



Shadow Girl: A Memoir Of Attachment (Sightline Books)

Deb Abramson

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As the good little girl in an unhappy family who hid her darker troubles, Deb Abramson felt like she was living with another girl, a shadowy being who would neither leave nor make herself known. Crushed beneath the burden of her parents' rigid expectations yet driven to satisfy their needs, Abramson becomes bulimic, then severely depressed and suicidal, retreating more and more from the troubling outside world to the seeming haven of home, to a cycle of comfort from and competition with her depressed mother, to the frightening but alluring intimacy of her father's affections. Her struggle to extricate herself from the "impermeable, immutable knot" of her family forms the heart of her dazzling book.

In this psychological portrait of a family bound together by the uneasy permutations of love, Abramson relies not on sensationalist narrative but on a collection of the many small moments that glitter along the bumpy path of her life. Now and then she provides a broader, connecting perspective by stepping out of her story to reflect on the meaning of it all from the standpoint of the insightful, healed person she has managed—against all odds—to become.

Rich in metaphor and intimate detail, this is a lyrical story about moving from isolation toward connection, about seeing childhood not as a crippling refuge but as a point of departure, about discovering that it is possible to "have your shadows as well as your light."



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