

THE
MARIA
SERIES

MARIA'S *many* COOKIES



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

• BRECKYN WOOD •





When Maria woke up, the sky looked as sunny and happy as she felt. She sang as she gathered the eggs, tapped her toes as she milked the goats, and did a little dance as she swept the floors. She tried to peek in the kitchen to watch Mama and Papa make her birthday

dinner, but they shooed her away.

“Skip to the market for me, my girl, and get some peppers,” Papa told her, slipping a few coins into her hand. “Our garden has run out.”

“This is too much for just peppers, Papa,” said Maria, looking at the coins.

He gave her a wink. “Get yourself a birthday treat too.”

Maria had many friends in the market from her time

selling flowers. Mr. Morgan, the boot maker, smiled as Maria walked past, and Mrs. Lopez called “Hello!” over her clay pots.



Mrs. Brogan, the dressmaker who had helped Maria sell her flowers, waved Maria over to her stall. “Good day, Maria,” said the kind old woman, giving Maria a kiss on the cheek.



“What brings you to the market today?”

“Good day, Mrs. Brogan,” Maria replied, staring at the pretty dresses hanging up in the stall. She reached out to touch a row of pink roses on the hem of one dress. “My papa needs peppers.”



“Well, you tell your papa I say hello, and your mama too,” said Mrs. Brogan.

Maria smiled, pulling her eyes away from the colorful dresses. “I will. Thank you.”

After buying five peppers, Maria still had two small coins left to buy a birthday treat. She jingled them in her hand as she looked around at the market stalls. Fruit, cakes, candy—what did she want? As she walked toward the bunches of cool

purple grapes, Maria saw something moving out of the corner of her eye.

Poking out of an alley was a face, a dirty and



hungry-looking face. It belonged to a boy she had never seen before, and he was staring at the grapes with a wild look in his eyes.

He watched her as she picked a bunch, but when she turned to walk toward him, he was gone.

The alley was dark and a bit scary, but Maria took a few brave steps in, calling “Hello? Hello?” When nothing happened, she added, “I have grapes!”

The face peeked out from
behind a wall.



Maria tried to smile. This boy looked like he needed a smile almost as much as he needed the grapes. “Here,” she said, holding them out to him.

Quick as a flash, the boy snatched the grapes and ran back to his hiding place. Maria heard loud crunching and slurping sounds. She sighed. “You’re welcome!” she called.

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Maria's story begins and ends with cookies—birthday cookies! For her birthday Maria gets a purse, not the dress she wanted! She quickly decides to earn money to buy one. While at the market, she meets Carlos, a hungry boy with no family. Will Maria help Carlos, or will she save her coins for herself? One day three items go missing from the market. Were they stolen? Follow Maria as she finds ways to give and forgive.



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