

THE MAGIC WORD

and

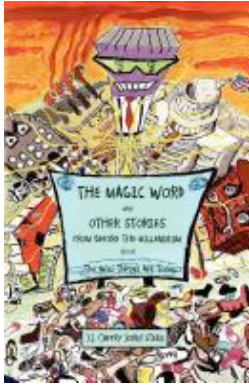
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FROM BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM

about

The Way Things Are Today

J.J. (JEFFRY JOHN) STEIN



These stories from before the millennium are about the everlasting state of the world, and how to make it a better-lasting place. They have a common thread, though they come in a variety of styles. Whether fable, street theater, therapy session, or generational dust-up, they involve transformations of consciousness assisted by encountering magic words.

THE MAGIC WORD

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The Way Things Are Today



J.J. (JEFFRY JOHN) STEIN

BookLocker, Bradenton, Florida

*THE MAGIC WORD and OTHER STORIES
FROM BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM*

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*for Brenda
more awesome than ever*

and

*for Donald
thank you for everything*

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PREFACE

I was deep into completing the first draft of my newest novel, *Keeper of the Planet*, when my college-age daughter asked whether I had ever written a children's story. It occurred to me that in the distant past, I actually had. So I dug through all my old floppy discs and then back to paper manuscripts and found *The Magic Word* that I drafted in 1989 and copyrighted in 1990. Reading it over, I realized it was not really a children's story, but a fable about saving the planet by practicing what most of us learned as children.

I remember that I was excited about it then, particularly as the basis for an animation. But somewhere in the midst of my transition from the film industry to teaching in universities it got lost in my archives. On revisiting it after 23 years (as if it was written by some other entity), I was struck by how it reflected circumstances that have manifested so blatantly today. Because of that, I was moved to finally get it published. The question became, in what form?

I wondered whether I had written other stories from times past that I had also forgotten and that were topically related. It may be that some writers have eidetic memories regarding everything they have written, but I clearly do not. In digging deeper into dusty old boxes I had the rarefied experience of visiting more of my past as if written by another. It was like discovering a buried treasure just as hoped for; a treasure of never published

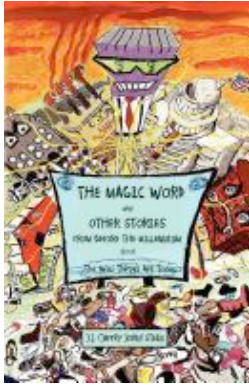
stories from the last century that would nicely complement *The Magic Word*. So here they are just as they were written. Nothing has been updated: no issues, no characters, no concerns, no structure. Presenting them this way offers a kick in the pants about how the same problems persist over time despite the fact that we've always known what it takes to solve them individually and collectively.

Though the stories have a common thread, they come in a variety of styles, personas, and tones. *The Magic Word* (1990), as I said, is a fable that so evidently presaged present circumstances. *Oreh's Great Fall* (1999), too, is a fable that personalizes the message. *Alice in Wasteland* (1992) is harder-edged and as real as street theater. *To Be a Hero* (1999), *Earning a Living* (1994), and *Disempowering Madness* (1999) take the issues to a therapist. Finally, *Bones Wanted* (1994) offers the antithetical view with a bit of panache.

Here's hoping you find some magic words within these pages.

J.J. (Jeffry John) Stein
December 2012





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