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It is an unseasonably cool October evening in the Harrison household. The twins, Jacquie and Jillian are getting ready for bed with their Mom supervising them. They complained that they were big girls now and knew how to get ready for bed. Nevertheless Christine, their mother checked on them as she had for years now. It was true they were growing up. The fraternal twins were now seven years old now and were in the second grade of elementary school. When they were born and turned out fraternal rather than identical twins, their mom and dad both were very relieved. At least they didn't have any identity problems to complicate bringing up the girls.

Christine watched them as they put on their pajamas. This was the first time this year that they used the ones that had feet in them. The flu and cold season was coming on and the way the girls kicked the covers off Mom didn't want them getting chilled and catching something.

She watched them brush their teeth. She had made sure that they understood that this was the best way to avoid cavities. When she mentioned cavities, she occasionally told them about the uncomfortable process of getting cavities filled. As a result the girls were a little afraid of the dentist and this always created problems when it was time for their check-ups.

When they completed their toilette, she sat down in their comfortable chair and they both came and climbed up in her lap. This was normally story reading time. Tonight it was their Dad's turn to read them a story.

Christine asked the girls, "What story is your dad going to read to you tonight?"

Jillian said, "Tonight Daddy is going to read to us 'The

# The Magical Mirror

by James R. Latham

Sorcerer's apprentice.' It's all about magic but Mrs. Thompson, our teacher, says that there's no such thing as magic.”

“You don't believe in magic?”

“No, our teacher says it's just superstition. Whatever that is. Do you believe in magic Mommy?”, said Jacquie.

“Well girls actually I do. Do you want to hear a story which made me believe in magic?”

The twins both piped up, “Yes, yes Mommy. Tell us. Please, Please.”

“Well this is a story about a magic mirror and a little girl.”

The girls listened intently as their Mom started.

*“Once upon a time there was a little girl. Let's call her Patricia.”*

*One bright and sunny Saturday morning after Patricia had turned ten years old, she was awakened very early by her Mother. Her Mom said, “Come on sleepy head, time to get up – we're going to visit your Grandma this weekend.” Patricia was so excited that she got up, got dressed and was the first one in the kitchen where the family normally had breakfast. By the time her parents and brother came downstairs, she had already set the table. Her mother said to her dad, “My, my hasn't our little girl been busy. We should go to Grandma's every weekend.”*

*The family rapidly fixed breakfast, ate, cleaned the dishes, packed a few clothes and set out on the two-hour trip to Grandma's house.*

*That afternoon Patricia's family had occupied themselves with their own activities. Dad was fishing in the farm pond, Mom was taking a nap and her brother was at the farm across the road playing with his friends.*

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*It was then that Patrica went up to her Grandma's room. She really loved that room. It was furnished in a very feminine way. Patricia took up Grandma's lipstick, went to the big full length mirror and put it on just like she had seen her mother do. She actually did a very creditable job of it.*

*Just then Grandma came in. Patricia got a very guilty look on her face and said to her Grandma, "I'm sorry I took your lipstick Grandma. Please don't tell Mama."*

*Her Grandma said, "Don't worry about it dear. The only reason that mothers don't like their daughters putting on lipstick is because it means that they are growing up and will soon be gone. Mothers hate the thought that their little girl will eventually leave them. Did you look at yourself in my magical mirror?"*

*Yes Grandma, I did. I didn't know that it was magical. What do you mean?*

*The mirror was very large and the frame was hand carved with angels and intricate scroll-work. It was stained black and the frame itself was as shiny as the mirror. The surface of the mirror was very old and just a wee bit cloudy.*

*"Well Patricia when I look into my mirror I look younger than I actually am and that's what I want. If you look into the mirror you'll look older that you are and that's what you want. I know that you can't wait to grow up and look older at least I did when I was your age."*

*Patricia stood in front of the mirror and indeed she did look older. Her black hair and grey eyes were in startling contrast with each other. When her Grandma stood behind her she saw that Grandma looked very much younger.*

*"Patricia would you like to have my mirror when I pass on?"*

*"Yes Grandma but please don't pass on for a very, very long time."*

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*“Well it has to happen sometime and I'd like to give you something personal of mine that I value very much.”*

*The rest of the trip was uneventful but the family enjoyed it very much and came home refreshed and relaxed and ready to take on the world.*

*It was two years later when the inevitable happened and Grandma passed away. She had often talked about joining Grandpa in Heaven and now she had.*

*She had made such a big thing of willing her “magical” mirror to Patricia that the family felt obligated to go, collect the mirror and install it in Patricia's room.*

*One day, shortly after getting the mirror, Patricia was looking into its cloudy surface. She was amazed to see an image looking back at her. It was a young boy about her age. She shook her head in disbelief and turned away from the mirror. Just then her mother called her to wash up and come down for dinner. She didn't think anything more about it until after dinner when she took another look. This time there was nothing in the mirror.*

*The next day when she got home from school in the afternoon she went to the mirror and looked into it. There was that same image that she had seen the previous day. The boy had a very pleasant face with dark red hair and the most mysterious blueish green eyes. They looked aqua in color. He was smiling at her and she couldn't help but smile back. She waved to him and curiously he waved back.*

*For the next few days after school she went to the mirror, saw the boy and waved to him. He waved back. She let down her long hair and showed him her barrette. He then reached into his pocket and showed her his pocket knife. It was then she reached out to touch him. Her hand went straight through the mirror and she ended up with her hand on his hair. He touched*

*her hand and she could feel him. She then summoned up her courage and lifted up one foot and stuck it through the mirror. She then stepped forward and found that she had stepped through the mirror into a strange new place. The boy was still standing in front of her. He stepped back to give her some room. Amazingly he spoke to her.*

*“Hi, I’m called Rusty. What are you called?”*

*“I’m Patricia.”*

*“Well, I think I’ll call you Pookie. What took you so long to come through the mirror?”*

*“I was frightened. What is this place?”*

*“We call it Eden. Take a look around.”*

*She looked around and saw what looked like a park with trees and lush grass and a very blue sky above. In the distance she saw a large lake with sandy beaches and in another direction what looked like people. She then asked, “Who are those people?”*

*He said, “Those are just children and some old people who are trapped in here with me.”*

*“Trapped,” she said, “What do you mean trapped?”*

*“Well, we did come in by way of the mirror but now we can’t get out. I’ve talked to the old ones and they say that once a person stays in Eden past nightfall that person will be stuck here forever.”*

*“You have plenty of time before nightfall. Would you like to play with the other children?”*

*“Yes, let’s go meet them.”*

*They met the other children and then he took her to the old people where he formally introduced her as Pookie. They played tag, hide and go seek and skip rope with the other children. He*

*even took her out on the lake with one of the rowboats that were there. By the time they had finished playing she knew all the children's names and most of the old peoples as well. They sat on the little hillside and then talked.*

*She said, "Why are there only children and old people here in Eden?"*

*He explained, "because those are the only people who believe in magic."*

*"Oh, my gosh," said Patricia, "I should leave because my mother will be very upset when she doesn't see me for such a long time."*

*He said, "Don't worry about that. In Eden time seems to go on as normal but on the outside world it stands still. When you leave Eden, it will be the same time in the outside world as it was when you entered."*

*My goodness, "How old are you?"*

*"I don't know, we have no clocks or calendars here."*

*We got up and hurried to the mirror or to the back of the mirror because it was just a shiny black rectangle that seemed to support itself in the air.*

*Before she stepped through the black rectangle Rusty said, "I really enjoyed playing with you. Will you come again to see me? I wish I could go with you but I can't."*

*Patricia said, "I'll see you tomorrow" and then stepped through into her bedroom. She had a lot to think about that night as she went over the events of the day in Eden.*

*For the next few days Patricia visited Eden every afternoon. She even took a watch with her but the entire time she was in Eden the hands never moved. The other children had taken to teasing the two, calling them boyfriend and girlfriend. Surprisingly, neither of them objected to being called that.*

*Eden even had a children's playground with swings, slides, skip ropes, and teeter totters. The ground around the play was a mixture of sand and sawdust so that if a child fell, they would not get hurt. Patrica loved the playground and did all the playthings there. She felt she was a little old for such activities still she loved it.*

*One day when the pair were resting on the hillside, Patricia asked about getting hurt. She said, "The children look so healthy – doesn't any get sick or hurt here in Eden?"*

*Rusty replied, "No, I have never seen anyone get sick and if someone falls and gets hurt, the pain goes away in a few minutes and everything is back to normal."*

*Even though she was having a good time, she thought of her Mom and Dad. She sort of missed them. Then she asked him, "Don't you miss your Mom and Dad?"*

*He said, "I miss them very much. It's perfect in Eden except that they aren't here. That's why I would like to leave this place. I've felt better since you came to see me but I still miss them."*

*Patricia thought about what he had said.*

*The one day it happened. Patricia was visiting her friend and they were talking to each other and to the other children. Even some old people were there talking to us and to each other. Everyone lost track of time. All of a sudden the light in the sky turned grey. It slowly went from grey to black. It then lightened as a dim moon appeared in the sky.*

*He groaned, looked at Patricia and said, "Now we've done it. Nightfall just happened and all of us are stuck here in Eden."*

*Patricia just sat and cried.*

*She spent the next few days getting used to the fact that this would be her home forever. Her days spending time with her boy friend were wonderful but a small part of her wanted to see her*

*Mother and Father. Time passed slowly but it did pass.*

*One day in Eden, Patricia was talking with Snow Bird, the oldest of the old people. Patricia said, "it seems strange that anyone can enter Eden but no-one can leave if they stay past nightfall."*

*Snow Bird looked around like she was afraid of being overheard and when she saw that they were alone said, "There is one way to leave Eden after being stuck here."*

*Patricia then asked Snow Bird, "If you know how to get out, then why have you never left this place? I would like to leave – will you tell me how to do it?"*

*"Yes, I will answer your questions. First off, I haven't left Eden because I don't want to. Here I am happy and content and in the outside world I would just be an old woman who would eventually die. As far as your second question, In order to leave Eden it will take a lot of force. Love is the greatest force in the universe. You must find someone here whom you love so much that you truly wish to spend the rest of your life with them. Then hand in hand the two of you can force your way through the mirror. Does that answer your questions my dear?"*

*Patricia told her yes she had answered her questions. Then she thanked Snow Bird and told her that she loved her. That made Snow bird very happy. She then went to where her special friend was sitting on the hillside. Without any preliminaries she asked him, "Do you love me?"*

*He answered, "I have always loved you. I want to be with you always."*

*"Would you like to leave Eden with me so that we can spend the rest of our lives together?"*

*"Yes, I would," he said.*

*"Then come with me."*

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*Hand in hand, Patricia led him to the mirror. She held his hand tight and said, "Hold my hand very tightly and then let's walk through the mirror."*

*They did and when they came through the mirror into her bedroom she turned and kissed Rusty with all the love in her body. When he returned her kiss they started on their trip through life.*

Christine then said to the twins, "Well that is the end of the story of the magical mirror. What did you think?"

Jacque said, "I liked the story clear up to the end but then . . ."

"Jill, what did you think?"

"The same as Jack but . . ."

"But what you two?"

I had to laugh as they answered as one, "The yucky part was that she kissed a boy . . ."

They heard footsteps coming down the hallway. The steps stopped outside of the girl's door. The girls knew that it was Daddy and he was getting a book from the bookshelf outside their door. This was the bookshelf that held all the books that he and mom were going to read to them. They also had another bookshelf inside their room. It held all the books that had already been read to them. Their Mom and Dad encouraged them to read those books by themselves so that they could enjoy the stories once again. Also it would improve their reading skills.

The door opened and Daddy come in with a book under his arm. He said, "Well, Jack and Jill, are you girls ready to hear an exciting story?"

"Mommy already told us a story about magic and it was

really exciting.”

“Well since you two have already heard a story, I guess we'll save this one for another night.”

“Why don't you read it to us anyway?”

“No, it's getting late and you girls have to get some sleep. Tomorrow is coming and it'll be here soon. Mom and I'll listen to your prayers and then you can Jump in bed, Okay?”

“Okay daddy.”

In unison the girls knelt by the side of their beds, clasped their hands and said, “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

“That was very good girls, Good Night now. Are you coming Pookie?”

Christine said, “As soon as I tuck the girls in, Rusty.”

When their Dad had left their room and closed the door, Jillian said to her Mom, “Daddy has dark red hair and Blue green eyes doesn't he Mommy?”

“Yes he does.”

Jacque piped in, “You have black hair and grey eyes, don't you Mommy?”

“Why yes, Jack. Why do you ask?”

“Nothing Mommy, we were just checking.”

The end.