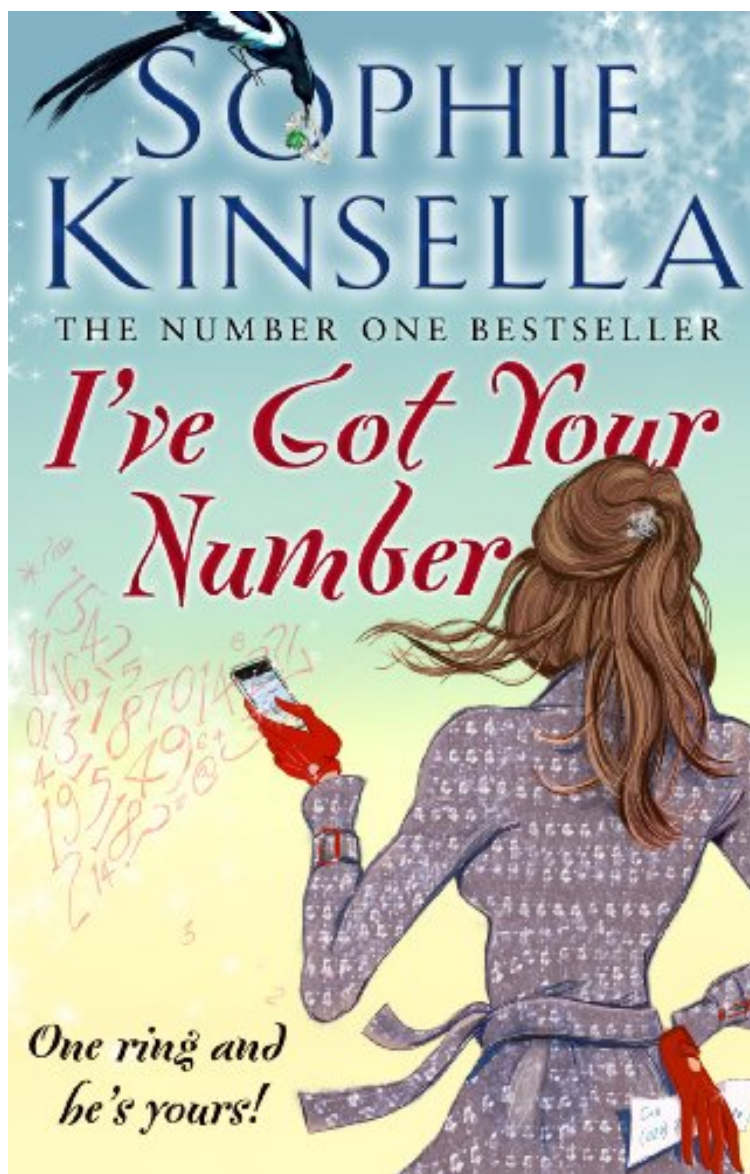


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# I've Got Your Number



*Par Sophie Kinsella*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurI've lost it. :( The only thing in the world I wasn't supposed to lose. My engagement ring. It's been in Magnus's family for three generations. And now, the very same day his parents are coming, I've lost it. The very same day. Do not hyperventilate, Poppy. Stay positive!! :)A couple of glasses of bubbly with the girls at a charity do and Poppy's life has gone into meltdown. Not only has she lost her engagement ring, but in the panic that followed, she's lost her phone too. As she paces shakily round the hotel foyer she spots an abandoned phone in a bin. Finders keepers! Now she can leave a number with the hotel staff. It was meant to be!Except the phone's owner, businessman Sam Roxton, doesn't agree. He wants his phone back, and doesn't appreciate Poppy reading all his messages and wading into his personal life. As Poppy juggles

wedding preparations, phone messages and hiding her left hand from Magnus and his parents, can things get any more tangled? Extrait CHAPTER 1 Perspective. I need to get perspective. Its not an earthquake or a crazed gunman or a nuclear meltdown, is it? On the scale of disasters, this is not huge. Not huge. One day I expect Ill look back at this moment and laugh and think, Ha-ha, how silly I was to worry Stop, Poppy. Dont even try. Im not laughing in fact, I feel sick. Im walking blindly around the hotel ballroom, my heart thudding, looking fruitlessly on the patterned blue carpet, behind gilt chairs, under discarded paper napkins, in places where it couldnt possibly be. Ive lost it. The only thing in the world I wasnt supposed to lose. My engagement ring. To say this is a special ring is an understatement. Its been in Magnuss family for three generations. Its this stunning emerald with two diamonds, and Magnus had to get it out of a special bank vault before he proposed. Ive worn it safely every day for three whole months, religiously putting it on a special china tray at night, feeling for it on my finger every thirty seconds? .? .? .? and now, the very day his parents are coming back from the States, Ive lost it. The very same day. Professors Antony Tavish and Wanda Brook-Tavish are, at this precise moment, flying back from six months sabbatical in Chicago. I can picture them now, eating honey-roasted peanuts and reading academic papers on their his n hers Kindles. I honestly dont know which of them is more intimidating. Him. Hes so sarcastic. No, her. With all that frizzy hair and always asking you questions about your views on feminism. OK, theyre both bloody scary. And theyre landing in about an hour, and of course theyll want to see the ring. No. Do not hyperventilate, Poppy. Stay positive. I just need to look at this from a different angle. Like? .? .? .? what would Poirot do? Poirot wouldnt flap around in panic. Hed stay calm and use his little gray cells and recall some tiny, vital detail which would be the clue to everything. I squeeze my eyes tight. Little gray cells. Come on. Do your best. Thing is, Im not sure Poirot had three glasses of pink champagne and a mojito before he solved the Murder on the Orient Express. Miss? A gray-haired cleaning lady is trying to get round me with a Hoover, and I gasp in horror. Theyre Hoovering the ballroom already? What if they suck it up? Excuse me. I grab her blue nylon shoulder. Could you just give me five more minutes to search before you start Hoovering? Still looking for your ring? She shakes her head doubtfully, then brightens. I expect youll find it safe at home. Its probably been there all the time! Maybe. I force myself to nod politely, although I feel like screaming, Im not that stupid! I spot another cleaner, on the other side of the ballroom, clearing cupcake crumbs and crumpled paper napkins into a black plastic bin bag. She isnt concentrating at all. Wasnt she listening to me? Excuse me! My voice shrills out as I sprint across to her. You are looking out for my ring, arent you? No sign of it so far, love. The woman sweeps another load of detritus off the table into the bin bag without giving it a second glance. Careful! I grab for the napkins and pull them out again, feeling each one carefully for a hard lump, not caring that Im getting buttercream icing all over my hands. Dear, Im trying to clear up. The cleaner grabs the napkins out of my hands. Look at the mess youre making! I know, I know. Im sorry. I scramble for the cupcake cases I dropped on the floor. But you dont understand. If I dont find this ring, Im dead. I want to grab the bin bag and do a forensics check of the contents with tweezers. I want to put plastic tape round the whole room and declare it a crime scene. It has to be here, it has to be. Unless someones still got it. Thats the only other possibility that Im clinging to. One of my friends is still wearing it and somehow hasnt noticed. Perhaps its slipped into a handbag? .? .? .? maybe its fallen into a pocket? .? .? .? its stuck on the threads of a jumper? .? .? .? The possibilities in my head are getting more and more far-fetched, but I cant give up on them. Have you tried the ladies room? The woman moves to get past me. Of course Ive tried the ladies room. I checked every single cubicle, on my hands and knees. And then all the basins. Twice. And then I tried to persuade the concierge to close it and have all the sink pipes investigated, but he refused. He said it would be different if I knew it had been lost there for certain, and he was sure the police would agree with him, and could I please step aside from the desk as there were people waiting? Police. Bah. I thought theyd come roaring round in their squad cars as soon as I called, not just tell me to come down to the police station and file a report. I dont have time to file a report! Ive got to find my ring! I hurry back to the circular table we were sitting at this afternoon and crawl underneath, patting the carpet yet again. How could I have let this happen? How could I have been so stupid? It was my old school friend Natashas idea to get tickets for the Marie Curie Champagne Tea. She couldnt come to my official hen spa weekend, so this was a kind of substitute. There were eight of us at the table, all merrily swigging champagne and stuffing down cupcakes, and it was right before the raffle started that someone said, Come on, Poppy, lets have a go with your ring. I cant even remember who that was. Annalise, maybe? Annalise was at university with me, and now we work together at First Fit Physio, with Ruby, who was also in our physio course. Ruby was at the tea, too, but Im not sure she tried on the ring. Or did she? I cant believe how rubbish I am at this. How can I do a Poirot if I

cant even remember the basics? The truth is, everyone seemed to be trying on the ring: Natasha and Clare and Emily (old school friends up from Taunton), Lucinda (my wedding planner, whos kind of become a friend) and her assistant, Clemency, and Ruby and Annalise (not only college friends and colleagues but my two best friends. Theyre going to be my bridesmaids too).Ill admit it: I was basking in all the admiration. I still cant believe something so grand and beautiful belongs to me. The fact is, I still cant believe any of it. Im engaged! Me, Poppy Wyatt. To a tall, handsome university lecturer whos written a book and even been on the TV. Only six months ago, my love life was a disaster zone. Id had no significant action for a year and was reluctantly deciding I should give that match.com guy with the bad breath a second chance and now my weddings only ten days away! I wake up every morning and look at Magnuss smooth, freckled, sleeping back and think, My fianc, Dr. Magnus Tavish, Fellow of Kings College London,<sup>1</sup> and feel a tiny tweak of disbelief. And then I swivel round and look at the ring, gleaming expensively on my nightstand, and feel another tweak of disbelief. What will Magnus say? My stomach clenches and I swallow hard. No. Dont think about that. Come on, little gray cells. Get with it. I remember that Clare wore the ring for a long time. She really didnt want to take it off. Then Natasha started tugging at it, saying, My turn, my turn! And I remember calling out, Careful! I mean, its not like I was irresponsible. I was carefully watching the ring as it was passed round the table. But then my attention was split, because they started calling out the raffle numbers and the prizes were fantastic. A week in an Italian villa, and a top salon haircut, and a Harvey Nichols voucher??.?.? The ballroom was buzzing, with people pulling out tickets and numbers being called from the platform and women jumping up and shouting, Me! And this is the moment where I went wrong. This is the gut-churning, if-only instant. If I could go back in time, thats the moment I would march up to myself and say severely, Poppy, priorities. But you dont realize, do you? The moment happens, and you make your crucial mistake, and then its gone and the chance to do anything about it is blown away. So what happened was, Clare won Wimbledon tickets in the raffle. I love Clare to bits, but shes always been a tad feeble. She didnt stand up and yell, Me! Woohoo! at top volume, she just raised her hand a few inches. Even those of us at her table didnt realize shed won. As it dawned on me that Clare was waving a raffle ticket in the air, the presenter on the platform said, I think well draw again, if theres no winner.?.?.? Shout! I poked Clare and waved my own hand wildly. Here! The winners over here! And the new number is??.?.? 4403. To my disbelief, some dark-haired girl on the other side of the room started whooping and brandishing a ticket. She didnt win! I exclaimed indignantly. You won. It doesnt matter. Clare was shrinking back. Of course it matters! I cried out before I could stop myself, and everyone at the table started laughing. Go, Poppy! called out Natasha. Go, White Knightess! Sort it out! Go, Knightie! This is an old joke. Just because there was this one incident at school, where I started a petition to save the hamsters, everyone began to call me the White Knightess. Or Knightie, for short. My so-called catchphrase is apparently Of course it matters!<sup>2</sup> Anyway. Suffice it to say that within two minutes I was up on the stage with the dark-haired girl, arguing with the presenter about how my friends ticket was more valid than hers. I know now that I never should have left the table. I never should have left the ring, even for a second. I can see how stupid that was. But, in my defense, I didnt know the fire alarm was going to go off, did I? It was so surreal. One minute, everyone was sitting down at a jolly champagne tea. The next minute, a siren was blaring through the air and everyone was on their feet, heading for the exits in pandemonium. I could see Annalise, Ruby, and all the others grabbing their bags and making their way to the back. A man in a suit came onto the stage and started ushering me, the dark-haired girl, and the presenter toward a side door and wouldnt let us go the other way. Your safety is our priority, he kept saying.<sup>3</sup> Even then, its not as if I was worried. I didnt think the ring would have gone. I assumed one of my friends had it safe and Id meet up with everyone outside and get it back. Outside, of course, it was mayhem. As well as our tea, there was some big business conference happening at the hotel, and all the delegates were spilling out of different doors into the road. Hotel staff were trying to make announcements into loudspeakers, and cars were beeping, and it took me ages just to find Natasha and Emily in the mle. Have you got my ring? I demanded at once, trying not to sound accusatory. Whos got it? Both of them looked blank. Dunno. Natasha shrugged. Didnt Annalise have it? So then I plunged into the throng to find Annalise, but she didnt have it; she thought Clare had it. And Clare thought Clemency had it. And Clemency thought Ruby might have had it, but hadnt she gone already? The thing about panic is, it creeps up on you. One minute youre still quite calm, still telling yourself, Dont be ridiculous. Of course it cant be lost. The next, the Marie Curie staff are announcing that the event will be curtailed early due to unforeseen circumstances and are handing out goody bags. And all your friends have disappeared to catch the tube. And your finger is still bare. And a voice inside your head is screeching, Oh my God! I knew this would happen!

Nobody should ever have entrusted me with an antique ring! Big mistake! Big mistake! And that's how you find yourself under a table an hour later, groping around a grotty hotel carpet, praying desperately for a miracle. (Even though your fiancé's father has written a whole bestselling book on how miracles don't exist and it's all superstition and even saying OMG is the sign of a weak mind.)<sup>4</sup> Suddenly I realize my phone is flashing and grab it with trembling fingers. Three messages have come in, and I scroll through them in hope. Found it yet? Annalise xxSorry, babe, haven't seen it. Don't worry, I won't breathe a word to Magnus. NxxxHi Pops! God, how awful, to lose your ring! Actually I thought I saw it??.?.?(incoming text)I stare at my phone, galvanized. Clare thought she saw it? Where?I crawl out from under the table and wave my phone around, but the rest of the text resolutely refuses to come through. The signal in here is rubbish. How can this call itself a five-star hotel? I'll have to go outside.Hi! I approach the gray-haired cleaner, raising my voice above the Hoovers roar. I'm popping out to check a text. But if you do find the ring, call meI've given you my mobile number. I'll just be on the street.Right you are, dear, says the cleaner patiently.I hurry through the lobby, dodging groups of conference delegates, slowing slightly as I pass the concierges desk.Any sign ofNothing handed in yet, madam.The air outside is balmy, with a hint of summer, even though it's only mid-April. I hope the weather will still be like this in ten days time, because my wedding dress is backless and I'm counting on a fine day.<sup>11</sup>His specialism is Cultural Symbolism. I speed-read his book, *The Philosophy of Symbolism*, after our second date and then tried to pretend I'd read it ages ago, coincidentally, for pleasure. (Which, to be fair, he didn't believe for a minute.) Anyway, the point is, I read it. And what impressed me most was: There were so many footnotes. I've totally got into them. Aren't they handy? You just bung them in whenever you want and instantly look clever.Magnus says footnotes are for things which aren't your main concern but nevertheless hold some interest for you. So. This is my footnote about footnotes.<sup>2</sup>Which, actually, I never say. Just like Humphrey Bogart never said, Play it again, Sam. It's an urban myth.<sup>3</sup>Of course, the hotel wasn't on fire. The system had short-circuited. I found that out afterward, not that it was any consolation.<sup>4</sup>Did Poirot ever say oh my God? I bet he did. Or sacrebleu! which comes to the same thing. And does this not disprove Antony's theory, since Poirot's gray cells are clearly stronger than anyone else's? I might point this out to Antony one day. When I'm feeling brave. (Which, if I've lost the ring, will be never, obviously.)-----  
Revue de presse'I almost cried with laughter' --The Daily Mail'Witty and hilarious' --Cosmopolitan'A laugh-a-minute read' --Glamour