

POLLY AND BUSTER – A STORY OF KINDNESS, JAMCAKES AND CLIMBING TREES.

Dear reader,

When I was young, my mother used to **take people in**. On any given day, I could come home from school and there would be somebody's toddler in the bath because their mother wasn't coping, or an old neighbor at the kitchen table whose family had abandoned him, or a couple of Mormons who needed a room to rent and could teach me how to play the piano.

Sometimes these people were bright and cheerful and enhanced our childhoods. Others were broken and damaged by life, and we knew to be gentle around them. To my mother, everyone deserved kindness no matter how life had shaped them, and she would often say, **"It's easy to love people who are loveable, but it is the unloveable ones who need it the most."**

For me, this is probably the most important line in the whole of Polly and Buster's story and it is spoken by Buster's mother, who takes in broken monsters and cares for them. Because of his mother, Buster has grown up knowing only trust and kindness, but is beginning to understand that the world is not always a fair or friendly place. Polly's mother, however, is more concerned about what other witches might think of her than whether life is kind or fair.

While witches and monsters once lived together peacefully, the divide between them is only growing wider – and those in power will go to any lengths to ensure that this separation is deepened by lies and fear.

In her heart, **Polly is good and true**, but it is hard to be different to everyone you know. When she is given the opportunity to finally fit in to the witch community, and even become popular, it means letting go of a little part of her integrity and hurting those she loves the most.

My hope for **Polly & Buster** is that my readers will see themselves in this story, and understand that no matter how confusing or frightening the world may seem at times, and despite all the crazy, bad things that grown-ups seem to do all around them – **kindness and integrity always win out in the end**. And also, if you are lucky, it doesn't matter how wonky or different or unloveable you may think you are, there will always be someone in the world who loves you.

Best wishes,

Sally Rippin

