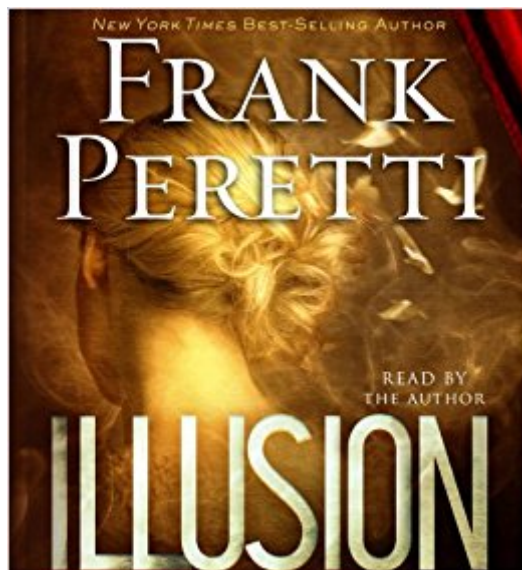


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Illusion: A Novel



Synopsis

A stunning new thriller from the father of Christian fiction— a grieving husband encounters a teen identical to his dead wife—in face, name, and magical skills. Dane and Mandy Collins have been a popular magic act for close to thirty years. They plan to retire but soon devastation strikes and Mandy is killed in a fiery car wreck. Reeling from his wife's death, Dane reluctantly agrees to see a new magic act on the advice of a friend. Dane is transfixed by the magic he sees, illusions that even he, a seasoned professional, cannot readily explain. But more than anything, he is stunned by the nineteen-year-old magician who is in every respect identical to his wife, forty years ago. Little does he know that his wife has somehow traveled through time. When Mandy and Dane reunite, they must decide what their future is—and uncover the conspiracy behind their meeting, the supernatural bent to Mandy's magic, and who is following them. Once again, Frank Peretti has crafted a riveting novel full of twists and mystery. This rich, rewarding novel depicts a love story that transcends time and space, to discover what death and life mean.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Frank Peretti is a master storyteller. His novels stay with you a lifetime, drawing you closer to God and the truth in His word."--Karen Kingsbury, New York Times bestselling author
"Frank Peretti kicked open the doors that all of us Christian novelists are passing through today. We owe him a huge debt."--Jerry B. Jenkins, author, The Left Behind Series
"Frank Peretti may just be the master storyteller of our time--using modern metaphors and fresh images, this remarkable writer helps us

visualize the unseen world in ways we never quite pictured before."--Joni Eareckson Tada"Frank Peretti is a master storyteller. He has a way of using fiction to draw our attention to the very real spiritual world around us. His stories are modern day classics and I can't wait to see the impact "Illusion" has on readers!"--Michael W. Smith

Frank Peretti is the author of *This Present Darkness*, *Piercing the Darkness*, *The Oath*, and many more. There are more than 12 million copies of his novels in print. He lives with his wife in the Western United States.

Although some people may believe that Mr. Peretti has deviated from previous novels and basically left God out of this story, I saw the Lord mentioned many times and the faith of the two main characters to be strong. Even though the story had a predictable ending, I still found the journey getting there to be fascinating, and the whole idea of alternating timelines in a person's life and how it impacted that person and others around her drew me in. I, for one, had trouble putting this book down. Thank you, Mr. Peretti, for writing another good read!

You may well have heard that this is not typical Peretti. I would agree that, plot-wise, this is not about spiritual warfare or monsters; neither does it have a male protagonist. There are two central characters, one male and one female, and I'm not sure what the exact breakdown is between whose perspective is featured more, but I came away from it feeling more of a connection to Mandy, the female lead, and feeling she was the main character. It seems to me that most previous Peretti novels are primarily from a male point of view. So, from that standpoint, this is not typical Peretti. What does this share with his previous work then? The greatest similarity for me is the fact that I couldn't put it down. While not as action-oriented as the *Darkness* series or as theologically thrilling as *Visitation*, I found the very human drama quite compelling. I was emotionally invested in the characters, especially Mandy, and the story never lost my interest. There is a supernatural element here (and it actually turns to sci-fi) but I think it would be a mistake to try to force a master storyteller like Peretti into too stringent genres or categories. The story begins with tragedy: a car accident has left magician Dane Collins without his wife and partner Mandy. We flash back to 1970 with young Mandy Whitacre at a county fair. A bit of a bump later, and she finds herself in a hospital gown at the same county fair but in 2010. Mandy and Dane soon find each other in modern days (he's 60 and she's 19) and the resemblance to his dead wife (but forty years younger) is undeniable. The plot is sometimes confusing but the central characters are real and their relationship and personal

journeys compelling. It's not a perfect book. I feel like the sci-fi elements, which keep taking a larger role in the story after the halfway mark, actually distracted a bit from the real appeal of the novel. The author seems to feel a need to explain away the central mystery of the plot with pseudo-science and sci-fi technobabble. For all the ground level explanation, it never feels plausible and never really makes sense to me. It doesn't need to for the enjoyment of the story, so I feel like the explanations simply detract. I'm a fan of science fiction but it all feels just a little shoehorned in here. I also was a bit disappointed that the spiritual themes weren't a bit more pronounced. The faith of the main characters is almost incidental. There is an afterword by the author that spells out the main themes that the book contains; the problem is that the afterword comes across as a bit optimistic to me. The themes listed sound very good indeed, but the author shouldn't have tell the reader what the themes of the book are. They should come across clearly in the text itself. I don't think that Christian fiction needs to be preachy - please no - but I do like when something of substance is added to the conversation. These characters don't swear and they go to church (at least sometimes). When things get bleak, they offer up a prayer. So this is a novel about Christian characters but I feel like it would go a little far to suggest that their faith made much difference in their lives, or that it had much impact on the story. Take away their faith and the story remains pretty much the same. Some (most?) readers this won't bother at all. This is a five-star review because I enjoyed the story immensely. Whenever I put it down, I looked forward to picking it up again. What we have here is a beautiful portrayal of human love wrapped in a compelling story with sympathetic characters. It's well-written, and I think it's quite good.

.Frank Peretti is one of my favorite authors. Nobody else on the planet can paint a word picture like Peretti. When he describes a scene, you can almost see it in all its detail, feel it, see it, smell it. His "Darkness" books are must-reads for any Christian, and kept me at rapt attention from cover to cover. Illusion is not like that. I suppose that, as a Christian, I was hoping that eventually Peretti would tie all the "magic" and miracles to what was going on into the spirit world. That didn't happen. In the end, Illusion is a sci-fi novel, through and through. That's Ok. I'm a sci-fi buff too, and have read most things from the masters like Asimov, McCaffrey, and the like. But Illusion just isn't that good a sci-fi story. You've got your pure-as-the-driven snow protagonists, your evil-through-and-through villains, a big honking, power-sucking machine, and the evil U.S. Government who wants to use it. Been there, done that. Finally, as other reviewers have said, the book does tend to drag a bit, spending too much time describing the details of Mandy's magic acts, and not nearly enough on the individual relationships. Our two heroes spend way too much time

being non-functional because of their past histories. That said, it's still a good book. I just felt it wasn't up to Peretti's standards.

What is, is not always what it seems in this ethereal tale of love unfettered. A young magician, magically transported across time and space for reasons unknown, contending with decades of change occurring in the blink of an eye. Sinister groups with hidden agendas are behind this bizarre state of affairs, ones who monitor and control myriad potential outcomes and manipulate ordinary persons' lives. I thought Frank did a fair job with his know-how of the ins and outs of the art of illusion, but I felt the novel lacked several potential sub-plots that would have ratcheted up the excitement level. If you're looking for the adrenalin-pounding plots found in his previous novels *The Oath* or *The Visitation*, you will most likely be relatively disappointed. Hence my docking two stars from the final tally. Still a fair to midland read.

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