



## Dad Spelled Backward: A Journey Through the Maze of Love, Marriage, and Adoption

**M. S. King**

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M. S. King's *Dad Spelled Backward* chronicles his and his wife's frustrating yet fulfilling quest to have a baby.

King, a New York dentist and comedian, was in his fifties when he met his wife, Gaby. Though, when King was younger, his Jewish mother had hoped that he would marry a woman of the same faith, he notes that the passage of time had rendered his mother happy that he had just found a "mammal" to marry. She was delighted by his intelligent, beautiful French bride.

Though King was undecided about having children, Gaby was determined to get pregnant. The couple's initial conception attempts, or what King calls "Fertility Hell," involved familiar procedures, like filling sperm specimen cups and obsessive tracking of Gaby's ovulation cycles. King also tried natural "virility enhancers," such as yohimbe and ginseng; he ended up in the hospital when their combined effect began to feel like a heart attack. Later, a Chinese acupuncturist advised King to "drink more water" for his weak kidneys, while positioning needles throughout his body to stimulate potency and "chi."

After further fertility tests and unsuccessful artificial insemination, King and Gaby decided to adopt. *Dad Spelled Backward* recounts the arduous process that followed, including posting adoption advertisements, interviewing respondents, and their feelings of intense disappointment after a birth mother opted to keep her baby. The couple's costs ran high: there were attorney and administrative fees, as well as plane fares to meet with prospective candidates. There was also the psychological toll of prolonged expectation.

*Dad Spelled Backward* is a heartfelt, sage, and funny look at the worthwhile gauntlet of domestic adoption. It's also a compelling portrait of a marriage, showing how the bond between King and his wife grew stronger and more resilient as they navigated their unique path to parenthood.

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