

The Tale of Peter Rabbit

by Beatrix Potter

Once there were four little rabbits. Their names were Mopsy, Flopsy, Cottontail, and Peter.

They lived with their mother in a sand bank. It was under the root of a big fir tree.

"Now, my dears," said Mrs. Rabbit one day, "you may go into the fields. But don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden. Your father had an accident there. He was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor."



"Now run along. And don't get into mischief. I am going out."

Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail were good bunnies. They went down the lane for berries.

But Peter was very bad. He ran straight to Mr. McGregor's garden and went under the gate!

First he ate some lettuces. Then he ate some beans.



And then, whom should he meet but Mr. McGregor! He was busy tending his cabbages. He jumped up and ran after Peter. "Stop, thief!" he called.

Peter was scared. He ran all over the garden. He had forgotten the way back to the gate.

He lost one shoe in the cabbages. He lost the other in the beans. Then he ran on four legs and went faster. He might have gotten away. That was when he ran into a berry net.

Peter gave up. He shed big tears.



Mr. McGregor came up to grab him. Peter got loose just in time. He had to leave his coat, though. He rushed into the toolshed and jumped into a can. It should have been a great place to hide. But it was full of water!



Mr. McGregor was quite sure that Peter was in the shed. Maybe he was under a flowerpot. Mr. McGregor began to look under each.

Soon Peter sneezed—"Kertyschoo!" Mr. McGregor was after him in no time. Peter jumped out of a window, upsetting three plants. The window was too small for Mr. McGregor. He just went back to his work.

Peter sat down to rest. He was out of breath and trembling with fright. He did not know which way to go. He was also damp from sitting in that can.

Soon he began to roam about, going lippity, lippity, not very fast, and looking all around. He found a door in a wall. But it was locked. Then he tried to find his way through the garden. That just made him more puzzled.



He went back toward the shed. Then, quite close to him, he heard the noise of a hoe—scr-r-ritch, scratch, scritch. He peeped over a wheelbarrow. There was Mr. McGregor, hoeing onions.

His back was turned to Peter. And past him was the gate!



Peter ran as fast as he could. He slipped beneath the gate. At last he was in the woods. He ran and ran. And he did not stop until he got home.

He was so tired that he flopped down on the floor of the rabbit hole. He shut his eyes. Poor Peter!



Peter was not very well that evening. His mother put him to bed. Then she made some tea. She gave a dose of it to Peter! But Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail had bread and milk and berries for supper.



Note: Certain words and punctuation in “The Tale of Peter Rabbit” have been changed to reflect an appropriate reading level for Grade 1.