

10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

THE
JAMES
MIRACLE

New York Times best-selling author of CHRISTMAS JARS

JASON F. WRIGHT

THE
JAMES
MIRACLE

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wright, Jason F., author.

The James miracle / Jason F. Wright.

pages cm

Summary: Sam and Holly Foster never expected the hardship that caused their perfect world to shatter. It will take the miracle of their young son James's toy boat and a mysterious man to remind them that heaven is not far and that love is never lost.—Provided by publisher

ISBN 978-1-60907-931-4 (hardbound : alk. paper)

1. Unemployment—Fiction. 2. Children—Death—Fiction. 3. Miracles—Fiction.
I. Title.

PS3623.R539J36 2014

813'.6—dc23

2014017572

Printed in the United States of America

Publishers Printing, Salt Lake City, UT

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For my dear wife, Kodi,
who will always be my miracle*

Dear Reader,

On December 24, 2003, I visited a copy shop and had them print and bind one copy of a manuscript I'd secretly been writing before work, during lunch, and when my small family slept in our home in Fairfax, Virginia.

It was *The James Miracle*.

Later that night, I wrapped the flimsy, comb-bound book with its card stock cover and slid it under our Christmas tree. I'd never been so excited to give a gift!

The next morning, after our two little girls had opened their presents, I handed the package to my wife and nervously watched her open it. Her eyes went wide at the dedication and title page. "You wrote this?" she asked, flipping through the pages. "*All of it?*"

I laughed and assured her it was an original work. Then I explained that the book wasn't really the gift—it was the message. There were things I needed to say, and this novella had become my outlet for saying them. I watched her read it in one sitting that afternoon, and I suspect many of you will read it in one sitting, too. (Though I promise I won't be watching!)

In 2004, the novella was released in a very limited print run. And, against all odds, a writing career was born.

Much has changed in the decade since, and many more

books have landed on shelves and e-readers, but *The James Miracle* will always hold a special place in my heart and in hers.

Thank you for giving it another life in this special ten-year anniversary edition. Mostly, thank you for believing in miracles.

Jason

PS: This book wouldn't have seen sunlight without a few special people. First and foremost, my brother Jeff provided endless encouragement and feedback as I fumbled along. Thanks also to Kodi, Sterling, Terilynne, and my mother, Sandi Lou, for reading and critiquing this novel—and everything I've written since. I couldn't ask for a better, more brutally honest focus group. I love you all.

Thanks, also, to Janeal Rogers, Ryan and Randy Bott, Sheri Dew, Chris Schoebinger, Laurel Christensen Day, Heidi Taylor, and Lisa Mangum for publishing me and inviting me to be a better writer and, more importantly, a better person.



MIRACLES

A very wise philosopher once said over hot caramel sundaes after middle school graduation: “Life’s miracles happen when you least expect them.” He said it wasn’t the well-planned, made-for-television moments that change and define us. Instead, our destiny is determined by how we choose to weave into our lives the random, unexpected happenings on seemingly normal Thursday afternoons. “Be prepared for chance, change, and miracles,” he offered with a wise wink. He preached that miracles would come in a thousand and one different packages. “And some will feel better on your soul than others,” he finished with a wrinkled smile, tapping the end of my nose with his dripping oversized dessertspoon.

Sadly, that wise man died when I was too young to fully appreciate his wisdom. It's a shame; my father was a genius.

It's been years since he left behind an arrogant, selfish son for a pain-free career well beyond the clouds. My mother told us that cancer had not beaten him. He had beaten it.

Forever.

"Chins up, gang," she consoled in the back of a slick black limousine. "He could have let it run our family for thirty years, but he simply would not let that happen. That brave man kicked it right out of our lives. And now he's closer than ever. He's in our hearts." Then she offered a prayer, nodded to the driver, and we watched through the tinted rear window as the caravan of headlights cut through traffic.

Since that soggy afternoon, I've learned to believe that he now enjoys an endless supply of perfect summer days when golf scores are low and mid-afternoon watermelon tastes like it was grown in heaven. And every night his favorite pillow smells just like Mom.

But most importantly, I have come to fully appreciate how right Dad was about chance, change, and miracles.

At any given second, somewhere in this grand old world of His, someone kneels beside a bed, or a couch, or inside a

mildewed cardboard box underneath some remote highway
overpass, and asks, “God, do miracles exist?”

They do.

And not just on Thursday afternoons.