

## About *The Exact Place*

### **Publication Information**

*Author:* Margie L. Haack

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### *Attributions:*

Cover design: J.E. Eubanks, Jr.  
All photos: Margie Haack

### *Ordering info:*

Pre-orders may be placed through the Kalos Press website; visit [www.TheExactPlace.net](http://www.TheExactPlace.net) for information.

*The Exact Place* will be available for sale through Hearts and Minds Books, the Kalos Press website, and other book-selling venues (including certain unnamed online behemoths).

### **Description, Endorsements, Etc.**

#### *Summary:*

A three-room house in northern Minnesota with no running water can seem crowded with a mother, stepfather, five siblings, and a dog. It was swampland barely claimed from wilderness, where temperatures of 40 below could freeze a chicken house full of hens. It was the place Margie accidentally killed her favorite dog, was chased by a timber wolf, learned to love work and humor and hate sheep. Her roots were tangled with the death of a father who was killed before her birth, leaving her mother a widow at seventeen.

This was also where her spiritual awakening began. She yearned for home, for a father who loved her. Margie determined to win her step-father's love and approval, but failed. Her stories of her childhood show how suffering ripened the landscape of her life. From her earliest memories at the age of four through dark nightmares, she became aware that God received her as a beloved daughter. She had been, all along, in *The Exact Place* she needed to be.

#### *Audience:*

All Christians will appreciate and enjoy Margie's heartwarming and personal story of her early life, journey to faith, and entrance into maturity. Women of all ages will particularly find a kindred soul in the many twists and turmoils of girlhood and the struggles of coming of age

while also coming to grips with the truths, realities, and freedom of Christianity. (Due to mild language, the book is recommended for readers 16 and older.)

*Author Bio:*

Margie Haack grew up in Minnesota, only miles from the Canadian border. She met her husband Denis while in college at the University of Minnesota, and their years together have seen many turns, including living in a Christian commune in New Mexico and befriending Francis and Edith Schaeffer while he was being treated at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

Margie and Denis have given themselves to loving Jesus, others, and the beauty of culture and creativity in as many ways as they can. They live in Rochester where they are the directors and principals for Ransom Fellowship, a ministry that explores everyday life as a Christian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Margie publishes *Notes from Toad Hall*, a newsletter of sorts that is issued four times a year; she also keeps a blog called Toad Drinks Coffee.

*Endorsements:*

"Margie Haack has written a book that captures what it's like to spend time with Margie herself. Artful, unpretentious, humorously self-disclosing, her prose lilt and beguiles, telling of life in rural Minnesota with faith and perception that recall Leif Enger or Patricia Hampl. Margie is famed for her hospitality, and I can testify to the warmth of her and her husband's open home, but here is a different sort of hospitality, one no less welcoming for being in print: an open life, displayed in stories that are full of sharp wit and graceful intelligence."

Wesley Hill

Author, *Washed & Waiting: reflections on Christian faithfulness and homosexuality*

"The most interesting people I've met all seem to have a couple things in common. One, they've all lived very hard, challenging lives. As Garrison Keillor once put it, 'It's a shallow life that doesn't give a person a few scars.' Well, Margie and her family have had more than their share, but mere scars are easy to come by. It's the second factor that is rare and makes her and her writing so extraordinary: the ability to see and rejoice in God's grace amidst the scars. *The Exact Place* isn't a 'poor me' tale. It's a 'this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory' tale and when I read it, I laugh, I weep, and I believe that it is so."

Greg Grooms

Director, Hill House (Austin, TX)

"Gratitude is my primary response to Margie's memoir, gratitude for refusing to be mawkish about childhood and growing up. Margie's early years, rife with earthy mischief, spiritual lucidity, fear and joy are side-splittingly hilarious and heart-rending. She tells these stories with the understanding of a very wise woman, but it's as though the scrape-kneed little girl she was sat beside her and whispered them in her ear."

Katy Bowser

Singer/Songwriter, Recording Artist

In her beautiful and honest new book, *The Exact Place*, Margie Haack allows us to look over-her-shoulder and through-her-heart, learning the possibility of love in a world that is often very unlovely. Like generations before her, she was born into the grand land of lakes and woods in northern Minnesota, and that place and its people have formed her, heart and mind, body and

soul. Readers of her much-loved essays already know that she is a remarkably-gifted writer able to see into the ordinariness of everyday, and finding unusual grace for all of us; for years we have longed for those tender, truthful windows on life to become a book—and a very good book it is. *The Exact Place* is for Everyman and Everywoman, for children and for grandparents, for the youngest students and the oldest students, for people everywhere who care about a good life, and what it takes to find it.

Dr. Steven Garber

Founder/Principal, The Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, & Culture

"Most of the time when I am reading I feel like an outsider, as if I am merely watching a program on television. With Margie's writing I feel like I am a participant, I'm eating the Cream of Wheat; I'm peering through the trap door; I'm pulling in the fish; I'm lying on the cold linoleum; I'm smelling the triple batch of chocolate chip cookies. Which is all lovely and affirming. She weaves life and Faith together so seamlessly that I can see Creation glowing with the light of Heaven. Margie has such a gift of making you feel like you are a part of things . . . and that is what I hate about Margie's writing. As I am swept up in the glory of the ordinary, and seeing the shimmer of the spiritual—she cuts me with the ragged shards of life in a fallen world. Then I want to be merely watching again. But there is blood on my hands."

Ned Bustard

Creative Director, Square Halo Books

Author, *Squalls Before War: His Majesty's Schooner Sultana*

"Margie Haack is a great storyteller and this book collects some fabulously entertaining bits from her childhood on a small Minnesota farm — nicely told, sometimes tragic, filled with deep pathos, still with an eye to beauty, but also good humor and a considerable passel of shenanigans (she brought her horse into the kitchen to eat pickles? She caught fish bigger than herself? She used bag balm? Don't ask.) Yet, with a sense of God's redemptive purposes played out over a lifetime of rural poverty and a harsh upbringing, these tales form a memoir of note, ruminating on an unusually vivid life in what for some will feel like another world. It is not a cliché to say that this book is written with grit and grace. Move over Garrison Keillor, this is one Minnesota mama you don't want to mess with."

Byron Borger

Proprietor, Hearts & Minds Books

"One of the highest compliments you can give an author is to feel a kind of sadness upon reaching the end of their book. If the story has become important to you and its reading a delightful part of your day, sometimes the only remedy is to flip back to the first page and start all over again. This is the way I felt upon coming to the end of Margie Haack's deeply moving, wise, and masterfully told memoir of her childhood, *The Exact Place*. I will read it again. Margie and I have been dear friends for years. We've written letters, shared meals and overnights, and talked of our lives, families, and work. I already love her. But now I also love the spunky, spirited, full-of-pain and full-of-hope young girl that she was. And I'm a little bit in awe. I have long considered Margie to be one of my favorite writers, devouring her essays and the quarterly Notes from Toad Hall. But after reading *The Exact Place*, she has moved onto my list of most beloved authors. There are sentences in this book so wonderfully crafted, breathtaking, and insightful that I had to read them over again and again to let the words soak into my soul. Margie

is a storyteller of the highest order. You will see, feel, and think, laugh out loud and want to cry, sometimes all on the same page. When a book of such excellence is birthed into the world, it is cause for much rejoicing. In honor of *The Exact Place* and its release, I'm raising a glass, dancing under the disco ball, and rushing to order multiple copies for the fortunate people in my life!"

Andi Ashworth  
Author, *Real Love for Real Life*  
Co-Director, Art House America

"Since my early twenties when I discovered Madeline L'Engle's spiritual autobiographies, I have been drawn to memoir writing. My curiosity in how people make sense of their lives mixed with the love of a well-written sentence has kept my interest in this genre alive. Reading Margie Haack's seasonal writings, confessions, and deliberations on grace in *Notes from Toad Hall* for over a decade has been more than just a curiosity fulfillment. Her life and writings have been friends along the path of my life. Every time I have read her writings, I have fallen more in love with God, my husband, my children, my home, and the story God is writing in our lives. Notes from Toad Hall and now this lovely book, *The Exact Place*, makes ordinary life just what it is — redeemed, beautiful, and full of grace. I look forward to sharing this book with friends in hopes that it will affirm them in the stories of their lives.

Leslie Bustard  
Author, Teacher

"I've never lived in a place like the wild remoteness of Northern Minnesota. I can't imagine the cold, or the isolation, or the swamps. But Margie Haack has invited me to test those waters with a visit to her childhood. In *The Exact Place*, she locates the first memories of her faith, shaped by farm life and a difficult father, and by playful moments of grace, like the time she and her little brother brought horses into the kitchen for pickles. *The Exact Place* is full of surprises."

Sam van Eman  
Culture Editor, The High Calling blog  
Author, *On Earth as It Is in Advertising?: moving from commercial hype to Gospel hope*

"The recipes that punctuate Margie Haack's recollections remind the reader that these stories are from a life truly lived: as tangible as a bite of Swedish pancake with chokeberry syrup. Wrestling with the insolence of memory, Margie tells the story of her childhood and of the discovery of the kindness of God and the meaning of home. Her discoveries takes places, as such discoveries almost always do, amidst the complications of ordinary life, and she recounts these with both honesty and tenderness: a god-damning grandfather in his love of her images God for her in an enduring way; the loss of her father before her birth and the stern discipline of her stepfather affects her as she reads of the Bible's God portrayed as a father; beloved dogs die as a result of her actions and the actions of her siblings, and these deaths provoke encounters with guilt and forgiveness. As I read the story of young Margie's life, I reflected on my own, and wondered at the goodness in the ordinary -- land well-tended, food well-prepared, children sheltered and fed with sweat and tears -- and at the unfolding of hope in the midst of hardship and heartbreak."

Gideon Strauss  
Executive Director, Max De Pree Center for Leadership

**Publisher Information**

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