

What's A Birthday?

"Hey, everybody, and welcome to our newest adventure, "What's a Birthday." Toby, Doby, and I are really excited about this one. Did you know that mice don't celebrate birthdays? No? Neither did I. Can you imagine how awful it must be to go your whole life without a birthday? Well, in case any of you, have never celebrated your birthday, we are going to tell you all about them. So sit back and enjoy. Our story is about to begin.

The sun was glistening. The birds were chirping their silly songs, and the trees, both big and small, swayed along with the gentle breeze. It was a beautiful day for a birthday party.

Suzy was turning five today. Today, she would celebrate her fifth birthday. She didn't remember her other birthdays, she had been too young, but Mommy and Aunt Olive told her all about them. Today, she was going to tell her friends, Toby and Doby, all about birthdays. Suzy wondered if Toby and Doby knew what a birthday party was, if they had ever had a birthday, and how old they were. Today she would find out.

Suzy was so excited! She jumped out of bed, slipped her feet into her slippers, pulled on her bathrobe and ran down to the kitchen.

Mommy was making breakfast. Suzy snuck up from behind, wrapped her arms around Mommy's waist, and gave her a great big hug.

"Good morning, Mommy," Suzy said.

"Good morning, Suzy," Mommy said. "Did you have sweet dreams last night?"

"I sure did. I dreamed all about my birthday party," Suzy said.

"Dreamt," Mommy corrected. "You dreamt all about your birthday party."

"Dreamt," Suzy repeated.

"That's right," Mommy said. "Dreamt means you already did dream."

"Oh," Suzy said, a puzzled look on her little face.

Suddenly, Suzy's face lit up.

"Is it time for my birthday party?"

"Not yet," Mommy answered.

"Oh," Suzy pouted, "how much longer?"

"A little while yet. We still have lots to do." Mommy said.

"Can I help?" Suzy asked.

"What?" Mommy asked.

"Oh, I mean, may I help?" Suzy asked, remembering to use the right word this time.

Mommy taught Suzy that if you want permission, you say 'May I.' That 'Can I' means you are able to, not that you are asking for permission.

"Of course you may. I would love your help."

"Yea!" Suzy cheered.

"But, first you have to eat," Mommy said, placing Suzy's plate on the table. "Your favorite, French Toast, and sausage."

"Oh, thank you, Mommy," Suzy said, picking up her fork. Suzy ate all of her delicious, birthday breakfast, "Yum, Yum."

When Suzy finished, she brought her dishes over to Mommy. Then, she ran upstairs to wash and get dressed. When she finished, she rushed to the top of the stairs, climbed atop the banister, and slid all the way down. "Wheee!"

At the bottom, Aunt Olive was waiting for her, "Good morning Suzy, Happy Birthday!"

Suzy threw her arms around Aunt Olive's neck and squeezed. "Good morning, Aunt Olive. I'm five today. I'm a big girl now."

"You sure are," Aunt Olive said, "a really, big girl, all grown up and everything."

"Yup, all grown up and everything," Suzy agreed.

"Are you grown up enough to help me decorate?" Aunt Olive asked.

"I sure am," Suzy nodded. "Can, er, may I go see if Toby and Doby can come help us?"

"Of course," Aunt Olive said. "Take your time, I need to talk to mommy first."

"Okay," Suzy said, skipping out the door.

Suzy knocked on the door of the Mouse Family's home. Mrs. Mouse answered, "Good morning, Suzy. How are you today?"

"It's my birthday today," Suzy said, with a smile.

"Your birthday?" Mrs. Mouse said, curiously. "Tell me, Suzy, what is a birthday?"

"You don't know?" Suzy asked, amazed. She thought grownups knew everything.

Mrs. Mouse shook her head.

"Your birthday is the day you were born," Suzy said.

"Oh, I see," Mrs. Mouse said, "Mice do not celebrate birthdays."

"They don't?" Suzy asked, surprised.

Mrs. Mouse shook her head, "No, we don't."

"Then, how do you know how old you are?" Suzy asked with wide-eyed amazement.

"I guess we don't," Mrs. Mouse said.

"Wow!" Suzy exclaimed. "It must be weird not knowing how old you are."

"Mice never think about it," Mrs. Mouse said. "We just get born, grow up, and if we are lucky, live a long life."

"That's why you are afraid of people, cats, traps, and poison, huh?" Suzy said.

"That's right, Suzy. As long as we can avoid all of those things, we usually do okay," Mrs. Mouse answered.

"Well, now you have us to help keep you safe," Suzy said.

"Yes we do," Mrs. Mouse agreed, "and that makes us very lucky mice."

Suzy nodded her head and smiled, "Are Toby and Doby home?"

Mrs. Mouse nodded, "I'll call them for you."

"Thank you," Suzy said.

While Suzy waited for Toby and Doby, she leaned over the porch railing and looked out at the yard. On the front lawn, she spied a mommy rabbit and her babies nibbling on the grass, still damp from the morning dew. They were so cute, soft, and furry. Their long ears were wagging. Their puffy, little, white tails were flicking about.

Suzy giggled quietly. She didn't want to scare them away. As she watched, Toby and Doby scurried down and sat on the railing beside her.

"Morning, Suzy," they said, "what are you looking at?"

Suzy placed her finger to her lips, "Shhhhh," and pointed toward the rabbit family in the yard. The three friends sat quietly watching the baby rabbits play until Aunt Olive joined them.

"Aren't they cute?" Aunt Olive smiled.

The three friends nodded.

"Do you still want to help me?" Aunt Olive asked.

Suzy jumped up and down excitedly.

Toby and Doby looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders, "Help with what?"

"You didn't tell them?" Aunt Olive asked, surprised.

"Well, I sort of forgot when I saw the baby rabbits," Suzy said.

"Today is Suzy's birthday," Aunt Olive said. "We were wondering if you boys would like to help decorate?"

"Your birthday! Cool, we'd love to help," Doby cried out.

"What's your birthday?" Toby asked.

"Yeah, what is your birthday?" Doby asked.

"Your birthday is the day you were born. Every year on the anniversary, or birth date, you celebrate with a party," Aunt Olive said.

Toby and Doby sat on the railing, gazing up with interest as Aunt Olive spoke.

Noticing their curiosity, Aunt Olive continued, "Today is Suzy's fifth birthday. Five years ago today, her mommy went to the hospital, waited for Suzy to be born then brought her home.

Every year you get one year older, and as you grow up, you get to do more things. For example, when Suzy turned four, she got to go to school."

"I love going to school," Suzy said.

"Me too," said Toby.

"Me three," said Doby.

"When Suzy turns sixteen, she will be old enough to get her driver's license and drive a car."

"I will?" Suzy asked. "Wow!"

"Yes, you will," Aunt Olive said. "You will be able to do lots of things when you get older."

"Cool," Suzy said.

"Neato," Toby and Doby said.

"Yes, there are many exciting things about growing up. But, for now, we need to get ready for Suzy's party," Aunt Olive said.

"Party," Doby said. "What's a party? Is there food?"

"Come with me. I'll tell you all about it while we decorate," Aunt Olive said, as she headed inside, closely followed by Suzy and two very curious little mice.