

The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy Winkle

by Beatrix Potter adapted by EveryReader

Adapted to Lexile Level 600





Once there was a little girl named Lucie.
She lived on a farm called Little-town.
She was good, but she always lost her
handkerchiefs.



One day Lucie came into the farmyard, crying hard.

She said she had lost three handkerchiefs and an apron.

She asked Tabby Kitten if it had seen them.



The kitten kept washing its white paws.
So Lucie asked a speckled hen named Sally
Henny-penny.
The hen ran into a barn and clucked that she
went barefoot.



Then Lucie asked Cock Robin, who sat on a twig.

He looked at her with a bright black eye and flew over a stile.



Lucie climbed onto the stile and looked at the high hill behind Little-town.

The hill went up into the clouds, as if it had no top.



Far up the hillside, she thought she saw white things on the grass.
She scrambled up the steep path as fast as she could.
Soon Little-town was far below.



She felt she could drop a pebble straight down a chimney.

Soon she came to a spring that bubbled from the hill.

A tin can sat on a stone to catch the water, but it was too small.



The water ran over because the can was like an egg cup.

In the wet sand she saw footprints made by a very small person.

Lucie ran on and on.



The path ended under a big rock and short green grass.

She saw clothes props cut from bracken and lines of braided rushes.

There was a heap of tiny clothes pins, but no handkerchiefs.



She saw a door that went straight into the hill.

Inside, someone sang a little song about clean, lily-white clothes.



Lucie knocked, and the song stopped.
A small, scared voice asked who was there.
Lucie opened the door and saw a neat kitchen
with a low roof.



The pots and pans and chairs were all small.
A short, stout person stood at a table with a
hot iron.
Her nose went sniff, sniff, and under her cap
she had prickles.



Lucie asked who she was and if she had seen the handkerchiefs.

The little person bowed and said her name was Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

She said she was very good at washing and ironing.



She took something from a basket and spread it to iron.

It was a little scarlet waistcoat for Cock Robin.

She ironed it, folded it, and set it aside.



She took another piece from a clothes horse.
It was not Lucie's apron.
It was a fancy tablecloth for Jenny Wren,
stained with currant wine.



Mrs. Tiggy-winkle fetched another hot iron from the fire.

Lucie saw one of her handkerchiefs and her apron at last.

Mrs. Tiggy-winkle pressed the frills and shook them out.



Lucie said it was lovely.
She asked about long yellow things with
finger-like ends.
They were stockings for Sally Henny-penny,
worn thin at the heels.



Lucie saw another handkerchief, but it was red.

It belonged to old Mrs. Rabbit and had smelled of onions.

Mrs. Tiggy-winkle had to wash it alone, and the smell stayed.



Lucie found another one of her handkerchiefs.

She asked about some funny little white things.

They were mittens for Tabby Kitten, who washed them herself.



Lucie saw her last handkerchief.
Mrs. Tiggy-winkle dipped small shirt fronts
for Tom Titmouse into starch.
She said he was very particular, and the
ironing was now done.



She said she would air some clothes next.
Soft, fluffy things were woolly coats for
lambs at Skelghyl.
The jackets came off and were marked for
farms like Gatesgarth and Little-town.



Mrs. Tiggy-winkle hung up all sorts and sizes of clothes.

There were mouse coats, a moleskin waistcoat, and a red tailcoat for Squirrel Nutkin.

There was a small blue jacket for Peter Rabbit and a lost petticoat, and the basket was empty.



Then Mrs. Tiggy-winkle made tea, one cup for each of them.

They sat by the fire and looked at each other.

Her brown, wrinkled hands showed soapsuds, and hairpins stuck out of her cap.



When the tea was done, they tied the clean clothes into bundles.

Lucie's handkerchiefs were folded inside her apron.

They were fastened with a silver safety pin.



They built up the turf fire, went out, locked the door, and hid the key.

Then they trotted down the hill with the bundles.

Little animals came to meet them, including Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny.



Mrs. Tiggy-winkle gave out the nice, clean clothes.

All the small animals and birds were thankful. By the stile, only Lucie's little bundle was left.



Lucie climbed over the stile and turned to say good night.

But Mrs. Tiggy-winkle was already running up the hill.

She had lost her cap and shawl and gown, and she had grown small and prickly like a hedgehog.



Some people said Lucie fell asleep on the stile.

But she still found three clean handkerchiefs and an apron with a silver pin.

The storyteller has seen the door in Cat Bells and knows dear Mrs. Tiggy-winkle well.