



# Shadowed Soul

*John M. Spagnoli , Stephen McCallum (Contributor)*

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Shadowed Soul by John M. Spagnoli is a fiction novel about bi-polar Thomas Milton, as he struggles to rebuild his life with the aid of his blind wife's seeing-eye dog, Bailey. The compelling drama follows Thomas and his wife, Beth, as they embrace and endure the birth of their firstborn through the holiday season in New York City. Fears and anxieties that plague Thomas are personified in the form of the Shadowed Soul a demonic specter who stalks the protagonist's every move. As his manic-depression escalates, his expectation for more problems is answered in abundance. His life goes from great to bad to worse. With the unconditional love of watchful Bailey, Thomas grapples with seemingly insurmountable challenges as he chooses to rebuild his shattered life. Much of the journey through manic-depression is autobiographical, with the exception of the main character's online pornography addiction and the demise of certain relatives. Set in the present, Spagnoli's intention is to depict clinical depression in a way that provides a clear road map to leading a full life

## Shadowed Soul Details

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# From Reader Review Shadowed Soul for online ebook

**Adriana Cervantes says**

[http://youtu.be/8f\\_bxNUBA7o](http://youtu.be/8f_bxNUBA7o)

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**Erin Black says**

Originally Posted on BOOKLUVRS HAVEN

I received this book from the publishing company for an honest review.

When I read the synopsis to this book I thought 'this is a must read'! Right up my alley. I thought I would love it. Did I? Nope. Was it a waste of time? Absolutely not! I liked it! It just wasn't as good as I thought it would be. In all honestly when I was reading this book I was rating it at a 2 star...until something clicked...and the light turned on....

I loved the characters, especially Thomas and the bond he shared with Bailey. I love dogs and their unconditional love. They truly are man's best friend. This bond shared between the protagonist and his wife's seeing eye dog was a feel good moment in the story. I couldn't help but think of my own dog.

The idea of the 'shadowed soul' amazed me. Though this aspect of the book brought some irritations up. I loved that Thomas' anxiety and fears were given a character in the story. Such an awesome idea! Draw back was that I found the shadowed soul SOOOOOOOOOO annoying. He just kept popping up, never with a positive thing to say. Than I clued in....

DUHHHH.....he was meant to be annoying! The point of the story was to make readers aware of what people who suffer from severe depression go through daily. This changed my rating instantly. What an awesome way to make someone who has no idea what it is like living with depression relate to someone who suffers with it on a day to day bases.

I think this book would be a great read for someone (definitely an adult due to explicit content) who has a loved one suffering from depression to get a glimpse of what they may be feeling. It truly would bring a new level of compassion to a relationship.

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**Krys (Krys Reads) says**

Via Black 'n Write Review

**My final thoughts:**

With all due respect to the author, and this story, I couldn't finish it. Not because it was a terrible book, it isn't! I did however slightly triggering. Not because I could relate to having a bi-polar disorder, or have suffered familial tragedies like the protagonist in this story, but because there was a particular tone in the

story that actually scared my mental well-being.

I basically read a large number of the first chapters and then skipped towards the end to get a good grasp and understanding of how this book developed. As with anybody who suffers from the debilitating disease of depression, it never ends. It doesn't leave you, you just learn to cope, whether it's medically or otherwise. So I know the very end of this novel, Thomas (the protagonist), wasn't going to live happily-ever-after. He was happier. He sought out the necessary help to be able to understand what he was going through. Why he was dreaming of his psychologist and his wife we both being held hostage by a man in a hat; bonded and gagged, like the pornography he became addicted to when his wife chose to live in her parents home for the safety of his and her child rather than come back to the unsafe apartment they called home.

How he constantly spoke of the feelings for his wife's seeing-eye dog, Bailey, and the comfort of the dog's company was to him and keeping him sane. Shadowed Soul is an interesting read. I'm sure there are people who have enjoyed the depths of understanding of what a person goes through – psychologically – and what in-turn results physically. It's a very difficult thing to read. I may return to try and read through the chapters I skipped, but momentarily, it's too much.

- Krys

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### **Kathy says**

The story centers around depression and the damage your mind can do in a depressive state. Very good, well written, but the inconsistencies bothered me. Such as his wife is blind, but several parts of the story she's looking or watching him do this or that.

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### **Cheryl says**

Thomas Milton is bi-polar. He and his wife, Beth along with her seeing eye dog, Bailey are about to have an addition to their family with a newborn baby.

Thomas's world unravels when Beth and the baby temporary move in with her parents leaving Thomas and Bailey to cope on their own. Thomas gets into porn. Also he is visited by his "shadowed soul" who is nothing but trouble.

I found this book to be a very well written and thought out book. It definitely is thought provoking in a good way. Mr. Spagnoli did a nice job writing Thomas. I felt a connection with him that I almost did not care about his obsession with porn. I am not talking just "soft" but "hard-core" bondage type. Because of the graphic details as described about the pictures I did feel an uncomfortable about Thomas being into this type of obsession. However I could understand why Thomas was into this type of thing.

I loved, loved Bailey. Of course I love all dogs that are featured in books. I have a soft spot for them. The "Shadowed Soul" that Thomas had with him was not very nice. I can not imagine what people who have bi-polar personalities have to deal with in the normal world. After reading this book I do have a better understanding of this disorder. I applaud people like Mr. Spagnoli who does not let this disorder hinder them from achieving great things like writing a book.

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## Gayle Pace says

### REVIEW:

Thomas Milton and his wife, Beth, their dog, Bailey are the main characters. Thomas is bi-polar, Beth is blind and Bailey is a seeing eye dog. Thomas and Beth are about to add to their family, a baby is on the way.

After the baby is born, Beth and the baby move in with her parents for a while. This leaves Thomas and Bailey to get by on their own. Thomas starts to spiral. He is hearing his "shadowed soul" and that spells trouble. He has also started entertaining porn. The book was a well written and it appears a lot of thought went into it. Writing about bi-polar disease is a hard thing to tackle. The author, creates a bond with the reader and Thomas. Thomas was into hard core porn, and you feel for Thomas. It might be an uncomfortable feeling but you can see the need for Thomas to do this. The 'shadowed soul' was evil. You have to dig deep to try to understand what these people have to deal with. These people can be very productive people, such as the author. They can lead a normal life and and do great things. Sometimes I feel we need to reflect. People have real afflictions and problems that we may know nothing about. We need to be a little more considerate of other people. There are many manic-depressives that learn how to live a good normal life. As with any physical or mental problem, I feel you have to face it head on and deal with it no matter what that entails. Bravo to the author for the courage to write this informative and interesting book.

I would give this book 4 STARS.

I was given a complimentary copy of SHADOWED SOUL by the author, John M. Spagnoli for this unbiased review.

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## Gigi Frost says

This is an intense, mind-boggling story of a man named Thomas Milton.

Thomas and his blind wife, Beth, aptly agree that she take their infant son and move in with her parents. It is a difficult decision and a sadly necessary one. Being diagnosed with a deep bipolar disorder, Thomas grapples with his own demon, the Shadowed Soul.

Bailey, his wife's seeing-eye dog, is his only source of comfort and connection to reality. As Thomas falls deeper into his manic-depressive state, there is an abysmal drop into the delusive reality that consumes his mind.

John Spagnoli's own experience with manic-depression has given this story a disturbing sense of reality. This is an intricate mixture of the author's personal foundation and brilliant imagination.

Read the entire review here:

Bookend Chronicles

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## Grady says

### A Successful Exploration of Bi-Polar Personality Disorder

John M. Spagnoli has found a means to open a window into the way in which a mind confused with bipolar or manic depressive syndrome in a way few authors have been successful. Perhaps part of the success of this novel is the fact that Spagnoli presents a near autobiographical story with his main character Thomas Milton reflecting in many ways Spagnoli's own treacherous journey through the complexities of adjusting a mind bruised by bi-polar personality.

The depressive state of Milton's mind is a creeping monster he calls his Shadowed Soul' and the interplay in conversation between Thomas and Shadowed Soul bring a clarity to understanding the conflicts people with bi-polar personalities face on an ongoing basis. The story is at once complex and simple: Thomas is married to a blind girl Beth, they have a child, and Thomas agrees that the safest way to raised the newborn infant is to have Beth move in with her parents, leaving Thomas to subsist on his own in a near empty apartment. His sole dependable comrade is his dog Bailey and it is Bailey that manages to provide moments of clarity in Thomas' otherwise battered perception of the world as directed by his Shadowed Soul. Thomas' only `hobby' is interplaying with online pornography yet that aspect of his life is not nearly as threatening as the obstacles he confronts on a daily basis. The manner in which he resolves his dilemmas spins through the book to the very end - and even there we feel that more change is in the offing - a fine trait for a book that likely will have at least one sequel.

Though the opening pages of this book plunge the reader into the incongruities of the manner in which the bipolar mind works, the reading is rough - heavily weighted with metaphors and similes and words that seem more like they came from a speed wandering through a thesaurus than from the mind of our main character. But do NOT let that stop you from continuing on through the book: without losing the flavor of this language, Spagnoli use of the verbiage becomes more smoothly discernable and in the end fits the story and the characters very well. Example: `Walls too close, ceilings too low, my hell: A cement cube where people came to die slowly. Those who grafted themselves onto life were only given a brief reprieve form the savaging that the act of simply living visited upon each human being crawling and clawing aimlessly across the crust of this polluted and hateful planet, our home. If I ran now I could disappear into the night. The world would wash over me, beach flotsam. I could be consumed, hidden from view and alone. At least then my arsenal of ball-and-chain would not be dragging down those who had somehow managed to find shards of charisma reflecting light inside of me, Why had Beth Chosen to love me?' Read this several times and the synaptic distortions of the bi-polar mind become legible.

John M. Spagnoli has taken on a brave outing here, and he deserves our attention and readership. He obviously has talent: he has written a stunning first novel.

Grady Harp

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