

Thank You, Night



DAN MCCAULEY • ILLUSTRATED BY JO LORING-FISHER

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free spirit
PUBLISHING®



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Edited by Alison Behnke

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9850 51st Avenue North, Suite 100

Minneapolis, MN 55442

(612) 338-2068

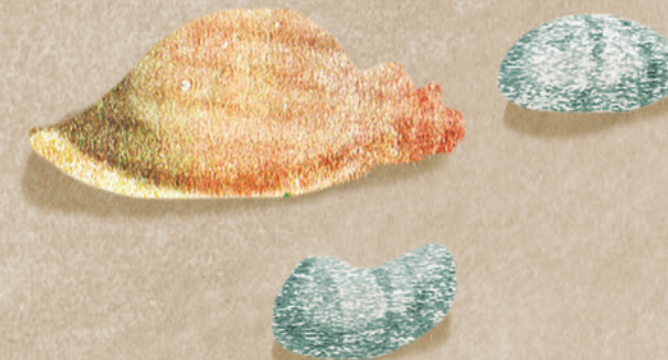
help4kids@freespirit.com

freespirit.com

To my life partner, Shayne, who takes
in every beautiful, open sky.


To my dear friend and former teacher,
LaMonte, who loves the ocean and
reminds us all to breathe.

—Dan



For Marianna, whose
friendship, love, and loyalty will
always be cherished.

With love, JLF



When I'm feeling tired and down,
my body slumps.

My chest gets tight.
My legs ache.

And my brain feels squeezed inside my head.
"I don't want to do anything," I think.

But tonight I hear a soft sound
at my window, and I wonder,

What could that be?



A Note from the Author

Dear Reader,

Do you know how lucky I am that you opened this book? While I am thankful for the night, the breeze, the grass, the ocean, and the stars, I am also thankful for you. Thank you so much for reading this story. When we breathe deeply, notice how our bodies feel, and pay attention to the world around us, this is called *mindfulness*. And when we go into nature and use each of our senses to take in the world, this is called *mindful movement*. Mindful movement is good for our minds and bodies. Our hearts become healthier, our bodies become stronger, and our brains feel a little bit calmer after a hard day.

Thank You, Night is based on real walks I've taken with a friend. The calmness I feel after these walks reminds me how important it is to go outside, especially on the hard days. When my friend and I realized how helpful walking in nature was, we started saying thank you to all the things that made us feel better.

I'm so glad you read this book. If you ever feel down or stuck, just remember there is a world outside waiting for you, and it's been there this whole time.

Love,
Dan

A Note from the Artist

There is something a bit thrilling about going out when it's dark, isn't there? Everything looks a little different, and you may see things in a new way. There are shadows and areas lit up by streetlights. Places that look quite friendly during the day, like a favorite park, perhaps feel a little spooky after dark!

The sounds of the night are not quite the same either. You might hear the hoot of an owl, a rustle in a hedgerow, or a distant horn from a ship. Sounds often seem clearer and closer at night.

Have you noticed that the night has a unique smell? I always think it smells a bit smoky, but the scents can change with the seasons. Warm summer nights where I live, in the East of England, can be heavily perfumed with jasmine and other plants.

Walking at night and seeing things in a new way can be a mindful activity. Taking time away from normal activities and focusing on the little details around us—particularly the natural world—can help our minds relax and help us think differently. This is an important and powerful tool that you can use throughout your life.

I have tried to give a sense of magic in the pictures I created for *Thank You, Night*. I hope that you agree and enjoy looking through the pages of this book. Maybe you can create your own piece of art to help you remember a nighttime adventure. Making art can be a mindful activity too!

—Jo

Questions to Think and Talk About

- What's your favorite moment in the story?
- How does the main character's mood change? What changes for his body? What events or choices in the story lead to these changes?
- Where is your favorite place to be outdoors? Who do you like to be there with? Why is this place special to you?
- Where do you feel stress or worry in your body? In your legs, back, or somewhere else?
- What activities help you feel calmer when you feel anxious, sad, or worried?



Ways You Can Say, "Thank You, Night"

Like the people in the story, you can learn ways to enjoy nature, be present in the moment, express thanks to the world around you, and feel better when you're experiencing big emotions. Here are some ideas to try by yourself or with a grown-up you trust.

Calming Deep Breaths

Deep breathing helps our bodies and minds feel calmer. Find a comfy position where you can sit or stand. Close your eyes if you'd like. Inhale through your nose, feeling your belly expand. Hold your breath for a moment. Then exhale slowly through your mouth. Feel your body relax as you continue breathing.

Be in Nature

Depending on where you are, how much time you have, and who you're with, you could go out and be in nature, or picture yourself in one of your favorite places in nature. Imagine leaving behind any worries from the day as you enjoy time in nature.

Use Your Senses

When we are stressed or anxious, using our senses to pay attention to the world can help us slow down and feel better. If you are outside, can you feel grass beneath your feet? Are crickets singing? Are leaves rustling in the wind? Pay attention to your body's sensations as you move and notice the world.