver or predetermine the outcome any more than she already had, it would blow up in her face.

“You don’t think they’ll be mad that we, you know, lied to them and shattered the fragile peace and all that?”

Sierra smirked. “What peace? Ain’t no peace that I can see.” Since inadvertently destroying all but one of the Sorrows and becoming the House of Shadow and Light a month and a

half earlier, Sierra’s crew of shadowshapers had been getting threatening messages from whisper wraiths, catching strangely shaped figures that stalked them through the streets of Brooklyn, and fending off halfhearted attacks from random spirits. Clearly, someone was trying to rattle them. Old Crane and his House of Iron was probably behind it somehow, but he’d pledged neutrality until things calmed down and had even sworn to protect Sierra’s brother Juan, her crush Anthony, and Izzy while they were in lockup. Still: No one could be trusted. That much Sierra had learned. Bloodhäus was on the rise, clearly vying to knock the House of Shadow and Light out of the way so they could take over dominance. And allying with Old Crane on the low would be just the way of doing it.

Anyway, the Bloodhäus was a bunch of raging skinheads, so regardless of whether they were behind the attacks, as far as Sierra was concerned, they had to go.

“You right,” Bennie said. “I just mean . . . no one can prove it was Bloodhäus that was coming at us.”

“Ha.”

“And they still gonna be mad.”

“That only matters if they can do something about it.”

Bennie shivered. “That mask you been painting on . . .”

“What about it?” Robbie had drawn it for her the first time. Halloween night, when everything had changed and she’d finally embraced her role as Lucera, Mistress of Shadows. It had felt right, and not just because everyone else was dressed up too. That face paint had saved her life when she’d squared off with the Sorrows later that night. It had been there for her when she’d needed it most, a form of art to channel spirits through, and ever since then it had felt like donning armor

every time she applied the grinning skull over half her face.

“Gives me the chills,” Bennie said, raising her eyebrows. “But I guess that’s the point, huh? You only paint it on when some shit’s about to go down. What *are* you planning, Si?”

Sierra just let her grim smile speak for her.

It was a fair question, though, and usually she preferred having her people know the full score of what was gonna go down. But tonight was different. First of all, she wasn’t totally sure how things would play. If Mina’s intel was right, Bloodhäus was every bit as ruthless as they’d projected themselves to be. And even if they were less powerful than the shadowshapers, they were more experienced and more desperate. They would play dirty, Mina had assured everyone at the planning meetup.

*That’s fine*, Sierra thought as Big Jerome rose from his position in the tall grass and signaled that someone was coming. She nodded at Bennie and then crouched out of sight.

She had no intention of playing clean.



“Took y’all long enough,” Big Jerome said from somewhere up ahead.

“You talk too much,” a sharp voice cut back. “Where’s your leader?”

*Good*, Sierra thought, still crouching amidst the weeds. *Goad them. Make them mad*. She closed her eyes, let the spinning world open up around her. Her spirits spun a slow circle around the field. She let them lift her consciousness, carrying her mind’s eye into a gentle glide. The Bloodhäus representatives stood uneasily in an open area facing the shadowshapers.

There were six of them — five not counting Mina. Two men and three women against Big Jerome, Bennie, Caleb Jones, and Robbie. Easy enough to take, especially once Mina blew her cover and messed with ’em from the inside.

But nothing was ever easy. Farther back in the field, three more Bloodhäusers waited beside barrels of some kind. Probably full of blood, knowing these creepers. That was fine. She had another move or two up her sleeve as well.

“On the way,” Big Jerome said.

“A likely story,” a woman snarled.

“Did you want to talk seriously or not?” someone else said. “Because we don’t need to be here.”

“If you didn’t need to be here, you wouldn’t be here,” Caleb said. “You don’t trust Crane, and rightfully not, and even if you did, you know you’d have to put him down somewhere along the line if you want to get on top, yes? So why not get him out of the way now while you have a common enemy in power?”

“Yes,” sneered the first voice — a woman who sounded a little older than Sierra; the one Mina said was called Axella, probably. “We’ve all heard about how he strung you along and then nearly destroyed you, Caleb.” It sounded like there might’ve been the tiniest hint of sympathy in that rebuke, but that didn’t seem likely.

*Easy*, Sierra thought. Crane’s betrayal had been a sore spot for Caleb, and it probably always would be. The old man had been a keeper of a lot of the lore behind shadowshaping and the Deck of Worlds, and even Sierra’s grandparents had trusted him with their deepest secrets. He’d been playing them all

along, a House of Iron spy amongst the shadowshapers.

Caleb wasn't about to be baited, though. His voice was steady: "Did you bring what we asked?"

"Slow down," the second voice growled. That would be Krin, probably. Mina had said he acted like the leader but was probably just posturing, or a decoy. "How do we know you're not hiding body paint, hm? All those layers."

"It's cold, you pervert," Bennie said.

"Dake, Mina," Krin barked. "Check them."

Sierra exhaled. The Bloodhäusers had insisted on meeting way out here, miles away from any graffiti-covered walls or sculptures that Sierra's crew could 'shape a spirit into and weaponize against them. The House of Shadow and Light had agreed on the condition that no weapons be brought at all. Even with Mina on the inside, no one was really sure how their blood magic worked, and the *Almanac of the Deck of Worlds* said that they were notorious for stockpiling arms for some forever-imminent apocalypse.

"Assholes," Sierra whispered, closing her eyes as Mina and Axella made their way across the open area between the two houses. At least they sent Mina to check the girls. Bennie, Caleb, Jerome, and Robbie all rolled back their sleeves and pulled their pant legs up, lifted their shirts to show paint-free tummies.

"Easy, jackass," Bennie growled, shoving Mina back.

"Hey, hey!" a few of the Bloodhäusers yelled.

Mina just shook her head and stepped back, staring down Bennie. "She's clean. No drawings."

"Alright, alright," Krin said. "Dake?"

The boy searching Caleb and Robbie had to be about seventeen. He'd slicked his sandy blond hair back against his head and wore a busted military jacket over jeans and combat boots. In Brooklyn, he could've been mistaken for a hipster. Sierra wondered if he was one of the high-ups — the Bloodmage or Sanguine Berserker.

Robbie and Dake exchanged icy glares as the Bloodhäuser finished his search and moved on to Caleb.

"If Lucera didn't come, what was even the point of this parlay?" Axella demanded.

*Everyone wants to flush everyone else out,* Sierra thought. *Well . . .*

"Did yours?" Robbie asked.

"Of course," Axella said. "We keep our word. You don't need to know who that is, but they are here." They'd been cagey about who was running things, even once Mina had won their trust enough to get initiated. As the House of Shadow and Light's resident spy, she'd been able to be initiated into the blood magic without them knowing about her other powers. But they still hadn't taught her how to use it or shared their organizational secrets with her.

"What good is having your leader here to negotiate with us if we don't know who it is?" Bennie said. Something rustled behind Sierra. Her eyes sprang open and she whirled around, but the tall grass revealed nothing. Had it been the wind?

"Seems we're at an impasse, then," Axella said. "I guess we'll be leaving."

*A bluff,* Sierra thought, but she couldn't concentrate on the talks and scan the area for danger at the same time. Sure, she had backup farther out in the weeds, but how would they

know she was in trouble if she couldn't make a noise without revealing her position? Without making a move, she called on the churning forces of shadow and light within her.

"And risk us picking you off one by one or getting crushed outright by the House of Iron?" Caleb said. "I don't think so."

"Or we could just wait around till you two decimate each other and then swoop in and clean up the mess."

There it was again, just off to Sierra's right and a few feet away. Not the wind. And then another one to her left, rustling toward her. If she used her powers, if she even moved too much, she'd be revealed, and she wasn't ready for that yet. Whatever they were, they seemed small — neither rustle was very loud, more like a gentle scurrying. Still, Sierra didn't like it.

*Sierra.* Vincent's voice, an urgent whisper. *Something's happening.*

Vincent had become Sierra's top lieutenant on the spirit side of things. He was Bennie's older brother, and he'd been cut down in a hail of NYPD gunfire when he was sixteen and Sierra and Bennie were eleven. Then he'd gone on to form a cadre of like-minded spirits who'd been killed by the state — the Black Hoodies — and they'd joined forces with Sierra's shadowshapers.

And now he was one of the shadows circling this weed-strewn New Jersey field in the middle of nowhere, and while he was always pretty serious, he sounded downright upset.

"What kinds of things?" Sierra whispered. "I got movement around me down here."

*Yeah, we see that, but we can't make out what they are. 'Bout a dozen of them moving toward the crew from different directions. They converging.*

The rustling had moved past Sierra now, and she was glad she hadn't given up her cover. But still — a dozen?

"Where you going?" Caleb demanded, and Sierra realized maybe the Bloodhäusers hadn't been bluffing at all. Or maybe the whole meetup had been a bluff.

She stood, opening her mouth to give the command to bum-rush them, when she realized everyone was looking at someone barreling toward them from the other side of the field: Tee.