

“Are you ready?” asked his mother. “Well, let us count. One, two, three!”

The lid flew open, and out jumped the man with the black hair and black whiskers. And with a squeak of joy, out jumped the mouse.

“Ee-ee-ee!” he cried, as he ran away.

“Ee!” said the Jack-in-the-box.

“Whee-ee-ee!” cried the boy with delight.

“Oh,—a mouse! A mouse!” cried the mother. Then she threw the box on the floor and jumped up on her chair.

“Where? Where?” cried all the children.

But they saw only the tip of Squeaky's tail as he ran across the hall to the pantry. Another moment and he was safe in the hole in the pantry wall.

The children's father laughed as he helped their mother climb down from the chair.

“Well,” he said, “how did *you* enjoy Teddy's scare box?”

SQUEAKY AND THE SCARE BOX



By Georgene Faulkner



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Squeaky and the Scare Box/ Georgene Faulkner

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“And see my beautiful dolly!” cried another.
“She can open and shut her eyes.”

By and by the mother took the box from the tree. “Come here, Teddy,” she said. “Here is a scare box. We will have some fun. Watch me open the lid.”

Teddy stood by his mother and watched closely.

The mother pushed the man with the black hair down, down, into the box and shut the lid. Poor Squeaky felt the springs close down on him and squeaked, “Ee-ee-”

“That was a fine squeak,” said the father. “The toys are wonderful these days.”

“Yes,” said the mother, as she turned off the light. “When I was a child, we did not have such toys.”

“I am in a trap,” said poor Squeaky, “but there isn't even a bit of cheese in it. I wonder what kind of trap it is; nothing seems to hurt me. Well, I am safe for a while, and I hope I shall soon get out.”

Squeaky lay in the box all night, and wondered what Sniffy and Sharpeyes were doing. The next morning, he heard children calling, “Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!” Soon the toys were taken down, one by one. Then such a noise was heard—drums beating, horns tooting, children shouting. You should have heard it.

“See our new doll's house!” cried one child.

“See my new train! How fast it goes!” cried another.

SQUEAKY AND THE SCARE BOX

Once upon a time a family of mice lived in the pantry wall. There was a father mouse, a mother mouse, and three little baby mice.

One little mouse had sharp bright eyes and could see everything, even in the darkest holes. He was called Sharpeyes. His brother could sniff and smell anything, wherever it might be hidden. He was called Sniffy. The baby mouse had such a squeaky little voice that he was called Squeaky. He was always singing, “Ee-ee-ee!”

Mother mouse was very wise, and she had taught her babies to run and hide when they saw the old cat coming. She had also taught them not to go near a trap. The little mice obeyed their mother, and they were happy in their home in the pantry wall.

They had many good times together. I could not tell you about all of these, but I am going to tell you about their Christmas party and what happened to Squeaky.

It was the night before Christmas. The stockings hung by the chimney, and the tall tree was standing in the parlor. The children were asleep, and the father and mother had gone upstairs to bed.

In the pantry wall, the little mice were all wide-awake.

“Ee-ee-ee!” squeaked Squeaky. “Why can't we creep into the big room and see the tall Christmas tree? The children have talked about it for days, and we have never seen one. Mother, please let us go and see it.”

“Yes,” said Sniffy, “do let us go. Everything smells so good. The children and the cook made

With a squeak, the mice scampered down from the tree. Then they ran along the hall, through the pantry, and back to their home. There was the father mouse, and the mother mouse, and Sharpeyes, and Sniffy. But where was Squeaky?

Now, as Squeaky tried to run down the tree, he fell heels over head. Down, down, down, he fell until he was caught in a funny box. An ugly man with black hair and black whiskers seemed to be hopping out of the box.

When Squeaky saw the lights turned on, he hid under the dress of this queer man. He lay very, very still, for he had been taught to be still when danger was near. He heard voices. The father and mother had come back.

“Yes,” the father was saying; “it would have been a shame to forget this train. I would like it to come right out from under the tree. Help me put the track down, mother.”

When the train was just where it should be, the mother turned to the beautiful tree.

“Why, look at that Jack-in-the-box,” she said. “The man is hanging out. That will never do. I will shut the box. Teddy must see the man jump out.”

On the floor they saw a wonderful doll's house. "How fine it would be to live there!" they squeaked.

They ran into the house. They ran up and down the stairs, sat on the chairs, and lay down in the beds. Oh, they had a merry time!

Then Sniffy said, "I smell that good popcorn again. Let's climb up into the Christmas tree and get some."

They climbed up into the tree. They nibbled the popcorn. They nibbled the candy. They nibbled the nuts, and they nibbled the cakes.

Soon Sharpeyes cried out, "Come here, I see a mouse! I see a mouse! But he doesn't look like our family at all."

"I should say not," sniffed Sniffy; "and how good he smells!"

"Why, he is good to eat!" squeaked Squeaky; and they all began to eat the chocolate mouse.

Then they found another candy mouse—a pretty pink one. They were so busy eating it that they forgot to watch and listen; then—bang! The door was opened, and the lights were turned on.

long strings of popcorn today. I found a little on the pantry floor, and I want some more."

"I peeped out of our hole," said Sharpeyes, "and I saw cake and candy all ready for the children. Oh, I do want a bite of those good things! Please let us have a Christmas party."

"Well," said mother mouse, "I will ask your father. If he says it is safe, we will go."

When mother mouse asked father mouse, he said, "I will go out first and look all about. If it is safe, I will come back for you."

So father mouse crept softly through the pantry, down the long hall, and into the parlor. The cat was nowhere to be seen. Father mouse ran back to the pantry and cried, "The cat is not near; come and see the tree."

Then all the mice came scampering from the hole in the wall. They crept through the pantry, down the long hall, and into the parlor. When they saw the tall Christmas tree, they squeaked again and again in their joy. Then they ran around and around the tree to see what was on it.

