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# *Half Magic* by Edward Eager

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# SUMMARY

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This American children's classic concerns four children who discover a magic coin which only grants half wishes. The children end up half invisible and half on a desert island (which is, of course, just a desert) and have many more adventures with the magic coin.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Name: Edward McMaken Eager  
Variant Name: Edward (McMaken) Eager  
Birth Date: 1911  
Death Date: October 23, 1964  
Nationality: American  
Gender: Male

Although his career of writing for children spanned only slightly more than a decade, Edward Eager made a distinctive contribution to twentieth-century children's literature. His two animal stories, *Mouse Manor* (1952) and *Playing Possum* (1955), are innovative and appealing in the unsentimental, straightforward characterization of animal figures. Even more important, Eager's series of seven books on the theme of magic made use of a new imaginative element in children's literature without sacrificing realistic character or setting. What the author called "daily magic" successfully integrated the realism of ordinary children living typical lives with romantic adventures that spring from the sudden appearance in their midst of a magic object, such as a book or a coin. Young readers of these books feel convinced that at any moment a magic token might inject a touch of wonder into their own daily lives.

Edward McMaken Eager was born and grew up in Toledo, Ohio, which is the setting of one of his books about magic.

<http://www.bookrags.com/biography/edward-mcmaken-eager-dlb/>



# BOOK REVIEW

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Edward Eager has been delighting young readers for more than 40 years with stories that mix magic and reality. *Half Magic*, the most popular of his tales about four children who encounter magical coins, time-travel herb gardens, and other unlikely devices, is a warm, funny, original adventure. The title refers to a coin that the children find. Through a comical series of coincidences, they discover that the coin is magic. Well, it's not totally magic--it's only (you guessed it) half magic. That means there's certain logic to the wishes one must make to generate a desired outcome. Imagine the results emerging from inaccurate efforts: half invisible, half rescued – half everything! *Half Magic* is never too cute, and with just enough emotion to complement the magic, this classic is sure to hold a special place in any child's library.

<http://www.amazon.com/Half-Magic-Edward-Eager/dp/0152020683>



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Where and when did this book take place? What things about the story seem outdated, and what things still seem current?
2. Which character, Jane, Mark, Katherine or Martha, do you relate to the most and why?
3. What did you think about the relationship the children had with each other and with their mother? How does Mr. Smith help bridge the gap between the imaginative children and their more practical mother?
4. What would you wish for if you had the magic charm?
5. This story places a great deal of emphasis on “books” and the adventure begins with the children returning from a trip to the library, laden with books. Many famous stories are found woven into their adventures. Which was your favorite historical setting in this story and why? Do you have any other favorite adventure stories that are special to you?
6. What was the moral of this story?



# Further Reading

If you like *Half Magic* by Edward Eager  
You might like the following books, too!

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*Seven day magic* by Edward Eager  
*The time garden* by Edward Eager  
*Knight's castle* by Edward Eager  
*Magic or not* by Edward Eager  
*Magic by the lake* by Edward Eager  
*The well wishers* by Edward Eager  
*Magic by the book* by Nina Bernstein  
*The magic thief, book one* by Sarah Prineas  
*The Indian in the cupboard* series by Lynn Reid Banks  
*No more magic* by Avi