



Shadows Between Thoughts

Some Places Remember. Some Places Watch. Some Places Wait.

Welcome to *Shadows Between Thoughts*.

Daybridge Maximum Security Hospital has been abandoned for decades. But it's not empty.

Thirty-seven patients died in Ward 7 under mysterious circumstances. Time moves differently in certain corridors. Shadows flow against the light. And something in the darkness hums lullabies to visitors who never leave.

Paranormal investigator Ryan Matthews survived Portland—barely. The scar on his neck is a permanent reminder that some things in the dark are very real. Now he's leading his team into Daybridge's most haunted location, armed with cutting-edge technology and questions that demand answers.

But the hospital has been waiting for them. The door opens both ways. And some investigations change the investigators forever.

Turn the page. The shadows are listening.

— **Rae Stonehouse - Author**

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Free Sample:

Shadows Between Thoughts

CHAPTER ONE: FATEFUL EXPLORATION

Ryan Matthews squinted at the architectural blueprints of Daybridge Maximum Security Hospital spread across his desk. The yellowed paper crinkled under his fingers as he traced the outline of Ward 7—the experimental ward where thirty-seven patients had died under mysterious circumstances. Red marks dotted the blueprint, each representing a reported supernatural occurrence he'd meticulously documented over the past three months.

The surrounding office hummed with activity. Equipment cases lined the walls, packed with the latest paranormal detection technology money could buy. After what happened in Portland, Ryan had spared no expense.

"You're obsessing again," JoJo Lang said, appearing in the doorway.

Ryan looked up to find his tech specialist balancing her custom-built laptop in one arm while adjusting her thick-rimmed glasses with the other. The gentle hum of her EMF detector filled the momentary silence between them.

"Just being thorough," he replied, rolling his shoulders to ease the tension. The scar on his neck—a jagged line where something in that Portland house had tried to tear out his throat—tingled with phantom pain.

JoJo set her laptop beside the blueprints. Her screen displayed wavelength patterns that defied conventional physics. "These readings are off the charts, Ryan. I've never seen anything like this in fifteen years of ghost hunting."

"That's what makes Daybridge different." Ryan tapped the blueprint. "This place wasn't just another asylum. The experimental ward conducted tests on patients with... unusual conditions."

JoJo leaned closer, her dark eyes reflecting the glow of her screen. "And those are just the documented deaths. Who knows how many more vanished without a trace?"

Ryan's hand unconsciously moved to the scar on his neck. Three years ago, he would have dismissed all of this as electromagnetic interference or old buildings settling. But the house in Portland had changed everything.

"The equipment's acting strange," JoJo added, lowering her voice. "Last night my primary scanner picked up voices speaking in Latin—backward Latin. I've triple-checked the recordings."

"What did they say?" Ryan asked, feeling the familiar chill that now accompanied their investigations.

JoJo pulled up an audio file. The distorted voices made Ryan's skin crawl even before she translated: "The door opens both ways."

The office door swung open as Jason Reeves entered, his young face flushed with excitement. At twenty-four, he was the newest member of their team, bringing enthusiasm that reminded Ryan of himself before Portland.

"Van's packed and ready," Jason announced, patting his jacket pocket where something made a slight metallic sound. "Double-checked all the equipment like you asked, JoJo."

Ryan studied the younger man. There was something about Jason that drew his attention—something in the way electronics sometimes malfunctioned around him, or how shadows seemed to linger in his presence. His background check had come back clean, but Ryan sensed Jason held secrets.

"Did you pack the modified thermal cameras?" Ryan asked.

"All six of them," Jason confirmed with a grin. "Plus, the EVP recorders with the quantum tunneling modifications. Everything's set."

Ryan rolled up the blueprints with methodical precision. "Then I guess it's time."

Twenty minutes later, their van pulled up at the gates of Daybridge Maximum Security Hospital. The setting sun cast the building in bloody red light, making the broken windows look like wounded eyes. Decades of neglect had transformed what was once a place of healing—or at least claimed to be—into a monument of decay.

JoJo whistled low as she gazed through the windshield. "It's bigger than I expected."

The Victorian architecture loomed against the darkening sky, its weathered gargoyles keeping silent watch. Vines crawled up the brick walls like grasping fingers, and several windows gaped open like screaming mouths.

"EMF's already active," JoJo reported from the back of the van, where she monitored their baseline readings. Her equipment chirped in protest. "Something's definitely here."

Ryan killed the engine, and silence fell over the team. The rusty sign reading "Daybridge Maximum Security Psychiatric Hospital - Est. 1887" swayed slightly in the breeze. Below it, faded red graffiti warned: "ABANDON HOPE."

"Remember," Ryan said, turning to face his team, "we stay together. No wandering off."

JoJo nodded, her fingers dancing over her equipment. "The temporal readings are unusual. It's almost like time moves differently in certain parts of the building."

"That matches the reports," Ryan confirmed. "Security guards claimed to have experienced missing time—minutes or hours gone in what felt like seconds."

As they unloaded their gear, the last rays of sunlight disappeared, plunging the hospital grounds into darkness broken only by their flashlights. Dead leaves skittered across the cracked pavement, and somewhere in the distance, a crow called out a warning.

The main entrance doors hung askew on their hinges, creating a dark opening into the building's interior. The brass handles had turned green with age.

JoJo aimed her flashlight at a second-floor window. "Did you see that?"

Ryan followed her beam. For an instant, he caught movement—a shadow, quick and deliberate, passing behind the dirty glass.

"Log it," he said, checking his watch: 7:42 PM. "Time, location, description. We document everything."

The air temperature dropped noticeably as they crossed the threshold into Daybridge Max. Their flashlight beams cut through decades of dust, revealing a stark administrative checkpoint with its bulletproof glass partition still intact. Behind it, abandoned logbooks lay open, their pages yellow with age.

The first security gate stood partially open, its heavy-duty electronic lock long dead. Beyond it lay the processing office, where new inmates were once photographed, searched, and stripped of their belongings.

"This place feels wrong," Jason whispered, his hand again touching whatever he kept in his pocket. "The air... it's too thick."

Ryan knew what he meant. Each breath felt labored, as if the air contained something beyond oxygen—something that filled the lungs but didn't satisfy them.

"Temperature's dropped twelve degrees since we entered," JoJo reported, her breath forming small clouds. "No drafts or open windows to explain it."

They moved deeper into the reception area. The institutional mint-green paint had peeled away in sheets, revealing cold gray concrete beneath. Their footsteps echoed off the bare floors, bouncing between metal gates and empty guard stations.

JoJo's equipment suddenly emitted a high-pitched whine that set their teeth on edge. "Something's generating massive energy. These readings don't make sense."

Ryan felt the familiar weight of dread settling in his stomach—the same feeling he'd experienced in Portland before all hell broke loose. He checked his equipment one last time, hands moving with practiced efficiency.

"Remember why we're here," he said quietly. "Whatever happens, we find the truth."

As they approached the second security gate leading to the main wing, Jason stopped suddenly. "Listen."

They froze. In the silence between their breathing, a soft sound emerged—like someone humming a lullaby several corridors away.

"Female voice," JoJo whispered, adjusting her directional microphone. "Coming from the east wing."

"Ward 7 is that direction," Ryan confirmed, checking the blueprint in his mind.

The second security gate, more formidable than the first, showed deep gouges near the locking mechanism, as if something had tried to claw its way through. Ryan pushed it open slowly, the hinges groaning in protest.

As the gate swung wide, the humming stopped abruptly, replaced by complete silence. Not the natural quiet of an abandoned building, but a listening silence—aware and waiting.

"I don't like this," JoJo muttered, but her hands remained steady on her equipment.

"We've got six hours before our check-in call," Ryan reminded them. "If we don't report back, our contact alerts authorities."

Jason stepped through the gate, his flashlight beam dancing across the corridor ahead. "Which way to Ward 7?"

Ryan pointed to a stairwell at the end of the hall. "Up to the second floor, then east. That's where most of the activity has been reported."

As they moved forward, Ryan noticed the shadows beginning to behave strangely—flowing against their light beams, lingering too long when they moved past. He'd seen similar phenomena in Portland right before the attacks began.

None of them noticed that their phones had all died simultaneously, screens blank except for Ryan's, which showed one final message that no one had sent:

"Welcome home."

The soft humming resumed, closer now, drawing them deeper into Daybridge's dark embrace.

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About the Author

Rae Stonehouse crafts dark supernatural mysteries where noir meets the paranormal. Drawing on over 40 years in psychology and mental health, he brings emotional depth and psychological complexity to urban fantasy. The Ethan Reeves series explores the shadows lurking in Daybridge—where every case uncovers secrets better left buried.

Connect: ethanreeveswerewolfdetective.com | daybridgeparanormal.substack.com

Want to Know What Happens Next?

They Came for Answers. The Hospital Has Other Plans.

You've walked through the gates with Ryan, JoJo, and Jason. You've felt the temperature drop twelve degrees. You've heard the humming that stops when you listen too closely. And you've seen the message that appeared on Ryan's phone: "Welcome home."

But the investigation has barely begun.

Why did all their phones die simultaneously—except Ryan's?

What happened in Portland that left Ryan with more than just a scar?

And what secrets is Jason hiding in his pocket that make shadows linger around him?

The haunting intensifies in *Shadows Between Thoughts*

Ward 7 awaits on the second floor, where thirty-seven patients died and time itself behaves wrong. The backward Latin voices warned them: "The door opens both ways." Now Ryan's team must discover what that means—before they become part of Daybridge's permanent collection.

Some buildings remember their dead. Some investigations can't be abandoned. And in Daybridge Maximum Security Hospital, the real terror isn't what happened decades ago—it's what's happening right now.

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