

# **The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies**

by Beatrix Potter adapted by EveryReader

Adapted to Lexile Level 600





People say that eating too much lettuce makes you sleepy. I have never felt sleepy after eating lettuce, but I am not a rabbit. Lettuce did make the Flopsy Bunnies very sleepy.





When Benjamin Bunny grew up, he married Flopsy. They had many children. They were cheerful, but they did not plan well. I do not remember each child's name. People just called them the Flopsy Bunnies.





There was not always enough food. Benjamin sometimes borrowed cabbages from Peter Rabbit. Peter was Flopsy's brother. He kept a small nursery garden. Sometimes Peter had none to spare.





When that happened, the Flopsy Bunnies went across the field. They went to the rubbish heap in the ditch outside Mr. McGregor's garden. The heap held many things. There were jam jars and paper bags.





There were mountains of cut grass from the mowing machine. The grass tasted oily. There were some rotten vegetable marrows (a kind of squash). There was an old boot or two.





One day—oh joy!—they found a big pile of overgrown lettuces. The lettuces had gone to seed. The Flopsy Bunnies stuffed themselves with lettuce. Little by little, they became very sleepy.





One after another, they lay down on the cut grass and fell asleep. Benjamin was not as sleepy as the children. Before he slept, he put a paper bag over his head. It kept away the flies.





The little bunnies slept happily in the warm sun. From the lawn came the faraway clatter of the mower. Bluebottle flies buzzed by the wall. A tiny old mouse picked among the jam jars.





Her name was Thomasina Tittlemouse. She was a wood mouse with a long tail. She rustled over the paper bag and woke Benjamin. She apologized and said she knew Peter Rabbit.





While she and Benjamin talked under the wall, they heard heavy footsteps. The steps were right above their heads. Suddenly, Mr. McGregor dumped a whole sack of grass clippings. He dumped it on top of the sleeping Flopsy Bunnies!





Benjamin ducked under his paper bag. The mouse hid in a jam jar. The little rabbits smiled in their sleep under the shower of grass. They did not wake up, because the lettuce had made them so sleepy.





They dreamed that their mother, Flopsy, tucked them into a bed of hay. After he emptied his sack, Mr. McGregor looked down. He saw the funny brown tips of ears sticking up through the clippings. He stared for a while.





A fly landed on one ear, and it twitched. Mr. McGregor climbed down onto the heap. "One, two, three, four, five, six little rabbits!" he said. He dropped them into his sack.





The Flopsy Bunnies dreamed that their mother turned them over in bed. They stirred a little, but still did not wake. Mr. McGregor tied the sack and left it on the wall. Then he went to put away the mowing machine.





While he was gone, Mrs. Flopsy Bunny came across the field. She had stayed at home. She looked at the sack and wondered where everyone was. Then the mouse came out of her jam jar, and Benjamin took the paper bag off his head.





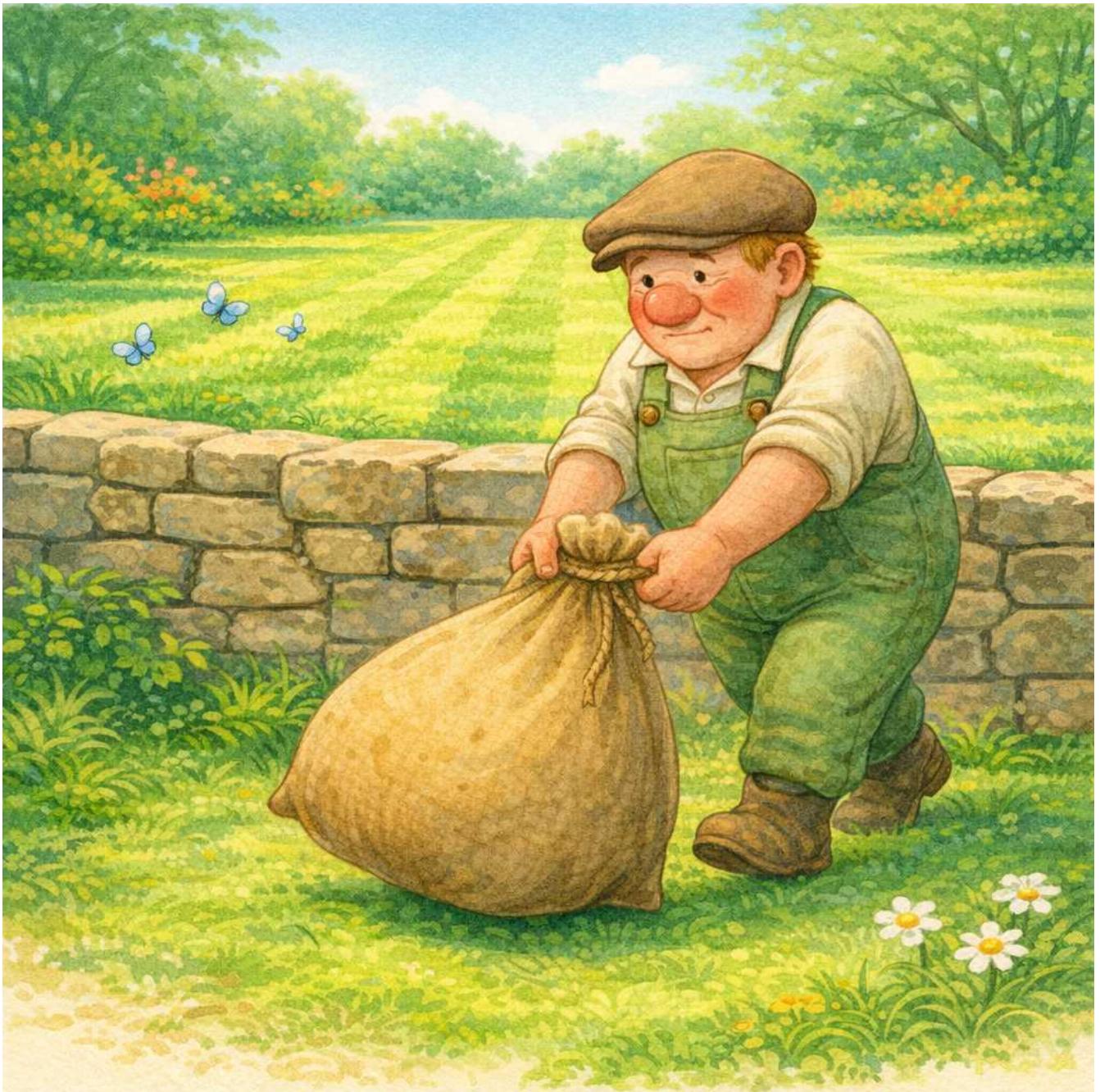
They told her the sad story. Benjamin and Flopsy tried to untie the string, but they could not. Mrs. Tittlemouse was clever. She nibbled a hole in the bottom corner of the sack.





The little rabbits were pulled out. They were pinched gently to wake them. Their parents stuffed the empty sack with three rotten marrows. They also put in an old blacking brush and two spoiled turnips.





Then they all hid under a bush and watched for Mr. McGregor. Mr. McGregor came back, picked up the sack, and carried it off. He held it low as if it were heavy. The Flopsy Bunnies followed at a safe distance.





They watched him go into his house. Then they crept up to the window to listen. Mr. McGregor threw the sack onto the stone floor. If the bunnies had been inside, it would have hurt them very much.





The rabbits heard him scrape his chair on the floor and chuckle. "One, two, three, four, five, six little rabbits!" said Mr. McGregor. "What's that? What have they been spoiling now?" asked Mrs. McGregor. "One, two, three, four, five, six little fat rabbits!" he said again.





He counted on his fingers. "One, two, three—" "Don't be silly. What do you mean?" asked Mrs. McGregor. "In the sack—one, two, three, four, five, six!" said Mr. McGregor.





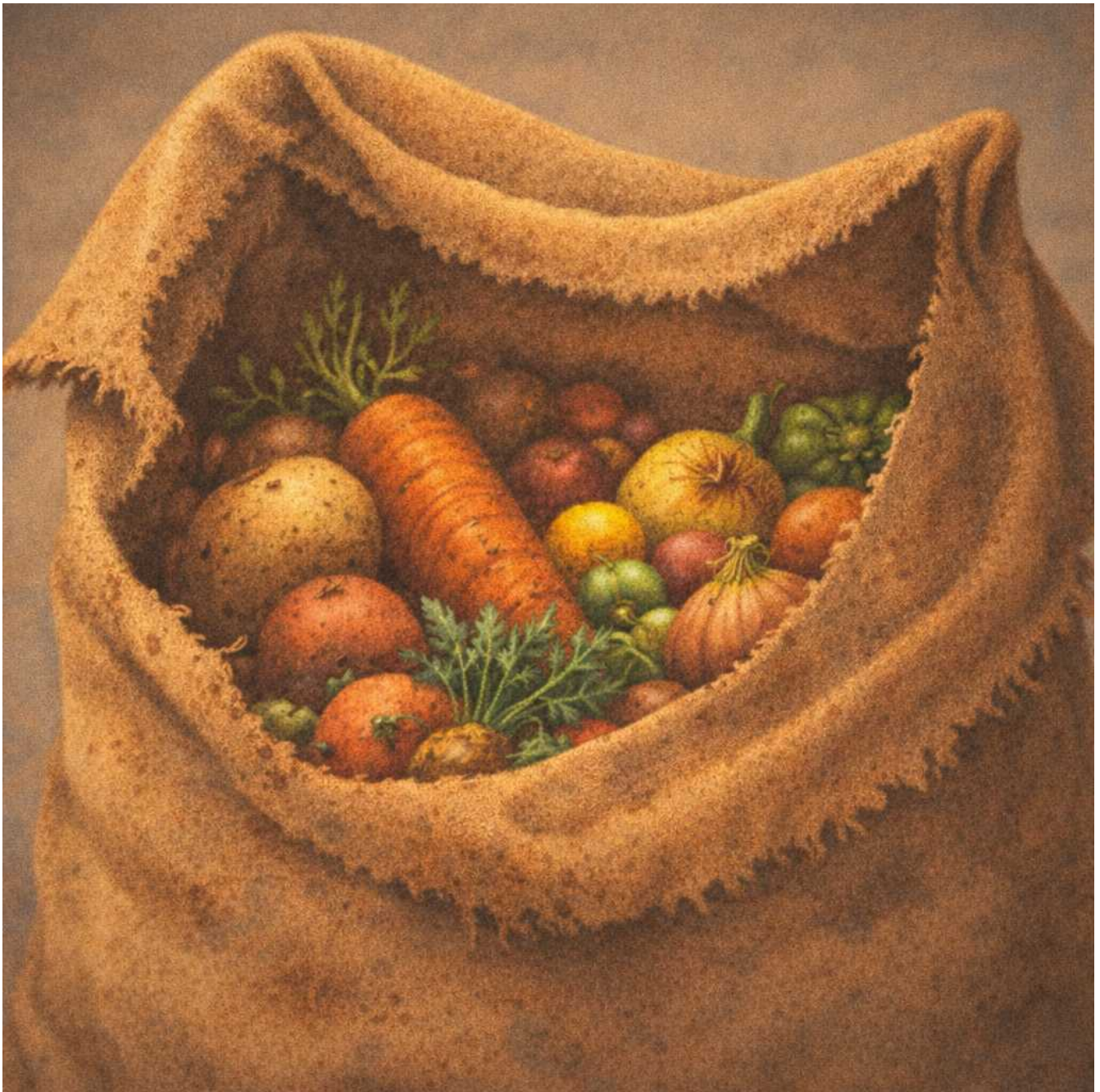
The youngest Flopsy Bunny climbed onto the window sill. Mrs. McGregor felt the sack. She said she could feel six, but they must be old rabbits. They were hard and different shapes.





"Not fit to eat," she said. "But the skins will line my old cloak." "Line your old cloak?" shouted Mr. McGregor. "I will sell them and buy tobacco!"





"Rabbit tobacco! I will skin them and cut off their heads," said Mrs. McGregor. She untied the sack and put in her hand. When she felt the vegetables, she became very angry. She said Mr. McGregor had done it on purpose.





Mr. McGregor grew angry, too. One rotten marrow flew out of the kitchen window. It hit the youngest Flopsy Bunny. It hurt a bit.





Then Benjamin and Flopsy decided it was time to go home. Mr. McGregor did not get his tobacco. Mrs. McGregor did not get her rabbit skins.





At Christmas, Thomasina Tittlemouse received a present. It was enough rabbit wool to make a cloak, a hood, a muff, and warm mittens.