



Mirror of Danger

Pamela Sykes

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Originally published in Britain as [Come Back, Lucy](#).

The mirror looked ordinary. It had a heavy gold frame and leaned against the wall in the attic. But when Lucy first looked into the mirror, a strange thing happened. Another girl's face appeared beside hers, laughing. Whirling around in surprise and alarm, Lucy saw a girl wearing a long dress, a pinafore...and a sly triumphant look on her face. Also, the attic had disappeared and another room had taken its place - a room that belonged to the past.

The girl in the mirror was Alice, and she had lived a hundred years ago. Lucy found she could visit her any time she looked into the mirror. At first, it was fun to enter the past and see how Alice had lived. But, gradually, the chill of terror took over. Alice's friendliness turned into a sinister desire for power and control over Lucy. And Lucy found it harder and harder to resist being trapped in the past with Alice forever!

Mirror of Danger Details

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Author : Pamela Sykes

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

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From Reader Review *Mirror of Danger* for online ebook

Fiona Dobrzynski says

I watched the BBC series of this, as a child, and would borrow the book regularly, from the public library, to enjoy it anew. However, in the late 80s, the library discarded it and I looked for the book for over 30 years, to enjoy again.

On Saturday, 14th January, 2017, I found a copy in a second-hand bookstore, scarcely believing my eyes. They'd written 'scarce' inside and charged \$20 for it, but I happily paid for it.

It was as good as I remembered. It's a gripping tale, with the appeal of historical curiosity as much for the 70s as for the Victorian times. She's a good writer. I'm now in my 40s but still feel the old joy I had as a child, in this interesting story.

I've just found out there's a sequel. What will be my journey to find it...???

Lisa says

This is one of my favorite books from grade school. I recently re-read it, and it was a slightly surreal experience to view it from an adult's perspective. It's a scary book but full of family love and happiness as well-- a small, lonely girl learns how to look to the future with hope and anticipation and love an imperfect family. I invite you to enjoy!

Jackie says

YA fiction, but suitably scary (in a subtle unsettling way).

Miriam says

Lucy has been raised in a quite old-fashioned way by her elderly aunt, a retired posh-girls-school teacher. After her aunt dies, she is sent to live with some very modern cousins and feels out of place in the large, loud family with their casual cloths, informal manners, and modern furnishings. She finds a refuge in the Victorian attic and a friend in Alice, the Victorian girl in the antique mirror. But Alice may not be the best of friends...

This was a pretty solid juvenile "ghost" story (although there isn't precisely a ghost, more like time-slip). Sykes does best with the more realistic elements, such as her treatment of Lucy's and her cousin Rachel's emotions. I would have liked a bit more of the book: sly and creepy Alice isn't really explained (how does she get her powers? Why does she want Lucy so badly?) and for people who are portrayed as casual and kind the parents' really don't seem to make much effort to connect with Lucy or understand how traumatic the changes are for her. Lucy doesn't try to get along with them, either, but I'd expect some acting out from a kid

who was just orphaned (for the second time, sheesh, some luck). I certainly wouldn't expect them to want to go to parties and meet strangers.

Andrea says

Read this as a kid. Loved it! Everytime I went to the library I had to have it!

Mirkat says

I'm shelving this book because I've been trying to remember the name of this one! I read this when I was a kid and it left a lasting impression. But the title escaped me. I had no idea until just now that there were sequels. Not doing stars because it's been way too long since I read this.

Hilary says

What a great read. This book was definately as enjoyable to read as an adult as I remember as a child.

Lucy lives with Aunt Olive and is brought up in a quiet and old fashioned way. When her Aunt dies she is devastated at her loss and finds it hard to cope being thrust into a caring but noisy 1970s family of cousins she had never met.

Lucy meets Alice, a victorian girl who used to live in the same house but different time. Lucy enjoys escaping to the past where she feels she fits in. Whilst she gradually gets used to her cousins company, Alice gets used to hers. A climactic ending makes this exciting story complete. I found the pond scene particularly unforgettable as a child !

We loved the part where Lucy experiences the contrast of a 1970s christmas party and a victorian one, we both agreed the victorian one sounded lovely.

A great christmassy read, lovely escapism. Who wouldn't want to escape there occasionally to get away from the stresses of modern life - if only Alice were nicer !

A good book to read aloud, best read at Christmas and practise your victorian, slightly sinister little madam voice first !

Peggy says

Fascinating and spooky--it reminded me a bit of both Jane-Emily and A Candle in Her Room for the unsettled (in a good way) feeling it gave me.

I just requested the sequel via interlibrary loan; definitely curious about what happens next.

Aikiko says

called "come back Lucy" here in London, I loved this book as a child and still love it. Have a well worn copy on my book case, interestingly there's also a tv series made in the late 70's based on this

Erin says

Cannot even believe I was finally able to find a copy of this to finally read again! This was one of my childhood favorites, and I was so happy to read it again. Thank you Open Library!

Of course only a few of my memories of the book were accurate, but it was still fun to read again. I was so intrigued by this book when I was younger, and it just made me happy to read it again.

Jane says

This is one of those books that I would love to talk about, would love more people to read, but I know that I can't say very much at all without giving too much away.

The book was published in 1974. 'Come Back, Lucy' was the British title and 'Mirror of Danger' the American. There was a television adaptation in the late 1970s, Pamela Sykes wrote a number of books for young readers that were well liked and are fondly remembered, but I haven't been able to find out anything else about her.

Thank goodness though for Open Library, where so many novels that were loved but have been forgotten find a home.

And so to the book.

I might express it as a recipe:

Mix equal amounts of:

- *Charlotte Sometimes* by Penelope Farmer
- *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James
- *Tryst* by Elswyth Thane

Dust with Victoriana and then leave it to rest in the 1970s

Lucy was an orphan and she had been raised by her Aunt Olive. Raised in the same way that Aunt Olive was raised in many years earlier. She was educated at home, she learned the domestic arts, she read Victorian novels, and in the evenings she played cribbage and made scrapbooks with her aunt.

She was happy, with just the two of them, but of course she was totally lost when her aunt died.

Mirror of DangerShe coped by daydreaming, by taking remembering happy times and building lovely fantasies.

Lucy was lucky. She had relations who had never met her, but they were ready to offer a home, to bring her up alongside their own children in the lovely Victorian house they were renovating.

They were lovely, but everything about their lives was alien to Lucy. It wasn't that they were odd, they lived as people did in the 1970s, but Lucy wasn't used to that at all. She didn't like it at all. She didn't understand them and they didn't understand her.

She carried on daydreaming. And she thought that maybe she had dreamed up Alice; who was like her, who understood.

But Lucy hadn't dreamed up Alice. She had lived – a hundred years ago

Pamela Sykes tells this story so well. The characters were so believable, the details were so right, and I had to keep turning the pages.

I felt for Lucy from the start, as she was bereft, as she tried to fit so many of the things she loved from her home to her new life. And I loved so much about the way Aunt Olive had brought her up; I just wished that she hadn't kept Lucy quite so close, that she had allowed her to see just a little of the modern world.

I understood her bewilderment in her new world, and her reluctance to let go of the way she had been taught to live.

Her family were good people, they really did their best to understand and to make Lucy part of their family, but at times she drove them to distraction.

But that wasn't Lucy. That was Alice

The intensity of the story grows and grows.

And then, suddenly it is over. There is no final resolution, there are unanswered questions; but there is a sea change, and it is the right ending.

It's subtle, and it leaves the way open for a sequel; there is a sequel, but Open Library doesn't have it and used copies are stupidly expensive.

But I think it might be better to just read this book, and then think about it, and the possibilities it opens up

Andria says

Is there anything spookier than looking into a mirror in a dusty old attic and seeing something reflected that you KNOW ISN'T THERE?! Probably not. But Lucy rolls with it, because the ghost world in the mirror is better than her real life. UNTIL SHE GETS TRAPPED THERE!

I was a weird, introverted kid obsessed with the Victorian era when I first read *Mirror of Danger* and I identified quite a bit with Lucy. This book hit all the right marks for me: ghosts, time travel, Victoriana, an outsider-y girl and a touch of evil -- and was one of my favorites back in the day.

girl writing says

Can't believe I missed this one in my childhood. British setting, lonely/outsider girl, creepy attic, falling back in time and meeting the girl who lived there 100 years ago, Victorian clothes and culture, Victorian girl turning into a scary, manipulative ghost...all things I love in a book. Scary enough to keep turning pages but not lose any sleep.

Jessica says

My favorite book in 4th- 6th grade.

Muffi says

This was one of my favorite books when I was a teenager. I still have my copy, and am trying to get my daughters to read it. They say the language is too complicated/literary and puts them to sleep. How sad is that?
