



# The Tale of Two Bad Mice

*Beatrix Potter*

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## **The Tale of Two Bad Mice** Beatrix Potter

To celebrate Peter's birthday, Frederick Warne is publishing new editions of all 23 of Potter's original tales, which take the very first printings of Potter's works as their guide.

The aim of these editions is to be as close as possible to Beatrix Potter's intentions while benefiting from modern printing and design techniques.

The colors and details of the watercolors in the volumes are reproduced more accurately than ever before, and it has now been possible to disguise damage that has affected the artwork over the years. Most notably, 'The Tale of Peter Rabbit' restores six of Potter's original illustrations. Four were sacrificed in 1903 to make space for illustrated endpapers, and two have never been used before.

Of course, Beatrix Potter created many memorable children's characters, including Benjamin Bunny, Tom Kitten, Jemima Puddle-duck and Jeremy Fisher. But whatever the tale, both children and adults alike can be delighted by the artistry in Potter's illustrations, while they also enjoy a very good read. Because they have always been completely true to a child's experience, Potter's 23 books continue to endure.

## **The Tale of Two Bad Mice Details**

Date : Published March 7th 2002 by Warne (first published 1904)

ISBN : 9780723247746

Author : Beatrix Potter

Format : Hardcover 58 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Classics, Fiction

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# **From Reader Review The Tale of Two Bad Mice for online ebook**

**momma.hailey says**

My 3 year old daughter brings me this book several times a day to read.

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**Robin Thomas says**

Oh no, I've fallen behind in my reading!  
This book may be considered cheating.  
But I did enjoy it and love the illustrations.  
So, now I have one more book to read to meet  
my challenge.

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**~?~Autumn♥♥ says**

My son's favorite book by Beatrix Potter. He would laugh and laugh over this book so I came to love it even more.

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**Prashant says**

Tom Thumb and Hunca and Munca, the two bad mice, repaying for all they have stolen from the doll house.

This is good!

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**Paul Bryant says**

**DON PETER RABBIT :**

Lucinda, we know each other for years, but this is the first time you come to me for help. I don't remember the last time you invited me to your burrow for carrots...

**LUCINDA :**

Don Peter, I'll give you anything you want... I ask for Justice. Make the two bad mice suffer as we suffer.  
How much shall we pay you?

**DON PETER :**

So now you come to me and say Don Peter Rabbit, you must give me justice. And you don't ask in respect or friendship. And you don't think to call me Bunfather; instead you come to my house on the day my 14 daughters are to be married and you ask me to get rid of these two bad mice...for money. But if you come to me with your friendship, your loyalty, then your enemies become my enemies, and then, believe me, they would fear you...

*[Slowly, Lucinda bows her head.]*

**LUCINDA:**

Be my friend Don Peter.

*[She kisses Don Peter's paw.]*

**DON PETER :**

Good. From me you'll get Justice.

**LUCINDA:**

Bunfather.

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**Kimberley doruyter says**

just too cute.

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**Rahmadiyanti says**

Ternyata masih banyak buku Beatrix Potter yang belum saya baca. Yang ini baru beli kemarin dan emang beneran belum baca (soalnya kadang suka beli lagi buku yang sudah pernah dibaca :D).

Ceritanya sih agak aneh... eh nggak aneh banget sih, namanya juga fairy tales. Tentang dua tikus suami istri (Tom Thumb & Hunca Munca) yang bikin "kerusuhan" di rumah Lucinda dan Jane, karena makanan yang mereka curi nggak bisa dimakan. Kenapa makanan tersebut nggak bisa dimakan? Dan apa yang harus mereka tebus gara-gara rusuh yang mereka buat tsb? Lucu juga sih endingnya.

Yang selalu saya suka dari Beatrix Potter ya pasti ilustrasinya. Potter memang menulis dan menggambar sendiri buku-buku yang ia karang. Kalau mau tahu lebih banyak tentang Potter dan bagaimana ia menulis, bisa nonton film biopic Miss Potter.

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## GoldGato says

Two mice, named Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca (his wife), break into a dollhouse and wreck havoc. They remind me of children who don't get their way and start destructive habits in anger.

Now, the mice do repent in the end, but only after walking away with the goods. Beatrix Potter just did not have a very high opinion of mousies.

Book Season = Year Round

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## Helen (Helena/Nell) says

Warning: this review is very considerably longer than the book under discussion.

I have no idea how old I was when I first read *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*. I only know it feels as familiar as family photographs. Every detail of it is so familiar that once I must have known it inside out, though I doubt I've read it for half a century.

I imagine it would have first been read to me, and then I would have read it myself, and I was an early reader, so maybe at about four years old I learned that mice were part of the loved universe. Later we (my little sister and I) had some Beatrix Potter tales on 45 rpm orange records. I remember *Jemima Puddleduck* was read—wonderfully well—by Cicely Courtneidge. I can hear her voice now. But *The Tale of Two Bad Mice* was not recorded, or it if was, we didn't possess it.

Even the fly-leaf inside the cover is familiar: here all the famous characters are displayed, as they are in every Beatrix Potter story. There is Mrs Tiggy Winkle (probably my favourite), Jemima P, Benjamin Bunny, Jeremy Fisher, The Flopsy Bunnies and their mother, The Tailor of Gloucester, Tom Kitten, Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin (we also had him on a record) and Mrs Tittle-Mouse (I remember her less well.)

Opposite the title page a full colour plate has Tom Thumb (one of the two bad mice) just about to smash the doll's house pudding with a pair of brass coal tongs. At this point, neither he nor his wife, Hunca Munca, are wearing any clothes.

In Beatrix Potter the pictures tell the story, not just the words. The opening page faces a picture of the doll's house, with Jane (one of the dolls) sitting on the chimney, and Lucinda sitting in front of the front door. So we can see they are fairly small dolls—they would certainly fit into the house. And then there they are inside. Jane looks like a peg doll to me. She is tall and thin. Lucinda is softer, with a blue dress and a ribbon round her hair. We learn that "Jane was the Cook; but she never did any cooking, because the dinner had been bought ready-made, in a box full of shavings."

I don't think I knew what shavings were, but you can see from the picture that it was some sort of packing. And the picture of the food is really lovely: "two red lobsters and a ham, a fish, a pudding, and some pears and oranges". Any child who has played with pretend food knows about things like this. The food looks marvelous and for some reason I feel I know this sentence off by heart: "They would not come off the plates, but they were extremely beautiful."

We did not have a doll's house like this, but I longed for one. Anyone who read *The Tale of Two Bad Mice* must have longed for this sort of doll's house. Later my father made us one, but it was not like this, and we never had the marvelous plaster food either.

And from this book, I knew what 'pram' was short for. I knew because Jane and Lucinda were out when the two bad mice arrived. They "had gone out for a drive in the doll's perambulator".

From the picture you can tell that Hunca Munca and Tom Thumb have exquisite ears, pricked for every sound of danger. Even their whiskers are precisely tuned. When they go into the doll's house, light streams from the dining-room and their wee paws are outstretched with amazement: "Such a lovely dinner was laid out upon the table! There were tin spoons, and lead knives and forks, and two dolly-chairs—all so convenient!"

What a phrase to learn at the age of four or five—"all so convenient"! Just as Beatrix Potter educated the eye, she expanded the vocabulary.

Then the mice proceed to destroy the lovely dinner bit by bit, because they find it is not in the least edible. They are very BAD mice, and that is part of the pleasure for a small child reading, a GOOD child. Here is the high point:

"Then Tom Thumb lost his temper. He put the ham in the middle of the floor, and hit it with the tongs and with the shovel—bang, bang, smash, smash!

The ham flew all into pieces, for underneath the shiny paint it was made of nothing but plaster!"

But I think I love the following sentence even more: "Then there was no end to the rage and disappointment of Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca." What a phrase—"rage and disappointment"! Can't you just feel for them, bad as they are?

I specially like the picture that shows them, one on the mantelpiece, one on the ground, trying to put the fish (which would not come off its plate) into the "red-hot crinkly paper fire in the kitchen".

Through the colour plates, you can observe the mice making the best of a bad job, a bit of pleasurable wrecking, then some stealing (because "Hunca Munca had a frugal mind"—imagine learning the word "frugal" from a mouse!) They make away with a cradle, for example, and, as the dolls return in their perambulator, you see the two mice fleeing for their lives, one carrying a small chair, the other with a brush and some blue stuff that looks very like Lucinda's dress.

I think my favourite bit in the whole book is this:

"What a sight met the eyes of Jane and Lucinda! Lucinda sat upon the upset kitchen stove and stared; and Jane leant against the kitchen dresser and smiled—but neither of them made any remark."

Why did Jane smile?

Because her smile was painted on her face.

Why did neither of them make any remark?

Because they were dolls.

And how is it that children both know these facts and can still believe wholly in the picture of domestic bliss on the next page? Here is Hunca Munca, dressed in Lucinda's blue dress and sitting on a wooden chair. She is cuddling a baby mouse on her knee, dressed in something very like a white christening robe, its little tail curling out and its pink paws waving like tiny hands. Beside them is the doll's cradle, topped with a pink quilt, under which four more baby mice are fast asleep, their tails drooping over the edge of the basket.

In this tale, the mice are naughty but they are endearingly alive. The dolls are just—dolls. The little girl who owns the house gets a doll “dressed like a policeman” and we see him, looking quite ridiculous a few pages from the end. In front of him (he is standing floppily with pigeon-toes and a blobby nose), Hunca Munca is holding up her mouse baby, as if to watch an interesting object at a museum. This time she is wearing a pink dress. Behind the policeman doll, other mice (unclothed) are in front of the doll's house. One has his paws up on the window, through which Jane is peering anxiously. Upstairs Lucinda is peering out too. They are besieged by mice. The policeman doll is three times their size—he would never fit into the house and he is doing nothing whatsoever to protect it. Because he is just a doll.

It is a fascinating mixture of reality and fantasy, making the mice real because the dolls are not, making Tom Thumb explain mouse traps to his babies because nobody wants them really to get *caught*.

And on the last two pages, moral order (like the end of a Shakespeare play) is restored because Tom Thumb finds a crooked sixpence to pay for everything he broke, and Hunca Munca turns into a cleaning lady, arriving with her dust-pan and broom to sweep the doll's house every morning.

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### **Jennifer B. says**

Poor little mice. Yes they are naughty, but they are also victims.

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### **Calista says**

I think this is a children's version of a frat party. Two mice come into a home that is not there's expecting to be feed and the food is fake so they destroy the doll house and steal stuff. It's ok in the end because they pay for it. A very weird tale indeed.

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### **Manny says**

#### **Celebrity Death Match Special: *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* versus *The Tale of Two Bad Mice***

"You see them often?" asked Hunca. Her tone was casual, but Tom immediately caught the edge in her voice.

"Who do you mean?" he said, pretending not to understand. It was a strategy that had worked before.

Hunca moved a step closer to the layout. "The Chinese," she breathed, unable to contain her excitement any longer as she gazed at the doll's-house. Her ample breasts rose and fell under the thin synthasilk sweater. "I know you meet them all the time. You must have some... stuff."

Tom calculated rapidly: none of the other colonists would be back for at least an hour. That should be enough. He reached into his pouch and pulled out the sticks of MAO-Z.

"Jesus Christ!" Hunca's eyes shone as she grabbed one of the sticks for herself. "You bastard! Six whole units!" She avidly unwrapped the foil and popped the stick into her mouth. Tom did the same. For a few seconds, they both said nothing, chewing as quickly as they could. Then the change operated, and they were inside the layout.

Tom looked at Hunca; even in her rodent body, she was still very attractive. He put a clawed hand on her haunch, but she pushed him away.

"Food first," she said, her eyes fixed on the table. "It looks good, doesn't it?" Tom had to agree. The sight of the glazed ham made his mouth water, and the lobsters were if anything even more appetizing. Why not? They had plenty of time. He seized a knife and started to carve the ham.

The knife buckled in his hand; the meat was rock hard. Hunca stared at him, appalled. Tom tried the lobsters, but he already knew what he would find. They had also petrified. Evidently, Palmer Eldritch's power now extended even into the layouts.

"Oh no!" sobbed Hunca as mouse-tears trickled down her cheeks, moving with exaggerated slowness in the Martian gravity. "What are we going to *do*?"

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## Jonathan says

When Tom Thumb and his wife Hunca Munca (what were her parents thinking?) break into Lucinda and Jane's delightfully furnished home, they go on a rampage through the house, destroying the fake food, climbing the chimney, and stealing anything that will fit through their own front door. When the 'single' ladies return from an afternoon's perambulation they can only look on in mute horror at the devastation that awaits them. The mice have the gall to return later and leave a token sixpence to pay for damages with the dolls' landlady, and Hunca Munca does a bit of sweeping up to try to rid herself of some of her guilt.

The key point of this story can be found in the publication date, 1904, proving that you could not go out and leave your door open, as we have been lead to believe, and that crime was just as bad then as it is today.

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## RH Walters says

These two bad mice go a full-throated spree of violent peevishness that is very gratifying to the reader. The title is misleading because the mice quite nicely atone for their havoc, so it's actually a perfect little story.



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## **Annet says**

So I'm getting to know the Beatrix Potter stories. Quite by accident, I found two booklets on my shelves quite unexpectedly. This is my third one, still cute, but a little less cute than The tale of Samuel Whiskers or the Roly-Poly pudding and The tale of the pie and the patty pan, which I found a bit more sparkling and humorous.

Anyway cute, these Beatrix Potter books...

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## **Bookdragon Sean says**

Are the mice really that bad?

Sure, they break into the house of an inanimate object (big crime I know) and smash up her stuff. But who cares? She's only a porcelain doll. And the two mice are only trying to feed their babies. If anything they're the victims. They've been teased by the fake food in the windows and tempted by falsehood. When they realise they can't get into it by normal means, they smash it up to try and eat it. I wouldn't call them bad, opportunistic maybe but not bad.

The dolls, on the other hand, they're pure evil. They lounge around the house all day teasing mice with food, and even go as far as to lay down traps for the poor creatures. Then, if that wasn't enough reason to hate them, they bring in a policeman to enforce their fascist means of control. Instead of talking to the mice they just go straight to the authorities. There's no reasoning to be had with these nasty dolls.

Something does tell me though that the book might not have sold with the title "The tale of the two opportunistic mice who are tempted by the fascist dolls."

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## **Lisa Vegan says**

I don't remember this from when I was young but I probably had it read to me. I liked this quite a bit more than I expected. It's actually very funny, the mice are cute, the story is different, in a good way, and it works well from beginning to end. I love dollhouses but the mice feel frustration when they find that the food in the dollhouse isn't real. What happens makes for a good story that holds up well even though it was written over a century ago.

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## **Mimi says**

yes, I've read another Beatrix Potter book... My nieces and nephews are coming to stay for a while, so I'm pre-reading loads of children's books, just to be prepared.

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## **Kristine Hansen says**

Such bad little mice! I could so easily see mice leaving this kind of wreckage everywhere. I think that's one of the things I love about Beatrix Potter is that she never forgets mice are mice even with human qualities. Great story that brings back happy memories as I read this.

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## **Jess ✨Harbinger of Blood-Soaked Rainbows✨ says**

So I may be overdosing a bit on nostalgia tonight, but I'm feeling oddly sentimental and wanted to share my thoughts.

I had a really rough day today. Christmastime is a time when we all think back on our lives for the past year. What did 2015 bring us? What is it that we remember as we reflect? Good times, bad times, scary times, happy times. We revel in the memories of friends and family, we sadden as we remember loss. We laugh when we think back to times we did stupid things or embarrassing things, or jokes we've made. I've always loved the holiday season. A chill in the air, lights illuminating downtowns, big gorgeous trees strung up with ornaments and tinsel and bright lights. Windows lit up for passing carolers. Shoppers trying to find that one perfect gift. Binge watching Home Alone, Elf, and A Christmas Story. People being abnormally friendly to one another. It's the spirit of the holiday season I look forward to every year more than the day itself.

This year is a little different. Three people who were present at my holiday table last year are no longer with us. My friend Eric passed last February. My grandmother passed in March, and my uncle passed in May. All three were relatively unexpected. Never in a million years would I have guessed that last Christmas would be the last holiday I would spend with any of them.

But I'm a tough broad. I knew this holiday season would be a little rougher than most but I knew I could handle it. Then a few weeks ago I received the news that my best friend and partner would be spending the holidays away from home. As hard as I try to remain positive, cheery, and hopeful, knowing that I won't be spending my Christmas with the person I love most in this world is the eggnog my demons are toasting with in my honor. Some days are better than others, and today has been the worst of all. I came home trying really hard to be Tiny Tim on the outside, while Scrooge was taking over my heart.

Trying to muster up even a scrap of Christmas spirit, I unpacked the ornaments and began decorating my yet undecorated tree. The last ornament I found was a wooden likeness of Beatrix Potter's Hunca Munca, one of the titular two bad mice from this little tale.

There are few tales in this world that are absolutely perfect to me and this short story is one of them. I can sit here and list every plot point, every character, every perfect illustration and describe them all in intricate detail, but I won't. I love the story, the characters, and the illustrations, but above all I love this story so much because it reminds me of my grandmother. She had first edition copies of all of Potter's stories and read them to us as kids, but the only one I ever wanted her to read was this one. I loved Hunca Munca. I loved her nature, her pretty purple dress, her sweet little white apron. I heard this story tens of millions of times as a child and throughout my lifetime and I never tire of it. It makes me think of my grandmother. How she would read to me in bed while rubbing my arms with her fingertips: "magic tickles" as she called them. This

story reminds me of blueberries and powdered sugar for breakfast, making cinnamon twists during the holidays, her letting my brother win at Monopoly all the time (he was the sore loser of the family), and above all it made me think of Christmas which was also my grandmother's birthday. Picking up that ornament to put on the tree flooded by mind with these memories, and ironically, it was the good that outweighed the painful. I thought about Hunca Munca, the little mouse who tried so hard not to be so terribly bad anymore, and it added a much needed light to my evening.

So this Christmas, I will be missing a lot of people. Aching at their lack of presence, wishing things were different, but accepting that they aren't. But crying about it won't bring my loved ones back, won't bring my best friend home, won't make me forget. So to all my friends, during this holiday season, think about the things in your life, however small they may be, that give your spirit warmth. Be kind. Be giving. Observe the beauty around you. Remember the good times. Show the people you love how much you love them. Spread cheer. Bake cookies. Watch Home Alone ten thousand times. Eat lots of chocolate. Drink lots of eggnog. And above all, remember to smile. Smiling is the first step.

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