

# How to Ruin a Surprise Party

## Rule Number 1: Tell Your Little Sister



Next week is Mom's birthday. We are making a party. It is a surprise. It is hard to make a surprise party. You have to keep it a secret. You have to watch what you say. You have to tell everyone that it is a surprise. Only tell people who can keep a secret. Do NOT tell your little sister. Little sisters cannot keep secrets.

I make signs for Mom's party. I make them in secret. I lock my door. But today day I forgot.

Someone knocks. Oh no! What if it is Mom? I am making a poster. It says "Surprise, Mom!"

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Suddenly my door opens! It is not Mom. It is my sister, Jenny.

“Jenny,” I yell. “Get out!”

Mom hears me. “Be nice,” she calls. “Do I need to come up there?”

“No!” I call. “Fine, Jenny. Come in. Close the door.”

“What is Mom's surprise?” asks Jenny.

Uh oh. I forgot. Jenny can read.

I tell Jenny about the party. “It is a secret. You cannot tell Mom.” Jenny nods. Her eyes are wide. She says she will not tell.

That night at dinner...

Jenny says, “Mom! I have a secret. But I can't say what it is. And I'm not saying anything about a surprise.”

Mom looks at Jenny. Mom looks at me. Mom looks at Dad. Dad looks at me. I look at Dad. I look at Jenny. I slap my hand over my face.

“What is going on?” Mom asks. “Are you making me a surprise party?”

“No!” we all say. It is not a lie. It is not a surprise anymore. Is it?



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Next week is Mom's birthday. We are making her a surprise party. It is hard to make a surprise party. You have to it keep a secret. You have to watch what you say. You have to make sure to tell everyone that it is a surprise. Only tell people who can keep a secret. Whatever you do, do NOT tell your little sister. Little sisters cannot keep secrets.

I am making the decorations. I always lock my door when I work on them. But today day I forgot. Suddenly my door opens! Oh no, what if it is Mom? I am making a poster that says "Surprise, Mom!" I try to hide the sign.

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I get lucky this time. It isn't Mom. It's my little sister, Jenny.

"Get out of my room, Jenny," I yell.

Mom calls, "Be nice to your sister! Do I need to come up there?"

"No, Mom!" I call. "Come in Jenny."

"What is Mom's surprise?" asks Jenny.

Uh oh, I forgot that Jenny can read.

I tell Jenny about the surprise party. I explain to her that it is a secret. Jenny nods, her eyes wide. She says she understands. She says she can keep a secret. But she cannot. It was a mistake to tell her.

That night at dinner, Jenny says, "Mom! I have a secret. I can't tell you the secret. And I'm not saying anything about a surprise."

Mom looks at Jenny and smiles. She looks at me, then at Dad. Dad looks at me. I slap my palm over my face.

"What is going on?" Mom asks. "Are you making me a surprise birthday party?"

"No!" we all say. It is not a lie. After all, it is not a surprise anymore. Is it?



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As you know, the most important part of planning a surprise party is the surprise. So no matter what, you've got to guard that secret—you guard it with your life. Whatever you do, do NOT tell your little sister. Little sisters cannot keep secrets.

Mom's birthday is in a month. About a month ago, Dad and I began planning a surprise party for her. I was in charge of making all the decorations. I did it secretly in my room with the door locked. But one day I forgot to lock it. I was working on a big poster that said "Surprise, Mom!" when the door creaked open. My eyes widened—what if it's Mom?

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I was relieved to see Jenny's head peeking inside. Not that I wanted Jenny in my room, I was just glad she wasn't Mom.

"Jenny!" I yelled. "Get out of my room!"

From downstairs, Mom warned, "Be nice to your sister. Do I need to come up there?"

"No, Mom," I called. "Get in here, Jenny, and close the door!"

"What is Mom's surprise," asked Jenny.

Uh oh, I forgot that Jenny had just learned to read.

I told Jenny about the party, carefully explaining why it was a secret. I told her that she can't even use the word "surprise" around Mom—or else! Jenny nodded, her eyes wide as saucers. She said she understood. I found out later that she did not.

That night at dinner...

Jenny said, "Mom! I have a secret, but I can't tell you what it is. And I'm not saying anything about a surprise."

Mom looked at Jenny and cocked one eyebrow. She looked at Dad and then at me, a smile spreading across her lips.

"What's going on? Are you planning a surprise party for me?" Mom asked.

Dad looked at me and narrowed his eyes. I slapped my palm over my face.

Dad and I answered: "No!" At least we weren't lying. After all, it wasn't a surprise anymore, was it?

