

Jaylen and the Magic Ring

It was the last day of fifth grade, and Jaylen was on her way home. She kicked a rock as she walked down the sidewalk and tried to keep from crying. Next year, she would go to middle school. Jaylen didn't want to. She wanted to stay in elementary school.

Jaylen kicked another rock and watched as it bounced across the concrete to land on the side of the road. Something glittered in the bright sunlight. Jaylen stopped. She leaned over to see what was shining. It was a golden ring! Jaylen smiled and picked up the ring.

"How was your last day of elementary school?" Mother asked when Jaylen walked in the door.

"It was okay," Jaylen replied.



Jaylen took her backpack up to her room and tossed it in front of the closet. She sat on her bed cross-legged and looked at the ring. It was a simple thing. There were no markings or decorations on it at all.

"I'll wash it and wear it," Jaylen said.

In the bathroom, Jaylen ran water over the ring. She scrubbed it with soap then dried it off. She slipped the ring onto her finger.

"Ahh!" Jaylen said. Smoke poured from the ring and formed a small man with green skin and long, blond hair.

"Hello," the genie said. "I am yours to command for three wishes."

Jaylen couldn't speak. Her heart pounded in her chest, and her hands got sweaty. She wanted to call out to her mother, but the idea of three wishes was too good to ignore.

“What is your first wish?” the genie asked.

“I--.” Jaylen wasn’t sure what to wish for. She had a nice home and loving parents. She had plenty of toys and clothes. She had lots of good friends.

“I know!” Jaylen said after a moment’s thought. “I want to stay in elementary school! I don’t want to go to middle school.”

The genie swirled around the bathroom. It floated up to the ceiling and whirled around the shower curtain. After a few minutes of this, the genie said, “Granted! You’ll get your wish in the morning.”

Jaylen smiled.

The next morning, Jaylen woke up early. She was excited to know she would stay in elementary school and couldn’t wait to tell her friends.

Jaylen jumped from her bed. She landed on the floor with a *thud*.

“Maybe I just tripped,” said Jaylen.

She stood up and went to get her clothes from the chest of drawers. She could barely reach the top drawer.

“What’s going on?” Jaylen thought.

Jaylen ran downstairs to the kitchen. Her mother was making a breakfast of pancakes and bacon.

“Good morning, my little sweetums,” Mother said. “Are you ready for pancakes and bacon?”

“Sure thing, Mom,” Jaylen said. This was weird. Her mother hadn’t used that baby talk since Jaylen started kindergarten.

“Okay. You climb up in your chair and eat. We’ll get you dressed after breakfast.”



Jaylen went to the dining room. The table was huge! She tried to sit in her chair, but it was too high.

Jaylen ran to the bathroom and looked in the full-length mirror on the wall. "Oh, no!" Jaylen cried. "I'm a kindergartener!"

She was. Jaylen was a small child again.

"This isn't what I wanted!"

Jaylen ran back to her room. Where was the ring? She searched her bedclothes and all along the floor. She found the ring and stuck it on her finger.

Smoke swirled from the ring, and the genie appeared. "I am yours to command for two more wishes."

"This isn't right!" Jaylen cried. "I don't want to start over with kindergarten!"

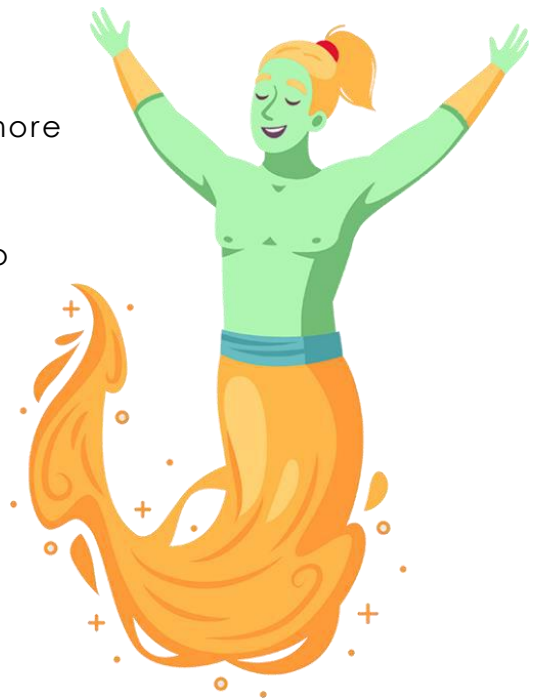
The genie tapped his chin. "Then what do you suggest? I have granted your wish in the only way possible. To remain in elementary school, you must be younger again."

Jaylen thought for a minute. How could she avoid middle school?

"I've got it!" Jaylen said. "I wish for you to make me into an adult."

The genie swirled around Jaylen's room. It floated up to the ceiling and whirled around her doll collection. After a few minutes of this, the genie said, "Granted! You will have your wish in the morning."

"Thank you," Jaylen said. She carefully placed the ring on her nightstand and ran back downstairs for breakfast.



Jaylen's day took forever to pass. Her mother wiped her mouth and washed her hands after breakfast, then she dressed Jaylen like she had when she was five. When it was time to watch television, Mother put on the baby shows Jaylen had watched years before. Jaylen wasn't sure she would make it until the next morning. What a horrible day!

An alarm clock buzzed beside Jaylen's bed. She groaned and pulled her pillow over her face.

The alarm clock kept buzzing.

Jaylen groaned again and tossed her covers aside. She got up from her bed and stumbled. The bed was too small. She rubbed her eyes and opened her clothes drawer. She didn't recognize any of the clothes, but she got dressed anyway.

"You'll have to hurry," Mother said when Jaylen got to the kitchen for breakfast.

A bowl of cereal sat on the table. It was some kind of wheat stuff that was quickly turning to mush in the milk.

"Aren't we having pancakes?" Jaylen asked as she played with the mess in the bowl.

"Not today. You didn't get up in time."

Jaylen choked on the cereal and decided she wasn't that hungry.

"Is that what you're wearing?" Mother asked.

"To what?" Jaylen said.



“To your job interview. It’s been months since you got out of school. It’s time to get a job. You have credit card bills to pay and you should be saving up to get your own home. You need to take this seriously.”

Jaylen's mouth dropped open, and her heart pounded. Alarm clocks? A job? Credit card bills? Saving to buy a house? Suddenly being an adult didn't seem like such a great idea.

Jaylen jumped up from the table and hurried to her room. She grabbed the ring and tried to put it on her finger. It was too small.

“Oh, no!” Jaylen cried.

She tried another finger. The ring was still too small.

Finally, Jaylen got the ring on her pinky finger. Smoke poured from the ring, and the genie appeared.

“I am yours to command for one more wish.”

Jaylen didn't even have to think. “I want to be the real me again. I want to be eleven and go to middle school. I want pancakes and bacon for breakfast. I want my friends and my toys.” She said all this in a rush and held her breath.

The genie swirled around Jaylen's room. It floated up to the ceiling and whirled around the bookcase. At last, the genie said, “Granted. You will have your wish in the morning.”

“Thank you,” Jaylen said. She placed the ring on her bedside table.



Jaylen's day was even stranger than the one before. Her mother drove her to a job interview at the local bank. Jaylen couldn't answer any of the questions. Next, she helped her mother wash the windows and scrub the floors. When it was finally television time, Jaylen's mother turned on the news. Jaylen sighed. She hoped it would be bedtime soon.

The next morning, Jaylen woke with a start and climbed from her bed. She hurried to the bathroom and looked in the mirror. She was herself again! She had her long, brown hair all mussed from sleep. She had her braces. She had her kitty cat pajamas!

“Woohoo!” Jaylen cried. She danced around the bathroom and raced to her room to get dressed. She wanted to play with her friends for the summer then go to middle school. She was still nervous about the change, but she decided going to middle school was the best thing for her.



Questions:

1. Where did Jaylen find the ring?
 - a. Jaylen found the ring in her stocking.
 - b. Jaylen found the ring in her backpack.
 - c. Jaylen found the ring in her cereal.
 - d. Jaylen found the ring on the side of the road.

2. What is Jaylen worried about?
 - a. Jaylen is worried about her new puppy.
 - b. Jaylen is worried about her flower garden.
 - c. Jaylen is worried about going to middle school.
 - d. Jaylen is worried about her nail polish.

3. What is Jaylen's first wish?
 - a. Jaylen wishes to be goldfish.
 - b. Jaylen wishes to stay in elementary school.
 - c. Jaylen wishes for a new car.
 - d. Jaylen wishes to be taller.

4. What does Jaylen's mother cook for breakfast when Jaylen is a small child?

5. List 3 things Jaylen must do as an adult.

6. What age would you like to be and why?
