



A Spoonful of Sugar: A Nanny's Story

Brenda Ashford

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Brenda Ashford is the quintessential British nanny. Prim and proper, gentle and kind, she seems to have stepped straight out of *Mary Poppins*. For more than six decades Nanny Brenda swaddled, diapered, dressed, played with, sang to, cooked for, and looked after more than one hundred children. From the pampered sons and daughters of lords ensconced in their grand estates to the children of tough war evacuees in London's East End, Brenda has taught countless little ones to be happy, healthy, and thoroughly well bred. In this delightful memoir, Brenda shares her endearing, amusing, and sometimes downright bizarre experiences turning generations of children into successful adults.

From the moment Brenda first held her baby brother David she was hooked. She became a second mother to him, changing his nappies, reading him stories, and giving him all the love her warm heart contained. Knowing a career caring for children was her calling in life, Brenda attended London's prestigious Norland College, famous for producing top-notch nannies. It was a sign of privilege and good taste for the children of the well-to-do to be seen being pushed in their Silver Cross prams by Norland nannies, who were recognizable by their crisp, starched black uniforms with white bib collars, and their flowing black capes lined with red silk. And what skills were these trainees tested on daily? Lullaby singing, storytelling, pram shining, bed making, all forms of sewing, cooking simple meals, and dispensing first aid—including knowing the best way to help the medicine go down.

In *A Spoonful of Sugar*, Brenda recalls her years at Norland and her experiences during the war (after all, even if bombs are dropping, there's no reason to let standards slip), and recounts in lovely detail a life devoted to the care of other people's children.

Sprinkled throughout with pearls of wisdom (you can never give children too much love, and you should learn how to sew a button, for goodness' sake), this delightful memoir from Britain's oldest living nanny is *practically perfect in every way*.

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