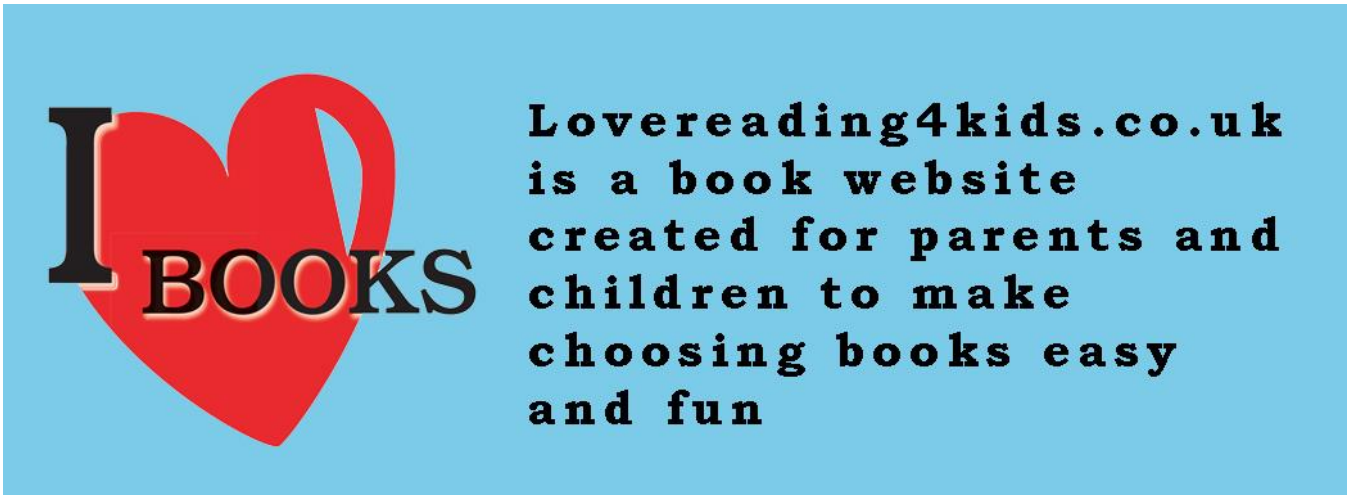

An extract from

The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Beatrix Potter

Published by

Warne an imprint of Penguin Books Ltd

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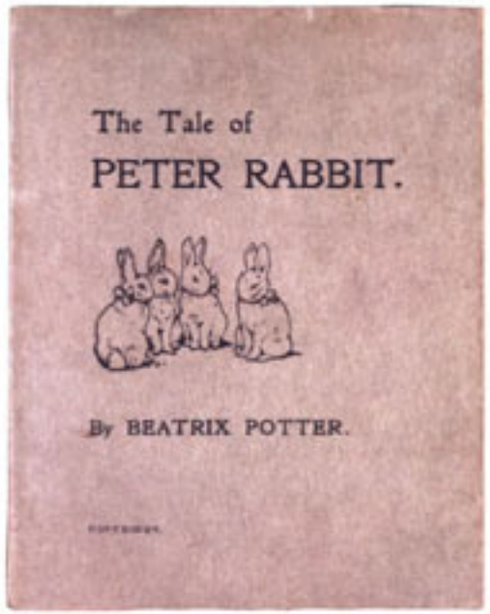
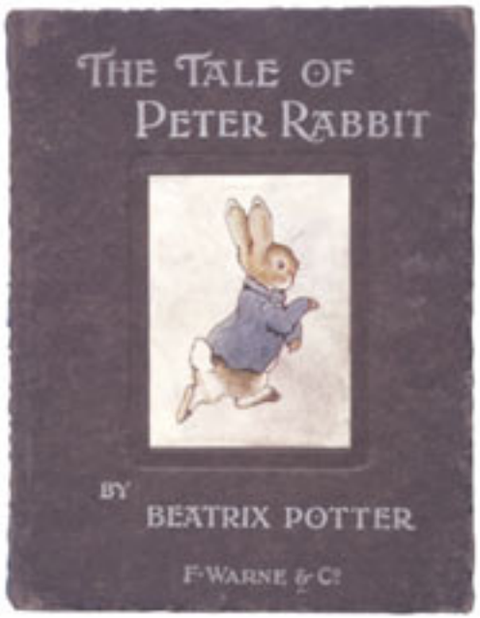
The Publication of The Tale of Peter Rabbit

Beatrix decided that she wanted to produce a book from her story idea. She sent the Peter Rabbit manuscript to at least six publishers but it was rejected by all of them. So she decided that she would publish it herself. In December 1901 she printed 250 copies which she sold through friends and relations. It did so well that she had to order more.



Above: *Beatrix's own privately-printed edition, illustrated in black and white.*



Above: *The first commercial edition, 1902, featuring colour illustrations.*

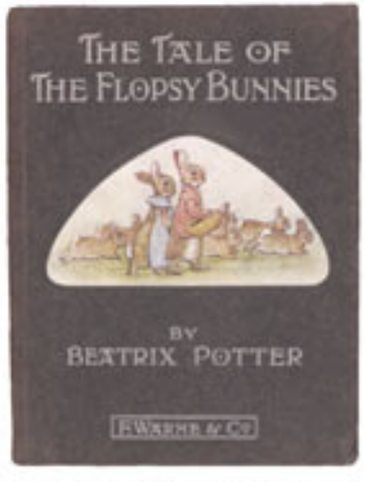
The book's success encouraged Frederick Warne & Co., one of the firms who had previously rejected the manuscript, to reconsider their decision. They offered to take it on if Beatrix was willing to re-illustrate all her black-line drawings in colour. She agreed. The book was published in October 1902 and it was an immediate bestseller. The book was kept small for "little hands" and sold at the affordable price of five pence.

Above: *Two of Beatrix's colour illustrations for the Frederick Warne edition of* The Tale of Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit Returns

For her third rabbit story, Beatrix decided to tell her readers more about the famous Peter and Benjamin, now grown up. Benjamin has married Peter Rabbit's sister, Flopsy, and they have six charming Flopsy Bunnies. Mr. McGregor's garden still provides the tastiest cabbages, but venturing there is as dangerous as ever.

Over the years Mr. McGregor's garden was based on a number of different locations. Peter Rabbit's first foray was set in Scotland. *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* features Fawe Park in the Lake District; and for the Flopsy Bunnies the setting is a garden in Wales.



ABOVE: *First edition, 1909*

"THE EFFECT OF EATING TOO MUCH LETTUCE IS 'SOPORIFIC'."

ABOVE, BELOW AND RIGHT: *When Beatrix stayed with her uncle and aunt in Denbigh, Wales, she made numerous watercolours of the garden at Gwaynynog to use as background scenes.*