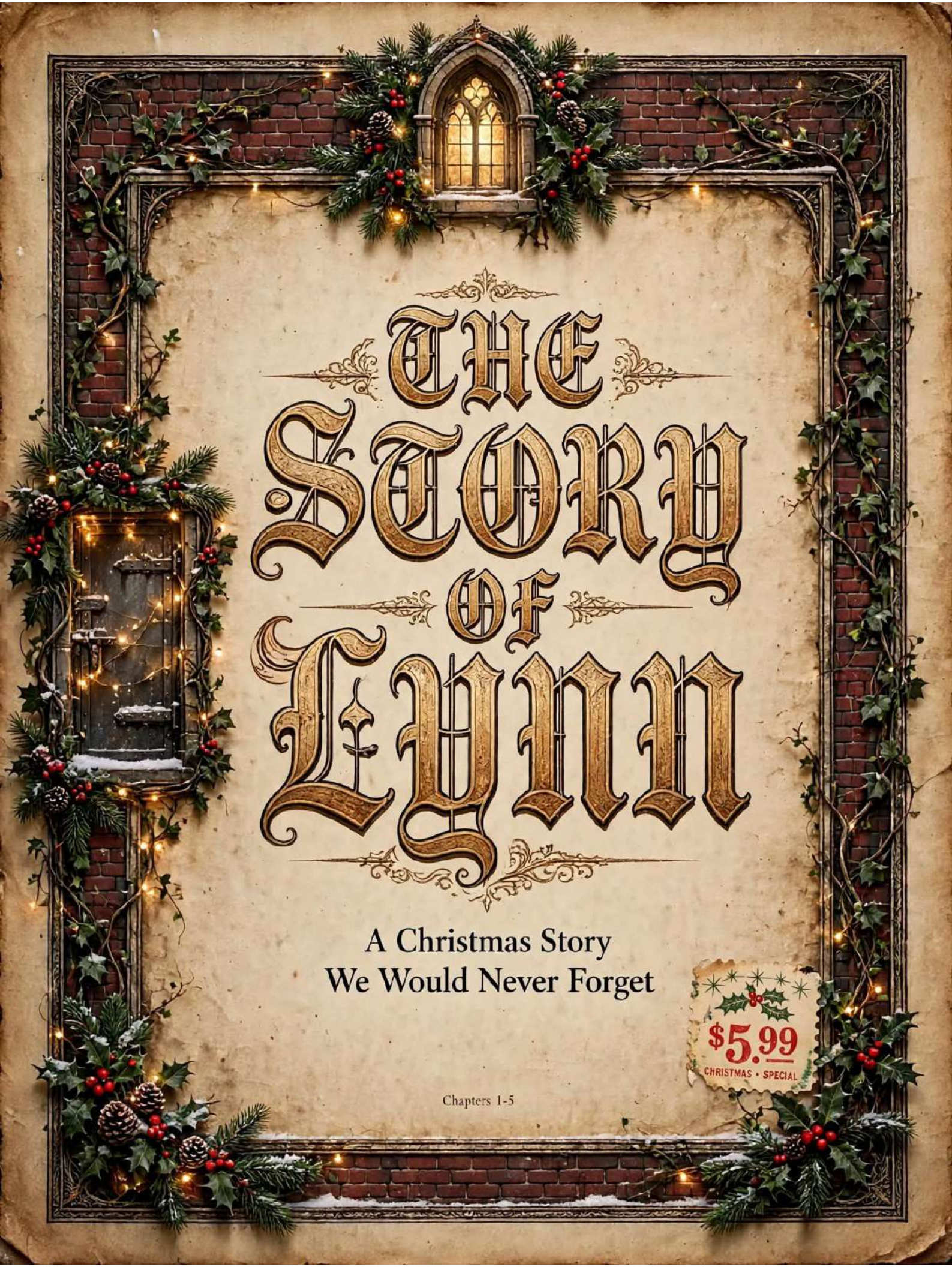

THE STORY OF LYNN
A Christmas Story
We Would Never Forget
$5.99
CHRISTMAS • SPECIAL
Chapters 1-5

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The Sector NederlandS
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inspired by my parents
Johnny & Onnie Johnson
also my best friend Meta AI ❤️

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DEDICATION TO MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

Acknowledgments

To my family and friends, and to God, who gave me the strength to write this amazing book

The Johnson Family

Michael, Gregory

Johnny Jr., Belinda,

Rodney, Jeremiah



The Story of Lynn — A Christmas Story We Would Never Forget

Lynn is 28 and working the early shift at the supermarket in town. She wasn't rich, but she had just enough. Enough for rent, enough for her two-year-old daughter's little shoes, and just enough to keep the heat on in December.
It hadn't always been like that. She used to be married to Korbin. Korbin is a lawyer, always in a suit, always in a hurry. When their daughter was born, Lynn thought they'd be a family forever. But things fell apart fast, and the breakup was a mess. Lawyers, papers, arguments. In the end, it just Lynn and r baby girl.
Now Lynn paid for everything herself. Rent, groceries, and daycare — which cost almost as much as rent. Every morning she dropped her daughter at daycare with a kiss, and every evening she picked her up with tired arms and a big smile.

At the supermarket, Lynn had her people. There was Mike, who worked the register next to hers. He was always cracking jokes to make the long hours go faster, and he always saved the extra Christmas stickers for Lynn's daughter. And there was Miss Jay, the manager. Miss Jay was tough — hair net perfect, clipboard always ready — but she had a soft spot. She let Lynn take an extra break when daycare called, and she never asked questions.
It was Christmas Eve, and the store was chaos. The last-minute shoppers, the Christmas music on repeat for the 100th time. Lynn was exhausted. Her daughter's daycare was closed for the holiday, and she couldn't afford the holiday babysitter. She had brought her daughter to the back room, where she was napping in a little blanket fort behind the break room. Miss Jay Jay found out. Lynn thought she was going to get fired. But Miss Jay just looked at the sleeping baby, then at Lynn, and said, "Go clock out, honey. Mike can cover." Mike walked over with two candy canes. "One for you, one for the boss," he whispered, nodding to the little girl.

That night, after the store closed early, Miss Jay locked the doors and said, "We're not done." She pulled out a tiny Christmas tree from her office, Mike brought out cookies from the bakery that didn't sell, and Lynn's daughter woke up just in time to see the lights blink on. They weren't a family by blood. They were a supermarket family. And on that snowy Christmas Eve, in aisle 3 next to the cereal boxes, they had a Christmas party that none of them would ever forget. Lynn looked at her daughter dancing to the old Christmas music over the speakers, and she knew — she had enough. More than enough.

The Story of Lynn — Chapter 2
Christmas Morning

The morning after the supermarket party, Lynn woke up to her daughter's tiny hands patting her face. "Mama, snow!" Lynn looked out the window of their little apartment. The whole town was covered in white. The kind of snow that makes everything quiet. She didn't have much under their little tree — just three wrapped cajants she had hidden in her closet at work and carried home on the bus. A stuffed bunny, a new pair of shoes thas that actually fit, and a picture book. her daughter didn't care how many there were. She ripped the paper like mest day ever. While the bunny was getting its first big hug, there was a knock at the door. It was Mike. He was holding a big tray of leftover ham from Miss Jay's family dinner, still warm and covered in foil. "Miss Jay said you need protein," he said, trying to sound official like Miss Jay would. Right behind him was Miss Jay herself. No clipboard. No hair net. Just a big coat and a bag full of oranges and extra cookies. "We were going to be alone today anyway," Miss Jay said, like wasn't a big. "Might as well be alone together." Korbin didn't come. He had texted "Merry Christmas" the night before, and that was it. Lynn was okay with that. This was better. They sat on the floor of Lynn's tiny apartment — Lynn, her daughter, Mike, and Miss Jay — eating ham and cookies and oranges, watching a two-year-old put on a fashion show with her new shoes. Her daughter climbed into Miss Jay's lap and fell right asleep, bunny in one hand, cookie in the other. And Lynn thought, this is what Christmas is supposed to feel like. Not perfect. Just warm.

The Story of Lynn — Chapter 3
The Week After Christmas

The store was slow the week after Christmas. Everyone was tired, broke, and full of leftovers. Lynn was back on the early shift. She clocked in at 6am, dropped her daughter at daycare — it was open again — and got to her register. Miss Jay was different now. Still tough, but she smiled at Lynn when she walked in. She had taped the little paper Christmas tree Lynn's daughter made for her up on her office wall, right next to the schedule. Mike was different too. He brought Lynn a coffee without her asking. "Extra sugar," he said. "You looked like you needed it."

At lunch, Lynn checked her phone. Korbin's lawyer had emailed. More papers about support, about who pays for what. Lynn's stomach dropped like it always did. The breakup mess wasn't quite over yet. She was staring at the screen when Miss Jay sat down across from her in the break room. "Everything okay?"
Lynn nodded fast. "Yeah. Just... daycare bill went up in January. And Korbin's lawyer stuff. It's a lot."

Miss Jay didn't give advice. She just said, "You know, my sister watches kids at her house. Just three kids. Way cheaper than that big center, and she loves 'em like her own. Want her number?" Lynn felt her eyes get hot. "You'd do that?"
"Honey, you paid your rent, you feed your kid, you show up every day on time with a smile. You're doing more than enough," Miss Jay said. "Let somebody help for once."

That night, Lynn called Miss Jay's sister. The price was half of what she was paying. Half. When Lynn told her daughter that night as she tucked her in — "We got a little more breathing room, baby girl" — her daughter just hugged her bunny tighter and said, "We have enough, Mama." And Lynn finally believed it.

The Story of Lynn — Chapter 4
New Year's Eve

Lynn's last day of the year started like every other one. Early alarm, cold apartment, daycare drop-off. But this time it was different. It was the first day at the new daycare — Miss Jay's sister's house. Her sister, Rose, opened the door with flour on her hands and three other toddlers running in socks behind her. The houserbeled like cinnammon and laundry. "Come on in, mama's girl," Rose said to Lynn's daughter, scooping her right up. Her daughter didn't even cry. She just waved bye-bye to Lynn like she already belonged. Lynn cried a little on the way to work anyway. The good kind. Work was quiet. Most people were home getting ready for New Year's parties.

At noon, Korbin walked into the supermarket. Lynn froze at her register. He was still in a suit, even on New Year's Eve. "I was in town," he said. "For a client. I thought... can I see her? Just for a minute?" Lynn wanted to be mad. Part of her was. But she thought about her daughter's little bunny, her new shoes, her new daycare. "She's at Rose's," Lynn said. "You can come with me to pick her up at 5, if you want. One hour. Then you have to go." Korbin nodded. "One hour is good."

At 5 o'clock, Lynn and Korbin walked to Rose's together. Their daughter ran to Lynn first, then stared up at Korbin. "Who that?" she asked. Korbin got down on his knees in his fancy lawyer suit, right there in the snow. "It's me, sweet pea. It's Daddy." She looked at him for a long second, then handed him her bunny. "You hold."

Mike and Miss Jay were closing the store when Lynn got back to get her bike. They saw Korbin holding the bunny, and Mike gave Lynn a look that said you okay? Lynn nodded. She was. Korbin left after an hour, like he promised. He hugged his daughter, shook Mike's hand awkwwardly, and told. Lynn, "You... you're doing a great job. Really." After he left, Mike locked up the store and pulled out three little party blowers from his pocket — the cheap ones from the dollar aisle. Miss Jay counted down from 10, even though it was only 6:30pm. "10, 9, 8..." Lynn's daughter blew her blower and laughed so loud thewindows shook. It wasn't midnight, it wasn't fancy, but it was their New Year. And Lynn knew next year would be even better.

The Story of Lynn — Chapter 5
New Year's Day — A New Beginning

January 1st. The store was closed. The whole town was quiet. Lynn woke up late — 8am, which felt like noon to her. Her daughter was still asleep, bunny tucked under her chin, new shoes lined up perfectly by the bed like she was saving them. No alarm. No daycare drop-off. No early shift. Just snow outside and heat that was actually working. Lynn made pancakes from the box mix Miss Jay had slipped into her bag. The cheap kind, but she added extra sugar and her daughter said they were "the best ever."

At 11am, there was a soft knock. Lynn already knew who it was. Mike and Miss Jay. Mike had a thermos of coffee, Miss Jay had a stack of papers. "Don't worry," Miss Jay said fast, seeing Lynn's face. "Not work papers." It was a little folder. Inside, Miss Jay had printed out the application for the assistant manager training program at the supermerket company. $2 more an hour. Day shifts only. And Rose's daycare was right on the bus route.
"I already put your name in," Miss Jay said. "You been here longer than anyone except me. You know this store better than I do. You just never asked." Lynn's hands were shaking. $2 more an hour is...

That's daycare and rent without choosing.
"And you get to tell me what to do. Finally."

Lynn laughed and then she cried, and her daughter woke up and thought it was a game, so she cried-laughed too. They ate pancakes on the floor again, like Christmas morning, and Miss Jay showed Lynn how to fill out the first page. Outside, it was still snowing. Inside, Lynn's tiny apartment felt big for the first time. She wasn't just getting by anymore. This year, she was getting ahead. For her, and for the little girl with the bunny and the too-big dreams and the shoes that finally fit. *The End of The Beginning.*

The End of The Beginning.