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Picture Books

The Suprise Party: A Rip Squeak Book
Lee Cohen
Loyal De Neuville, illustrator
Raven Tree Press
978-1-934960-85-1
(December 31, 2010)

Rip Squeak, a little mouse, has a great secret! He plans to show his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Squeak, how much he loves them. Mr. Squeak asks, “What are you up to, Rip?” and Rip answers, “Nothing at all.” But when his parents leave the house to see the new flowers in the garden, the loyal and family-oriented Rip goes to work. He plans a surprise party with invitations, decorations, and cake. He confides his plan to his innocent but determined little sister, Jesse, and they make a list of things to do. They ask for help from their friends: Abbey the gentle kitten with a mind of her own, and the fun-loving, born actor Euripides the Frog. Jesse says, “I don’t like cleaning up. I thought throwing a surprise party was going to be fun.” But Abbey grins and convinces her that together they can make an adventure out of cleaning the house and baking Mr. and Mrs. Squeak’s favorite, a chocolate cake. They ask Sam the Dragonfly to deliver hand-written invitations while everyone else decorates the toy room with balloons.

Throughout the story, Rip watches out for his little sister, including her in his secret and helping her climb down from the toy chest after three big balloons accidentally hoist her aloft. As the guests arrive, Rip and Jesse hurry them to hiding places; Euripides dims the lights and the toy room goes quiet. When the parents walk in, everyone yells, “SURPRISE!” and the lights are switched on. Mr. and Mrs. Squeak beam with pride. They play guitar, sing old songs, dance, and laugh. Unsurprisingly, “The party was a great success.”

Author Lee Cohen has written other books featuring these characters, as well as stories, TV scripts, and feature animation. Accomplished artist Loyal de Neville, whose work has been featured on magazine covers and books all over the world, brings the brightly dressed characters to life in vibrant full pages and spreads.

The Rip Squeak family and other woodland creatures can also be discovered in books,

toys, and gifts at the Rip Squeak Galleries.

Engagingly written, printed with soy ink, and accompanied by vibrant pictures, *The Surprise Party* is a delightful way to teach children that working together can be fun. It describes how plans must be made and followed by listing the chores and teaches cooperation and responsibility, which promotes family togetherness. Ages three to seven.

Mary Popham