



Oh, Were They Ever Happy!

Peter Spier

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One Saturday morning while their parents are away, the three Noonan children decide to paint the house.

Oh, Were They Ever Happy! Details

Date : Published 1978 by Doubleday

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Author : Peter Spier

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From Reader Review Oh, Were They Ever Happy! for online ebook

Charlie Moses says

Peter Spier is a genius illustrator and storyteller. He's written some truly marvelous things. This...is not a one of them - but it was still enjoyable for me to read, and enjoyable for my granddaughter to hear and see the pictures, and made me and her mama laugh out loud. I still smile every time I think of it. It's the story of a family of kids whose parents go away for the day. The kids, on their own, decide that they'll help their parents out by painting the house. The pictures have to be seen. Check this out and laugh.

Bari says

Best book ever

Sally says

As opposed to Spier's other books I love that are a visual feast, this one made me squirm. The babysitter never shows up!? The kids paint the house like a Pollack?!

Shiloah says

This is a great example of what children would do!

Lisa Vegan says

Pure fun! Three very good, obedient, resourceful, and helpful children decide to do a needed chore when their parents leave for the day and the babysitter doesn't show up. The children, their dog, their cat, their tools, the bathroom (the children are so good they do clean up after themselves) and oh yes, the house they're painting all get very colorful, the house and the property in particular. The illustrations are very, very, very colorful. I know children who will feel gleeful as the story progresses, and it's great fun for both children and adults. Guess I'm part kid because, while I wouldn't really be pleased, I enjoyed the results.

Ruth says

Love the illustrations, but I got so stressed about the kids painting the house!

Kathryn says

This book has been around for awhile and I can see why! It's the sort of story that parents and children will read and enjoy together--yet both will get something different out of it. When the parents in this story leave to run errands all day, the baby sitter fails to show up and the kids decide to "help" Mom and Dad by painting the house for them (a task Mom and Dad both planned to do). And, oh my, are they creative and exuberant in their color schemes and quite thorough in their paint job! They are very thoughtful children, even "cleaning up" after their job (the illustrations of the bathroom covered in paint splatters shows just how successful they were, haha!) At the end, Mom and Dad come home and "Oh, were they ever happy!" ;-p Great fun!

Vicki says

I always get a wonderful reaction from the group when this book is read aloud, especially by the adults in attendance. I would have given the book 5 stars, but it does bother me that the parents in this book, leave their children before the babysitter arrives. I guess there wouldn't be a premise for the action in this book otherwise. The children listening to this book love to watch for the cat and dog in this story as it unfolds. Many giggles during this read, that I have used for years.

Karen says

This is a really cute book about some kid that were left alone (the babysitter was supposed to show up in minutes, but didn't come) and decided to paint the house. Children can follow them through the whole process, right down to cleaning the brushes and leaving the paint cans out on the curb for the garbage man. This story is creative and colorful, imaginative and fun.

Eric says

My six year old read this to me for homework. He enjoyed it, but I did not as much. The story was disjointed and had some pretty big plot holes. The parents just left their kids at home alone with hopes that a babysitter would show up? Maybe the one boy was old enough to be left alone, but the story proves he has poor judgement at best. Why was there so much paint in the house? The author also left out the parents actual reaction to the huge mess. I understand how the last line is supposed to read, but it was lost on the target audience. At least the artwork was decent.

Shanna Gonzalez says

This story brings us another episode in the Noonan family, who also appear in Spier's later books Christmas and Rain. Before their parents leave the children at home to run errands for the day, Mrs. Noonan remarks to her husband that the house needs painting. When the babysitter never arrives, the three children decide to surprise their parents by painting the house themselves. Opportunistically gathering up a large collection of

half-filled paint cans from the garage, they set to work painting the house, top to bottom, chimney and doorknobs, in a variegated rainbow of colors. The well-meaning mayhem that ensues is profoundly destructive, and the children innocent congratulate themselves for a job well done, gleefully anticipating how happy their parents will be to see their handiwork.

The fantastical scale of the children's efforts saves the book from being painful to read, and adults will laugh along with younger readers at the ridiculously costly mistake. While the youngest readers will need help understanding that the children were being foolish, even young readers will appreciate the irony in the closing scene, in which the children eagerly await their parents' arrival. We don't see the parents' reaction, we just see the rainbow-colored house with the phrase: "Oh, were they ever happy!"

This book is unfortunately out of print, but is available in public libraries and on the used book market.

The Brothers says

Some children overhear their mother asking their father when he will paint the outside of the house. When their parents go off to run errands and the babysitter fails to show up, the children decide to tackle the chore themselves. Using a variety of paint and styles, create a masterpiece color out of their house.

Excellent illustrations.

Camille Haynie says

Picture Book. I love Peter Spier books. They help with imagination, predictions, and seeing actions and results.

Tracy Poff says

This review also appears on my blog.

The three Noonan children, mistakenly left at home without a babysitter, decide to spend their day helping out by painting the house. Oh, won't their parents be happy!

Peter Spier's *Oh, Were They Ever Happy!* follows the children from beginning ("I do not know who thought of it first, but there was plenty of paint in the garage.") to end ("Sure looks swell! Won't they be happy when they come home and see what we've done!"). As the children go along, they gradually become messier and the house gradually becomes more colorful, as the children use as many colors of paint as it takes to finish the job.

The children even clean up, when they're done! Won't their parents be happy!

This is a very fun book. The story's amusing as the children go along, happily 'helping' by painting their house (windows and all!). With each passing page, it hardly seems that the mess could get any bigger, but turn the page and it's messier still. The art is simple, colorful (and how!), and perfectly pleasant. Altogether, this book rather reminds me of *Wacky Wednesday*.

Spier won the Caldecott medal in 1978 for *Noah's Ark*, which is (mostly) wordless, but has a similar style of art.

Strangely, *Oh, Were They Ever Happy!* seems not to be in print, and the prices at Amazon are higher than expected, but if you do come by a copy, it's surely worth a read.

Erin Buhr says

New books are wonderful...I love discovering new talented authors and watching children's literature evolve. On the other hand, every now and then I discover an older book that is timeless and delightful and I just have to share. This is a book that one of my children randomly pulled off the shelf at the library one afternoon. It is the colorful story of three siblings who are left at home and decide to help their parents out by painting the house. Their messy and outrageous painting style reminds me of my children and the way young children are able to completely let go when they create. Full of splotchy rainbow colored illustrations, brief fast paced text, and a great message about creativity and working hard - this is a great read no matter what decade it was written.
