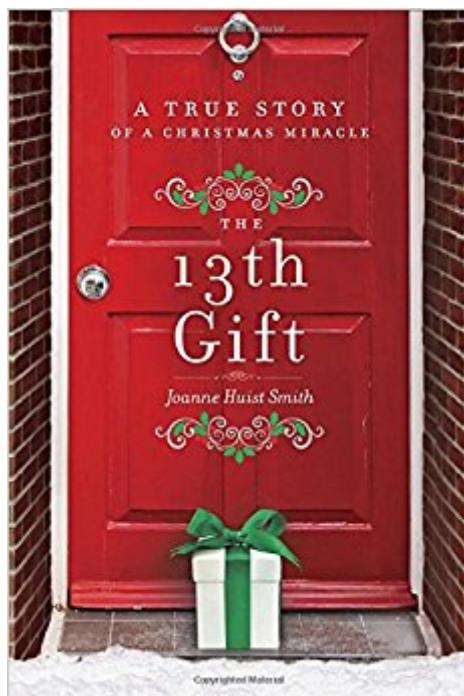


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# The 13th Gift: A True Story Of A Christmas Miracle



## Synopsis

For readers of Richard Paul Evans and Greg Kincaid comes The 13th Gift, a heartwarming Christmas story about how a random act of kindness transformed one of the bleakest moments in a family's history into a time of strength and love. After the unexpected death of her husband, Joanne Huist Smith had no idea how she would keep herself together and be strong for her three children--especially with the holiday season approaching. But 12 days before Christmas, presents begin appearing on her doorstep with notes from their "True Friends." As the Smiths came together to solve the mystery of who the gifts were from, they began to thaw out from their grief and come together again as a family. This true story about the power of random acts of kindness will warm the heart, a beautiful reminder of the miracles of Christmas and the gift of family during the holiday season.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER A Woman's Day Book Club Pick "The book's simple prose and profound message will fill even the Grinch-iest hearts with Christmas spirit while affirming the age-old adage, it really is the thought that counts." --USA Today "A funny, knockout-moving new memoir...Read it, share it, pay it forward." --The Good Life "[A] touching true story." --Women's Day "A feel-good story guaranteed to move you." --Good Housekeeping "Inspiring readers throughout the country and around the world this holiday season." --The Dayton Daily News *THE 13TH GIFT* is the kind of Christmas book whose message is much bigger than the holiday. This memoir is written from the heart and for the heart. --Jason Wright, New York

Times bestselling author of Christmas Jarsâ œl loved The 13th Giftâ "a truly heartfelt and intelligent book. Â Joanne Smith deftly reconciles the difficult terrain that ranges between the Christmas we all want and the tragedies of life that sooner or later beset us all.Â Highly recommend it to all, but particularly to those that are dealing with recent losses and donâ ™tâ ™ know how or if they will ever find their way back.â • â "Greg Kincaid, author of the bestselling Christmas with Tucker and A Christmas Home" The beautiful story told inÂ The 13th Gift reinforces how the most precious gifts at Christmas are when people give unconditional love and support and it proves how compassion and a kind heart can change lives. Â Acts of kindness can create a legacy that lives on from generation to generation." --Laura Schroff, New York Times bestselling author, An Invisible Threadâ œlf there ever was a roller-coasterish page-turner of a Christmas book, this would be it. As a veteran devourer of Christmas stories short and long, fictional and true, I mistakenly assumed I'd encountered every conceivable plot variant in the genre. Turns out I was dead-wrong. Joanne Hurst Smith's wondrous story hit me from so many directions, playing on the strings of so many emotions, that it left me limp at the end. Quite simply, it is a masterpiece.â • --Joe L. Wheeler, Ph.D., author of the bestselling Christmas in My HeartÂ® series "The 13th Gift has a touch of magic in it. It's a lovely story that proves we can recover from any loss, strengthened by the blessings of others. It's a classic for the Christmas season--and all seasons." --Glenn Plaskin, author of Katie Up And Down The Hall: The True Story Of How One Dog Turned Five Neighbors Into A Family "For readers of Richard Paul Evans and Greg Kincaid comes The 13th Gift, a heartwarming Christmas memoir about how a random act of kindness transformed one of the bleakest moments in a family's history into a time of strength and love." --Book Reporter.com

Joanne Huist Smith is a native of Dayton, OH. She earned a bachelor's degree in English at Wright State University and worked as a reporter for the Dayton Daily News. She is the mother of three and grandmother of two.

"The 13th Gift" is not that big of a book, but it took me the entire month to finish it, even though I'm one of those readers who generally finishes a book in one or two days. At one point, I listed this book as DNF (did not finish). Why? Because it started out so heart-wrenching that I was either getting really depressed, crying or getting really angry at the mother in the story. This is a true story of how a family was dealing with the loss of the husband/father. He had died at Christmastime the previous year, which made this Christmas very difficult to get through. Then the gifts started coming. Not expensive gifts, just simple Christmasy gifts on their doorstep with a mysterious note each day.

Gifts for each day of the twelve days of Christmas. The family came together little by little, and began looking forward to the next day. The sentiment and warmth that shows through in strangers and friends and the family as well, gives you the real sense of what Christmas is all about. I can't say that I loved the book. It was well written, but far too emotional for me. I know that there are others who would find this heartwarming instead of heart-wrenching.

My family was the recipient of the 12 Days of Christmas in 1982 in Henderson, Nevada. The young women at church helped our family by surprising each day with a simple gift that thrilled our four little children. We were living through a situation that brought joy and grief simultaneously so their thoughtful acts brought a sweet light to our home. Their final gift was a baby blanket with quilt squares that illustrated each gift they had brought us. To honor them, we carried on the tradition and did the 12 Days on other friends and neighbors for years. My children have carried on the tradition on their own. If you are lacking the Christmas spirit, serve someone else in some way. Do the 12 Days, and you will have so much love brought into your life! This book tells a great story, heartbreakingly yet healing. Thank you for sharing.

The 13th Gift by Joanne Huist Smith is a very heartwarming Christmas tale. It will renew your faith in mankind. I had heard about this book and wanted to read it. When I noticed it was on sale, I quickly purchased it and read it. It is a non-fiction story but reads like fiction. It is well written and very enjoyable. The family has recently lost Rick, Joanne's husband. Joanne and the children have been just getting but not really living. However, the holiday season is upon them and Joanne is being pressured by her sister to do Christmas for the children. Joanne has three children: Ben, 17; Nick, 12; Megan, 10. Megan is precocious and wise beyond her years, Nick is obsessed with video games (much to my daughter's dismay, I never bought her video games), and Ben is angry and avoiding spending time with the family. When Joanne tries to purchase Christmas gifts for her children, but it ends in embarrassment and crying. Then one day a poinsettia arrives on their doorstep with a card. The card has a lovely drawing a cute reference to the twelve days of Christmas. Megan is excited, but everyone else is not pleased. But on each successive night the family finds another gift on their doorstep. These gifts change the family and their perception of Christmas. The 13th Gift is such a lovely book. The gifts (which were not expensive) got the family together, helped them remember good times (past Christmas with their Father), and got the family into the spirit of Christmas. Some kind people made a huge difference to this family. The givers kindness and compassion made a huge difference in their lives.

This is a wonderful and inspirational book. Happy Reading!

Everyone at some point in their lives finds that Christmas is not the once joyous occasion it has been. This could be from loss of a spouse, a parent, a child, a divorce, a soldier, a dear friend. This is a true story in which the husband suddenly dies before Christmas. The mother and 3 kids all start to "fall apart" trying to deal with this loss, unsure about opening up about their emotions. Christmas will never be the same. Everything seasonal accentuates the grief... the music, the shopping, the decorations. Christmas seems to be passing them by for "lack of effort." Then suddenly little gifts arrive on their doorstep for each of the 12 days of Christmas, and slowly, the family finds some joy in looking forward to the gifts and trying to discover who is doing this. Each is drawn into action to bring about a little Christmas in their home, re-inventing a "new reality" and remembering their Dad and precious memories. The story is retold realistically about the pain, but also with love and a bit of humor. The 13th gift is the discovery that gifts of kindness ... big or small... can brighten someone else's situation; out of one's own pain came an understanding of the joy in giving and helping another. It is a tradition that the family decides to carry on... we can all be "Santa" to someone. It doesn't have to be just at Christmas, but to anyone in time of need.

Great book. Got it before Christmas which was the perfect time. As a widow the holidays are hard for me. But this book put some of that once known joy back into them. I'm not sure I would have enjoyed this book as much had it not been for knowing the pain of major loss and hard it is to cope. Even little blessings become lifeline's and anchors.

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