



## 0. Miss Potter - Story Preface

1. LIFE in VICTORIAN BRITAIN
2. SUMMERS in SCOTLAND
3. ARTISTIC INFLUENCES
4. BEAUTY of the LAKE DISTRICT
5. SUMMERS in the LAKE DISTRICT
6. THE REAL PETER RABBIT
7. ENTER NORMAN WARNE
8. HAPPINESS TURNS to TRAGEDY
9. THE LITTLE BOOKS
10. Mrs. WILLIAM HEELIS
11. ASHES and LEGACY
12. DISCUSSION TOPICS
13. AUTHOR'S OBSERVATIONS

Illustration of Peter Rabbit with his family, from *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, by Beatrix Potter dated 1901. Image online, courtesy Project Gutenberg. See the [fully illustrated eBook at Project Gutenberg](#).

*It is much more satisfactory  
to address a real live child;  
I often think that that was the secret  
of the success of Peter Rabbit,  
it was written to a child - not made to order!*

Beatrix Potter

Noel Moore wasn't feeling well during the late summer of 1893. Home in London, the five-year-old boy received a special letter from [Beatrix Potter](#), a close family friend. It began:

*My dear Noel:*

*I don't know what to write to you, so I shall tell  
you a story about four little rabbits whose names  
were Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail and Peter.*

More than a simple story, written to make a child with scarlet fever feel better, [the letter](#) was filled with pictures, drawn by [Miss Potter](#). It was one of many picture-letters which Beatrix created for [Noel](#) and his siblings.

When her young friend was about twelve, Beatrix asked if she could borrow the letter she had written to him on September 4, 1893. It would be the basis of a little book to be called *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.

Who was [this woman](#) who wrote picture-letters to friends, then reused some of them to create picture-books for the public? Where did she live? Who, and what, inspired her?

And ... how could it be that more than one hundred years after she published her first book, she is still one of the most popular writers and illustrators of children's stories?

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Miss-Potter>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Miss-Potter>



### Beatrix Potter - As a Young Woman

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beatrix-Potter-As-a-Young-Woman>



### Miss Potter - Portrait in Her Youth

Image online, courtesy The Free Library website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Miss-Potter-Portrait-in-Her-Youth>

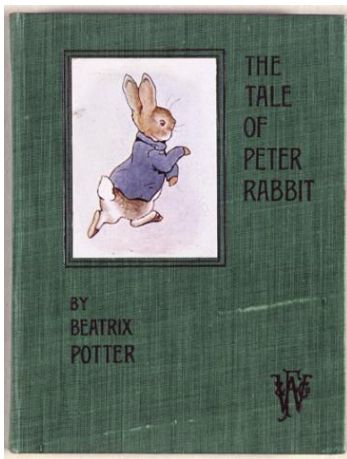


### Noel Moore - His Letter Became "Tale of Peter Rabbit"

Image online, courtesy the mythopath blog site.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Noel-Moore-His-Letter-Became-Tale-of-Peter-Rabbit->



### Tale of Peter Rabbit, The - Beatrix Potter

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tale-of-Peter-Rabbit-The-Beatrix-Potter>



### Beatrix Potter - Writer of Picture Letters

Image online, courtesy the Morning Earth [website](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beatrix-Potter-Writer-of-Picture-Letters>

## BEATRIX, THE NATURALIST

As a budding naturalist, Beatrix Potter created this drawing of caterpillars when she was a young girl spending her summers in Scotland. The original is maintained at the [Victoria and Albert Museum](#) in London.

Like many artists, Beatrix wanted to know how her subjects were constructed so she could draw them more accurately. Following the standard practice of the time, she boiled animals to their skeletons so she could better study them.

It wasn't just animals that interested Miss Potter. She was fascinated by the many different plants she saw. And living near London's [Natural History Museum](#) and [South Kensington](#) - as the [Victoria & Albert Museum](#) was then called - Beatrix was able to copy whatever intrigued her. Since she was a little girl, summering in Scotland, Beatrix had observed local flora and fauna. Over the years, she became especially interested in [fungi](#). In 1887, at the age of 21, Beatrix created her first-known fungus painting.

In 1892, when she was twenty-six, Beatrix met [Charlie McIntosh](#), a Perthshire naturalist and postman at Dunkeld. McIntosh, who had walked fifteen miles a day during his years as a mail-carrier, had observed fungi, ferns and mosses. He and Beatrix had much to talk about.

By 1897, Beatrix was convinced that, among other things, some fungi were hybrids and [lichens](#) were actually part-fungi and part-algae. Writing as Helen B. Potter, the thirty-one-year-old submitted a scientific paper, *The Germination of the Spores of Agaricineae*, to the [Linnean Society of London](#).

Although women, at the time, could neither be members nor attend meetings, they were allowed to submit papers to the 209-year-old scientific association. Someone else - a man - presented Beatrix's work to the society.

Her paper was never printed. Initially, some members of the Linnean Society were antagonistic toward her results. Her lichen theory, however, has since been proven true. The Linnean Society, it is said, may yet apologize for rebuffing the self-taught Potter.

Between 1887 and 1901, Beatrix made hundreds of natural-history drawings. In exchange for some of her paintings, [Charlie McIntosh](#) collected fungi for Beatrix to paint, posting them to London during the winter months.

Before Beatrix became a famous writer and illustrator of children's stories, she was thus a budding naturalist. Eventually, she produced hundreds of fungi drawings and [paintings](#). Beatrix Potter, however, is not remembered most for her drawings and paintings of fungi. She is loved, the world over, for her stories and paintings of animals. The setting, for many of these tales, is Britain's Lake District.

Let's take a virtual visit to the places which Beatrix loved.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/BEATRIX-THE-NATURALIST-Miss-Potter>



## Miss Potter

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Miss-Potter-Illustration->