

MARK J. SPINICELLI

CATCHING — A — MIRACLE



Catching A Miracle

Mark J. Spinicelli

Copyright © 2018 Mark J. Spinicelli
All rights reserved.

Cover design by DIGITTO Media, LLC
Fulfillment by Amazon

Produced by DIGITTO Media, LLC
Vendor for SEO Marketing & Web Development

www.digittomedia.com



DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those brave individuals who have been forced to battle a disease that takes so many lives each year, and to the families who walk the difficult path with them.

Catching A Miracle was created to offer hope, encouragement, or at least thought-provoking entertainment.

The notion that a cure is out there is not far-fetched. A number of recent advances could turn this fictional read into reality. A 2011 report claimed scientists at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, discovered the cure, but it has yet to materialize. Israeli scientists have found rat cells secrete a substance that destroys cancer cells in humans.

Catching A Miracle is the first of a trilogy:

Catching A Miracle

To Kristen Elizabeth Spinicelli

When God reaches down into the garden of humanity, he always grabs the brightest flower.

Catching A Miracle: The Hunt For Hans

To Joseph "Joe" Carney

You were right, I became everything others said I could never be.

Catching A Miracle: Sparrow in the Fog

For my wife, Susan.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Synopsis.....	iii
Chapter 1.....	1
Chapter 2.....	6
Chapter 3.....	14
Chapter 4.....	21
Chapter 5.....	24
Chapter 6.....	32
Chapter 7.....	39
Chapter 8.....	46
Chapter 9.....	60
Chapter 10.....	70
Chapter 11.....	75
Chapter 12.....	90
Chapter 13.....	112
Chapter 14.....	123
Chapter 15.....	127
Chapter 16.....	136
Chapter 17.....	155
Chapter 18.....	169
Chapter 19.....	178
Chapter 20.....	186

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work on *Catching A Miracle* has been a unique undertaking that has spanned three years. From the beginning it has been a slow but steady trail with my ever-talented wife Susan, an avid reader who assisted in the reader experience department. Susan's help in advising as to what works and what to edit out was critical to this story.

Throughout the project and for seventeen years before, Candice Davis proved her talent in copyright, legal and all the elements it takes to get this project completed. Without her at my side, I would never be as successful as I am today with all of my companies.

Thanks also go out to:

Cindy Huckabee for being the eagle eye who keeps me on the straight path of doing things the way they have to be.

Alton Gansky, who took time away from being a professor to help me with the entire *Catching a Miracle* trilogy. His talents enable us to provide this story and trilogy.

David Gentilella of DIGITTO Media for leading the way in getting this book from manuscript to the book you see now.

Finally, the reason for this story, my loving sister Kristen and my mentor Joe Carney, both of whom succumbed to cancer in 1985. Kristen was a nurse who specialized in treating children with brain damage. Her "kids," as she called them, were her life and she is buried next to many of them in Orlando.

Joe Carney was the man who would tell an eighteen-year-old high school drop-out that what I had to do was go out and be everything people said I could never be, successful.

Kristen and Joe have been the driving force that makes us wonder when we hear, "There's nothing more we can do." Will you accept that, or simply stand with us and say, "I bet you are wrong."?

To me, *Catching a Miracle* is more than a book, it is a blueprint to another way.

SYNOPSIS

Under the watchful eyes of Dr. Gregory Wall, eight-year-old Shelly White and her best friend and roommate, Kristen, fight for their lives at St. Theresa's Hospital for Children. After Dr. Wall has tried everything, Shelly's cancer disappears overnight in what becomes the hospital's first miracle. Yet as Shelly leaves the hospital, she sees Dr. Wall rush to Kristen's bedside, where her best friend loses her battle against cancer.

Thirty years later, Dr. Shelly White works alongside her mentor in order to save other children. At a fundraiser to honor Kristen, she meets advertising executive Nicholas Harris, who along with his father, Salvatore, will change her life and possibly wipe cancer off the face of the earth. With the help of Nick and his father's high-profile friends, an idea becomes a quest to find a cure.

Catching A Miracle is a unique and fast-paced story of compassion, intrigue, and power about a group of people who each have a reason to stop a killer... by trying a different approach: greed.

CHAPTER 1

October 1972

From the doorway of Room 1604 in the children's ward, Nurse Doris Powers watched the celebration in the reception area a short distance down the hall. A child going home was always a reason to celebrate.

Nurse Doris smiled and waved to some of the parents she had grown to know, all the while keeping a keen eye on the pale little girl lying in the bed a few feet away. Above the bed loomed machines monitoring her vital signs. The readings were not good. The children's laughter in the lobby faded from Doris' ears as she focused on her patient. The child lay unconscious, curled in a fetal position.

The celebration was almost over, the eight-year-old honoree whisked away in her wheelchair by her mother as smiling children chattered and waved goodbye. Doris saw right through the smiles on their faces and knew they wished with all their might they were going home too. But few ever did. The nurse's eyes locked with those of the brown-haired girl in the wheelchair as if thanking each other for sharing the past four months of their lives.

A sound snapped Doris' attention back to the patient in the bed. It was a sound she had been dreading, a sound she desperately wished she would not hear.

The monitors shrilled.

Her patient was flat-lining.

Doris punched the room's intercom button. "Code blue 1604! Code 1604."

A moment later, a calm, authoritative voiced oozed from overhead speakers. "Code blue, 1604. Code blue, 1604."

The ten-year-old's eyes twitched. Her body shook. She soiled the bed.

Doris pushed back the bed curtain, the side table, and anything else that might hamper the code team's action.

"She's coding!" Doris told the first doctor to enter the room.

Dr. Gregory Wall studied the monitors. He stood tall, calm, his face an impassive mask, but his eyes told the real story. Wall was black, in his thirties, and just a year out of the Navy Medical Corps, and, at six feet two inches tall, could be a bit intimidating. Yet he was a champion for children, and every pain they felt hurt him.

The rest of his medical team appeared at the patient's side. One pushed the crash cart into the room.

Wall rattled off commands. "Adrenalin. Five hundred CCs."

A second later one of the resuscitation nurses handed Wall the demanded drug.

"Okay, little one," he whispered, "let's not ruin a perfectly good day." He stabbed her chest with the needle. "C'mon, give me something ..."

"We're losing her." Doris' words were steady but awash with fear.

Wall swore. "Compressions."

An intern began CPR.

Wall called for the defibrillator and with practiced motions placed the paddles and sent an electrical charge across the child's heart.

She gurgled. The monitors showed no heartbeat.

"Clear!" Hands raised in the air and bodies moved from the rails. The girl's body jumped again from the electrical surge, then shook as it fell back on the sheets. The doctor tried again to revive her. No change. She went limp. The team bowed their heads. An intern took notes while a nurse wiped a tear from her eye. Dr. Wall faced Doris.

"We could try ..." he offered.

Doris shook her head. She was young, just 27, but had been a nurse long enough to know the truth. "She's gone, Doctor."

He laid a hand on the dead child's head. Doris saw it shake. She had once asked him if he got used to the pain and death. "The day I get used to seeing children die is the day I leave medicine forever."

"Sometimes the Lord gives us miracles, Doctor. Sometimes he takes the little ones home," Doris said. "It's time to let go."

"There was nothing more I could do," Dr. Wall said. A tear formed in the corner of his right eye. "Five months of treatment and we end up losing her."

"You did everything right, Doctor." She placed her hand on his. "Remember, the first rule of medicine is that patients die. And rule number two?"

"You can't change rule number one." He nodded.

"I'll get a gurney." She stood up and rubbed the small of her back. "You okay?"

"I just want to stay with her a few minutes," he said as the light over the bed began to flicker. He looked at Doris Powers and then up at the bulb. She smiled.

"If you're up there, child, how about fixing that thing, would you?" she asked with eyes to the ceiling. The bulb went dark, flickered again, and returned to a bright, steady light. They both smiled. "See that, Doctor Wall?" the nurse said. "She made it."

In the lobby, the party atmosphere turned to dread, at least for those old enough to know what was happening.

The guest of honor stretched her neck to see what room was causing all the commotion—her old room. That's what she'd feared. A pit formed in her stomach. She was so frightened for her friend that she wanted to scream. She wanted to run back to her room and help. Tears leaked from her eyes as her mother pushed the wheelchair faster toward the exit.

JUNE 1972

The linoleum floors of the hospital appeared to gleam with enthusiasm about the little feet that now walked their pathways

with hopes of getting better. The state-of-the-art, five-story St. Theresa's Children's Hospital was the toast of the town. A circular driveway lead to the main entrance off Hope Drive. In the corner of the waiting area, a black and white television on a curio cabinet displayed re-runs of *The Lucy Show*. A single parent sat nearby, nervously leafing through *Life* magazine.

St. Theresa's had opened a few months before and focused primarily on the treatment of children with cancer. Beds were filling up with children from all walks of life. Some could not afford to pay, and many of the families were indigent, but the Board of Directors vowed they would never turn a child away.

The lobby was clean and stark and it worried Shelly White. It reminded her of the building she had visited before her father died. The smell was the same. Her mom held Shelly tightly in her arms as she walked through the lobby. Her mother's embrace comforted her some, but she wished to be home instead of this place. They had driven two hours to get to the hospital.

Shelly squirmed a little in her mother's arms. She was getting too big to be carried by her mom, but she was too weak to stand for long let alone walk very far.

"Welcome to St. Theresa's." The calm voice seemed to break Shelly's mom out of her trance. "I am Dr. Gregory Wall. Who do we have here?" He held out his arms to Shelly.

Shelly looked at the tall black man in the white doctor's smock. His smile was wide and she thought she saw a twinkle in his eyes. Shelly's mom tightened her hold as if she was not sure whether to hand Shelly over to the stranger.

"So you're not feeling too well, little one?" Dr. Wall asked Shelly. She buried her face into her mother's chest.

He asked Shelly's mom, "May I take her?"

Her mother started to hand her to the doctor, but Shelly tightened her grip. "No!"

"She's just scared, that's all," her mom said. "Let the nice doctor take you, okay, Shelly? He wants to help us."

"I-I guess." When Shelly raised her head again, she saw tears on her mother's cheek.

Dr. Wall took Shelly in his arms. She didn't resist but kept her eyes on her mother. The smell and strangeness of the place, her mother's tears, the big man who insisted on holding her frightened her all the more.

"Well, then, let's see if we can make you better, young lady." He carried her down the hall. Her mom tried to keep pace alongside.

"I'm new to this area," said Dr. Wall. "Something made me come to this hospital. It's a special place. I like its mission. I like what they do. And it's not just kids with cancer, we work with all children."

"We were told this was the best place to go. We're hoping you can do something for Shelly."

Dr. Wall arrived at the nurses' station cradling Shelly.

"I have a young lady who needs assistance here. Could we have a check-up for Miss Shelly, please?" He smiled and lowered Shelly into a gleaming silver wheelchair that smelled like plastic. "I'll leave you here with these fine folks, but don't get too comfortable, because I want you running out of here soon. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," Shelly fidgeted in the wheelchair, trying to find a comfortable position. A pulse of pain ratcheted through her chest. She winced and sighed, wondering what was going to happen next. Suddenly, she felt faint. Maybe she was about to throw up.

"Thank you," her mom said as the doctor left down an opposite hallway. She caressed Shelly's sweat-dampened hair.

A nurse leaned over the counter. "Shelly, I'm Doris Powers. Do you have a last name, Shelly?"

"Yes. White."

"Hi, I'm Carol White, Shelly's mother."

"Nice to meet you. Now, what seems to be the problem?"

"Well, Shelly was a normal little girl,," Carol said. "Then, one day in the backyard, she became too weak to play with her friends. Over the next few days, her skin began to change color, and I had no idea what to do. I'm afraid our insurance isn't very good."

"Don't worry about the money, Mrs. White. Let's just take care of Shelly. Sound good?"

Carol's eyes welled up with tears. She turned away from the counter, crouched down, and kissed Shelly on the forehead. Shelly looked up at her mother.

"Don't cry, Mom. It'll be okay."

Shelly hoped that was true.

Find out more about this series at:
www.catchingamiracle.com



Available at
amazon



“Mark J. Spinicelli breathlessly entertains his readers with his world building, F.B.I. chases and dramatic medical secrets. Spinicelli challenges readers to imagine what a world of cures, and not just treatments, would look like.”

