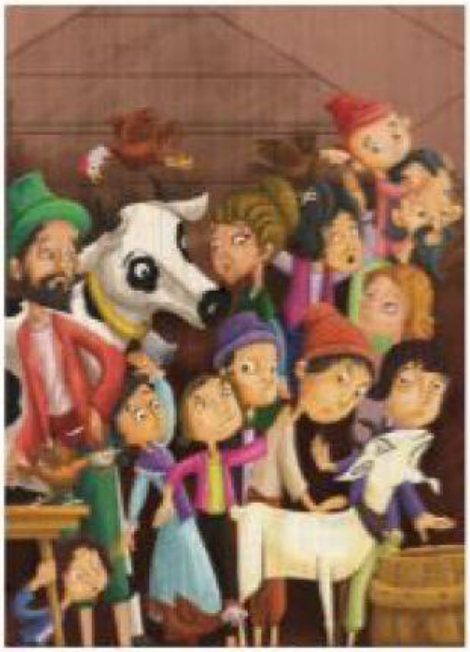
THE CROWDED HOUSE

A Folktale



Long ago, eight members of the Rubin family lived in a little house that seemed terribly **cramped** and crowded. Papa, Mama, their four children, Aunt Gert, and Grandmother Rubin were always getting in each other's way. They complained unhappily that one day they might **burst** right through the walls. So Papa and Mama went to the wisest man in the village, Reb Solman, to ask for advice.

Reb Solman stroked his beard thoughtfully as he listened. Then he said, "Yes, I can help you, but you must do exactly as I say, no questions asked." Papa and Mama **eagerly** agreed.

"The first thing you must do," Reb Solman told Mama, "is to invite your sister and her family to visit."

"But, Reb Solman," said Mama worriedly, "my sister and brother-in-law have three big sons, so how will five more people in our crowded house solve our problem?"

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reb Solman replied, "Remember–you promised to obey and ask no questions."

So the five relatives arrived, and everyone was elbowing each other and tripping over feet, and the walls **trembled** as if about to explode. After several days, Papa ran back to Reb Solman and pleaded, "Oh, it is unbearably crowded and noisy now. Please, what should we do?"

Reb Solman said, "Bring your chickens, goat, and cow into the house." Papa blinked hard when he heard that, but he had promised to obey, so he did as he was told.

A few days later, Papa returned to Reb Solman. In an exhausted voice, Papa said, "The noise, the smells, the crowding–the situation is impossible."

Reb Solman said, "Send your relatives home, and put the animals outside."

So the visitors left, and the animals went outside where they belonged. The eight members of the Rubin family breathed a big sigh of relief. "I never knew that our house could feel so **spacious**," said Mama as she looked around.

"It certainly feels as if our house has grown bigger," said Papa. "Reb Solman is a very wise man." And everyone, smiling in agreement, relaxed in their remarkably roomy house.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The Crowded House: A Folktale

KEY VOCABULARY

- **cramped** (adjective) *Cramped* means uncomfortably small.
- **burst** (verb) To *burst* is to suddenly split or break open.
- **eagerly** (adverb) *Eagerly* means in an interested or hopeful way.
- **trembled** (verb) To *tremble* means to shake.
- **spacious** (adjective) *Spacious* means having a lot of space.

Comprehension questions:

How many people live in Rubin's house at the beginning of the story? Who are they?

Explain why mom questioned Reb Soloman's advice.

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Illustrate and describe the Rubin's house at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the story.

If the Rubins had not taken Reb Soloman's advice, what might the ending have been?

Do you think Reb Soloman is wise? Why or why not?

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How would you have solved the Rubin's crowded house problem?

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Story Map for

Main Characters:

Setting:

Problem/Goal:

Major Events:

Solution:

This story is mainly about...

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