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Mary Poppins: The Mary Poppins Series, Book 1



Synopsis

Here is the timeless story of Mary Poppins, the world's favorite nanny, and her magical adventures with the Banks family. Mary Poppins is like no other nanny the Banks children have ever seen. It all starts when their new nanny is blown by the east wind onto the doorstep of the Banks house, carrying a parrot-headed umbrella and a magic carpetbag. She becomes a most unusual nanny to Jane, Michael, and the twins. Who else but Mary Poppins can slide up banisters, pull an entire armchair out of an empty carpetbag, and make a dose of medicine taste like delicious lime-juice cordial? A day with Mary Poppins is a day of magic and make-believe come to life!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When adults forget their childhood pals, daydreamers make foolish wishes and the wind blows unusually strong, it always leads to something quite out of the ordinary -- that is, whenever Mary Poppins is around. In this, the final Mary Poppins book that P.L. Travers gave us before her death at age 90, we share the five Banks' children's adventures. Besides Jane and Michael, who were in the classic Disney movie, there are also toddler twins John and Barbara and infant Annabel. A big departure from the Disney flick is Mary Poppins herself. Here, she is not the smiling, syrupy sweet nanny that young Julie Andrews portrayed; rather, the book's title character is strict, stern, often sarcastic and very taken with herself. Her strong personality makes her a unique storybook character and readers will find this Mary Poppins more of an enigma. Which, frankly, makes for better stories. Everything in this book is G-rated but not preachy. Travers gives her young readers

many fascinating, but never frightening, fantasy situations. Or are they real? Jane and Michael can never quite tell. The lines between what's real and what's not always blur around Mary Poppins. This book is a series of unrelated chapters, self-contained stories, all dealing with the same main characters. Nothing is ever as it seems in the nursery of No. 17 Cherry Tree Lane -- or in the nearby park. On a hot summer's day, Mary Poppins tells the children a tale of a hobo who was an angel in disguise, shedding his rags and growing wings as he flies away. In another chapter, Michael, upset that he's caught a cold, finds that some days when everything seems to be going all right, it's actually going all wrong. He's taught a valuable lesson on a planet full of cats.

I have to admit that I cannot completely explain the attraction of Pamela Travers' tale of Mary Poppins, nanny extraordinaire. But 48 years later, and Julie Andrews notwithstanding, I still found myself nodding and smiling as I read the book. Strange things just happen around Mary. You can wander into paintings and travel the world with a magic compass. Laughter makes you fly and the animals in the zoo will celebrate your birthday if you're nice. All at Mary Poppins' whimsy. Growing up in the U.S., with no concept of what a nanny was, I still loved her right away. What is odd about this is that she actually isn't all that likable. She is quite vain and very, very bossy. She says 'no' a lot, and rarely stops to explain herself or reveal her secrets. Yet somehow you know that she will never let you down and she always will do what she says. Young Jane and Michael (and the even younger twins) couldn't ask for a better guide and protector. In a family where the father is most often at work 'in the city' and the mother is loving but a trifle inept, Mary is the glue that keeps things working together. The book is actually a series of short tales of a fantastical nature. Sometimes the tale contains the requisite grain of wisdom and sometimes it is just silly fun. Perhaps the willingness to be light hearted is what charms young listeners. In addition to those already mentioned, there is the tale of the dancing cow, and a touching explanation of why we cannot talk to birds. Even though the book is quite readable for an 8 or nine year old, it is really best for being read to children. The adventures should be appealing to almost any child and the pen and ink sketches are a delight to look at.

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