

The Christmas List: A Novel

By Richard Paul Evans

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The Christmas List: A Novel By Richard Paul Evans

Dear Reader,

When I was in seventh grade, my English teacher, Mrs. Johnson, gave our class the intriguing (if somewhat macabre) assignment of writing our own obituaries. Oddly, I don't remember much of what I wrote about my life, but I do remember how I died: in first place on the final lap of the Daytona 500. At the time, I hadn't considered writing as an occupation, a field with a remarkably low on-the-job casualty rate.

What intrigues me most about Mrs. Johnson's assignment is the opportunity she gave us to confront our own legacy. How do we want to be remembered? That question has motivated our species since the beginning of time: from building pyramids to putting our names on skyscrapers.

As I began to write this book, I had two objectives: First, I wanted to explore what could happen if someone read their obituary before they died and saw, firsthand, what the world really thought of them. Their legacy.

Second, I wanted to write a Christmas story of true redemption. One of my family's holiday traditions is to see a local production of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. I don't know how many times I've seen it (perhaps a dozen), but it still thrills me to see the change that comes over Ebenezer Scrooge as he transforms from a dull, tight-fisted miser into a penitent, "giddy-as-aschoolboy" man with love in his heart. I always leave the show with a smile on my face and a resolve to be a better person. That's what I wanted to share with you, my dear readers, this Christmas -- a holiday tale to warm your season, your homes, and your hearts.

Merry Christmas --*Richard Paul Evans*

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Richard Paul Evans is the #1 bestselling author of *The Christmas Box*. Each of his more than thirty novels has been a *New York Times* bestseller. There are more than thirty million copies of his books in print worldwide, translated into more than twenty-four languages. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Mothers Book Award, the *Romantic Times* Best Women's Novel of the Year Award, the German Audience Gold Award for Romance, two Religion Communicators Council Wilbur Awards, the *Washington Times* Humanitarian of the Century Award and the Volunteers of America National Empathy Award. He lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, with his wife, Keri, and their five children. You can learn more about Richard on Facebook at Facebook.com/RPEFans, or visit his website, RichardPaulEvans.com.

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Chapter One

Saturday , Three Weeks Before Christmas

James Kier looked back and forth between the newspaper headline and the photograph of himself, not sure if he should laugh or call his attorney. It was the same photograph the *Tribune* had used a couple of years earlier when they featured him on the front page of the business section. He had worn a silver herringbone-weave Armani over a black silk Tshirt for the photo session, the corner of an ebony silk handkerchief peeked strategically from the breast pocket. The black and white photograph was carefully posed and lighted to leave half his face in shadow. The photographer, a black-clad young Japanese man with a shock of bright pink hair, chose to shoot in black and white because, in the photographer's words, he was "going for a yin-yang effect -- to fully capture Kier's inner complexities." The photographer was good at his craft. Kier's expression revealed a leaky confidence.

While the photograph was the same, the headline could not have been more different. Not many people get to read their own obituary.

> Local real estate mogul dies in automobile crash
>
> Utah real estate developer James Kier was pronounced dead after his car collided with a concrete pylon on southbound I80. Rescue workers labored for more than an hour to remove the Salt Lake man's body from the wreckage. Authorities believe Kier may have had a heart attack prior to swerving off the road.
>
> Kier was the president of Kier Company, one of the West's largest real estate development firms. He was known as a fierce, oftentimes ruthless, businessman. He once said, "If you want to make friends, join a book club. If you want to make money, go into business. Only a fool confuses the two."
>
> Kier is survived by his son, James Kier II, and his wife, Sara. See page 1 of the business

section for more on James Kier.

Kier put the paper down. *Some idiot's going to lose his job over this,* he thought.

He had no idea what the article was about to set in motion.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Loren Velasco:

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Kevin Miller:

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Patricia Baker:

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Jerry Bonner:

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