



A secret pain that only love can heal



Maggie Daniels is haunted by the accident. She sees it when she closes her eyes, and she hears it in her father's words: "Maggie should've come and gotten me." They are constant reminders of the tragic event. Her mama is gone and Maggie is to blame.

When her daddy marries another woman, it's a chance for a fresh start. But Maggie can't let go of the past. She clings to a few precious mementos—all she has left of her mother. They become secret treasures, her only link to a past filled with tenderness and joy. She focuses on these items, closing herself off to everyone who cares for her.

But when a second tragedy threatens to tear her world apart, will Maggie's treasure be enough to sustain her? Or will she finally turn to God, and to the people who have tried so hard to love her?

"Sandra Waggoner's books are entertaining page turners. She has a God-given talent for putting a story together, which is not only captivating, but has a strong tie with Scripture. Her books definitely hold the interest of her readers and make a change in their lives. We recommend her books most of all because they exalt the Lord Jesus Christ."

—Al & JoAnna Lacy,
bestselling authors of
historical and western novels.



Sable Creek
PRESS

US \$9.95 Juvenile Fiction



Maggie's Treasure

Sandra Waggoner

Maggie's Treasure



Book 1



Will Maggie find the
only treasure that can
save her from her guilt?

1

GATLIN FIELDS



Sandra
Waggoner



Maggie's Treasure

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Waggoner



Sable Creek
PRESS

First printing 2005

Second printing 2008

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Cover and text design by Diane King, www.dkingdesigner.com

Cover photo of barn © 2008 istockphoto.com/Tracy Tucker

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Published by Sable Creek Press, PO Box 12217, Glendale, Arizona 85318

www.sablecreekpress.com

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication data

Waggoner, Sandra.

Maggie's treasure / Sandra Waggoner.

p. cm. "Gatlin Fields, Book One"

ISBN 978-0-976-68230-1

Summary: When an unwanted family, a cruel busybody and a deadly explosion bring young Maggie to despair, she learns about God and reveals her secret.

1. Depressions--1929--Kansas--Juvenile fiction. 2. Family life--Kansas--Fiction. 3. Stepmothers--Juvenile fiction. 4. Fathers and daughters--Juvenile fiction. 5. Christian fiction. I. Title.

PZ7.W124135 .Ma 2008

[Fic]--dc22

2007942817

Printed in the United States of America.

*Especially for Mom and Dad,
who taught me the worth of work;
Greg, who encouraged me to work;
and Janet, who made it work.*

Romans 8:28

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.”



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CHAPTER
1 *We Do*

A thin film of dust covered the inside of the church. Maggie eased forward. Ever so gently her finger penned her name on the dusty pew in front of her. Thump! Maggie swallowed, leaned back, and rubbed her head where her father had gently but completely gotten her attention.

“Quit playin’ and pay attention to the preacher,” he whispered into her ear.

Maggie straightened her dress. Well, it wasn’t *exactly* hers. It had been three years since she’d worn anything but overalls, and now she was eleven and she’d done a lot of growing in that time. This dress was Mama’s, but Daddy had insisted she wear it. “After all, you’re meetin’ your new mama and new sisters for the first time,” he had explained with a smile.

Maggie studied the dress. It was old, but there had been no money to buy a new one. There had been no money for anything. Daddy had pulled out Mama’s dresser drawer, carried it into Maggie and placed it in her arms. Then he had choked over a few words, telling her to see if she could find



anything suitable for church. She remembered how his shoulders had drooped when he'd turned and quietly walked to the barn. That's when Maggie had found the dress. It still smelled like Mama. Daddy had wanted her to wash it, but Maggie had hung it on the clothesline to air. She didn't want to lose the aroma that flooded her heart with memories. She could still remember Mama wearing that dress.

Tiny pink rosebuds spattered the creamy material and there was a touch of lace about the collar. Mama had laughed in that dress and teased Daddy about her being a grand refined woman whenever she wore it. She had looked beautiful in it. It didn't look the same on Maggie. She had rolled up the waist several times and cinched it with an old leather belt. The belt didn't show though, because the top of the dress bloused over it. She would have to be sure to keep the tail of the belt tucked in so it didn't flop down and look out of place. She found a safety pin to modestly close the drooping collar.

Maggie smashed her eyes shut. Although it had been three years, many memories still made her want to cry. She clenched her fists and shoved them into the dress pockets. Her hand landed on cold metal—Mama's compact! Maggie had found it with a bunch of other treasures in Mama's drawer. In fact, Maggie had dumped every single thing in Mama's drawer into the bottom of her carpetbag. She wanted all she could bring of Mama with her when she went to this new place Daddy had promised her. She pulled the compact from her pocket and opened it. A mirror was a priceless possession and she would treasure it forever, even if it was broken. She would have to be careful with it. Maggie gazed into her own face for only a few moments. After all, she knew what she looked like. Her



eyes were sometimes blue and sometimes green, but nothing special. Her hair was what Mama had called dishwater blonde, which meant dirty blonde. Freckles splashed across her nose. Maggie smiled as she remembered Mama had always teased her that her freckles were angel spit. Daddy would scoop Maggie into his arms, twirl her high in the air and assure her they were really angel kisses!



Maggie quickly looked up at the preacher. She didn't want to see her memories anymore. Before she could clamp the compact shut the mirror caught movement overhead. Maggie paused, a smile spreading across her face invited her eyes to dance. A squirrel scampered in the rafters, clutching something tightly in his mouth. Maggie squinted to study the intruder.

"Amen and amen!" Pastor Olson bellowed and pounded the pulpit. Maggie's eyes flew wide as the squirrel dropped its cargo. In slow motion it sailed through the air and bombed a sleeping man on the top of his bald head. He snorted and blurted out, "Dinner ready yet?"

Like a summer thunderstorm, laughter rippled through the little wooden church.

"Arnold! Be quiet!" Embarrassed, the man's wife jabbed him in the ribs. Her hush settled the whole congregation.

Pastor Olson cleared his throat and stifled the smile that played at the corners of his mustache. It was clear that any serious thought was gone. "Let's bow our heads and pray. Our Father, we thank you for your promise of victory to overcome whatever trials we may face in this life. We pray for your blessing of badly needed rain upon this land you have given us.





Lord, you know we need it something awful. Please, Father, bless each of us as we go our separate ways,” he paused, “and please bless Arnold’s dinner.”

Maggie peeked up at the preacher. She liked him because he wasn’t mad at Arnold for spoiling his sermon. Pastor Olson tipped his head at Arnold who now sat with a sheepish look on his face. Arnold’s wife jabbed him in the ribs again. Arnold dropped his head. As the preacher scanned the congregation, he caught Maggie’s eye and winked. Quickly she closed her eyes.

“Amen.”

Before Pastor Olson could dismiss the people, Maggie heard a rustle beside her as Daddy stood. He took a long, deep breath and rolled his hat over and over in his big calloused hands. “Sir . . . uh . . . brother . . . uh . . . preacher . . .”

“Yes?” Pastor Olson said.

“We was a wonderin’ . . . uh . . . Sue and me . . . if you could take a minute to hitch us?” Daddy’s voice dwindled to a whisper.

Gasps of surprise surrounded the couple and excitement filled the little church building.

Maggie’s heart stopped. How had this happened anyway? She had never even met this Sue until they drove into town this morning. Daddy had explained she was an old friend of the family, they had been writing, and that Maggie needed a mama. That was supposed to explain everything, but Maggie didn’t understand any of it.

The preacher paused only for a moment. His gentle smile comforted Maggie’s daddy. “Well . . . Sir . . . Mr. . . .”

“Daniels. Sam Daniels,” Daddy filled in the blank.