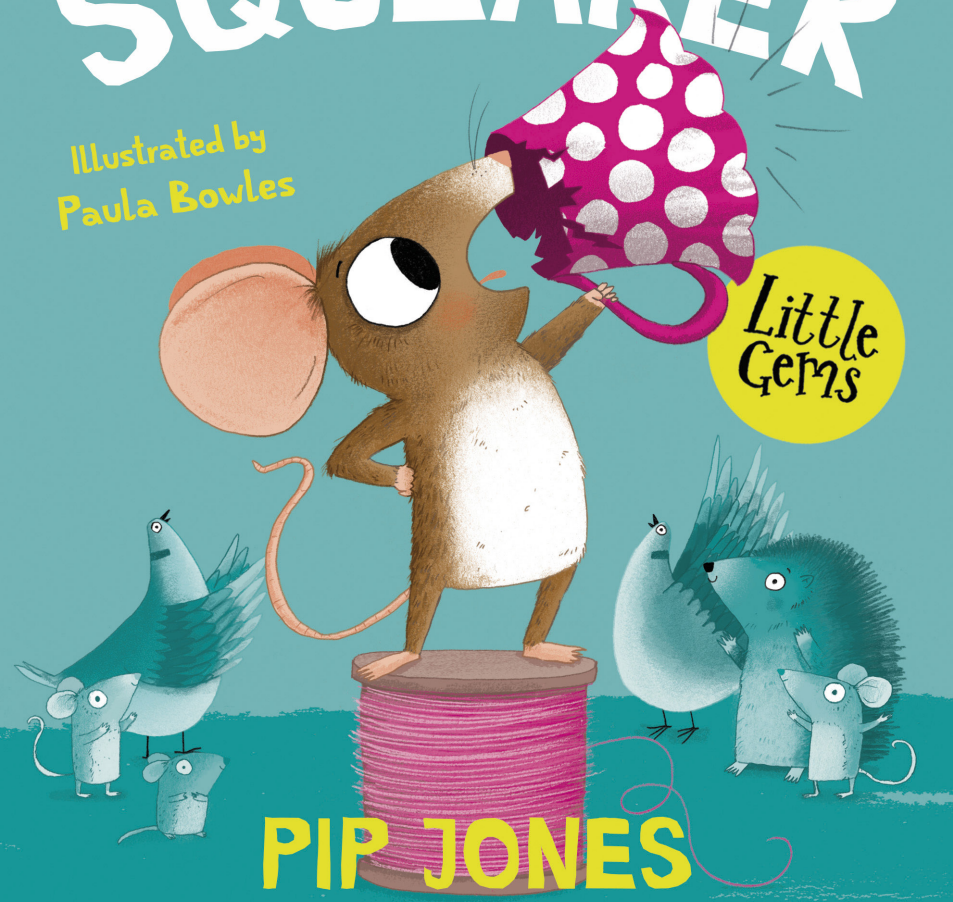
MADAM SQUEAKER

Illustrated by Paula Bowles



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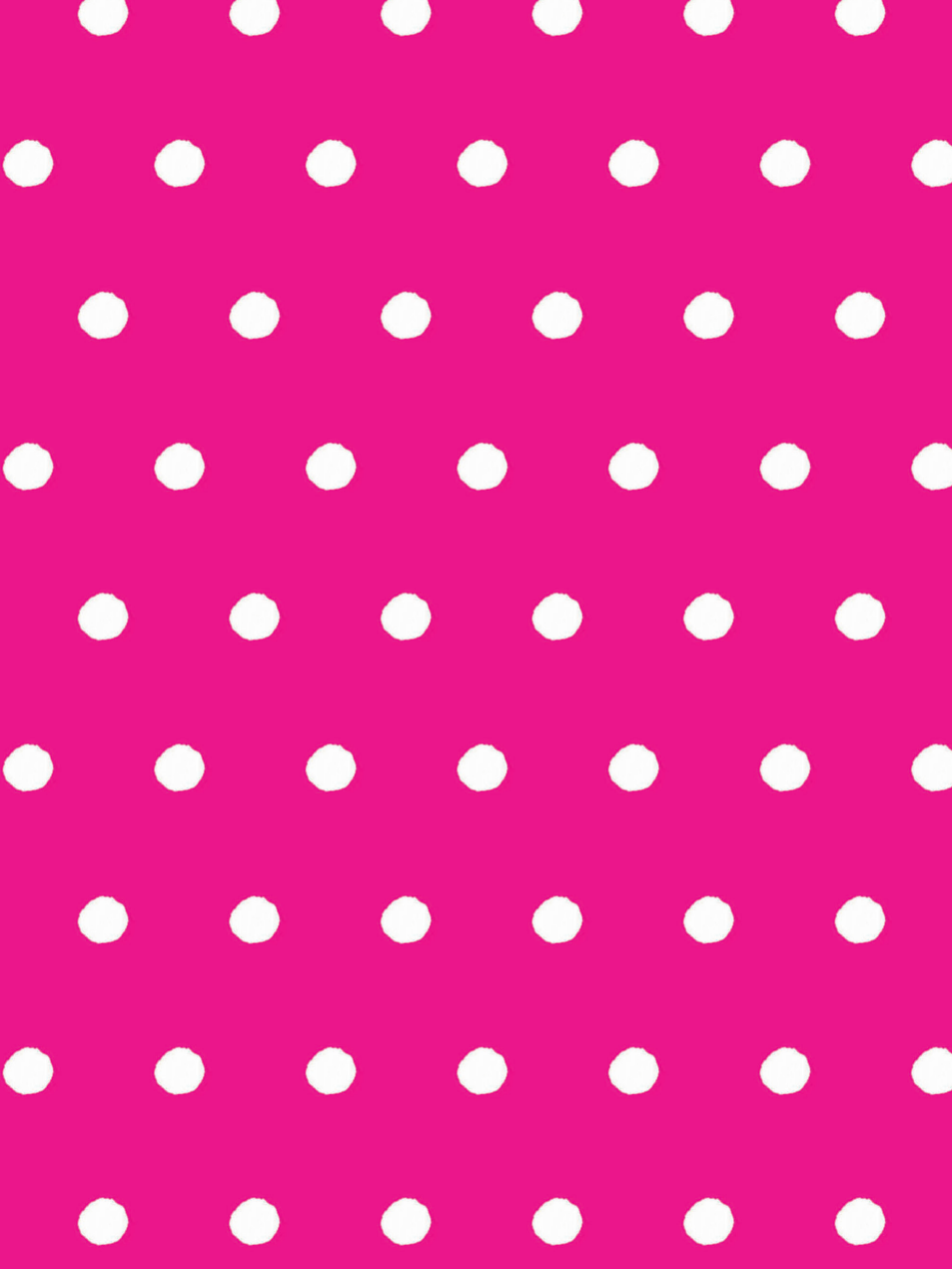

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This book is in a super-readable format for young readers beginning their independent reading journey.

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PIP JONES

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Barrington Stoke

For my beautiful niece Martha,
for my sister Katie, and for mighty
girls and women everywhere. xx

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CHAPTER 1

Half a peanut and a speck of cheese

The garden around Hollyhock House shone in the evening sun. Inside the creaking old building, Minetta Squeaker, a tiny grey-brown mouse, had found a lovely cool spot under the bottom step in the hall. It was the perfect place to eat her evening meal.

"Billy?" Minetta squeaked. "Won't you come and sit with me?"

Billy the spider opened three of her eyes and looked down from her cobweb. "Sorry, Minetta. What did you say? I didn't hear you."

"Come and sit with me while I eat!" Minetta squeaked louder.

"It's not worth coming down!" Billy yawned. "That's not much of a dinner, Minetta. It'll all be gone in three bites!"

Billy was right – Minetta didn't have much to eat tonight. She had only found a few scraps dropped by the Two Legs who lived in the house – three cracker crumbs, a speck of cheddar cheese and half a peanut.

"I'll just have to make the most of it," Minetta said, and she popped the cheese in her mouth. "Perhaps I'll have more luck tomorrow."

"Not with those rats about!" Billy scoffed. "They never leave anything for anyone else to eat if they can help it."