

Esme Raji Codell



First famous for her bestselling tell-all diary of her first year of teaching in a Chicago Public School, *Educating Esme*, and her landmark resource guide, *How to Get Your Child to Love Reading*, Esme Raji Codell turned her talents to writing multicultural books for intermediate readers. Her novel *Sahara Special* has received starred reviews from Kirkus and Publisher's Weekly, was a # 1 Booksense 76 pick and won the International Reading Association Children's Book Award for Intermediate Fiction. Esme Raji Codell is the author of several other books for children that have earned praise and a strong and lively fan base: her childhood memoir *Sing a Song of Tuna Fish* is a perennial favorite for teaching children to journal, *Diary of a Fairy Godmother* is a fairy-tale tell-all that leads readers to make their own wishes come true, and *Hanukkah Shmanukkah* gives Dickens' classic a fresh twist. The anticipated companion novel to *Sahara Special*, titled *Vive la Paris*, was the first novel featuring an African-American protagonist to win a Sydney Taylor honor.

Annie Barrows



Annie grew up in Northern California, and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, with a degree in Medieval History. Unable to find a job in the middle ages, she decided upon a career as an editor, eventually landing at Chronicle Books in San Francisco, where she was in charge of "all the books that nobody in their right mind would publish." After earning an M.F.A. in Creative Writing at Mills College, Annie wrote a number of books for grown-ups about such diverse subjects as fortune-telling (she can read palms!), urban legends (there are no alligators in the sewer!), and opera (she knows what they're singing about!). In 2003, Annie grew weary of grown-ups, and began to write for kids, which she found to be way more fun. Her first children's book, *Ivy and Bean*, an ALA Notable Book for 2007, was soon followed by other books in the series, including *Ivy and Bean and the Ghost That Had to Go* and *Ivy and Bean Break the Fossil Record*.

In between writing books about Ivy and Bean, Annie began to write *The Magic Half*. "I wrote the kind of book I loved as a kid—what I call regular magic, which means that it takes place in the same world we all live in, except that a magical event occurs. *The Magic Half* is a catalog of my favorite daydreams: a tiny door in an enchanted house, time travel, and twins."