

An underwater photograph of a cenote. At the top, a large, irregular opening in the rock ceiling allows bright blue light to stream down, creating a powerful light column. Three divers are visible in the middle ground, swimming horizontally and looking upwards. Bubbles trail from their breathing apparatus. The water is dark blue, and the overall atmosphere is mysterious and ethereal.

# LIQUID LIGHT

*An Underwater Photographer's Guide to  
the Cenotes of the Riviera Maya*

SHAWN MURPHY



*LIQUID LIGHT*

*A Underwater Photographer's Guide to the  
Cenotes of the Riviera Maya*

*by Shawn Murphy*

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## *Welcome to Liquid Light*

This book was created for divers, photographers, artists, and explorers—  
the ones who feel more at home below the surface.  
The ones drawn to the unknown.

The ones who dive not just to witness it,  
but to bring something back and shape it into their own.

Inside, you'll find more than just images—  
you'll find process, failure, breakthrough, and growth.  
The cenotes of the Riviera Maya are sacred, powerful, and  
endlessly complex.

I made this book to share what they've taught me—  
about diving, about light, and about how to create something that  
feels alive.

Let this be your invitation to see things differently—  
*and return with something only you could find.*

*"The most beautiful experience  
we can have is the mysterious."*

*— Albert Einstein*





*For my beloved Isabella  
Your love, support, and creative spirit  
mean the world to me. You inspire me  
every day.*

*For my mother, father, and grandparents  
Your unwavering love and guidance  
shaped the man I've become. I'm  
endlessly grateful.*

*For all the friends I've been blessed to  
cross paths with  
So many incredible people—thank you  
for the lessons, the energy, and the  
inspiration.*

PROLOGUE

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# *PROLOGUE*

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*“A silent waterfall of light cascaded down  
above me—and everything changed.”*

*—Shawn Murphy*

*Beneath the surface lies a portal—*

A gateway into the hidden world of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, where freshwater flows through ancient limestone caves and light dances through cracks in the Earth.

Known as cenotes, these flooded sinkholes were sacred to the Maya—seen as portals to the underworld. Today, they offer something just as powerful: stillness, beauty, and the feeling that you've stepped into another dimension.