



The Day My Mother Changed Her Name: And Other Stories (Library of Modern Jewish Literature)

William D. Kaufman

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William Kaufman grew up on his mother's kugel and his father's boyhood stories. The son of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania and the Ukraine and one of five children, he learned how to translate his colorful childhood into tales of his own, regaling audiences of family, friends, and eventually his retirement community with periodic public readings. Now, at the age of 93, Kaufman makes his stories, filled with a sharp wit and telling detail, available to a wider audience for the first time.

In the title story a young Jewish boy is shamed by his narrow-minded teacher when she forces him to admit, before the whole class, that his mother cannot read English. His mother's eventual encounter with the teacher offers a lesson in self-respect with just the right balance of grace and moxie. In "The Search for God in the A & P" a young boy goes on a clandestine mission to compare prices at his father's grocery competition; the expedition meets with comic results when the young boy refuses to be bullied in this David-and-Goliath-style parable. These semi-autobiographical stories, populated with outsized and magnetic characters, subtly layer the specifics of the Jewish experience with universal dilemmas of childhood, growing up, and old age.

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