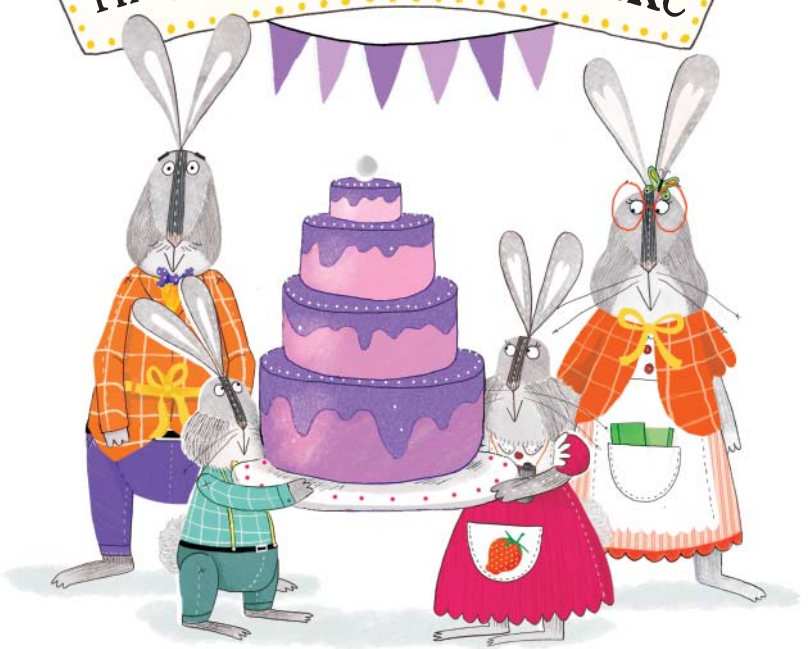
Teacup House

The Twitches Bake a Cake



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USBORNE

Chapter One

Party Time

Stevie Gillespie was precisely 117.6 centimetres tall, with long brown hair that she wore in a big plait on one side of her head. She had it on the side so she could twirl it between her fingers when she was thinking.



Today, Stevie was at the kitchen counter, kneeling on one of the dining chairs. She was mixing edible, bright-purple glitter into a huge bowl of butter icing.

She twisted the spoon this way and that. She was so excited to be helping Mum ice the big purple cake for their moving-in party.



Stevie was thinking about everything that had happened this very busy week:

1. She and Mum moved from the city to the country, and it turned out Stevie loved it.
2. Nanny Blue gave Stevie a teacup house and its little family of toy rabbits, the Twitches.
3. Stevie lost the daddy rabbit, Gabriel Twitch.
4. Stevie found him again. Phew!

After spending most of their moving-in day looking for Gabriel in the garden, he'd somehow turned up in her bedroom with the other Twitches, Bo, Silver and Fig.



Relieved and excited, Stevie had spent the past few days carefully arranging, and rearranging, all the Twitches's belongings, until she'd got the inside of the teacup house looking just right.

Now it sat on the kitchen counter in its pretty saucer garden. She loved the house's tiny blue tiles and the delicate painted ivy that crept along the walls. She loved the tiny little flowers that sat in the cheerful red window boxes, and the little sign swinging above the blue front door. And most of all, she loved the four Twitches: Bo, Gabriel, Silver and Fig. They really were the most delightful little toy rabbits you could possibly imagine.



Today, she'd set them up as
though they were doing work
in the garden.



"Yum yum, hey, Twitches!" Stevie said, as she took a lick of the icing from a thick dollop on the back of the wooden spoon. "I think the icing's ready, Mum, and it's delicious!"



Stevie winked at the four rabbits and looked at the giant four-layer cake Mum had made for the moving-in party that she'd organized specially to introduce them to their new neighbours. Though

Mum had made lots of tasty party treats, Stevie was looking forward to tucking into the purple party cake most of all.

"Good," said Mum. "It's nearly one o'clock, and the party starts in half an hour. It's time to ice the cake."

Whenever Stevie thought about the party she felt nervous. She liked parties, she really did. But she could be what grown-ups wrongly called "shy" and what Stevie called, "taking my time to get to know people in my own way".

Getting to know people was one of

her biggest worries about moving to the country. What if nobody liked her? What if she didn't make any friends at all?

Stevie tried not to worry, and went and grabbed two spatulas instead. Together, she and her mum spread thick swirls of sparkly purple icing all over the cake, before smoothing it down so it looked neat and yummy.

"Nice work," said Mum, beaming as she handed Stevie a tub of little silver balls for her to decorate the cake with. There were loads of them.

She tried to spread them out as



neatly as possible, telling herself she'd enjoy the party. Why wouldn't she?

And, yes she was worried, and yes she was nervous, but as always she'd try her best.

She wasn't going to let today be anything less than brilliant.



Chapter Two

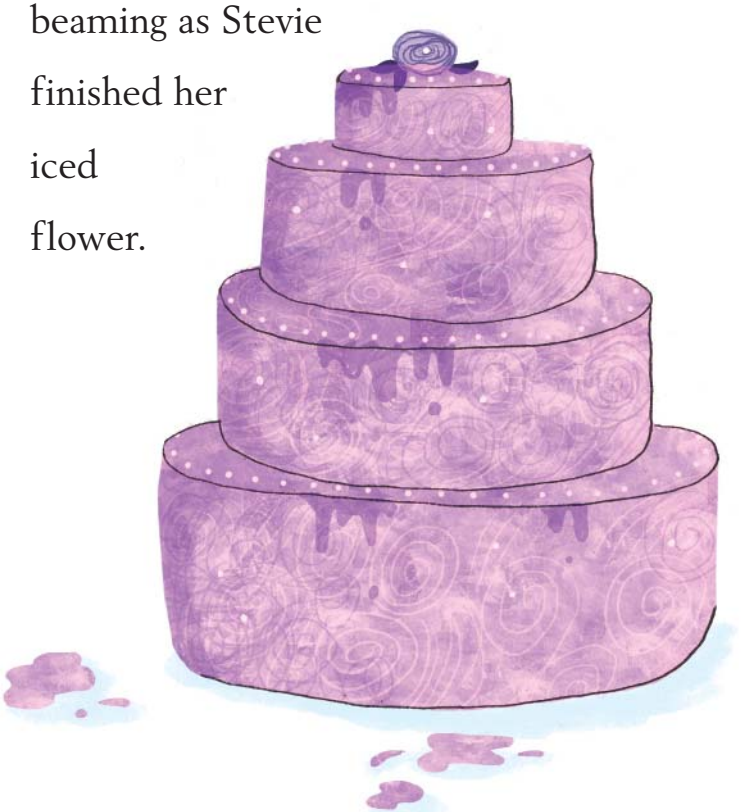
Rabbits Make a Plan

Stevie pulled her concentration face as she held an icing bag between her hands and piped a big purple flower on top of the cake, just like Mum had taught her.

As the flower started to take shape, Stevie wondered who would be at the party. They didn't know anybody in the countryside yet, other than Dad and

Stuart. They only lived two miles away on their farm, but they couldn't come because they had something very important they had to do with their cows.

"That's really brilliant," said Mum, beaming as Stevie finished her iced flower.



Stevie felt proud of herself. "And," Mum continued, "there's somebody coming up the garden path who I think would very much like to see you."

Stevie looked up, her heart beating fast. "Who?"

Mum paused, then smiled. "Nanny Blue."

"Nanny Blue!" Stevie exclaimed. Nanny Blue was Stevie's Favourite Person (who wasn't Mum or Dad) and she hadn't seen her for a whole week. Stevie picked up Bo and Gabriel from the saucer garden and put them in her pocket with the yellow star. She wanted

to show Nanny Blue the new little jackets she'd made them from one of Mum's old scarves and some yellow ribbon. Before Mum could tell Stevie to put on some shoes, she had opened the kitchen door and run off into the garden.





As soon as the coast was clear, Fig and Silver Twitch looked at each other and wiggled their noses with delight.

"Quick! Let's go out and take a closer look!" said Silver excitedly.

"Have you seen that amazing glittery icing on the cake?" said Fig, pointing to the other side of the kitchen counter.

Despite having a felt carrot attached to his hand, he hated carrots. But he loved cake. And icing!



"Do you think we could find a way to taste some?" he said. "Maybe a tiny nibble, from the side?"

"It does look delicious," said Silver, the start of an idea sparking in her head. "I think we should make our own – a lovely surprise cake for when Mama Bo and Daddy Gabriel get back." Ever since their first day at the cottage, Silver had been wondering what adventures she could have next.





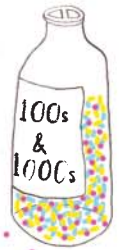

"What do you mean?" Fig was hopping excitedly from one foot to the other. Baking was the one thing he really loved doing and was good at.

"I mean, we've got all the ingredients to make a cake here in the teacup house," said Silver. "And you can show me how. But, to make it extra special, we could get some of that sparkly purple icing and put it on our cake. Imagine what it would look like!"

Fig's face lit up, then he frowned.








"Won't Mama Bo and Daddy Gabriel be cross if we leave the teacup house by ourselves, especially without asking first?"

"But they're not here to ask, are they?" said Silver, twitching her nose and grinning with mischief. "And besides, everybody loves surprises. And cake! So, are you with me?"

Fig looked at the thick icing, sparkling and purple in the huge bowl in the not too far distance.

"Yes," he said. "I definitely am."

