ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

All for Pie, Pie for All
David Martin
Valeri Gorbachev, illustrator
Candlewick Press
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Bespectacled Grandma Cat knowingly glances over her shoulder at the Cat family, Mouse family, and Ant family, who are already thinking about how much they will enjoy sharing—down to the last bite—the delicious apple pie she has baked. The author, whose previous books include *We've All Got Bellybuttons!* and *Piggy and Dad Go Fishing*, was inspired for this tasty picture book by his own pie-baking experiences and the motto of the Three Musketeers.

The whole Cat family enjoys Grandma Cat's pie, leaving a single piece. While the Cats nap with their stomachs full, the Mouse family, led by Grandma Mouse, has its dessert, leaving only six crumbs. While the Mouse family, now also full, naps, the Ant family, lead by Grandma Ant, eats its dessert. Finally, Baby Ant, yelling "Pie," walks off with the very last crumb. When Grandma Cat decides to bake another pie, she has fifteen helpers: cats, mice, and ants. Anyone who has cooked with young children will see the humor in this situation: the "helpers" make a mess, which the illustrator portrays as a swashbuckling adventure in baking.

As the plot suggests, Martin's narrative contains plenty of repetition, almost rebus-like, which will appeal to preschoolers and emergent readers alike. The bold text is well integrated with the colorful pen-and-watercolor illustrations. Gorbachev, a prolific illustrator of children's books including *The Giant Hug)*, creates cozy settings with washed colors and the kinds of details that delight small children, like Baby Ant wheeling a blueberry in a stroller, a picture that captures both the purposefulness and difficulty of a toddler wanting to help grownups. Even the end papers show kitchen scenes that add subtext to the plot. The illustrations echo each other in the same manner as the text, making for a unified whole.

The gentle message of sharing and cooperation will not be lost on listeners, yet the humorous tone prevents the story from becoming didactic. *All for Pie, Pie for All* is an ideal book for library story time or a great read-aloud from a parent or caregiver's lap.

Jeanne M. Lesinski