



Twin: A Memoir

Allen Shawn

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A heartbreaking yet deeply hopeful memoir about life as a twin in the face of autism.

When Allen Shawn and his twin sister, Mary, were two, Mary began exhibiting signs of what would be diagnosed many years later as autism. Understanding Mary and making her life a happy one appeared to be impossible for the Shawns. At the age of eight, with almost no warning, her parents sent Mary to a residential treatment center. She never lived at home again.

Fifty years later, as he probed the sources of his anxieties in *Wish I Could Be There*, Shawn realized that his fate was inextricably linked to his sister's, and that their natures were far from being different.

Twin highlights the difficulties American families coping with autism faced in the 1950s. Shawn also examines the secrets and family dramas as his father, William, became editor of *The New Yorker*. *Twin* reconstructs a parallel narrative for the two siblings, who experienced such divergent fates yet shared talents and proclivities. Wrenching, honest, understated, and poetic, *Twin* is at heart about the mystery of being inextricably bonded to someone who can never be truly understood.

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