

## MY MIRROR MAKES MAGIC

In a time before hers, in a small room lit by candle, her Great-Grandmother, Grace, sat on a ruffled featherbed holding her most prized possession. The mirror was framed in wood with a handle made for Grace's hand alone. It had a secret. Only she knew it. There was a twinkle, a shine, a spark that only lasted for a few seconds. Staring at it without end, waiting for something to happen, became a daily ritual. Grace saw the sparkle many times but only from the brightest moonlight.

The cherished mirror became too small for her to use. It was passed on to her daughter, Grandma Elizabeth, on her seventh birthday. In order to see her new hair ribbon, Elizabeth turned away from her dressing table mirror. She held the mirror high, looking at the reflection of the shining ribbon. The evening was marked with a bright moon. As she turned her back, the handheld mirror twinkled brightly, as if it had something to say. It startled her, but curiosity held her tight. She held up the mirror one more time to see the twinkling shimmer. When she asked her mother about the mirror, her mother just smiled. And so the mirror with the mysterious sparkle was passed to each daughter, through time.

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Once upon a time there was a little girl. She had dark hair and green eyes. When Kyla smiled, all was well. Kyla was the light of her parents' eyes. Skateboarding, her second most favorite thing to do, was time taken away from her most favorite hobby. Drawing.

The car accident two years ago had made Kyla apprehensive, causing her to fear the color red. The van that smashed into the driver's side of her mother's car was cherry red. It had run a red light. Kyla was in the back seat on the driver's side and saw the van coming. She found herself filled with so much fear she couldn't scream to warn her mother.

Ever since then, Kyla had not been fond of red. She let her mother know it every time her mom tried to buy her something red. Once, the fear her mother saw in those green eyes when she purchased a red summer dress, told her instantly to return it to the store. What she didn't see was the shame Kyla felt, along with the fear. She was too afraid to tell her mom how ashamed she was for not being brave enough to warn her.

So, instead she drew. Kyla loved to draw. She loved to draw a figure of an imaginary friend. Kyla named her imaginary friend Lily. As always, Lily was perfect. Kyla wished her imaginary friend could become real. She needed someone who saw her imagination the way she did. Kyla's mom was great, but she never took the little girl's drawings very seriously. "Everyone needs a hobby," she would say.

Kyla drew her imaginary friend being very brave, with a proud look on her face, as if to say, "I can do anything." She drew the picture so much that sometimes in school it took up much of her time. The kids in her class were done being politely inquisitive about the drawings, now they just made fun, especially when she missed recess. Her friends really needed a fourth in foursquare.

After working on her drawings one weekend, Kyla decided Monday morning to stuff her backpack with them. A weak excuse got her the chance to stay in for recess. She checked to see if she was alone in the classroom. She started talking to the drawing.

Out on the playground, the class bully had just made a big mistake. He was sent back to the classroom to sit out the rest of recess. He stopped at the door of the classroom.

"I'll draw you some new outfits when I get home. My magazines are arriving today," she was explaining to the drawing. The class bully overheard this and started laughing. Out loud. Really loud.

He sat in the seat next to the door of the classroom, waiting for everyone to return. The minute the first student appeared, he told his story. Of course, the story grew and of course you know what happened next. All the kids were laughing and pointing. Some even tried to take the drawings away, to make more fun of Kyla. She didn't cry though. She didn't get angry either. She just sat very still until it was over and class was in session again.

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Kyla's dad had come home with the news about three months ago. They were moving. He got the promotion he was hoping for, but it was on the other side of the city and the date to move had been set. The date was the very next day after the last day of school! This did not make the Kyla happy. She only had a few friends, but she'd known them for what seemed a very long time. Her dad was sympathetic but very wrapped up in his job, so there was not much time for the family, and even more important, his daughter. When her mom tried talking to him about the time Kyla spent drawing, he dismissed it as her way of dealing with the move, and as part of the age the little girl was in. He said, "Unusual maybe, but not over-indulging."

Their new house was next door to a house full of children, seven to be exact. It seemed they were everywhere, all the time. One of the children was an annoying little boy about four years old. He attached himself to Kyla and she didn't care for it one bit. She tolerated it though, he was also attached to his older brother. She liked that a lot. Jordy was their paperboy and he was cu-oo-oote. He had sort of long, curly hair, blue eyes, and the softest voice. When he came to collect for the paper Kyla was always at the door waiting with the money, plus a tip she insisted to her mother that he needed to help support his large family. He had an interest in other girls though,

because he talked about strangers with girl's names all the time. She settled in her mind to be his friend next door.

One possession very precious to Kyla was a hand mirror. It had once belonged to her great-great-grandmother. It had traveled across the country with family she had never met, to places she had never seen. It didn't look very special, but it had lots of history. Every time the sidekick four-year-old from next door visited, he made his way to Kyla's bedroom. One of his favorite things to touch was the hand mirror. Kyla always grabbed it out of his hand and placed it gently back on her dresser.

One day, with sunshine peaking out over clouds that had just given way to a downpour of rain, the little boy stood with the mirror in hand and a very serious look on his face. He said, "There's something peculiar about this mirror!" The word 'peculiar' caught her attention, more than what he referred to. He rarely spoke. She asked him if he knew what the word 'peculiar' meant. He only said, "I saw the twinkle!" Once again, she had to remove the mirror from his sticky little hands and put it back in its rightful place.

"Twinkle? What twinkle?" she thought.

It rained again the next day. The paperboy wouldn't be collecting for the paper. In her room Kyla was drawing her imaginary friend, Lily. She started to have a conversation with the drawing and pretended to have it talk back. Looking for a new place to draw her friend, Kyla picked up the hand mirror. She looked carefully for something to draw with that would not leave a permanent mark on the mirror. She found her white liquid pen. Perfect! She started to draw Lily onto her hand mirror, talking all the while about how beautiful the drawing was with the mirrored background. It made the drawing shimmery, with a twinkle.

Without any thought, Kyla held the mirror up to the full-length mirror on the back of her bedroom door to show Lily what she looked like. For an instant the drawing giggled, swished her skirt and said, "MMMMMMMMM."

Kyla was startled but not scared. She decided that she'd had such an intense conversation with the drawing that it "seemed" to come alive. Her mom called from downstairs to come and eat dinner and she put the hand mirror back on her dresser.

Later that same night, the moon was full and the twinkle seemed to be very strong. Kyla tried it again. Instantly, Lily came to life this time and began to speak to her. "Hello, and thank you," Lily said. Frightened, Kyla put the mirror down with a jolt of her arm. She discovered that by putting the mirror down, it made Lily go away. She also heard very clearly, "Pleeeeeaaaase, noooooooo."

Kyla tried to tell her mother and father the next day, but they dismissed the whole thing as a dream. After all, it had been night-time hadn't it? Imagination always came out at night. "You did spend

the whole afternoon drawing in your room, didn't you?" they asked. She agreed they were probably right.

For good measure, and to prove to herself it was only a dream, Kyla held the hand mirror up to her full-length mirror one last time before she went to bed. The moon was still full. The curtains were open and the light from the moon caught the full-length mirror just as she held up the hand mirror.

The twinkle flashed! Lily came to life. She was standing on the floor between the full-length mirror and the little girl holding the hand mirror. She said to Kyla, "Oh thank you, thank you. I thought I would never come out." Kyla jumped back, turning the handheld mirror away from the full-length one. Lily disappeared.

But curiosity was strong inside Kyla. The little girl bravely faced the handheld mirror toward the full-length mirror once more. She watched in amazement as the drawn girl appeared in front of her. "Hello," said Kyla, her voice shaking a tiny bit.

"Hello, and thank you again," Lily squealed.

Kyla was puzzled about one thing—did she have to stand there holding the mirror all the time? Lily told Kyla to set the mirror on her chair, facing the full-length mirror. She did this, propping up the mirror on the back of the chair. Lily proceeded to move about the room. She was real all right. She kept touching things the little girl didn't want her to touch. Lily asked "How long can I stay around?" Kyla answered, "Not long, because I have to go to bed." Lily said, "Okay, but can I come back out in the morning? Kyla agreed.

Kyla woke before early light came into her room. She was uncomfortable about the drawing coming out of the mirror. She wanted to let her new imaginary friend out, but wasn't sure if it was just a dream, like the imagination night-time brings. She turned her alarm off. Creeping to her dresser she picked up the hand mirror, sighing with an unsteady breath. Like a shadow trailing someone, Kyla moved to her full-length mirror. The moonlight was just disappearing when she held the mirrors face to face. The white-iced sparkle appeared and so did the drawing.

With a wide smile and her mouth open, Lily suddenly felt a soft hand cover the sound that was about to emerge. Kyla gave Lily some clothes and said, "You will have to wait until everyone leaves the

house for the day." The drawing quietly agreed, "I promise."

Lily watched Kyla get into her mother's car and drive away. She was about to climb out the window when curiosity got the best of her. She walked boldly down the stairs and out the back door. The back door led to a place full of life, with colors in all shades: the swing, the sidewalk that led to the garage, and the red brick barbeque pit that looked like a grinning ogre. She smelled flowers, stared at the climbing tree, and hid the moment she heard the sound of something large in the driveway next door.

The paperboy came home from school at noon. He'd had a dentist appointment that ran late and his mom decided he could stay home for the rest of the day. After his usual burst through the back door, the slide down the hallway on the new throw rug, and the dropping of the book bag, Jordy went to his room. From his window he saw a figure standing near the fence between the two houses. He saw flowing hair move from the fence to the climbing tree and back. It was a girl, a beautiful one who seemed to float.

Remember, wish drawings are always perfect.

He opened his window, climbed out, and down his escape trellis. She heard the rustle and looked to see the most perfect image she had ever dreamed of. It was love at first sight for both. What was left of the afternoon went quickly. He had to go home before his mom caught him, and she had to figure out how to get back into the house.

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Part of Kyla's favorite drawing time was creating a friend for Lily. Lily was adventuresome but Kyla wanted more. She had an idea what to draw. She wanted the friend drawing to be special, to be able to do special things, like help Kyla get rid of her fears, one in particular. One thing for sure, the friend drawing wasn't afraid of red!!

Kyla had messed up drawing Lily's face once. She made one that appeared to have a kind face, but if you looked close you weren't sure. And, for some odd reason, right out of the clear blue, Kyla gave this new drawing red hair. She was daring new territory, placing her fears on paper.

She decided to give the friend drawing a pair of wings. They weren't sissy fairy wings or long feathery bird wings. They were the kind that could fold behind her back, as long as her body. They were made of the same color as the friend drawing so that they were part of her being, right down her back and into her legs. They were skin colored when attached to her body but became crimson red when they were completely spread out. Kyla liked wings; she wished she had them too. She wanted this new friend to be able to fly to places Kyla could only dream of.

She added the new friend drawing to the hand mirror so Lily could meet her. Kyla called her Jade. That evening, with a bright moon, Kyla held up the hand mirror to the full-length mirror to see what would happen.

At first, the mirror seemed almost black in color. Then a flash hit the room. Kyla almost dropped the mirror. In front of her stood the two figures. Both perfect, both smiling, both full of wonder. With Jade's very first step the crimson wings opened. All three of them fell down in surprise.

The little girl's mom yelled up the stairs. "What is going on? Are you alright?"

Kyla reassured her mother. "Everything is fine, I just lost my balance and dropped my books."

After two minutes of giggling, the three girls conspired to sneak out of Kyla's bedroom window. It was too far to the ground for Lily and Kyla so they used the tree, but Jade found an opportunity to spread her wings and fly to the ground. Kyla wanted to share something very special with her new friends, so she showed them the paperboy's window. As they peered in the window Kyla sighed, Lily had a lovesick tear in her eye, and Jade saw an opportunity.

The mirror's twinkle flashed in her eyes. Uncaught, they climbed back into Kyla's bedroom window where she returned the two to the mirror.

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When Kyla woke up the next morning she did a rather unusual thing. She erased Lily from the mirror and held it up so only Jade could appear. Kyla had a favor to ask.

Could Jade spread her flaming red wings and fly back to Kyla's old neighborhood? Could Jade hide and wait for Kyla to find her? Then, she asked for a special favor to be done at the exact time Kyla found Jade. She whispered her dream of conquering her fear.

In return, Jade asked if she could not return to the mirror for the rest of the day, and even late into the evening. Kyla agreed. Early Saturday, Kyla released Jade from the mirror. Jade took off in the direction pointed out by Kyla. She found a hiding place and waited for Kyla's arrival.

On her skateboard, Kyla headed for the old neighborhood in search of revisiting her fears, and Jade's hiding place. It took a while to get there but the little girl recognized familiar places. She got closer to the hiding location she had described for Jade, but slowly developed the most uncomfortable feeling. She continued on her path with anxiousness tugging at her to stop. Then she saw it; the corner where the accident had happened. She moved slowly forward, hoping she could conquer the strong desire to run. She put her head

down so no one could see her face.

Suddenly, one of Kyla's old friends shouted to her. She froze. Her old friend asked if she was all right. She said yes three times, with much hesitation. Her old friend looked at Kyla funny. Suddenly, the friend also remembered where they were standing. Out of nowhere Jade appeared. She didn't just announce herself being found, she spread her glittering crimson wings, flung her long, flowing red hair upward and created the strangest red glow Kyla had ever seen.

The old friend screamed so loud and long that Kyla saw flashes of the red van just before it hit. The favor was forgotten. Kyla ran, hard. Jade chased her but couldn't keep up with her. Even Jade got so frightened that she forgot she had wings and walked back home.

Jade seized her opportunity to stay out the rest of the day. She immediately went next door and introduced herself to the paperboy. They liked each other immediately and spent the rest of the day and evening together. By the time the evening came to a close Jade had made up her mind.

She wanted to stay. She confided this Kyla. Kyla already had her own attraction to Jordy. She also knew of Lily's strong feelings for the boy. She recognized the defiant look in Jade's eyes and quickly held up the mirror to trap her back in.

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