



The Story Behind the Story

SHADES OF MORNING

By Marlo Schalesky

Provided courtesy of www.MarloSchalesky.com

It happened on an ordinary Sunday morning at church. I went not expecting to see anything different, or special, or extraordinary. But God had other plans. And so did Andy.

In the middle of the third song, a noise came from the far side of the church. A loud noise. Strange, awkward, and off-key. Then, it grew louder. I furrowed my brow. Was that someone singing . . . badly?

I stood on tiptoes and peeked toward the sound.

And there was Andy. His arms were raised, his eyes closed. And he was singing to his God for all he was worth. Andy, in his middle teens, with blond hair, thick glasses, and small ears. Andy, with Down Syndrome and a grin on his face big enough for the angels to see. Andy, shout-singing with all his might through that radiant smile.

That moment changed me. It showed me that beauty is found in unexpected places, and that God's gifts in our lives are often wrapped in awkward, off-key packages. I witnessed something beautiful, something wondrous that day, and it made me see that so often the hard things in life, the things we want to hide away, to forget, to cover up, can be transformed into things of beauty in the hands of God.

And that's how *Shades of Morning* was born – in those moments while Andy worshipped and I was left breathless by the wonder of it.

So, my vision for *Shades of Morning* is to share that beauty with you, my readers, to show you that God can take even your regrets and wash them clean, make them new. That His gifts to us come in ways we may not want, don't expect, and often don't recognize. But they are His gifts to us all the same, meant to set us free from the misconceptions that prevent us from being everything He wants us to be.

In the end, I hope you will experience that moment of wonder and see God in it. Then, I hope you will be able to look at the awkward, off-key places in your own life and see God's hand in them. That's the purpose of the story's twist, and that's the hope for the book itself – to reveal God's wonder in the places we least expect it.

For more information about *Shades of Morning* and other books by Marlo Schalesky, visit www.marloschalesky.com