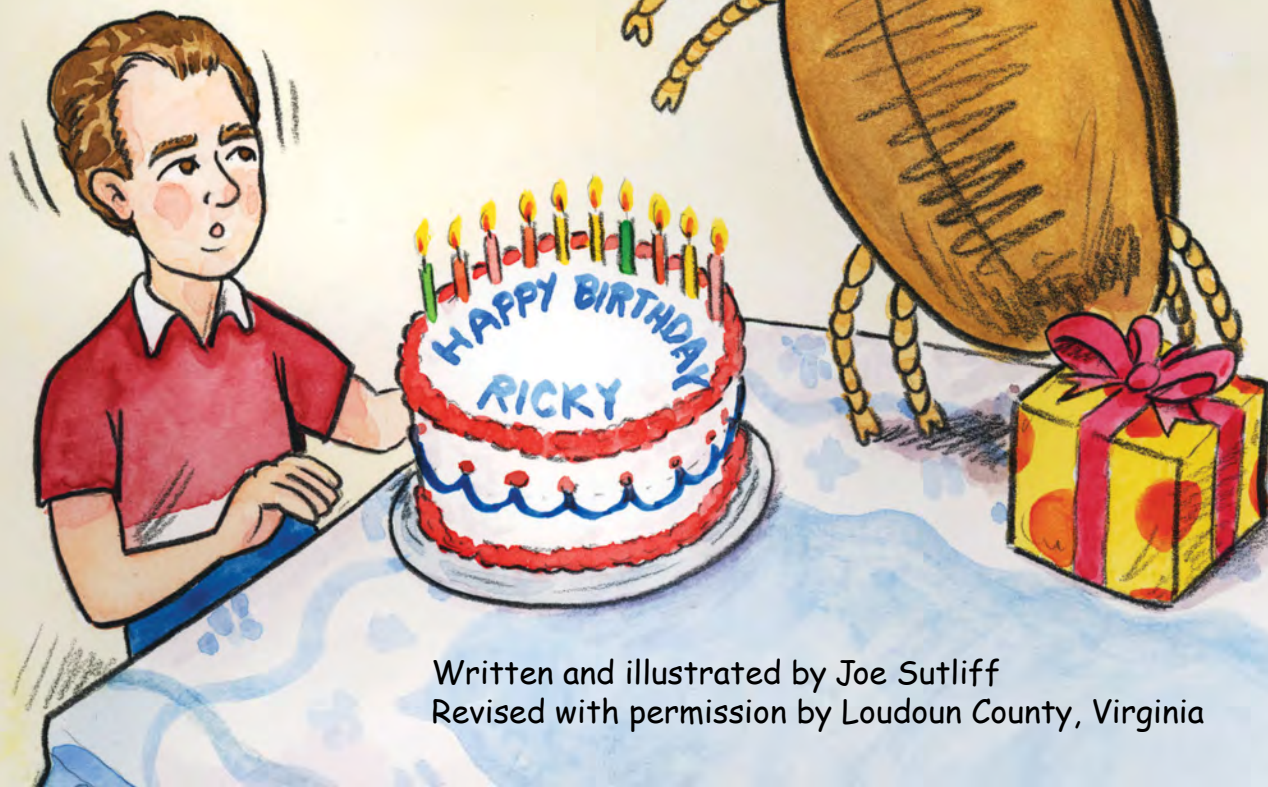


Ricky Beats the Birthday Bites



Written and illustrated by Joe Sutliff
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On March 20, 2012, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors proclaimed 2012 as "Lyme Disease Awareness Year" and committed the county to mitigating the devastating effects of Lyme disease on the citizens of Loudoun.

As part of this initiative, the Board of Supervisors passed a 10 point action plan to mitigate Lyme disease in Loudoun County. This included the creation of a Lyme Disease Commission and a focused effort to educate the community and local medical providers on ways to prevent Lyme disease, as well as to detect the infection and receive treatment early.

More information on Lyme disease in Loudoun County is available at www.loudoun.gov/Lyme or by email at Lyme@loudoun.gov.

Information on the Lyme Disease Commission is available at www.loudoun.gov/LymeCommission.

Information on West Nile virus is available at www.loudoun.gov/WestNile.

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Ricky is very excited. His friend Laurel is coming over so they can plan his big birthday party. Every year, Ricky invites his friends and family. This year his mom told him that he is old enough to plan the party himself.

“This will be the best party ever!” He thinks. If only Laurel would get here!



Suddenly a head pops through the door of Ricky's club house.
It's Laurel!

"Hi Ricky - I have lots of ideas for your party. How about dressing like pirates, or maybe a baseball players theme?"



“What about a circus party with a clown and balloons, or we could have a soccer game!” says Ricky.



The pair make a list of all their ideas. The club house is a good place for making plans. Ricky, Laurel and some of their friends built it in the woods behind Ricky's home.



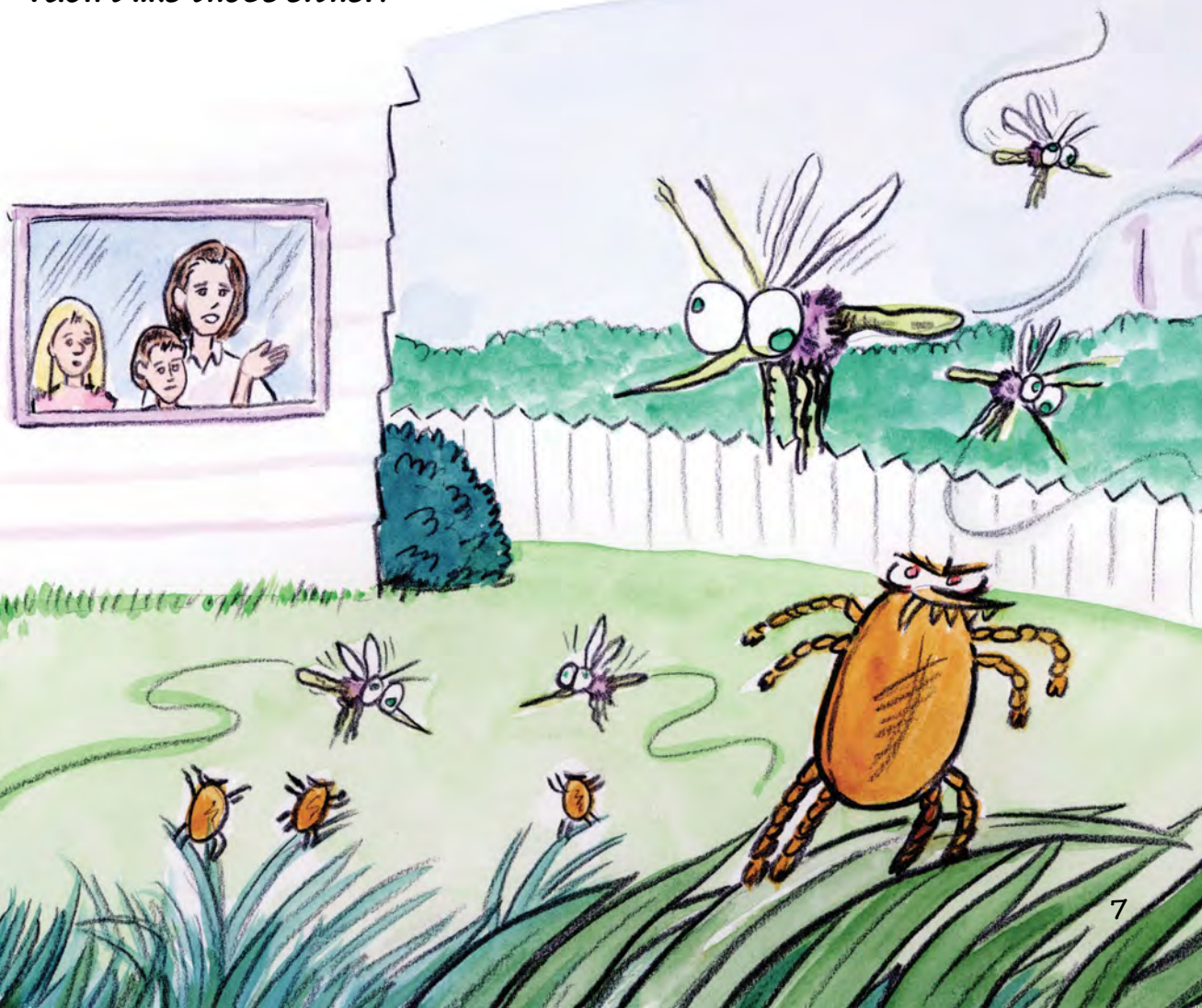
“Okay, let’s show these party ideas to my mom!” he says as they run out of the clubhouse and towards Ricky’s home.



Ricky's mom and little brother Sammy are in the kitchen. Ricky and Laurel tell them about their ideas when Ricky's mom stops them. "What is that on your arm, Ricky?" she asks. She looks closer. "I was afraid of this... a tick." She checks for any more of the nasty pests.

“For some reason, we have a lot more ticks around.” she says. “It won’t be a fun party if everyone gets ticks on them.”

“There are a lot of mosquitoes around too - I don’t like those either!”





“Hey, has anyone seen Alex? Let’s go tell him about the party!” says Laurel. Alex is their friend and neighbor. He has been home sick for the last week. They run to Alex’s house.



“Hey Alex, how do you feel?” asked Ricky.

“I am pretty tired and have headaches. I am sick with Lyme disease. It is carried by ticks” Alex says. He shows them a bull’s-eye shaped rash on his arm.

“I am learning all I can about ticks on my computer,” Alex says. Let me show you. He types “tick” and then “Loudoun County” in the search window on his computer.



Bulls Eye Rash



Lyme Disease



Black Legged Tick



*Correct way to
remove a tick*



“Wow! Look at all the information!” exclaims Laurel.

“Let’s print out the tick brochure from the Loudoun County website,” suggests Ricky.



They learn that ticks, mice and deer are all important in the spread of Lyme disease. Ticks wait on long grass and thick brush, grabbing onto animals and people as they walk by.



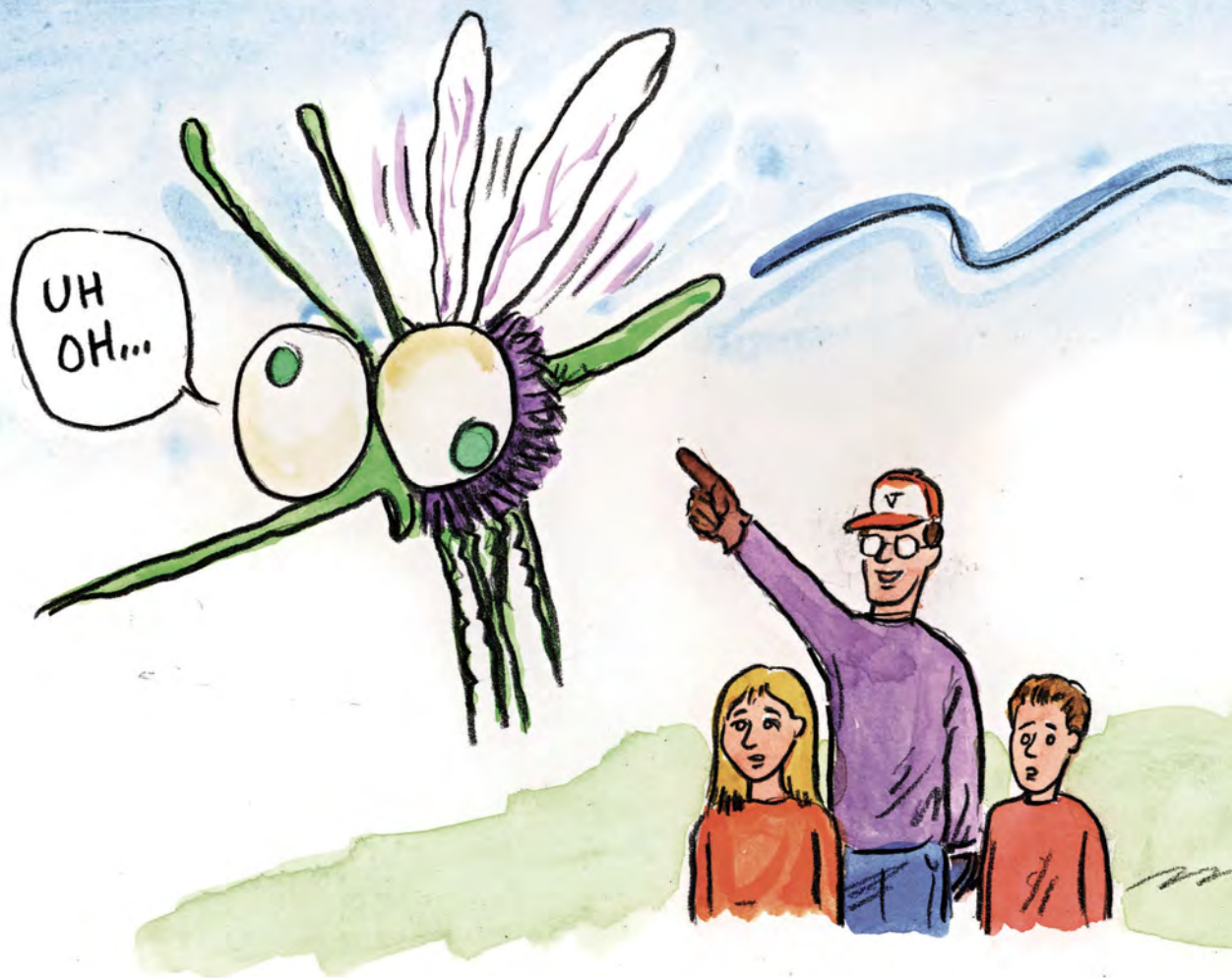
The brochure says they can prevent tick bites by wearing long, light-colored, loose clothing and tucking their pant legs inside their socks. These helpful suggestions make it easier to see ticks so you can remove them.



They then put on bug repellent. They make sure it contains 30 percent DEET because that works the best to keep ticks away.



The brochure also has information on how to keep ticks out of the yard. The kids ask Ricky's Dad to trim the grass and bushes around the yard and they help clear away the branches and clippings—all places where the ticks like to hide and wait.



"You should make sure there are no mosquitoes for your party either," says Ricky's dad. They all agree and he shows them some ways to get rid of mosquitoes.



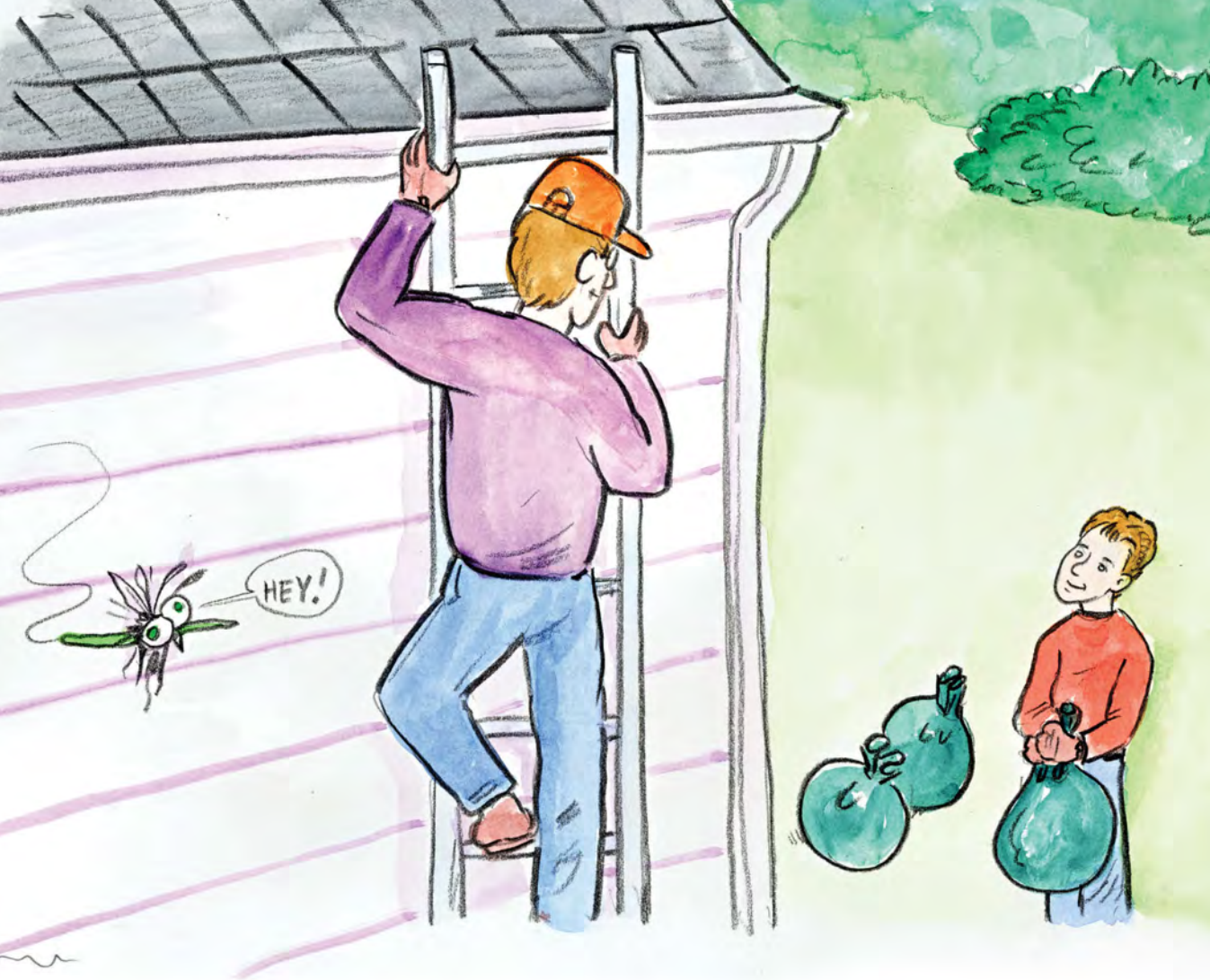
“You see kids, mosquitoes only need a little water to lay their eggs. Look, you can see the baby mosquitoes called larvae swimming around!”



First, Ricky and Laurel clean up all the trash they can find. They also empty Sammy's pool.



Ricky and Laurel change the water in the birdbath and empty the water from all the containers and flower pots and put them away.



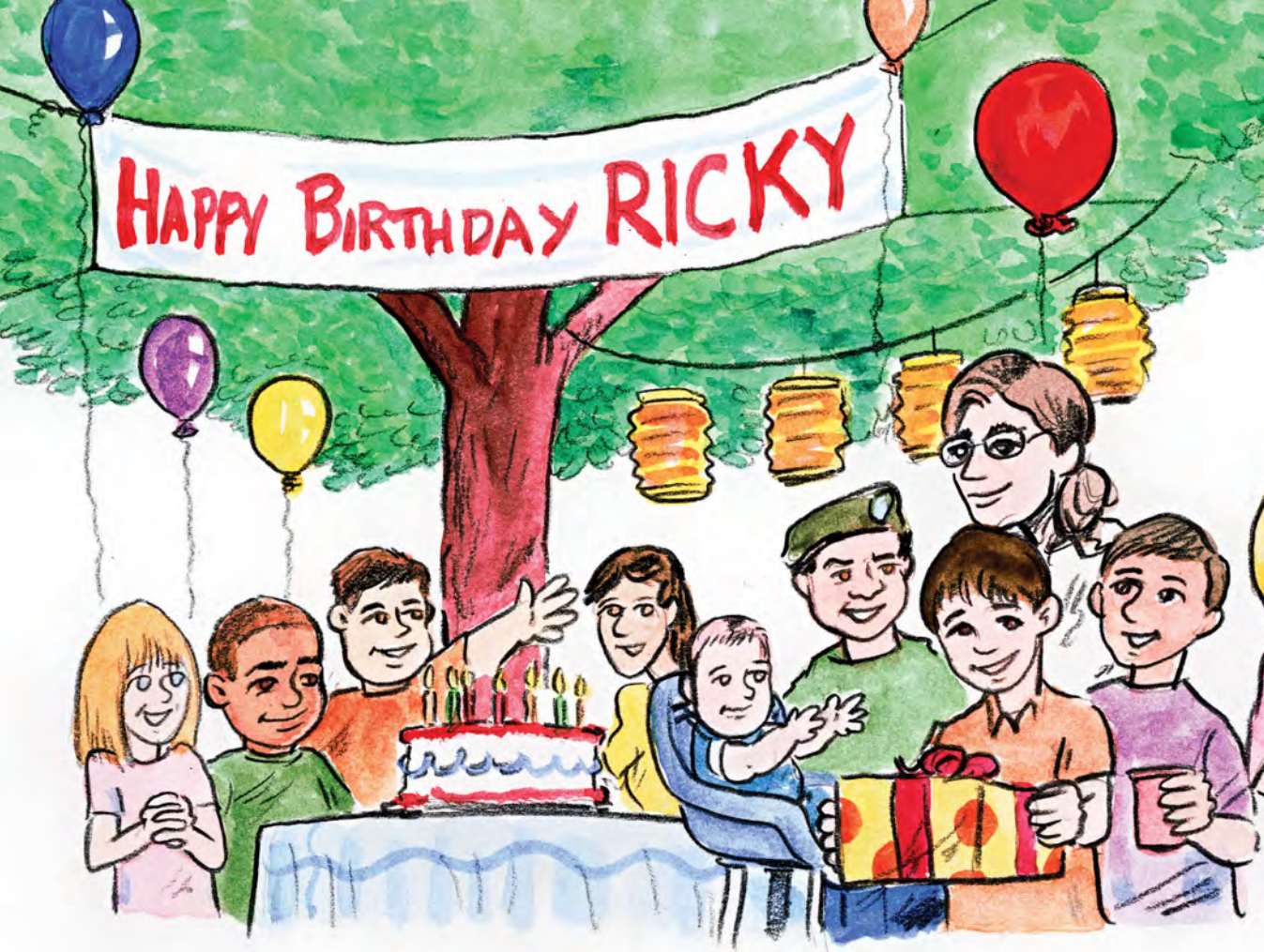
Ricky's dad cleans out the gutters on their house, and makes sure there is no standing water in any of the downspouts or corrugated pipes.



Ricky's dad sprays the area with permethrin to get rid of ticks. He tells them to stay inside while he is spraying, and not to go near the places where he has sprayed for a few hours.



The next day Ricky's mom announces that their yard is mosquito and tick free. "Great work kids!" she says. "You and your friends have made our neighborhood safer for everyone!"



"When the day of the big party arrives, all of Ricky's family and friends are there.

"This is the best party you have ever had!" says Laurel happily.

"I'll say!" answers Ricky. "And there's not a tick or mosquito anywhere!"



“Wait a minute, kids” said Ricky’s mom. “Here’s one big tick you missed!” She brings out a special piñata that she has made for the party. Sammy rushes up with the piñata stick and everyone laughs.

“Me first!”



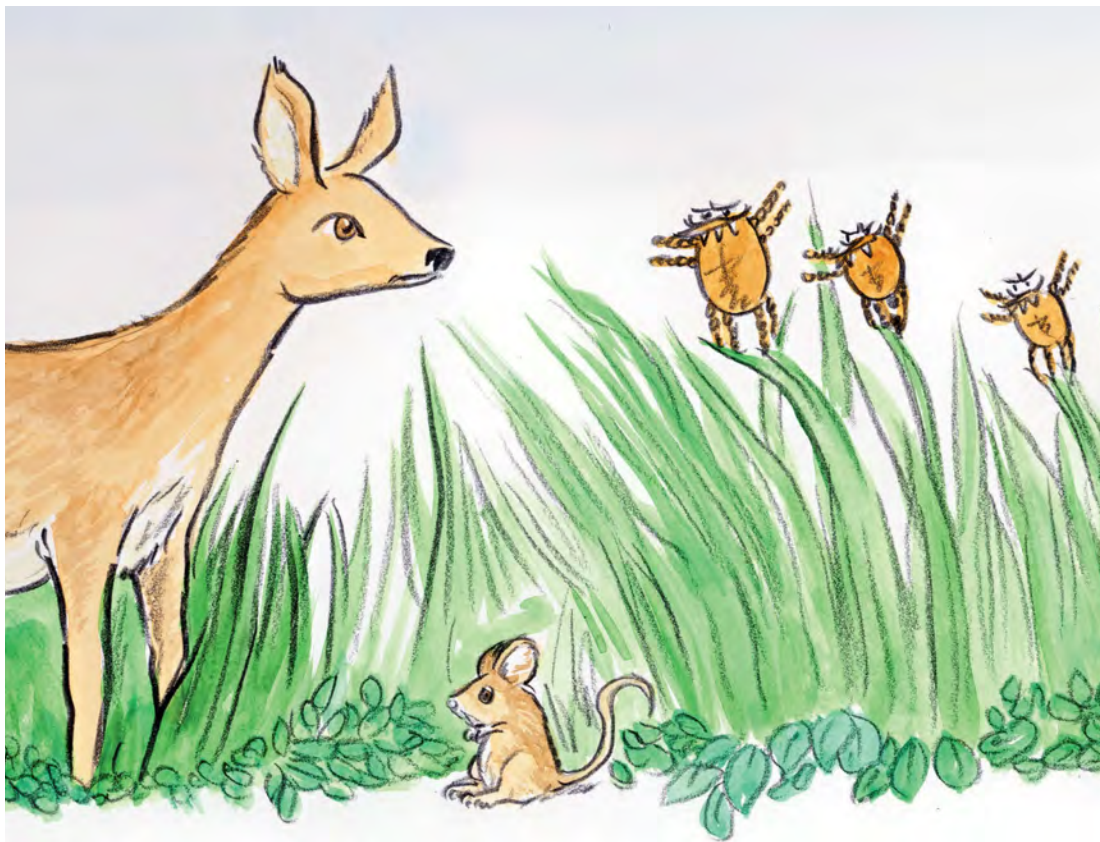
THE END



TICK TIP:

Remember the deer and mice near the club house? If you are in an area where there are a lot of deer, you are also probably near a lot of ticks. Ticks like to prey on deer and field mice, so if you see these animals, make extra sure to use repellent and check yourself often! Remember that Permethrin is an insecticide that kills ticks and mosquitoes, not a repellent. An adult should always be in charge when you use repellents and insecticides.





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www.loudoun.gov/LymeCommission
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