

# RHYME TIME

**SCENE:** It is bedtime for baby Lucy. The Jacobs family are discussing which lullaby they should sing to her to help her go to sleep.

**ROLES (4):** Harry (father), Claire (mother), Tina (elder sister), Billy (younger brother)

**READER AGES:** 8 years and over

**CLAIRE:** (*surprised*) My goodness, is that the time? It's seven o'clock! Time for baby Lucy to go to sleep. Say 'night night', everyone.

**TINA:** I have a nice idea. Why don't we all take Lucy to bed together? We can sing her a lullaby to send her off to sleep.

**HARRY:** What a lovely thought, Tina. I do have a rather pleasant singing voice.

**BILLY:** (*jokingly*) Sure you do, Dad!

**CLAIRE:** Well, then. Lucy gets the Jacobs family singers instead of reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* tonight. What a lucky girl!

*All characters pretend to gather around baby Lucy's cot.*

**BILLY:** What should we sing?

**CLAIRE:** How about *Rock-a-bye Baby*? That used to send you two off to sleep in minutes. (*sighing*) Oh, it feels like only yesterday that you both were tiny babies like Lucy. Honestly, I don't know where the years go!

**TINA:** (*thinking aloud*) I've always thought that's a terrible choice of song to sing to a baby. Think about it - the poor baby is stuck up in a tree when the wind starts to blow and the cradle starts rocking madly. How scary would that be?

**HARRY:** Not to mention the part when the baby and the cradle come crashing down! I agree with Tina. Let's choose a different song to sing to Lucy.

**BILLY:** What about a nursery rhyme?

**CLAIRE:** Great idea, Billy! Which nursery rhyme should we sing?

**TINA:** How about *Jack and Jill*?

**HARRY:** (*thinking*) Do we really want to sing Lucy a rhyme about children falling down a hill? I've always wondered how things turned out for those two. Jack breaks his crown and Jill goes tumbling after... they both probably ended up in hospital feeling very sad indeed.

**CLAIRE:** That's awful! Their poor mother would have been so worried about them. Right, no *Jack and Jill* for Lucy, either. Any other suggestions?

**BILLY:** *Humpty Dumpty*?

**TINA:** Yet another story of pain and suffering! The poor fellow falls off a wall and no one is able to put him back together. We need to think of a nursery rhyme with a happy ending, not a tragic ending!

*Everything is silent while the Jacobs family try to think of an appropriate nursery rhyme.*

**HARRY:** *Three Blind Mice*?

**TINA:** Dad! The poor mice get their tails cut off with a knife! That's a terrible choice.

**HARRY:** (*embarrassed*) Sorry. It was the only nursery rhyme I could think of.

**CLAIRE:** What about *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son*?

**BILLY:** I'm pretty sure the boy in that story steals a pig, Mum. Do we really want to teach Lucy about stealing at this young age?

**TINA:** (*getting desperate*) *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*?

**HARRY:** (*shocked*) She dies at the end! I'm not singing that to my daughter at bedtime!

**CLAIRE:** This is hopeless! All those suggestions are terrible!

**BILLY:** Sorry, Mum. We're trying our best.

**CLAIRE:** Yes, Billy, I know you are. It's just that all those nursery rhymes are about such awful things! Who wrote them, anyway? And why do parents keep telling them to their children?

**TINA:** (*considering this*) Maybe we're just taking the whole situation a little bit too seriously, Mum. Maybe Lucy won't –

*Tina stops suddenly. All characters look at her, confused.*

**HARRY:** What is it, Tina?

**TINA:** (*whispering*) It's Lucy. (*pauses*) Look at Lucy.

All characters pretend to look into Lucy's cot.

**CLAIRE:** Oh, my goodness... she's fast asleep!

**BILLY:** It seems she didn't need a special lullaby to send her off to sleep. All she needed to hear was the voices of her favourite people – us!

**HARRY:** *(disappointed)* Does this mean that I don't get to sing?

**TINA:** *(laughing)* Not tonight, Dad. I'm sorry, I know you were looking forward to it. Maybe we can try the singing again tomorrow night.

**CLAIRE:** That sounds like a lovely idea. But before we do that, we have a job to do!

**BILLY:** A job? What kind of job?

**CLAIRE:** We need to sit down together and write a lullaby that's appropriate for babies! No injuries, stealing or carving knives - just happiness and sunshine!

**HARRY:** *(enthusiastically)* Great idea! Then I can practise singing it in the shower tomorrow morning!

**CLAIRE:** If you must, dear – if you must. But right now, we have some work to do. Come on, Jacobs family. Let's get writing!

**THE END**

