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# Divine



## Synopsis

Mary Madison was a child of unspeakable horrors, a young woman society wanted to forget. Now a divine power has set Mary free to bring life-changing hope and love to battered and abused women living in the shadow of the nation's capital. Mary is educated and redeemed, a powerful voice in Washington, D.C. both to the politically elite and to other women like her. But she also has a past that shamed polite society. Her experiences created in her paralyzing fear, faithlessness, addiction, and promiscuity. At the crossroads of her life, only one power set Mary free and gave her a lifetime of love and hope. A power that could only be divine. Peggy Madison is Mary's grandmother, a quiet woman who has spent her life praying for her granddaughter. Peggy clings to the belief that God has a special plan for Mary. Through years of sorrow and longing, Peggy walks the journey in faith and watches from a distance as one key person after another comes into Mary's life and demonstrates the timeless, powerful love of the Master, the Savior. The divine Lord. Emma Randall is a single mother fleeing an abusive relationship, wondering whether there is hope for her and her young daughters. She is desperate, broken, and unloved, tempted to commit the unthinkable. Then Mary Madison introduces Emma to the greatest love of all, greater than any either of them has ever imagined.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Karen Kingsbury's novel *Divine* is a modern-day retelling of Mary Magdalene's story and the contemporary demons she faces. She recounts her past of physical and sexual abuse, drug addiction and suicidal thoughts at an abuse shelter she runs. The book is well written, except for a

few parts where the story slowed or seemed redundant. However, the character development was excellent and completely realistic. The choices that characters make in light of their painful histories are believable, although traumatic. The majority of the story is Mary telling her past to a woman who has left her abusive husband. Mary's history is darkly traumatizing and leads her down a dangerous path in life where only Christ could rescue her. However, Mary relives her past in order that another woman will be saved. All of the characters involved in the book have gone through stressful patches of life. Kingsbury's characters are easy to connect with and the relationships developed between the various characters accurately show the ups and downs of living a life of abuse and a life lived in darkness. Overall, the book was excellent. It is an inspiration for Christians to go out and minister to those who have led lives like Mary's. Mid-teens and older, especially women, would receive the most enjoyment from the book, in particular those who have suffered through abuse or those who know someone who is currently dealing with issues of abuse. However, it is also just an enjoyable read to gain perspective through another person's eyes. - Molly Schnepel, Christian Book Previews.com

Divine by Karen Kingsbury is a truly touching novel about a woman whose terrifying abuse leads to a life of ministry. This book details how one life can alter the lives of many and Mary Madison's life does just that. Her life not only touches the other characters in the book, it also touches the reader. I found myself having to put the book down a number of times just so I could grab the tissue. Spiritually, I found this book to be quite uplifting at this time in my life. It was refreshing to read about a person redeemed by Christ who didn't live the perfect life and who wants to reach others that have been damaged by sin. I get so tired of perfect characters, with perfect lives, who have nothing better to do than sit in judgment of everyone else. It was nice to read about a person who has sinned, who has been saved, and is out to do as Christ has called them to do ... not out of a sense of self-righteousness, but out of true love. The kind of love Christ has for us. This is the third book that I have reviewed that is considered to be Christian fiction. I am finding that I really like this genre. Karen Kingsbury does an excellent job of reaching out to her readers through the lives of the characters she so beautifully creates. Divine, published by Tyndale House Publishers, really is Life-Changing Fiction. If you know someone who has been abused or is being abused, I would highly recommend giving them this book. Five stars!

In the DC area at one of her women's shelter, Mary Madison is briefed by her receptionist Leah Hamilton that her newest resident Emma Randall looks suicidal and ready to bolt. Battered and with

no hope, the twenty-three year old Emma considers herself unworthy and ready to flee now that her two young children are safe from their abusive father Charlie. However, Leah softly gets Emma to meet with the legendary Mary while four years old Kami and two years old Kaitlyn play with dolls. Mary shocks the frightened Emma by asking if she should like to hear her story not just the media account. Hesitantly Emma agrees so Mary explains how Jesus loved her and saved her. She was a little girl when her hooker mother took them to stay with her maternal Grandma Peggy who gives the little girl a purse with scripture inside. However, her mother immediately removed them back to the streets. When she scores a three day job with out of town Johns, her mom leaves Mary with her pimp; the last time they saw one another. From that moment Mary battled the seven demons that lead to sin and helplessness until she meets a believer who introduces her to Jesus. This is a terrific modernization of Mary Magdalene living in Washington DC and using her story to encourage other people especially women that hope lies with Jesus. Mary's tale is told in flashbacks, which enhances how far she has come. Karen Kingsbury provides a deep character study of how one woman with help overcame seven contemporary demons (drugs, prostitution, etc.), but also makes no apologies that the author believes the path is with Jesus; readers who want a clear split between state and religion may find the religious message overbearing, but everyone will agree that Ms. Kingsbury provides an entreating parable starring a modernized Magdalene. Harriet Klausner

I was glad to see a Christian fiction author tackle the subject of abuse, but was ultimately disappointed by this book. As a social worker I've worked with juvenile and adult victims of sexual and physical abuse, including victims in the juvenile justice system. Kingsbury's story of Mary seemed contrived and unrealistic to me. It wasn't the abuse that stretched credibility, rather other events in the story did not ring true. Kingsbury asks us to believe that a 15 year old who is totally illiterate, having never spent a day in school and not even knowing the alphabet could earn a doctorate and become "the most powerful woman in Washington, D.C." by age 30. She misrepresents the realities of the juvenile justice system when she has Mary steal a car while fleeing from abuse and asks us to believe that she would be sentenced to a 3 year term in juvenile detention, although she had never previously committed a single law violation. Then while in the juvenile detention center she has Mary having sex with a delivery man. I've never seen a juvenile detention center where inmates and delivery man had any possibility of interacting. Kingsbury relies heavily on cliché phrases and "Christianese" speech in this book. Sadly, I don't believe that many of the abused women I have worked with would relate to this story. That is unfortunate because the

Kingsbury does present an important message of redemption, but the story ends up being an irritating distraction to that message.

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