

The Children of the King

Illustrations by
Sergio Martinez



MAX LUCADO

PUBLISHER’S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The publisher wishes to acknowledge that the text for *The Children of the King* appeared originally in *Tell Me the Story* in 1992, was released as a separate book titled *Children of the King* in 1994, and was retitled and rereleased as *Just the Way You Are* in 1999. *Tell Me the Story* was written by Max Lucado and illustrated by Ron DiCianni. More stories in Crossway’s “Tell Me” series—*Tell Me the Secrets*, *Tell Me the Promises*, *Tell Me the Truth*, and *Tell Me Why*—are available at your local bookstore. Special thanks to Ron DiCianni for the idea and vision behind the creation of the series.

The Children of the King
Text copyright © 1992, 1994 by Max Lucado
Illustrations copyright © 1999 by Sergio Martinez
Published by Crossway
1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided by USA copyright law.

Previously published as *The Children of the King* text copyright © 1994 by Max Lucado and illustration copyright © 1994 by Toni Goffe and as *Just the Way You Are* text copyright © 1994 by Max Lucado and illustration copyright © 1999 by Sergio Martinez.

Cover design: Dog Eared Design, Kirk DouPonce
Cover image: Illustrated by Sergio Martinez

First printing 2014
Printed in Singapore
Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-4335-4091-2
ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-4094-3
PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-4092-9
Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-4093-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lucado, Max.
The children of the king / Max Lucado ; illustrations by Sergio Martinez.
pages cm
Originally published in Tell me the story.
Summary: When the king comes to adopt some children, they are all too busy trying to impress him with their talents, except for one little girl who offers only her kind heart.
ISBN 978-1-4335-4091-2 (hc)
[1. Kings, queens, rulers, etc.--Fiction. 2. Kindness--Fiction. 3. Christian life--Fiction.] I. Martinez, Sergio, 1937- illustrator. II. Lucado, Max. Tell me the story. III. Title.

PZ7.L9684Ch 2014
[E]--dc23

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers
IMG 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14
15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1





A long time ago in a land much like your own, there was a village. And in the village lived five orphans. A lonely family of fatherless children, they had banded together against the cold.

One day the king learned of their misfortune and decided to adopt them. He announced that he would be their father and would come for them soon.

When the children learned that they had a new father, and their father was the king, and that the king was coming to visit, they went wild with excitement.

When the people of the village learned that the children had a father, and their father was the king, and that the king was coming to the village, they were excited as well. They went out to see the children and told them what to do.

“You need to impress the king,” they explained. “Only those with great gifts to give will be allowed to live in the castle.”

The people didn’t know the king. They just thought that all kings want to be impressed.

So the children began preparing gifts to offer the king. They worked long and hard to be sure the king would approve.









One of the children who knew how to carve decided to give the king a wonderful work of wooden art. He set his knife against the soft bark of the elm and whittled. The small blocks of wood came alive with the eyes of a sparrow or the nose of a horse.

His sister decided to present the king with a painting that captured the beauty of the heavens—a painting worthy to hang in his castle.

Another sister chose music as her way to impress the king. For long hours she practiced with her voice and mandolin. Village people would stop at her window and listen as her music took wings and soared.

Yet another child set out to turn the king's head with his wisdom. Late hours would find his candle lit and his books open. Geography. Math. Chemistry. The breadth of his study was matched only by the depth of his desire. Surely a king would appreciate all his knowledge.



But there was one sister who had nothing to offer. Her hand was clumsy with the knife, her fingers stiff with the brush. When the little girl opened her mouth to sing, the sound was hoarse. She wasn't much of a reader. She believed she had no talent. And so she believed she had no gift.

All she had to offer was her heart, for her heart was good. She spent her time at the city gates, watching the people come and go. She would earn pennies to buy food for her brothers and sisters by grooming people's horses or feeding their animals. She was a simple stable girl. But she had a good heart.

She knew the beggars by name. She took time to pet each dog. She welcomed home the travelers and greeted the strangers.

"How was your journey?" she would ask.

"Tell me what you learned on your visit."

"How is your husband?"

"Do you enjoy your new work?"

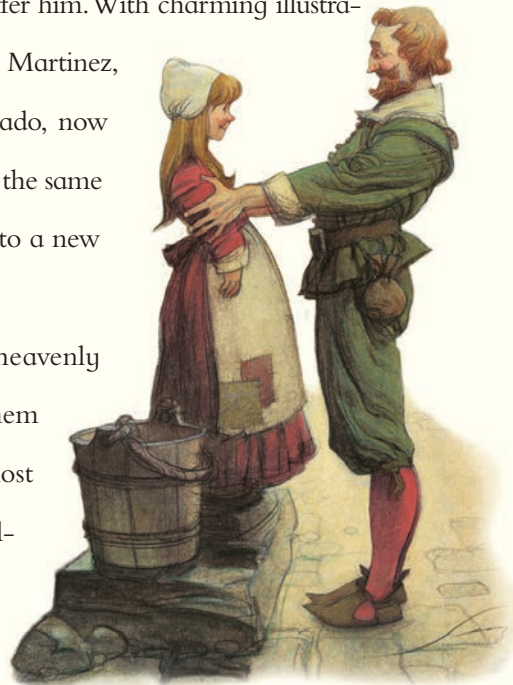
She was full of questions for people because her heart was big and she cared about people. They were all the same to her—the beggars and the rich. She cared for all of them just the way they were.



A TIMELESS TALE FOR A NEW GENERATION

When it was originally released in 1994, *The Children of the King* introduced a generation of young people to God's desire to enjoy a relationship with each of them, no matter what they had to offer him. With charming illustrations by award-winning artist Sergio Martinez, this heartwarming story by Max Lucado, now redesigned with a new cover, still speaks the same tender message of love and acceptance to a new generation of 4- to 10-year olds.

Its timeless truth—that their heavenly Father loves them and delights in them just the way they are—is one of the most lasting assurances we can give our children. It's a truth no child should have to live without.



CHILDREN AGES 4 AND UP