

The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy Winkle

by Beatrix Potter adapted by EveryReader

Adapted to Lexile Level 200





Lucie is a little girl.
She lives on a farm named Little-town.
Lucie is good.
But she keeps losing her hankies.
She lost her apron too.



One day, Lucie cries in the farm yard.
"I lost my hankies!" she says.
"Three hankies and my apron!"



She asks Tabby Kitten, "Have you seen them?"

Tabby cleans her white paws.

Tabby does not answer.



Lucie asks a speckled hen.

"Sally Henny-penny, have you found my hankies?"

The hen runs to the barn.

"I go barefoot! Barefoot!" she clucks.



Lucie asks Cock Robin on a twig.
He looks at her with a bright eye.
Then he flies over the fence step and away.



Lucie climbs the fence step.
She looks up at the big hill behind Little-
town.
The hill goes up and up into the clouds.
Far up on the hill, she sees white things on
the grass.



Lucie runs up the path.
She goes up and up.
Little-town looks very small below her.
She comes to a little spring.



Water bubbles out of the hill.
A tin can sits on a stone.
The can is too small.
Water runs over the top.



Lucie sees tiny footprints in the wet sand.
"A very small person was here," she says.
She follows the path.
The path ends under a big rock.



The grass is short and green.
Lucie sees sticks and lines for clothes.
She sees many tiny clothespins.
But she does not see her hankies.



She sees a door in the hill.
Someone inside is singing a washing song.
Lucie knocks on the door.
A little voice calls, "Who is there?"



Lucie opens the door.
She sees a small, clean kitchen.
The floor is stone.



The beams are wood.
Everything is small.
The ceiling is low.



A short, round person stands by the table.
She holds a hot iron in her hand.
She looks at Lucie.
She wears a big apron and a striped skirt.



Her little black nose goes sniff, sniff.
Her eyes go twinkle, twinkle.
Under her cap are not curls.
She has prickles!



"Who are you?" asks Lucie.
"Have you seen my hankies?"



"I am Mrs. Tiggy-winkle," says the little person.

"I am a very good washer and starcher."
She takes a tiny red vest from a basket.
She spreads it on the blanket and irons it.



"What is that?" asks Lucie.

"That is not my hanky."

"No," says Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

"That vest belongs to Cock Robin."



She takes a cloth from a rack.
"Is that my apron?" asks Lucie.
"No," says Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.



"This is a fine tablecloth for Jenny Wren.
It has a dark juice stain.
It is hard to wash."



Mrs. Tiggy-winkle sniffs and smiles.
She gets another hot iron.
"Look! My hanky!" cries Lucie.
"And that is my apron too!"



Mrs. Tiggy-winkle irons them smooth.
She shakes out the frills.
"Oh, how pretty!" says Lucie.



"What are those long yellow things?" asks Lucie.

"They look like gloves."

"They are socks," says Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.



"They belong to Sally Henny-penny.
She scratched the heels thin.
Soon she will go barefoot!"



"Here is another hanky," says Lucie.
"But it is red.
It is not mine."



"That red one is for old Mrs. Rabbit," says Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

"It smelled like onions.
I washed it all by itself."



"And here is one more of mine," says Lucie.

"What are those tiny white things?"

"They are mittens for Tabby Kitten," says Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.



"I only iron them.
She likes to wash them herself."



"That is my last hanky," says Lucie.

"What are you dipping in the starch?"

"These are little shirt fronts," says Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.



"They belong to Tom Titmouse.
He likes them very neat."



"I am done with the ironing," she says.
"Now I will warm and air the clothes."



"What are these soft, fluffy coats?" asks Lucie.

"They are wool coats for the lambs," says Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

"The coats come off.



See the farm marks on the shoulder?
Each one is marked for its farm."



She hangs up many kinds of clothes.
There are tiny brown coats for mice.
There is a black vest for a mole.
There is a red tailcoat with no tail for
Squirrel Nutkin.



There is a small blue jacket for Peter Rabbit.
It has shrunk in the wash.
There is a little petticoat with no name.
At last the basket is empty.



Mrs. Tiggy-winkle makes tea.
She pours a cup for herself and a cup for
Lucie.
They sit on a bench by the fire.
Mrs. Tiggy-winkle holds her cup.



Her hands are very brown and wrinkled from soap.

Hairpins stick out of her cap and gown.

Lucie sits a little way off.



When the tea is done, they tie the clean clothes in bundles.

Lucie's hankies are folded in her clean apron. They are fastened with a silver safety pin.



They make up the fire with turf.

They go outside.

They lock the door and hide the key under the step.

Then they go down the hill with the bundles.



Little animals come out of the fern.
Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny come first.
Mrs. Tiggy-winkle gives them their clean
clothes.



All the animals and birds say, "Thank you!"
They are very happy.



At the bottom of the hill, they reach the fence step.

Now only Lucie's small bundle is left.

Lucie climbs up the step and turns to say good-night.

She wants to thank the washer-woman.



But Mrs. Tiggy-winkle does not wait.
She runs up the hill.
Her white cap is gone.



Her shawl is gone.
Her gown and petticoat are gone.
She is smaller now, and very brown.
She is covered with prickles.



Why, Mrs. Tiggy-winkle is a hedgehog!



Some people say Lucie fell asleep on the fence step.

But how did she get three clean hankies and her clean apron, pinned with a silver safety pin?



And I have seen the door in the back of that
hill called Cat Bells.

And I know dear Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.