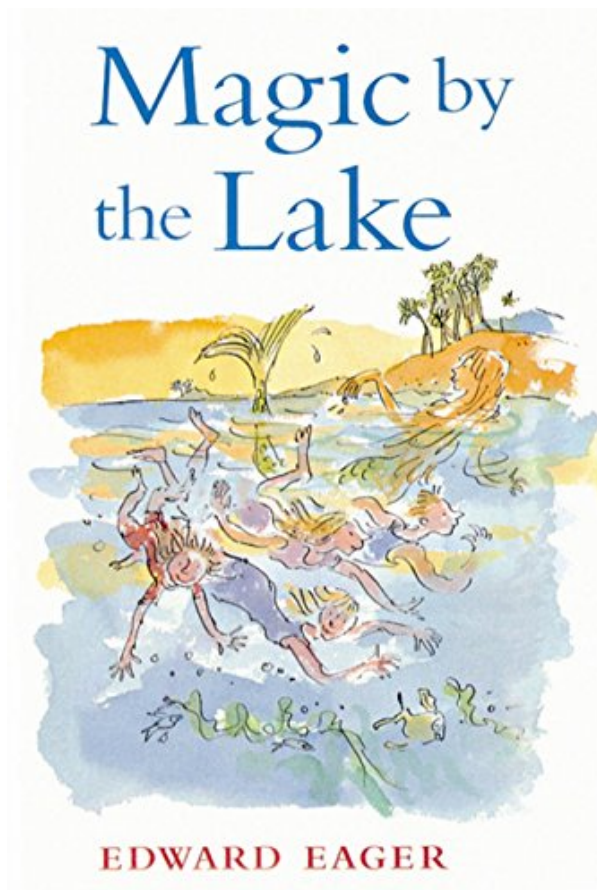


**MAGIC BY THE LAKE BY EDWARD EAGER,
N. M. BODECKER (ILLUSTRATOR)**



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So they rowed back along the shore and decided which cottages they liked the looks of, and chose a pink one with curlicues as their favorite, till they came in sight of their own house and beach, already looking familiar and homelike. They rowed round the bend toward the boathouse, but the inlet was so inviting, what with water lilies gleaming whitely, and frogs sitting on lily pads looking bemused, and dragonflies hovering over the water, that Mark and Jane shipped their oars, and the four children drifted gently in the afternoon sun. It was then that Martha saw the turtle swimming past.

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But the turtle merely gave one look at the four children and withdrew into its shell in scorn.

"Put it back," said Katharine, who was of a tender heart. "It's not happy here."

"It will be," said Mark. "I'll build it a tank. I'll catch lots more and train them."

But when they had put the boat away and carried the turtle tenderly to the shade of a friendly oak, building a tank right now seemed all too energetic. The four children sat in the shade, lazily eating an occasional gooseberry from a convenient bush, and talked, instead. The turtle still refused to make friends. Its apparently headless, footless shell lay upon the ground nearby.

"This summer," said Katharine, "is going to be a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

"Not quite," said Jane. "It's the middle of July already. Two more months and prison doors will yawn. And I get Miss Martin for seventh grade next year. Help!" And she fell back in a deadly swoon at the thought, and lay pulling up blades of grass and nibbling the juicy white bits off the bottom.

"Why couldn't we have found this place way back at the beginning of vacation?" said Katharine.

"If we had, we wouldn't have found the half-magic charm and Mother wouldn't have got married," said Mark.

"And there wouldn't have been any Uncle Huge to rent a cottage for us," said Martha, for that was the charming name she insisted on calling Mr. Smith, whose given name was Hugo.

"Maybe there would have," said Jane. "If I could find a magic charm right on Maplewood Avenue, it stands to reason there must be lots of it lying around still, just waiting for the right person to come along."

Meaning me,” she added smugly, and whistled through a blade of grass.

“Have you noticed the name on the cottage?” Katharine asked.

Martha and Jane hadn’t. Katharine told them.

“Pooh,” said Mark. “I told her that doesn’t mean a thing. Just a goofy name.”

“Maybe it does,” said Katharine. “Maybe it means exactly what it says. Maybe there’s a secret passage in the wall, and a wishing well, and buried treasure in the cellar!”

“And a dear little fairy in the keyhole,” said Mark scoffingly. “Bushwah!”

“Magic by the lake,” said Martha, trying out the words to herself. “Doesn’t it sound lovely? Don’t you wish it were true?”

“I certainly do,” said Jane.

There was a silence. The turtle stuck its head out of its shell.

“Now you’ve done it,” it said.

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- Sales Rank: #764517 in Books
- Brand: Sandpiper
- Published on: 1999-03-31
- Released on: 1999-03-31
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.63" h x .51" w x 5.13" l, .41 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 208 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Magic by the Lake

By A Customer

This was a really great book. It is about 4 children who visit a lake with their mom and Mr. Smith (their stepfather). Very strange things begin to happen when the children make magical wishes. They visit the South Pole, the Arabian desert, and a mysterious island. I recommend this book to all children who love magic.

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Magical and Funny, a winning combination!

By A Customer

~ - ~

~ I just introduced my nieces, ages 8-11, to the Edward Eager books, when they ran out of Harry Potter to read. They love them, as I did when I read them 30 years ago.

The adventures of these independent and adventurous children are always amusing and fun. There is usually enough sense of danger in the magical adventures to make them suspenseful, without being too frightening. I always enjoyed the author's ability to describe realistic brother and sister relationships. Some of the arguments in his stories remind me so much of squabbles with my own brother!

~ I think "Magic by the Lake" was my favorite. The adventures were very imaginative and fun to read. I loved the chapter in which two sisters wish to be "grown up"- unfortunately, they get their wish, at least temporarily!

These books are wonderful because they are no less fun now, then 2 generations ago, when they were written. This author should be on all kid's bookshelves!

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Great Book!!!

By A Customer

This book is the sequel to Half Magic. It is GREAT!!! Jane, Mark, Kathrine, and Martha are on vacation and spend the summer in a cottage on a lake with their parents. They have no idea, though, that the lake is magic.

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MAGIC BY THE LAKE BY EDWARD EAGER, N. M. BODECKER (ILLUSTRATOR) PDF

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Review

"The combination of real children and fantasy is convincing and funny." —Booklist

"The same mélange of realism and fantasy, witty talk and believable characterization that has come to be the hallmark of Mr. Eager's stories." —The New York Times Book Review

About the Author

EDWARD EAGER (1911–1964) worked primarily as a playwright and lyricist. It wasn't until 1951, while searching for books to read to his young son, Fritz, that he began writing children's stories. His classic *Tales of Magic* series started with the best-selling *Half Magic*, published in 1954. In each of his books he carefully acknowledges his indebtedness to E. Nesbit, whom he considered the best children's writer of all time—"so that any child who likes my books and doesn't know hers may be led back to the master of us all."

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1

The Lake

It was Martha who saw the lake first. It was Katharine who noticed the sign on the cottage, and it was Mark who caught the turtle, and it was Jane who made the wish. But it was Martha who saw the lake first. The others didn't see it until at least ten seconds later. Or, as Katharine put it, at long last when all hope was despaired of, the weary, wayworn wanderers staggered into sight of the briny deep.

This, while poetic, was not a true picture of the case. They really weren't so wayworn as all that; the lake was only fifty miles from home. But cars didn't go so fast thirty years ago as they do today; so they had started that morning, their mother and Martha and Mr. Smith their new stepfather in front, and Jane and Mark and Katharine and the luggage in the tonneau, which is what people called the back seat in those days, and Carrie the cat wandering from shoulder to shoulder and lap to lap as the whim occurred to her.

At first spirits were high, and the air rang with popular song, for this was going to be the four children's first country vacation since they could remember. But two hours in a model-T Ford with those you love best and their luggage is enough to try the patience of a saint, and the four children, while bright and often quite agreeable, were not saints. It was toward the end of the second hour that the real crossness set in.

"That lake," said Jane, "had better be good when we finally get to it. If ever."

"Are you sure we're on the right road?" said Mark. "That crossroad back there looked better."

"I want to get out," said Martha.

“You can’t,” said their mother. “Once you start that, all pleasure is doomed.”

“Then I want to get in back,” said Martha.

“Don’t let her,” said Katharine. “She’ll wiggle, and it’s bad enough back here already. Sardines would be putting it mildly.”

“Just cause I’m the youngest, I never get to do anything,” said Martha.

“That’s right, whine,” said Katharine.

“Children,” said their mother.

“I,” said Mr. Smith, “suggest we stop and have lunch.”

So they did, and it was a town called Angola, which interested Mark because it was named after one of the countries in his stamp album, but it turned out not to be very romantic, just red brick buildings and a drugstore that specialized in hairnets and rubber bathing caps and Allen’s Wild Cherry Extract. Half an hour later, replete with sandwiches and tasting of wild cherry, the four children were on the open road again.

Only now it was a different road, one that kept changing as it went along.

First it was loose crushed stone that slithered and banged pleasingly underwheel. Then it gave up all pretense of paving and became just red clay that got narrower and narrower and went up and down hill. There was no room to pass, and they had to back down most of the fourth hill and nearly into a ditch to let a car go by that was heading the other way. This was interestingly perilous, and Katharine and Martha shrieked in delighted terror.

The people in the other car had luggage with them, and the four children felt sorry for them, going back to cities and sameness when their own vacation was just beginning. But they forgot the people as they faced the fifth hill.

The fifth hill was higher and steeper than any of the others; as they came toward it the road seemed to go straight up in the air. And halfway up it the car balked, even though Mr. Smith used his lowest gear, and hung straining and groaning and motionless like a live and complaining thing.

“Children, get out,” said their mother. So they did.

And relieved of their cloying weight, the car leaped forward and mounted to the brow of the hill, and the four children had to run up the hill after it. That is, Jane and Mark and Katharine did.

Martha was too little to run up the hill. She walked. And nobody gave her a helping hand or waited for her to catch up, and she felt deserted and disconsolate, and the backs of her knees ached. When she arrived at the top, the others were already in the car and urging her on with impatient cries. But she didn’t get in the car. She threw herself down among the black-eyed Susans at the side of the road to get her breath. She glanced around. Then she jumped up again.

“Look!” she cried, pointing.

The others looked. Below them and to one side was the lake. They could see only part of it, because land and trees got in the way, but the water lay blue and cool, and there were cattails and water lilies, and from somewhere in the distance came the put-put of a motorboat.

Then Jane and Mark and Katharine started to get back out of the car, and they all clamored to go running right down to the lake now, and take their bathing suits and jump into it.

Mr. Smith had a lenient look in his eye, and their mother must have seen this, for she became firm.

“All in good time,” she said. “First things first. Wait till we get to the cottage and unpack.”

So Martha climbed back in the car, not feeling out of breath at all anymore, and they drove on till they came to a gate. Mark jumped out and opened the gate, and closed it after them, and then they drove over a rolling pasture, and there were sheep staring stupidly and a few rams looking baleful, and then another gate, and beyond it a grove of trees, and in the grove was the cottage.

And of course before there could be any base thought of unloading the car, the four children had to explore every inch of the cottage and the grounds around it, only not going near the water, because their mother’s word was law and they kept to the letter of it. But they could see the lake from every window and between the silver birches that picturesquely screened the front.

And naturally there was a hammock slung between two of the birches, and better still there was a

screened porch with cots on it that ran around three sides of the cottage, and that was where the children would sleep. And there were three little rooms with more cots in them downstairs and another cot in the corner of the living room, for rainy nights, only of course there wouldn't be many of those.

There was a big kitchen, and a big room upstairs for their mother and Mr. Smith, and that was all of the cottage.

"I'm sorry it isn't any better," they heard Mr. Smith saying to their mother. "It was the best I could do so late in the season."

The four children couldn't imagine what he meant. So far as they could see, the cottage was all that was ideal.

Next came a horrid interval of unloading and unpacking, but few would wish to hear about that. Suffice it to say that at last the four children emerged in their new bathing suits, and the lake was waiting.

Mark and Katharine were the first to emerge from the cottage. As they waited impatiently for the others, Katharine noticed a sign by the front door. It was of rustic letters made from pieces of tree branch, and they hadn't seen it before because it was the same color as the cottage's brown shingles. "Magic by the Lake," it said.

Katharine looked at Mark, a wild guess in her eyes. "Do you suppose?" For the four children had had experience of magic, or at least a kind of half magic, in the past.

(After the half magic was over, they wondered if they'd ever have any magic adventures again, and in the book about it it says it was a long time before they knew the answer. And here it was only three weeks later, and already Katharine was ready for more. But if you think three weeks isn't a long time for four children to be without magic, I can only say that it seemed a long time to them.)

"Could it be going to start again already?" Katharine went on.

Mark shook his head. "Nah," he said. "It's too soon. We couldn't be that lucky. That's just one of those goofy names people give things. You know, like 'Dreamicot' and 'Wishcumtrue.' Doesn't mean a thing."

And then Jane and Martha appeared, and their mother and Mr. Smith with them, and there was a race for the small private beach that went with the cottage. And the beach proved to be perfection, first pebbles and tiny snail shells, then soft sand and shallow water for Martha and Katharine, and farther on a diving raft for those like Jane and Mark, who had passed their advanced tests at the "Y" and could swim out deep.

You all know what going swimming is like, and it is even better when it's your first swim from your own private beach in the first lake you've ever stayed at.

After an hour of bliss, there was the usual rumor among the grown-ups that maybe they'd been in long enough, and after an hour more even the four children were ready to admit there might be more to life than paddle and splash. Just merely lying in the sun on the sand might be even better. So they did that until their mother cried out and said they would catch their deaths. Then reluctantly they went back to the cottage and put on blue jeans (Mark) and old dresses (the three girls) and set out to explore the rest of the grounds.

They found a nice rustic summerhouse on the high point of the shore that would be useful for sitting in and watching the sunset and listening to the water and the mosquitoes. And down on an inlet, round the corner from the beach, was the boathouse.

The boathouse, when investigated, proved to contain a flat-bottomed rowboat and a trim red canoe named Lura, after the first name of Mrs. Kutchaw, from whom they'd rented the cottage. The four children had met Mrs. Kutchaw and did not think Lura an appropriate name for her, but the canoe was dandy. Only their mother, when consulted, said they'd better not take the canoe out without a grown-up along, just yet. But the flat-bottomed rowboat they could use, if they were careful.

"Better stay close to shore," said Mr. Smith. "There are parts of this lake in the middle where they've never found bottom."

This impressed the four children very much, and they now had even more respect for the lake than they'd had before. As Mark said, it must be some lake.

None of them had ever done any rowing at all, and of course they all had to try. But after Martha lost an oar and Mark nearly fell in rescuing it, and Katharine almost shipwrecked them on an unhandy sandbank, it

was decided that Jane and Mark should take charge, and the other two lay back in luxury and were passengers.

“This is keen,” said Mark, after a bit. “I’ve got the crude inkling of it now, just about.”

“I’ve almost figured out how not to catch crabs already,” said Jane, plying the other oar and belying her words by sending a sizable jet of water all over Katharine.

But the shore was slipping by them visibly now, and they explored its possibilities with eager eyes. After their own grove of trees came a cottage or two, then more trees, then more cottages closer together, till up ahead the four children saw a little settlement, with a hotel and a dance pavilion and a soft-drink stand and a pier.

“That must be Cold Springs,” said Jane, for that was the unusual name of the resort on this side of the lake.

All the cottages had boats, and most of the boats were on the water now, and when Mark saw a large excursion launch called the Willa Mae heading toward them from the hotel pier, he decided traffic conditions were too difficult for beginners and turned the rowboat around.

So they rowed back along the shore and decided which cottages they liked the looks of, and chose a pink one with curlicues as their favorite, till they came in sight of their own house and beach, already looking familiar and homelike. They rowed round the bend toward the boathouse, but the inlet was so inviting, what with water lilies gleaming whitely, and frogs sitting on lily pads looking bemused, and dragonflies hovering over the water, that Mark and Jane shipped their oars, and the four children drifted gently in the afternoon sun. It was then that Martha saw the turtle swimming past.

It was Mark who caught it. It was a big turtle, and it looked even bigger as he deftly scooped it up and landed it in the bottom of the boat.

“Watch out, maybe it’s the snapping kind,” said Jane.

But the turtle merely gave one look at the four children and withdrew into its shell in scorn.

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“It will be,” said Mark. “I’ll build it a tank. I’ll catch lots more and train them.”

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