

The Tale of Two Bad Mice

by Beatrix Potter adapted by EveryReader

Adapted to Lexile Level 400





Once there was a very pretty dollhouse.
It was made of red brick with white windows.
It had real muslin curtains, a front door, and a
chimney.



The dollhouse belonged to two dolls named Lucinda and Jane.

It really belonged to Lucinda, but she never ordered meals.

Jane was the cook.



She never cooked, because the dinner had been bought ready-made in a box full of shavings. There were two red lobsters, a ham, a fish, a pudding, and some pears and oranges. The food was stuck to the plates. It looked very beautiful.



One morning, Lucinda and Jane went for a ride in the doll carriage.

No one was in the playroom.

It was very quiet.



A soft scuffling sound came from a little hole near the fireplace, under the baseboard.

Tom Thumb put out his head and then popped back in.

Tom Thumb was a mouse.



A minute later, his wife, Hunca Munca, peeked out, too.

She saw that no one was there.

She stepped out onto the floor by the coal box.



The dollhouse stood on the other side of the fireplace.

Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca went carefully across the rug by the fire.

They pushed the front door.

It was not locked.



They went upstairs and looked into the dining room.
They squeaked with joy.
A lovely dinner was on the table!



There were tin spoons, little metal knives and forks,
and two tiny chairs.

Everything was so handy.



Tom Thumb began to cut the ham at once.
It was shiny yellow with red streaks.
The knife bent and hurt his finger.
He put his finger in his mouth.



“It is not cooked.
It is hard,” said Tom.
“You try, Hunca Munca.”



Hunca Munca stood up on her chair.
She chopped at the ham with another little knife.
“It is as hard as the hams at the cheese shop,” she
said.



The ham broke off the plate with a jerk and rolled under the table.

“Leave it,” said Tom.

“Give me some fish, Hunca Munca.”



Hunca Munca tried every tin spoon.
The fish was glued to the dish.
It would not come off.



Tom Thumb lost his temper.

He put the ham in the middle of the floor.

He hit it with the tongs and the shovel—bang, bang!

Smash, smash!



The ham flew into pieces.

Under the shiny paint, it was only plaster.



Then Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca felt very angry and very sad.

They broke the pudding, the lobsters, the pears, and the oranges.



The fish would not come off the plate, so they put the whole dish into the red paper fire in the kitchen. It would not burn.



Tom Thumb went up the kitchen chimney and
looked out at the top.

There was no soot.



While Tom was in the chimney, Hunca Munca had another disappointment.

She found tiny tins on the dresser.

They were labeled Rice, Coffee, and Sago.



She turned them upside down.
Only red and blue beads came out.
There was no food inside.



Then the mice began to make as much mischief as they could, especially Tom Thumb.

He took Jane's clothes out of the dresser in her bedroom.

He threw them out of the top floor window.



Hunca Munca liked to save things.
She pulled many feathers out of Lucinda's long
pillow.
She remembered that she needed a feather bed.
With Tom's help, she carried the pillow downstairs
and across the rug.



It was hard to push the pillow into the mouse hole.
But they did it.



Hunca Munca went back for more things.
She brought a chair, a bookcase, a birdcage, and
several small bits and pieces.
The bookcase and the birdcage would not fit into the
mouse hole.
She left them behind the coal box and went to get a
cradle.



She was coming back with another chair when they heard voices on the landing outside.

The mice ran to their hole.

The dolls came into the playroom.



What a sight they saw!

Lucinda sat on the tipped-over kitchen stove and stared.

Jane leaned against the dresser and smiled.

They did not say a word.



The people rescued the bookcase and the birdcage from under the coal box.

But Hunca Munca kept the cradle and some of Lucinda's clothes.

She also kept some useful pots and pans and several other things.



The little girl who owned the dollhouse said, “I will get a doll dressed like a policeman!”

But the nurse said, “I will set a mouse trap!”



That is the story of the two bad mice.

They were not so very naughty after all, because Tom Thumb paid for what he broke.

He found a bent sixpence coin under the rug.

On Christmas Eve, he and Hunca Munca put it into one of Lucinda and Jane's stockings.



Very early every morning, before anyone wakes up, Hunca Munca comes with her dustpan and broom. She sweeps the dolls' house and keeps it neat. The end.