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Half for You and Half for Me: Best-Loved Nursery Rhymes and the Stories Behind Them

Katherine Govier

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Half for you and half for me is the first line in a short nursery rhyme that continues with Between us two shall goodwill be. The phrase is a fitting title for this book, which was inspired by the experience of shared reading, and whose audience is children as well as adults. The author, award-winning novelist Katherine Govier, grew up with her mother reading to her, especially from one of their favorite books, The Jessie Willcox Smith Mother Goose. Katherine is now the one who reads to her mother, whose eyesight has degenerated so that she has trouble making out letters. This experience inspired Katherine to collect her favorite nursery rhymes and annotate them. She discovered that the oldest rhymes were not intended for children, but repeated by adults, who were for the most part powerless to change their situations. They would use rhymes speak in code, marking events, making fun of the powerful and passing judgement. In Half for You and Half for Me, the author breaks the codes of these nursery rhymes in accessible, amusing explanations. Beautifully illustrated with vintage pictures as well as contemporary color drawings done especially for this book, Half for You and Half for Me will engage, delight, entertain and inform younger and older readers alike. An essential title for every family bookshelf.

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