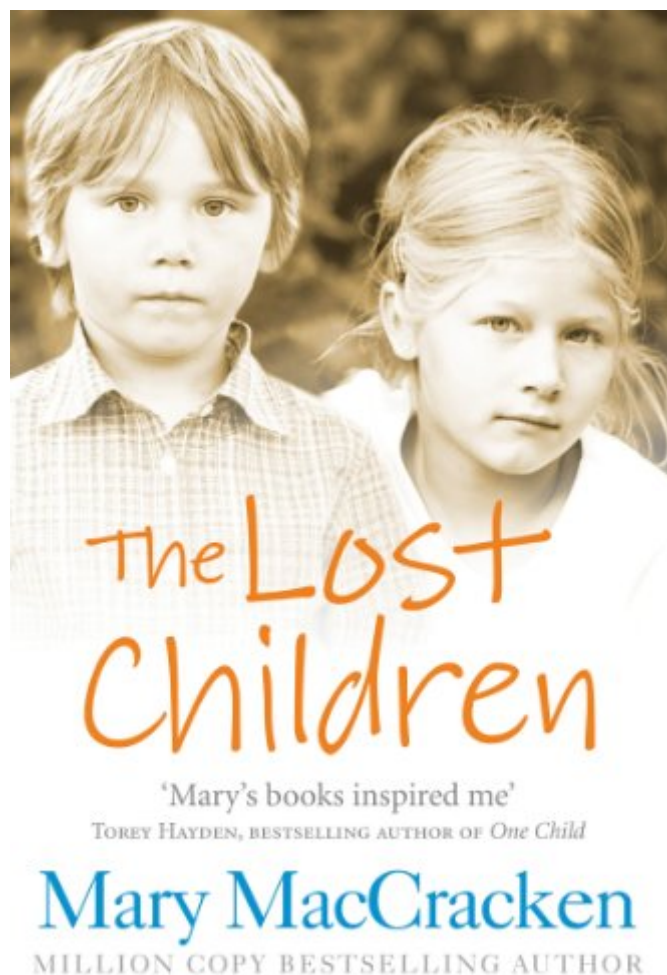


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The Lost Children



Synopsis

First published in 1974 as *A Circle of Children* this is the first of four books from learning disabilities specialist Mary MacCracken. This is a book about children so emotionally disturbed they cannot fit into society; it is also the story of a woman whose involvement with these children changed the shape of their lives forever. When Mary MacCracken joined a school for emotionally disturbed children as a volunteer, she quickly found herself rocked to the core by the strong, loving people who taught there, the hard-pressed and bewildered parents, and the damaged children. On the outside most of the children looked healthy. But the reality was far sadder. Locked away from love and any human contact, these children struggled with life every day. It soon became evident that Mary MacCracken was a natural, gifted teacher. Using her instincts, observations and common sense, Mary was able to establish a rapport with even the most difficult children. Over time, Mary taught her class to eat and to drink; she decoded their mutterings, and taught them to talk and to read. But most important of all she helped them to take the first steps towards feeling love and trust. There are no miracle-workers in this story, only a remarkable woman who refused to give up. Heartfelt, moving and incredibly inspiring, this is an amazing story about the astonishing human capacity for growth and change, even in those whom society regards as beyond help.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ever taught a kid that flaps his arms, talks gibberish, and has never eaten anything but saltines and chocolate milk his whole life? Mary has taught this kid, and many others with other abnormal conditions. This book is based on a true story about the life of Mary McCracken. Mary starts out as part of a League that went to visit a school for the emotionally disturbed. After an hour of visiting, Mary really wanted to work there. She started out as a volunteer under the supervision of a teacher named Helga. Mary moved up from being a volunteer to substituting for another teacher and eventually running her own class. Mary and another teacher Dan formed team teaching, which they took both classes into one big room and taught together. Each week they took kids to nearby attractions because these kids rarely get out. Mary and Dan were able to teach their students, such as, Brian to eat normal food, Jenny to talk, all the kids how to swim and working other miracles. The book ends with all the kids returning from winter vacation and Mary receiving a message that Dan would be stuck in Florida for awhile. A substitute, named Claude, is hired to teach in Dan's place. I really enjoyed this book from the beginning up towards the very end of the book. When all the Junior Leaguers went to the school to visit, they ended up leaving quickly because they were disgusted in the school. Mary could have left too but she said she really wanted to stay. Her friend Ellen thought she was nuts but Mary didn't care what anyone thought. This is what I really admire about Mary. Another thing I admire about Mary is how she got Helga to become friends with her. Mary, who was hated by Helga because she was a volunteer, was able to gain respect from Helga when she quit her job at this school.

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