



Maggie's Miracle

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

KAREN
KINGSBURY

Maggie's Miracle

— *A Novel* —

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New York · Nashville

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PROLOGUE



The letter was his best idea yet.

Jordan Wright had already talked to God about getting his wish, and so far nothing had happened. But a letter . . . a letter would definitely get God's attention. Not the crayoned pictures he liked to send Grandpa in California. But a real letter. On his mom's fancy paper with his best spelling and slow hands, so his a's and e's would sit straight on the line the way a second grader's a's and e's should.

That way, God would read it for sure.

Grandma Terri was watching her yucky grown-up show on TV. People kissing and crying and yelling at each other. Every day his grandma picked him up from St. Andrews, brought him home to their Upper East Side apartment in Manhattan, got him a snack, and put in the

video of her grown-up show. Jordan could make his own milk shakes or accidentally color on the walls or jump on his bed for an hour when Grandma watched her grown-up show. As long as he wasn't too loud, she didn't notice anything.

"This is my time, Jordan," she'd tell him, and her eyes would get that in-charge kind of look. "Keep yourself busy."

But when the show was over she'd find him and make a loud, huffy sound. "Jordan," she'd say, "what are you into now? Why can't you read quietly like other children?" Her voice would be slow and tired, and Jordan wouldn't know what to do next.

She never yelled at him or sent him to his room, but one thing was sure. She didn't like baby-sitting him because yesterday Jordan heard her tell his mom that.

"I can't handle the boy forever, Megan. It's been two years since George died. You need a nanny." She did a different kind of breathy noise. "The boy's wearing me out."

Jordan had been in his room listening. He felt bad because maybe it was his fault his grandma couldn't handle him. But then he heard his mom say, "I can't handle him, either, so that makes two of us."

After that Jordan felt too sick to eat dinner.

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Ever since then he'd known it was time. He had to do whatever it took to get God's attention because if he didn't get his wish pretty soon, well, maybe his mom and his grandma might not like him anymore.

It wasn't that he tried to get into trouble. But sometimes it was boring looking for things to do, and he'd get curious and wonder what would happen if he made a milk shake with ice cubes. But how was he supposed to know the milk-shake maker had a lid? And using paper and a red crayon to trace the tiger on the wall calendar probably wasn't a good idea in the first place, because of course sometimes crayons slip.

He took the last swallow from his milk and waited until the cookie crumbs slid down the glass into his mouth. Cookies were the best snack of all. He set the cup on the counter, climbed off the barstool, and walked with tiptoe feet into his mom's office. He wasn't allowed in there except if his mom was working on her lawyer stuff and he had to ask her a serious question.

But she'd understand today because a letter to God was very serious business.

The room was big and clean and full of wood stuff. His mom was the kind of lawyer who put bad guys in jail. That's why sometimes she had to work late at night and on Sundays. Jordan pulled open a drawer near his

mother's computer and took out two pieces of paper and two envelopes. In case he messed up and had to start over. Then he snuck real quiet out the door, down the hall, and into his room. He had a desk and pencils in there, only he never used them because second graders at St. Andrews didn't get homework till after Christmas.

One time he asked his mommy what would happen if he couldn't do the homework when he got it, what if the stuff he had to do was too hard.

"It won't be too hard, Jordan." His mother's eyebrows had lifted up the way they did when she didn't want any more questions.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm completely sure."

"How come?"

"Because, Jordan, I've been through second grade and I know all the answers. If you have trouble, I'll help you."

His heart felt a little less scared after that. Not every second grader's mommy had *all* the answers. If she knew everything, then he could never really get in too much trouble with his homework, and that was a good thing because Christmas wasn't too far away.

He sat down at his desk, took a pencil from the box, and spread out the piece of paper. The white space

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looked very empty. Jordan stared at it for a long time. If God was going to read the letter, it had to be his best work ever. Big words would be a good thing. He worked himself a little taller in the chair, sucked in a long breath through his teeth, and began to write.

Dear God, my name is Jordan Wright and I am 8 years old. I hav something to ask you. I tride to ask you befor but I think you wer bizy. So I am riting you a letter insted.

Jordan's hand hurt by the time he finished, and he could hear music playing on Grandma's grown-up show. That meant it was almost done, and any minute Grandma would come looking for him. He quickly folded the letter in half, ran his finger along the edge, and folded it again. Then he stuck it in the envelope and licked the lid shut. With careful fingers he wrote "God" across the front, then his pencil moved down a bit and froze. He'd forgotten something.

He didn't know God's address.


His heart felt extra jumpy. God lived in heaven, so that had to be part of it. But what about the numbers? Jordan could hear footsteps coming closer. He didn't want Grandma to see the letter. She might want to read it, and that would ruin everything because it was a secret.

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Just between him and God. He looked around his room and saw his backpack near his bed. He ran fast to it and slipped the letter inside. He could give it to his mother on the way to school tomorrow. She would know God's address.

She knew everything.

CHAPTER ONE



Megan Wright tucked her blouse into her navy skirt as she rounded the corner into the kitchen. Her biggest opening argument of the month was in less than an hour. “Let’s go, Jordan. Two minutes.”

“Just a sec.”

“Not just a sec.” She blew at a wisp of hair as she grabbed a cold piece of toast from the kitchen counter. These were the times she missed George more than any other because the morning routine had been his deal. As long as he was at work by eight-thirty he’d been happy. But she had briefings and depositions that started earlier than that.

“*Now*, Jordan. I have a hearing today.”

She poured two glasses of orange juice, snatched one and spun toward the vitamin cupboard. Two C’s, one A,

one E, a B-complex, a CoQ₁₀, and two garlics. She popped the pills into her mouth and swallowed them with a single swig of juice. George had been more than twenty years older than her, a man she respected and tried to love. But the fortress surrounding George's deepest emotions was unyielding stone and razor wire, and in his presence, Megan never felt like more than an amicable business partner. When the love she'd dreamed of never materialized, Megan allowed herself to become like him. Married to her job.

Neither of them had figured Jordan into the plans.

But surprise gave way to possibility, and for a time Megan believed that maybe George would come around, spend less time at work, and get caught up in fatherhood. They would have quiet moments together, watching their baby sleep and dreaming of his future. Laughter and passion would finally find them, and her life would be all she'd ever hoped it to be. But the dream never quite materialized. George was nearly fifty by then, and thrilled with the idea of a son, a child to carry on his name, but he was as distant as ever with Megan.

"You treat me like part of the furniture, George." Megan whispered the words to him one night after they climbed into bed. "Don't you want more?"

His eyes had been steely cold. "You have all you could

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ever want, Megan. Don't ask more of me than I can give.”

George had been a bond trader, a financial wizard with a spacious office in Midtown. For two weeks straight he'd complained about a stiff neck, but neither of them saw the signs. When his secretary found him that October morning, arms spread across his desk, his head resting on a pile of client files, she'd thought he was merely resting. An hour later a client call came in and she tried to wake him. Her scream brought most of the office staff and fifteen minutes later paramedics gave them the truth.

He was dead, the victim of a massive coronary.

Megan lifted the juice to her lips once more and downed it in four swallows. It had been two years now. Her grieving period had lasted only a few months. The two of them had never loved the way Megan had hoped, the way she'd once, a long time ago, believed possible. She and George were business partners, friends who ran a common household. She missed George in a functionary sense—especially on mornings like this—but he'd taken none of her heart with him when he died.

The problem was Jordan.

The boy was the one person George had truly loved, and what little free time and sparse emotions he was able

to give had been completely reserved for their only child. Megan never admitted it, but more than once she'd found herself feeling jealous of George's love for Jordan. Because it was a love he'd never had for her. When George died, Jordan was devastated. In the two years since his death, the level of Jordan's behavior in school and at home had plummeted.


Grief and anger, his doctor had called it. A passing phase. Megan and Jordan met with a counselor after George's death, but the sessions were costly and time-consuming, and Megan didn't notice any improvement in Jordan's behavior. She'd asked her doctor about medication for the boy. Ritalin or one of the other drugs kids were using.

"Let's wait." The pediatrician had angled his head thoughtfully. "I still think his behavior is related to the loss of his father."

That was three months ago, and Megan was tired of waiting.

Her mother had lived with them since just after George's death, an arrangement Megan had thought would be best for all of them. Her mom had retired from teaching in Florida that year and lived on a limited income. They could share expenses, and her mother could help her with Jordan after school and on the weekends.

AUTHOR'S NOTE



Gideon's Gift was my first book in the Red Gloves Series. In that book, I shared with you the miracle of a sick little girl and an angry, homeless man, and the gift that changed both their lives forever. And in honor of Gideon's precious gift, at the back of that book I suggested several Red Gloves Projects for you and your friends and families.

In the hundreds of letters you wrote me after that book published, I've heard one theme resonate loudly. You love the idea of the red gloves. Red for Christmas, red for a heart full of love and hope and Christmas miracles.

Red, the color of giving.



And because of that, the red gloves play a cameo role

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in each of my Red Gloves stories. Each book in the Red Gloves Series has a new list of Red Gloves Projects. As one of you told me, "I bought fifty copies of *Gideon's Gift* to give to everyone I know. My prayer is that we'd see red gloves all around us in the coming years, that they'd grace the hands of the homeless and widowed, the children without parents and parents without hope. So that red gloves would forever be the symbol of Christ's love at Christmas."

In that light, I bring you these Red Gloves Projects.

MORE RED GLOVES PROJECTS

-  Adopt an orphan through WorldVision or another international organization you feel is trustworthy. For usually pennies a day, you can make a difference in the life of at least one child and be to that little boy or girl a Christmas miracle every day of the year. Once you've chosen your child, send him or her a pair of red gloves. Then cut out the child's picture and attach it to a red glove, which can hang in your home all year long.
-  Contact your local branch of Social Services and find out how many children in your area are awaiting families. Make a list of the names of those children and

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commit along with your friends or family to pray for each of them. Buy gifts for these children, along with several pairs of red gloves, and take the wrapped presents to the local Social Services office. Ask that they be delivered to the children waiting for families.

✿ If you're single and able to be more involved, check if your area has an organization that pairs lonely children with willing adults. Make a yearlong commitment to a child, and make your first gift to him or her a pair of red gloves with an explanation that red is the color of giving.

✿ Talk to your local public elementary school or contact your church leaders, and locate a needy family in your area. Purchase presents for the family, and deliver them while wearing red gloves. Adorn the packages with red gloves for each of the children in the family.

I pray this finds you and your family doing well this Christmas, determined to mend broken relationships and let fall the walls that have come between you and those you love. God gave us the greatest gift of all that first Christmas Day. How much richer we—like Casey Cummins—are when we follow His example and give something back.

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Especially something to a child.

Please check out my website at www.KarenKingsbury.com for more information about the Red Gloves Projects. And leave me a note in my guestbook. As always, I'd love to hear from you, and if you have a Red Gloves Project idea you'd like to share with me, please do.

May God's light and life be yours in the coming year.

In His love,

Karen Kingsbury

www.KarenKingsbury.com