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Wish I Could Be There: Notes From a Phobic Life

Allen Shawn

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Wish I Could Be There: Notes From a Phobic Life

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Wish I Could Be There: Notes From a Phobic Life Allen Shawn
A droll, inquisitive, and poignant memoir of agoraphobia from a member of one of New York's premier literary families

Allen Shawn is afraid of heights, water, fields, parking lots, tunnels, and unknown roads. He avoids taking subways, using elevators, or crossing bridges. In short, he is afraid of both closed and open spaces and of any form of isolation. Yet this is a memoir of enormous bravery.

Shawn grew up in a lively but mysterious world. He is the son of the famous, longtime *New Yorker* editor William Shawn and brother to the brilliant playwright and actor Wallace Shawn. His twin sister is autistic, and when they were eight years old, she was put in a home. Though it was kept from him until he was in his thirties, his father led a double life that introduced strict taboos to his household. Shawn examines these influences, his father's and mother's phobias, and his own struggle with agoraphobia with generosity, wit, and insight, attempting to decipher the psychological and biological puzzles that have plagued him for so long.

Interwoven with both Freudian psychology and cutting-edge brain research, Shawn has written a profound examination of familial love and the universal struggle to face our demons.

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