



# BOOKRAPT™

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## ***The Road to Ratenburg* by Joy Cowley illustrated by Gavin Bishop**

**Publisher: Gecko Press**

**RRP \$19.99**

Joy Cowley has done it again – *The Road to Ratenburg* is a delightful adventure story featuring a family of very engaging rats. Told by the father of the family, Spinnaker Rat, this book recounts the journey the family takes after their home is demolished. Their destination, Ratenburg, is the fabled rat city that is paradise on earth for rats. There are many perils along the way and new things to learn about the world and each other.

The rat characters are all well drawn. We get to know Spinnaker best, the ship rat, because he is the author. But his wife, Retsina (who grew up in a Greek restaurant), their children, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta, and annoying friend, Roger, all have distinctive personalities. This is primarily an adventure story but, with Spinnaker as narrator, we see the world from a rat's perspective and his descriptions of 'humming beans' activities and habits add plenty of incidental humour. This book would be an excellent read-aloud from about 6 years of age, or could be read independently from about 8 years old.

The story is very well complemented by Gavin Bishop's charming illustrations, and the production values are high. This is a sturdy paperback that will stand up well to the repeated readings it is bound to get. Given the beautiful palette Gavin has used for the cover, coloured illustrations within the book would have added to its appeal. However, it is more important to keep this book affordable for Kiwi children.

**Author's website:**

[www.joycowley.com](http://www.joycowley.com)

**Illustrator's website:**

[www.gavinbishop.com](http://www.gavinbishop.com)

**Reviewed by Penny Guy,  
Children's Librarian**

