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All But Normal: Life on Victory Road

Shawn Thornton



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Growing up, Shawn Thornton's life was anything but normal-but then, so was his mother.

After waking from a coma following a car crash, Beverly Thornton's once sweet and gentle disposition had been replaced by violent mood swings, profanity-laced tirades, and uncontrollable fits of rage. Inside the Thornton house, floors and countertops were piled high with dirty laundry and garbage because Bev was unable to move well enough to clean. Dinners were a Russian roulette of half-cooked meat, spoiled milk, and foods well past their expiration dates. A moment of frustration might prompt her to hurl a knife at Shawn, his brother, Troy, or their dad or to vehemently cuss them out, only to shower them with love and affection moments later as though nothing had happened. And God help the family cat!

On several occasions, Bev even tried to jump out of the car on the highway while Shawn and his brother struggled to keep her inside. Yet this same woman was also a devoted Bible reader, Sunday school teacher, and friend to the elderly, poor, and marginalized wherever she went. How the same woman could be a saint one minute and a nightmare the next was a constant source of frustration for the family. Then one day, after decades of embarrassing outbursts, a surprise discovery finally helps the Thornton family come to grips with Bev's mysterious condition and brings Shawn to a startling realization that changes the course of his life forever.

A heartwarming coming-of-age story, *All But Normal* is a powerful reminder that sometimes the "broken" people in our lives are the ones who need fixing the least.

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