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Magic Carpets

By Leslie What

26 July 2004

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The Santa Ana winds arrived, whipped into frenzy by a spirit with the power to fold hot air inside wind. I lay beside my big sister Pammy in the backyard, feeling the dry breeze tickle the backs of my legs. My skin itched where the crop top had exposed a four-inch band of belly to dead grass. I sat up to scratch and Pammy sat up, too. She tugged her shirt down, as if to cover the welts Daddy had raised that morning, then reached to pull the sports page from beneath her transistor radio.

"What time is the game?" I asked. We hadn't had a radio or a team back home, but in Los Angeles we had both.

Pammy checked her watch. "Now," she said.

A wind blew, thick and breathy like a child learning to whistle. I watched a leaf fall from one of our two avocado trees and circle in the air, stirred by the wind's hand. Pammy let go of the paper and it skimmed twenty feet along the grass before landing on the chain-link cyclone fence that divided the back of our property from the neighbor's.

"I better get it," Pammy said, "before it flies into Mrs. Garcia's yard." Daddy had warned us just that morning to stay away from Mrs. Garcia, ". . .that witch next door. Stay away from her and her devil magic," he'd said, but if it hadn't been magic, he would have found another reason to keep us to our yard.

Pammy found his superstitions funny. I couldn't help looking past the fence to Mrs. Garcia's back door, wondering why she had been nice to us all summer, awfully nice for someone who wasn't even a blood relative. I didn't want to trust her. Maybe Daddy was right. Maybe Mrs. Garcia was

[Before Paphos](#)

by Loretta Casteen

8 January 2007

It starts again. The baby begins to cough and choke.

[Locked Doors](#)

by Stephanie Burgis

1 January 2007

You can never let anyone suspect, his mother told him. That was the first rule she taught him, and the last, before she left him here alone with It.

[Heroic Measures](#)

by Matthew Johnson

18 December 2006

Pale as he was, it was hard to believe he would never rise from this bed. Even in the darkest times, she had never really feared for him; he had always been strong, so strong.

[Love Among the Talus](#)

by Elizabeth Bear

11 December 2006

Nilufer raised her eyes to his. It was not what women did to men, but she was a princess, and he was only a bandit. "I want to be a Witch," she said. "A Witch and not a Queen. I wish to be not loved, but wise. Tell your bandit lord, if he can give me that, I might accept his gift."

[Archived Fiction Dating back to 9/1/00](#)

