



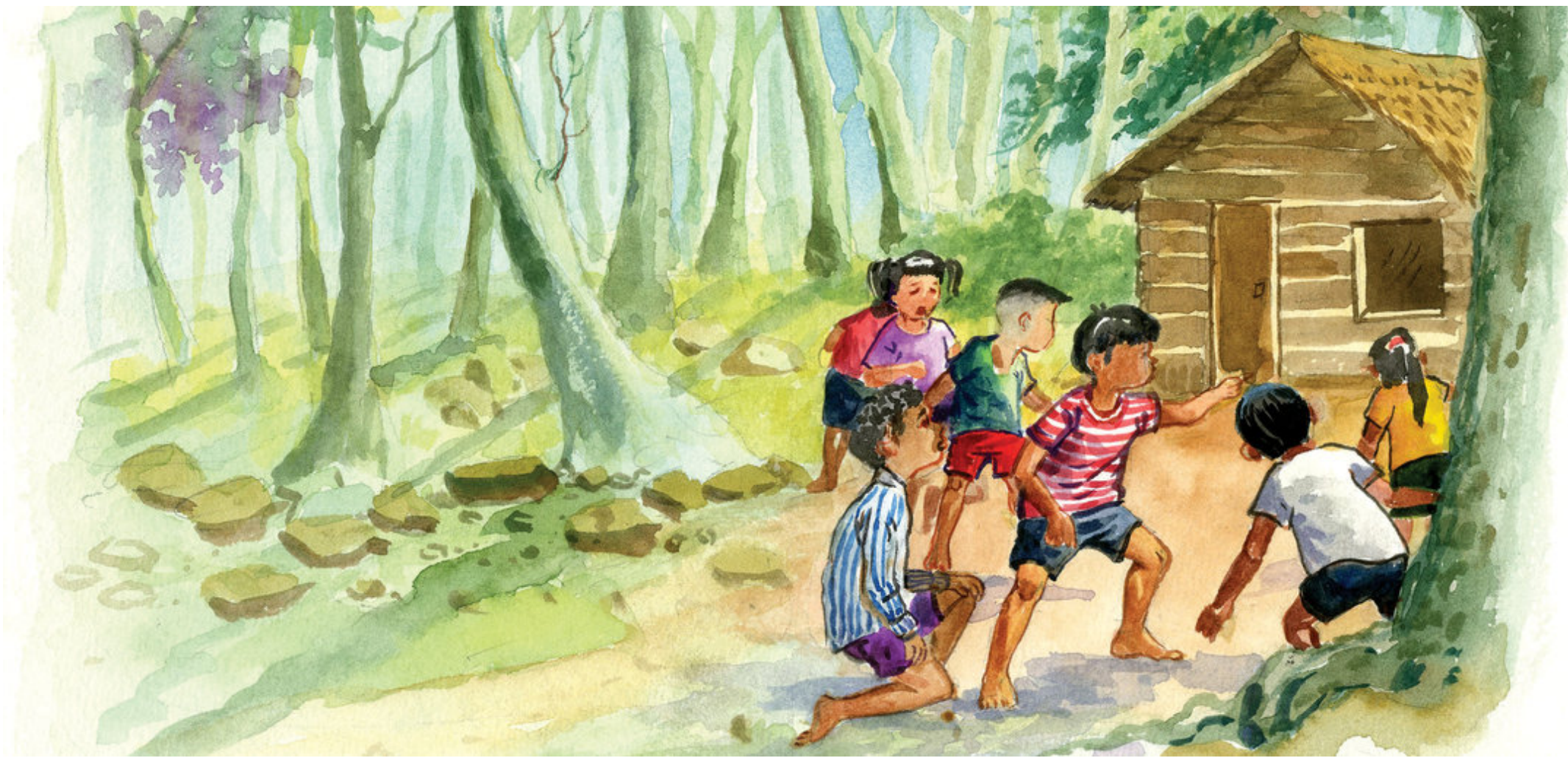
Level 3

The Magic Mirror

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Once upon a time not long ago, a group of friends were playing in a village when suddenly a strong wind swept them away.

"What is this place?" they asked? "Where are we? It's so quiet and scary."

"Look! There's a house," said one. "Let's go and see if someone is there to help us."



The children walked to the house and peeked in the window. There, they saw a table full of delicious food. Suddenly, the front door opened as if by magic.

A strange voice called out to them. "You look hungry. Come in and eat."



Sam was suspicious. "I don't think we should eat this food," he warned his friends.

"But we are so hungry!" they wailed. "We can't bear this hunger any more and the food looks so good."

"Don't eat it if you don't want to," said one friend "but don't stop us."



As their friends went inside to eat, Sam held on tightly to his sister's hand.

"Sam, I'm so hungry," she cried. "I want to eat too!"

Sam shook his head. "No, Soy. Remember what our parents told us - 'Don't eat to fill your hunger, don't act to fill your ego.' And don't you think this house is strange?"



All of a sudden, Sam and Soy saw that their friends had turned into... monsters! Sam grabbed Soy's hand and ran through the door into the forest.



Inside the house, an old witch appeared. The witch counted the monsters and her face turned hard with anger.

“Where are the other two children?” she screeched. Then she flew away after Sam and Soy.



Sam and Soy ran and ran through the forest, desperately trying to find a hiding place.

As they ran, they came across a big white rat. "Come to my den," he said. "I'll help you hide!"

"I'm so afraid, Sam!" said Soy, as they ran into the white rat's den. "What if the witch finds us?"

Sam comforted his sister. "Don't think about that, otherwise the witch might smell our fear."



From inside the white rat's den, the children could hear the witch wailing and screeching as she searched for them.

Finally, she flew away and the white rat said, "It was wise of you to not eat the food inside the witch's house."

"Why did she do this to our friends?" asked Sam and Soy.

The rat told them that her master had ordered her to turn a hundred children into monsters and bring them to him.

"Once she brings these hundred children to him, she will be gifted with immortality," said the rat.



"How can I help my friends become human again?" asked Sam.

"It's hard to say," said the rat sadly. "If you do not find a spell in three days they will stay monsters forever."

"Oh no! I'm scared for them, Sam," cried Soy.

"Don't be afraid, Soy. We must be strong," Sam said as he hugged her.



"Do you know how we can help our friends?" Sam asked the rat.

"Yes," said the rat. "You must find the magic mirror in the mysterious temple. It will help you save your friends!"

"Where is this mysterious temple?" asked Sam.

"It's far away in the east. Hurry, go now!" said the rat.



As they left Sam said, "Soy, you must search for a village and tell them about what's happened to our friends. I will travel east and find the mirror."



As Sam walked, he remembered what his grandfather had told him. "Your words will help you find the way." Along the road, Sam came across a woman. "Excuse me?" he said. "Do you know which way leads to the mysterious temple?"

"You must go down this road until you see a big lake. On the other side you will find the mysterious temple," she told him.



On his journey, Sam came to the edge of a cliff. When he looked down he saw an eaglet struggling in the stream below.

He quickly jumped in the water and rescued her. As he came out, a large eagle flew to him.

"Thank you so much for saving my baby!" chirped the eagle. "Would you like to come to my nest to warm yourself?"

Sam happily agreed.



As Sam warmed himself in the Eagle's nest she gave him a ring.

"I found this ring as I was collecting sticks to build my nest," she told him. "It looks like a powerful ring. Take it so that it can help you to save your friends."

"Thank you so much, eagle," said Sam. "Do you know how I can get to the mysterious temple?"

"Get on my back and I will take you there," said the eagle, and flew up into the sky with Sam.



Finally, they reached the banks of a huge lake. There, the eagle dropped Sam and told him "Remember to have faith in yourself."

"I will remember. Thank you, eagle," said Sam.



As Sam turned towards the lake he became concerned. It was filled with menacing crocodiles!

He threw a piece of wood to see what they would do. One of the crocodiles lunged at the piece of wood and snapped it in its jaws.

Sam felt disheartened and wondered how he would ever make it to the temple before the three days were finished.



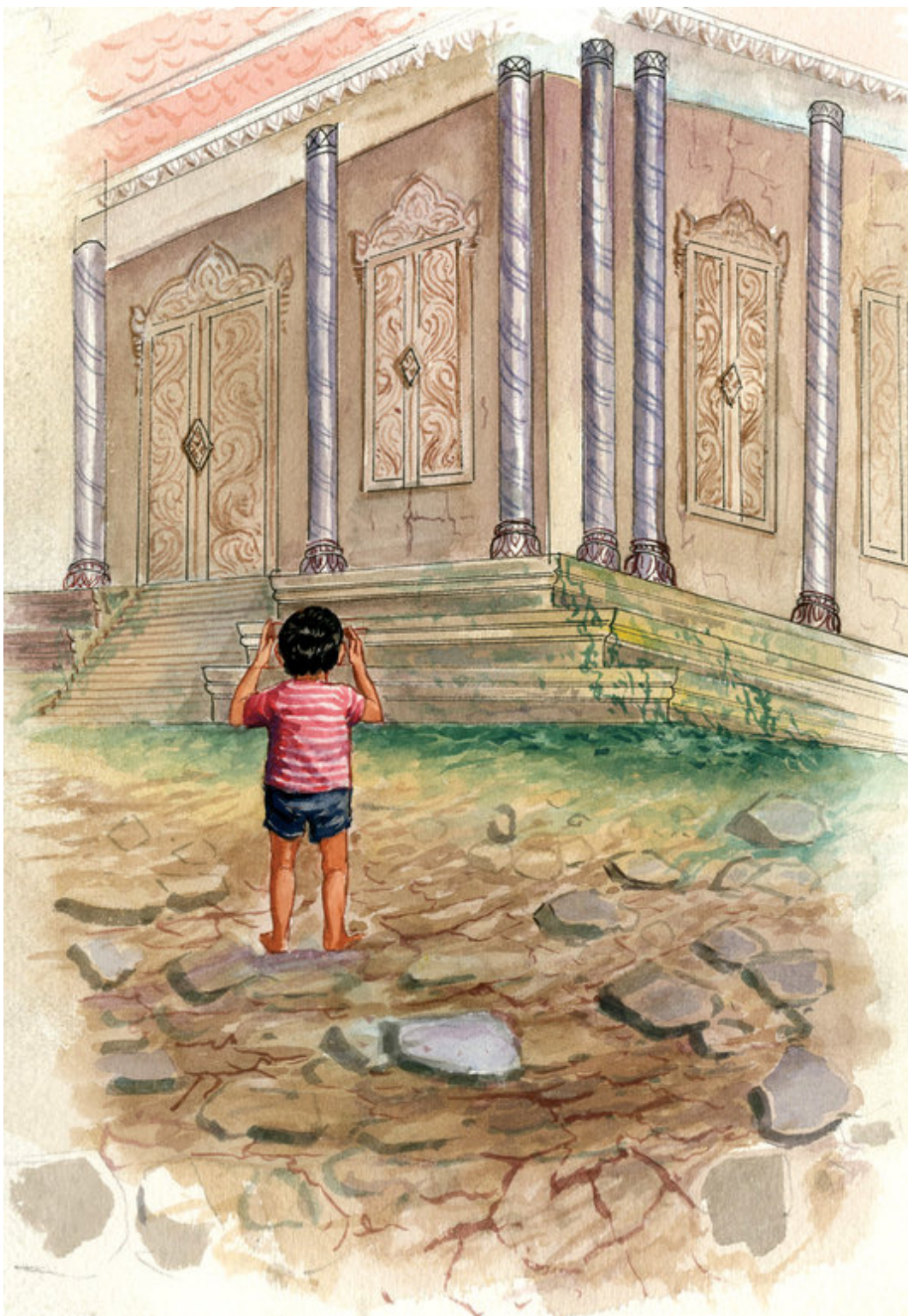
He looked around the lake and saw that there were many trees with vines hanging from them.

Suddenly an idea struck him!

He tied the vines together to make a thick rope and swung himself as hard as he could across the lake. He was just about to reach the other side when...

SNAP!

The vine broke and Sam fell into the lake. In an instant, he was surrounded by crocodiles.



As he fell, the ring slipped from his finger and fell into the water. The moment the ring touched the water, the entire lake froze and the crocodiles became statues! Sam ran from the water to the temple.

He bowed outside of the temple politely addressed the monks. "I bow before you, venerable monks. Is anyone here?"

But nobody answered him.

Sam tiptoed into the temple where he saw a glittering light. He looked high up on a shelf and there he saw the magic mirror!

But just as he was about to reach for the mirror, an elf appeared.



"You insolent child! You want to steal my mirror? I will eat you," howled the elf.

"No, please don't eat me!" cried Sam. "I need this mirror to save my friends who have been turned to monsters by a witch. I will bring it back, I promise. If you want, you can eat me then."

"How can I trust you?" asked the elf angrily.

"I don't lie," said Sam. "I promise I will come back."



"Hmmm," said the elf. "You can take the mirror but remember, you must not break your promise."

"I won't," said Sam. "But I'm worried that I won't reach my friends in time."

"Flash the light of this mirror at the wall and go through the light," said the elf. "You will reach your friends before the end of the third day."



Sam did as the elf instructed and found himself at the witch's house.

Oh no! Sam saw that the witch was trying to kidnap his sister Soy and a group of villagers.

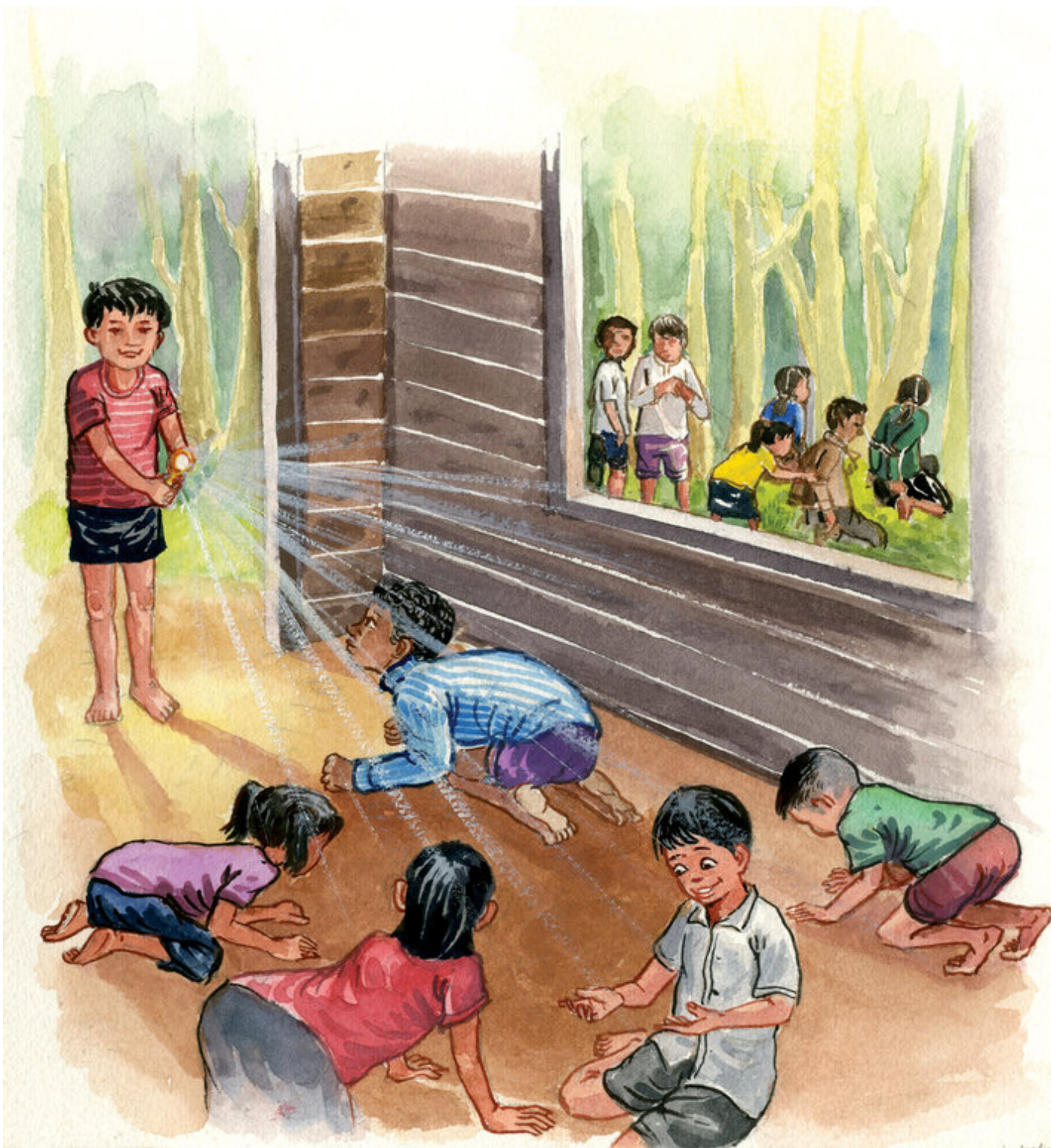
Sam yelled out and the witch turned to curse Sam, but soy threw a stone at her. The witch tried to curse Soy instead, but she quickly ran into the white rat's den.

When the witch turned back to trap Sam, he had disappeared.



Sam ran to his sister and they both faced the witch with the mirror in front of them. Enraged to see two little children facing her so bravely, she screeched and hurled a ball of fire at them.

But the magic mirror reflected the ball of fire back at the witch. She screamed and collapsed into a pile of ashes.



Sam and Soy ran to the witch's house and shined the mirror on each of their friends.

As they saw their reflection, they changed back to their human selves!

They danced and clapped with joy and relief, but Sam was sad. He had to go back to the elf as he had promised.



Suddenly, the elf appeared before him!

"You are a brave and honest kid," said the elf. "You have kept your promise and you care for others. I was cursed by the witch to protect this magic mirror, but now that she's dead, her curse has lifted. You have given me my freedom back! Take this mirror as my gift to you, and use it to help anyone who needs it."

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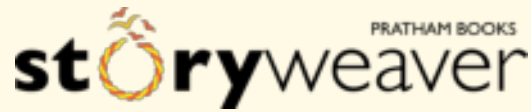
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The Magic Mirror

(English)

An evil witch curses the village, causing children to turn into scary creatures. Only Sam and Soy are free from the curse. Will Sam and Soy continue to escape the witch's curse? Will the other children stay scary creatures forever?

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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