



Fog Magic

Julia L. Sauer

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Originally published in 1943, this edition features a rare cover by the ground-breaking illustrator Lynd Ward.

Greta had always loved the fog—the soft gray mist that rolled in from the sea and drifted over the village. The fog seemed to have a secret to tell her. Then one day when Greta was walking in the woods and the mist was closing in, she saw the dark outline of a stone house against the spruce trees—a house where only an old cellar hole should have been. Then she saw a surrey come by, carrying a lady dressed in plum-colored silk. The woman beckoned for Greta to join her, and soon Greta found herself launched on an adventure that would take her back to a past that existed only through the magic of the fog

Fog Magic Details

Date : Published 1969 (first published 1943)

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Author : Julia L. Sauer

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Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Childrens, Science Fiction, Time Travel, Middle Grade, Young Adult

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From Reader Review Fog Magic for online ebook

Canadian Reader says

“It’s the things you were born to that give you satisfaction in this world, Greta. [. . .] And maybe the fog’s one of them. Not happiness, mind! Satisfaction isn’t always happiness by a long sight; then again, it isn’t sorrow either. But the rocks and the spruces and the fogs of your own land are the things that nourish you. You can always have them no matter what else you find or what else you lose.”

Greta Addington is 10 and lives in Little Valley, Nova Scotia. Unlike most in her small coastal village, she has a particular affinity for the fog. It creates hardship for the men out on the boats, and it only makes life easier for lobster poachers, but for Greta it is “like the magic spell in old fairytales” or “a magic wall she can step through.”

One day Greta’s mother sends her out in the fog to find a cow that has strayed, and Greta discovers that it has wandered towards Blue Cove, a long-abandoned settlement where only cellar holes remain. On her way home in the mist along Old Post Road (made by the first settlers), she sees the outline of a building, which in fine weather is not there. She later asks her father about the building. It wasn’t there even in his day, he says, only an old cellar hole. But even if her father denies knowing anything about the structure, he does speak to Greta’s anxious mother about allowing the girl freedom to go out in the fog.

The next time Greta ventures down Old Post Road in the fog, she meets a brisk woman driving a surrey, who offers her a ride down the other side of the mountain to Blue Cove. As they descend the road that goes towards the sea, the foghorn in Tollerton stops sounding entirely. Indeed, the woman knows nothing about that warning signal when Greta asks her about it. As for Blue Cove, it is no longer an open clearing with many cellar holes but a quaint fishing settlement, very much alive.

Greta quickly meets Retha Morrill, a girl of about her own age (who seems to have been waiting for her), and Retha’s mother, Laura, who mysteriously comments that there is always a “Greta” among the Addingtons, and there is always an Addington child who loves the fog. So begin Greta’s fog-time visits to Blue Cove.

Greta quickly finds out that Blue Cove operates on a different time than Little Valley, though it does experience the same season. She also discovers that she knows the outcome of events that village folk can only guess at. Greta learns the origins of stories she knows from her own childhood—for instance, the story of Ann, an orphan girl, whose ghost is said to haunt the wood near Little Valley. Greta learns of shipwrecks and salvaging expeditions. She now understands the fascinating story behind Captain and Mrs. Cornwall’s gravestones in the cemetery. (Mrs. Cornwall had gone mad when her captain husband died of yellow fever on the return from Bombay and insisted on bringing his body home for burial.) One of the most fascinating stories is that of Anthony, a legless man with “a lean, dark, strange, and foreign face” who was found after a shipwreck and whose identity has never been established.

Greta visits Blue Cove over a period of two years, growing increasingly attached to this other, older, secret world, but as she approaches her twelfth birthday, she (like the Morrill family) knows that something is about to change. She is, however, able to make one final visit to Blue Cove before that day is through. She receives a gift from Mrs. Morrill and learns a secret from her father, all before she puts childish things away.

Julia Sauer’s book is an absolutely lovely piece of children’s literature, which I suspect many adults would

enjoy as much as I did. It seems that Sauer, an American writer and children's librarian summered on the Nova Scotia coast, near the town of Digby and heard many of the old stories about the place. Interestingly, the story of Anthony is based on the real story of "Jerome" a legless, foreign man, whose body washed ashore in Sandy Cove, near Digby, in September, 1863.

Karen Witzler says

A childhood favorite.

Christopher says

[Just before the end, it basically characterizes the

Rebecca McNutt says

This book was absolutely beautiful, and in many ways it reminded me of the 1988 film *Paperhouse*. Its elements of magic and mystery entwined in a story of friendship, *Fog Magic* is a book that everyone should read.

Hilary says

[this appears for her as the houses once were and whilst the fog la

Elizabeth Drake says

Title: Fog Magic
Author: Julia L. Sauer
Publisher: Puffin
Release Date: 1943
Rating: 5/5

Cover Impressions: This is my favorite cover of this book and the one that I remember. It gets the old fishing village just right and has the beautiful, soft and ethereal quality of the fog.

Review:

When I was a little girl I discovered this book on the shelf of my tiny school library. I read it at least twice a year for the rest of my time at that school. It was my go-to book when I was feeling sad or lonely (which, to be honest, was quite often) and I was the perfect book for a foggy, Newfoundland day. Recently, while perusing the shelves at my favorite second hand bookstore, I came across *Fog Magic* and just about squealed in delight. I am so happy to get to read this wonderful story again.

Fog Magic is the Newberry Award Winning book of Julia L. Sauer. It is set in rural Nova Scotia in a tiny fishing village. The main character is an eleven year old girl named Greta. Greta has always had an unexplainable fascination with the fog. From the time she could walk, her mother was constantly trying to stop her from wandering off into the mist. While walking one grey, foggy day, Greta discovers that the fog doesn't simply hide her from the world, it also reveals a new world to her. The fog allows her entrance to Blue Cove, a place that holds only remnants of a community in the bright sunshine but is alive with the hustle and bustle of life within the fog.

I always love the magic behind Fog Magic. I grew up in the fog, I saw how it will creep and sneak along the ground one day and roll in as if swallowing you up the next. I loved the idea that you could walk into the mist and come upon something that was never there by the light of the sun but could exist in that liminal space that fog can create. Sauer does an excellent job of describing the mystery of the fog and the rules of this world are fairly well defined. The fact that Greta can only reach Blue Cove through the fog and that time is different there allows the story to move quickly through a year without being bogged down with day to day details.

The story is a simple one, but is enchanting in its simplicity. We are able to see some of the key events in the lives of the people at Blue Cove and can really feel Greta's sense of other-worldliness in having prior knowledge of the outcome of these events but no way to change them. She develops a simple and sweet friendship with Retha and becomes close with her family, who appear to know more about this mystery that Greta does herself. I do wish that some of the minor mysteries, like what happened to make everyone leave Blue Cove or who Anthony really is, were answered as these are the questions that keep me wondering and wishing there was a sequel to this book.

This book will always be a favorite of mine and it makes me happy simply to see a copy resting on my shelves, awaiting the next grey, foggy day.

Notable Quotables:

"Most of us live in two worlds - our real world and the one we build or spin ourselves out of the books we read, the heroes we admire, the things we hope to do."

Teaching/Parental Notes:

Age: Middle Grade

Gender: Both

Sex: None

Violence: None

Inappropriate Language: None

Substance Use/Abuse: None

Miriam says

Despite the title and the magical device of the fog allowing time travel, this book isn't really much of a fantasy -- it is about everyday life, family relationships, and the bittersweet experience of growing up.

Sheetal Dash says

My favorite thing about Fog Magic is when the fog comes in, Greta saw a different world. When she discovered the fog had magic in it was when she was looking for the milk cow and thought she saw a house in the fork of the road. Then Greta found friends on the other side of the mountain called Blue Cove. Her new friends name was Retha and Mrs. Morrill. My favorite part of the book was when Retha and Greta were picking berries and it was time for Greta to go home and Mrs. Morrill gave Greta a piece of pie to take home with her. When she got home the pie was gone from the pale. All in all I really liked reading this book and imagining what it would be like to be in another world. My least favorite part of the book was about Captain Cornwall dieing of yellow fever. It made Greta and Retha really sad.

Gina says

My mother took care of Mrs. Sauer before her death and as a gift she gave her the three books she wrote, autographed. After my mother moved she passed these books onto me because she knew I enjoyed reading them growing up. It was a treat to re-read them now as an adult.

Fog Magic was one of my favorite books as a child. It's a wonderful "ghost story" that I think has gotten better since the first time I have read it.

Producervan in Cornville, AZ from New Orleans & L.A. says

Fog Magic by Julia L. Sauer, ©1943. 5+ Stars. A wonderful middle grade book featuring irresistable fog as a means for a girl to time travel! A tale of a Nova Scotia family and their girl who is about to turn twelve, this book explores magical realism and takes us with it as it bends time to give us a peek of the main character Greta's newfound world. Will reality and responsibility make her a different person when she grows up; will she forget? This book was so good it was a Newbery Honor recipient in 1944. This is truly a read-again book for its mesmerizing inner story which begs the question of whether we can ever hold on to some of the true magic of our dearest moments of childhood—real or imagined. Highly recommend!

Tamora Pierce says

It's very old-style, a series of visits from a girl who lives in one island village to the families and village that existed on another part of the island two generations ago (it's now vanished). There's no violence or big action, just interactions between people.

And I can't really complain about why I didn't like it without spoiling the end. I apologize!

Wendy says

One of those awesome atmospheric children's books, with an unusual setting (or at least it was unusual to

me)--maritime Canada.

Margie says

I love this enchanting and magical little book, and decided to treat myself to a first edition (1943) which arrived the day after Christmas, Boxing Day! It reminds me so much of Greenwillow, about another magical little village, another one of my favorite books (can one have too many "favorite" books?!) I lose myself in another world whenever I read these two books.

Rhea says

A long time ago when I was in 6th grade, I was digging through the bookshelf in our English classroom when I encountered this little gem.

It had old-fashioned cover art, on top of which a gray Newberry seal was printed. Because I was obsessed with dates back then, I checked the published date for this one and discovered it was 1943.

To me, that was obscenely old. That was during WWII! Because of its oldness, the gray medal, and its shortness (I was into giant 500-page fantasy books back then) I decided to give it a go.

It was an odd story - a girl walks freely between her island's past and present - but unpredictable and atmospheric and mysterious in that way that makes it feel anything can happen. At first I was bored due to the lack of plot (it takes the shape of a slice-of-life), but as Sauer dropped little clues that linked the two worlds together, I slowly became enmeshed in it, and began to feel like this was a "second world" for me to live in. The book places mysteries with such precision, it makes the story come alive (in life, there will always be things we don't know) and even when they aren't answered (which is all too often) it is extremely satisfying.

I recommend this to imaginative kids who love the mystery in the world. It is packed with anecdotes, subtle hints, and wonders, just like real life.

4.5 stars

Heather Rose says

I've read this a dozen times at least, it was favorite of my mothers and now a favorite of mine. Truly an escape, wonderment but not in a fantasy land, fairies and dragons kind of way. This small girls fascination with the fog takes her back in time...but not very far back, historically speaking, making it all the more tangible. Pick a foggy or rainy afternoon and read this.

