

## THE SMOKE MOTH — Feral & Protective

### *The Smoke Moth*

You chose the dark path. You chose what survives. You chose what becomes the dark.

Your familiar is a moth — the kind that doesn't just live in the dark. It is the dark. Wingspan enormous, wider than your outstretched arms, and the wings are made of smoke so dense it swallows light. Not silver. Not grey. Black smoke. Layered, moving, thick as velvet but weightless, and where its wings pass, darkness follows like a tide.

It doesn't hover. It occupies. It fills the space above you and when you look up, the stars disappear — not because the moth is blocking them but because the smoke has consumed every photon between you and the sky. You are standing inside the moth's shadow and the shadow is alive and it is watching outward from every edge, in every direction, simultaneously.

Its body is a dense core of dark silver smoke — barely visible within the greater darkness of its wings. The shape of it is suggested rather than seen — the curve of a thorax, the segments of an abdomen, all wrapped in darkness. The only solid elements are its eyes — pale silver, bright, sharp as surgical instruments — and they are not looking at you. They are looking at everything that isn't you. Everything that might come from the dark that it now owns.

Its antennae are black smoke tendrils that extend far beyond its body, reaching into the surrounding forest like sensory tripwires. If something moves in the dark, the antennae know. If something breathes wrong, the antennae taste it. If something approaches with intent, the antennae contract and the wings spread wider and the darkness gets darker and the thing approaching changes its mind.

It is feral and protective. It doesn't guard you with light or strength or presence. It guards you with absence. It removes the dark from around you and replaces it with itself, and itself is worse — for anything that isn't you. For you, it's the safest place in the world. You're standing in the belly of something that eats shadows, and nothing that lives in shadows would dare come near.

It chose you because you weren't afraid of the dark. It stays because now the dark is afraid of you.

## STEP ONE — MEET YOUR FAMILIAR

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*I just walked through an interactive experience at Kay and Dax's wedding — a circus of impossible rooms. Based on my choices, I've been assigned a familiar: a creature that is mine.*

Here is what it is:

**Species: Moth** — enormous wingspan made of dense black smoke that swallows light. Fills the space above you. Consumes darkness and replaces it with something worse — for anything that isn't you. **Aesthetic:** Black smoke wings, dense and light-absorbing. Body is dark silver smoke, barely visible within the greater darkness. Eyes are pale silver, sharp, the only solid element — and they never look at you. They look at everything else. Antennae are black smoke tendrils extending outward like sensory tripwires. **Personality:** Feral and protective. Guards with absence — removes the dark and replaces it with itself. Standing inside its wingspan is the safest place in the world because the moth is worse than anything else in the dark. Makes the dark afraid of you.

I need you to do three things:

1. **Name it.** Give this creature a name that fits — something that sounds like the dark clearing its throat. Not a name you call — a name you invoke. A name a Victorian entomologist would write in his journal and then lock the journal in a drawer, not because the creature was dangerous but because the name felt like it was listening.
2. **Write its field journal entry.** In the style of a 19th century naturalist documenting a species he only encountered because it allowed him to. Include: Latin classification (invented), physical description, wingspan measurement, habitat, temperament, diet, notable behaviours, and care instructions. The naturalist should convey that this creature is the reason he stopped being afraid of the dark — not because the dark became less dangerous, but because something more dangerous was on his side. End with one warning that reads more like a love letter than a caution.
3. **Introduce it to me in character.** Not as a description — as a moment. The stars just disappeared. The clearing just went dark — darker than it should be, darker than night accounts for. Something enormous is above us and its eyes are the only light left. You're experiencing this alongside me. Are we afraid? Should we be? What does it feel like to stand inside the wingspan of something that made the dark flinch?

## STEP TWO — IMAGE GENERATION PROMPT

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An enormous moth hovering in a dark forest clearing at night — but the scene is almost entirely dark. The moth's wings are made of dense, black smoke that actively absorbs light, creating a region of profound darkness in the upper half of the frame. The wings are visible not by their own light but by the absence of everything else — the stars that should be visible above are gone. The canopy behind the wings is gone. There is only darkness, and the darkness has the shape of wings.

The moth's wingspan is approximately 150cm. The smoke-wings are layered and dense — thick enough to be opaque in most areas, with occasional shifts revealing slightly lighter grey smoke beneath, suggesting internal movement and structure. The edges of the wings dissolve into tendrils of black smoke that blend seamlessly with the surrounding night.

The moth's body is barely visible — a slightly denser region of dark silver smoke at the center of the black wingspan. It exists as a suggestion, an implication. The shape of a moth's thorax and abdomen hinted at within the darkness.

The eyes are the focal point of the entire image — two pale silver points of light in the center of the darkness, bright and sharp and very much alive. They are the only light source the moth provides, and they are looking outward — not at the viewer but past the viewer, at something in the darkness beyond. They glow with cool, hard silver light.

Black smoke tendrils extend outward from the moth's body — its antennae, but vastly elongated, reaching into the frame's edges like sensory wires or triplines. They are thin, dark, barely visible against the background, but they create a web of awareness around the moth's territory.

The lower half of the frame — below the moth — is the clearing. Emerald moss, visible by what little ambient light remains. This space beneath the moth's wings feels enclosed, protected, separate from the surrounding forest. The moth's darkness creates a ceiling, a boundary.

**Setting:** The clearing is visible in the lower portion of the frame. Emerald moss ground, ancient tree trunks visible at the edges. The upper portion is the moth — or rather, the moth's darkness. Cassiopeia should NOT be visible — the moth has consumed the sky above the clearing. Beyond the moth's wing-edges, the faintest suggestion of stars continues, emphasising that the darkness is localised, deliberate, the moth's choice.

Somewhere in the scene — on the moss below, in the protected space under the moth's wings, well within its perimeter of darkness — a small yellow rubber duck. Safe. In the safest place in the clearing. Directly under the thing that ate the dark.

**Colour palette:** Deep black, dark silver, pale silver (eyes only), emerald green (ground only). This is the darkest creature variant. Minimal light. The absence of colour is the point.

**Lighting:** The moth provides almost no light — only its silver eyes. The scene's ambient light comes from whatever starlight leaks in at the frame's edges beyond the moth's wingspan, and faint residual moonlight on the moss below. The contrast should be extreme — the protected space below the wings is dimly lit, the moth itself is darkness. The eyes should be piercing against the black — the brightest elements in the frame.

**Camera:** Looking up from ground level, tilted toward the sky. The moth fills the upper two-thirds of the frame as a region of darkness with silver eyes at its center. The lower third shows the moss clearing below. Wide angle — 24mm equivalent — to capture the full scope of the moth's territory.  $f/2.0$ . The focus should be on the eyes, with the darkness around them soft and volumetric.

**Texture detail:** The black smoke should not be flat — it should have depth, layers, internal movement visible as slightly lighter and darker regions within the overall darkness. Like looking into deep water. The edges where the smoke meets the open sky should show gradation — tendrils of black reaching into the star field. The moss below should have realistic detail, lit dimly, showing the contrast between the vulnerable ground and the armoured sky above.

**Mood:** Awe. Terror and safety simultaneously. The specific feeling of realising the most dangerous thing in the dark is yours. Not comforting — empowering. The feeling of the dark itself deciding to protect you, and everything in the dark knowing it.

**Resolution:** Highest available. Photorealistic with painterly quality. Style reference: dark academia meets Victorian natural history illustration meets cinematic fantasy photography.