

The Normal Side of Insanity

Marynell Lund

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (07/10)

Before I even started reading “The Normal Side of Insanity,” the drawing of a child crying on the cover caught my eye. Illustrated by Kathy Bassett, the face of this child drew me in. This little girl’s face conveyed to me that she was dealing with a horribly painful situation. I think that many survivors of abuse will find themselves being drawn to this picture, because they will relate to her picture. As I started reading, I knew that this illustration represented the author, Marynell Lund, when she was growing up.

Unfortunately, she had to grow up way too fast. Being raised in poverty, by a mother who suffered from insanity and a father who put his sexual needs before the needs of his daughter, she had no choice. Ms. Lund’s story is very painful to read. In addition to the abuse by her mother and father, she also had to deal with a perverted uncle, an incestuous cousin and an abusive husband. She holds nothing back as she tells her story.

Ms. Lund grew up on a farm that her father barely was able to hold on to. At school, she was ridiculed for being poor. During daylight hours, she helped her father out and was able to enjoy being close to him. At night time, he would become a different person and sexually abuse her. Having a teenage brother that was an alcoholic and a mentally ill mother who verbally abused her left her with no one to turn to for help.

In addition to the incest, as she progressed into adulthood, Ms. Lund found herself dealing with some very painful issues, especially with regards to her mother. Things worsened when she fell in love with a man who was horribly abusive. Not having a way to live on her own and not being helped by the authorities forced her to stay on in the relationship longer than she should have. This tore her down both physically and mentally. As I read, I felt so frustrated that when she finally did ask for help, no one would help her.

After finally getting out, she ended up in other relationships that were not good for her as well, but somewhere along the way, she had three children and she got a college degree. Maintaining a positive attitude about her faith in God and her ability to overcome what she went through, Ms. Lund left me with the feeling that readers who are dealing with abuse will be given hope that they can overcome their circumstance and also learn not to continue to destroy their lives by hanging on to

the anger and bitterness of what they went through. I appreciate her need to convey the importance of letting go and moving on to her readers. By hanging on to the anger, the victimizer still holds control over the victim's life.

There is a child abuse prevention group that has a saying that, "Children should be seen and heard." However, what is a child supposed to do when there is no one there to listen? I think that "The Normal Side of Insanity" should be read not only by victims of abuse, but also by mental health professionals, medical professionals and people who are in law enforcement. It will give them a better understanding of what the abused person is experiencing. It will also make them think twice about not doing anything to help them, because they sure will not want to be mentioned in a book like this!

This book would benefit from tighter editing. However, I truly appreciate the author for sharing her story with us. By writing about her experiences in "The Normal Side of Insanity" and sharing the incredible amount of wisdom that she gained from them, Marynell will help and inspire so many people to get help and move on with their lives.