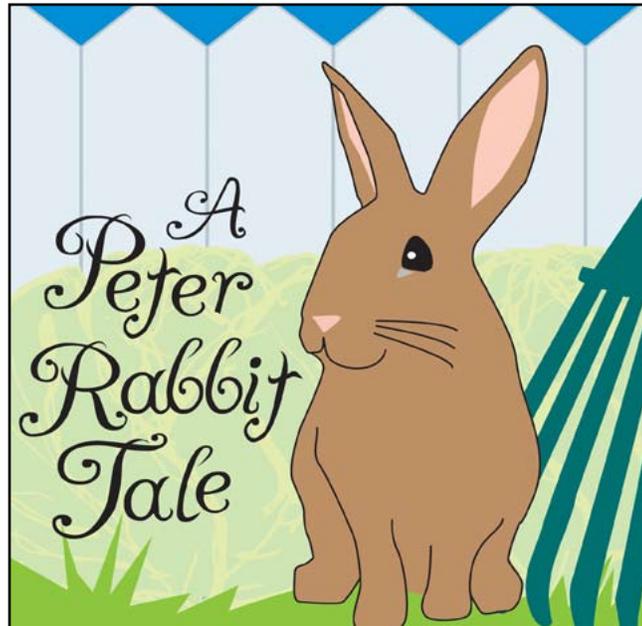




# imaginary theatre company

2009–2010 SEASON



by Sarah Brandt

Music and Lyrics by Neal Richardson

based on the works of Beatrix Potter

Directed by Kat Singleton

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# Imaginary theatre company



By Sarah Brandt

Music and Lyrics by Neal Richardson

Directed by Kat Singleton

**Scenic Designer**

Scott Loeb

**Costume Designer**

Betsy Krausnick

**Stage Manager**

Danny Maly

**Director of Education**

Marsha Coplon

## The Company

Flopsy, Nutkin, Mice 2, Simpkin / **Ann Ashby**

Mother, Benjamin Bunny, Twinkleberry,  
Thomasina, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle / **Lakeetha Blakeney**

Mopsy, Mr. McGregor, Owl, Mice 1, Tailor / **Chauncy Thomas**

Peter Rabbit / **Amanda Williford**



Financial assistance for this theatre has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis; and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.

## setting the scene

So you've heard of Peter Rabbit, right? He's the brother of Flopsy and Mopsy, and cousin of Benjamin Bunny. He lives with mother and twin sisters right next door to Mr. McGregor out in the country. But living next door to somebody like Mr. McGregor can be bad news for two reasons: first—Mr. McGregor has an amazing garden full of carrots and cabbage (two of Peter's favorite treats). And while living next door to your favorite treats isn't a exactly a bad thing, it is when you hear the second reason—Mr. McGregor doesn't like anybody in his garden, especially rabbits.

Even though he's a good boy, Peter Rabbit is known for getting himself into tricky situations. He always seems to accidentally stumble upon trouble, and today he's feeling especially antsy. He feels like he's doing all the work while everyone else gets to play, have fun and eat cake all day. Lucky for him, he's friends with all the other animals in the forest, so if he gets into trouble they just might be able to help him.

## who's who?

Even though he's the star of our story,  
you won't catch  
**PETER RABBIT**  
doing a whole lot more than playing with  
his toys (or avoiding work!).

Peter's **MOTHER**  
is more than fair in asking him to do his  
chores—in fact, she'll even reward him  
when he finishes!

**FLOPSY and MOPSY**  
(Peter's older sisters) are twins who always do  
everything they're told, especially when it  
comes to helping out around the house.

Rabbits, squirrels and mice beware!  
If you venture into  
**MR. MCGREGOR'S**  
garden, you may never come back out!  
After all, he doesn't like it when you  
eat all his veggies!

**TWINKLEBERRY and NUTKIN**  
are a pair of adventurous but  
hardworking squirrels.

If the squirrels aren't careful  
**OWL**  
just might eat them! He doesn't like it when  
anyone steals his walnuts!

**THOMASINA TITTMOUSE**  
is not only an expert sewer, but she's also one  
of the sweetest mice you'll ever meet.

**TIMMY, JIMMY, KIMMY,  
WILLY, JILLY and MILLY**  
are only half of Thomasina's kids.  
Believe it or not there are more!

Even though some humans like  
Mr. McGregor may not like animals, the  
**TAILOR**  
has a special deal with Thomasina  
and her family, offering them shelter,  
clothing and protection.

While **SIMPKIN**  
(the Tailor's cat) may have a deal not to  
harm mice, he doesn't seem to have the same  
deal for rabbits...look out!

Not only does she make dynamite carrot stew,  
**MRS. TIGGY-WINKLE**  
(a hedgehog) also gives pretty good advice.  
Will Peter follow it though?

# what's the story?

It's just another day out in the forest, and Mother is asking Flopsy, Mopsy and Peter to help with chores around the house. Though Flopsy and Mopsy (the good children that they are) are actually doing their chores, Peter is doing everything he can to not do his (which includes playing, ignoring his mother and annoying everyone in the house). When Mother leaves to pick up some groceries, Flopsy and Mopsy lay into Peter, giving him a hard time about never doing any work. But he's tired of his older sisters telling him what to do, tired of working, and tired of being a rabbit in general, so he decides to get out of the house for a bit.

Before he knows it, Peter finds himself in Mr. McGregor's garden with Benjamin Bunny. Benjamin shows him where all the great vegetables are, but just as they're about to make off with the goods, Mr. McGregor sneaks up and tries to snatch the culprits. Though Peter and Benjamin are able to get away, Mr. McGregor snags Peter's jacket. Peter can't return home without his jacket, his mother will kill him! Between that and being fed up with being a rabbit, Peter decides to set off and see if he can become another animal . . . preferably one who doesn't have to work all the time!

As Peter wanders about in the woods, he comes upon Twinkleberry and Nutkin, two squirrels. They think they might be able to teach him how to be a squirrel (all he has to do is scurry, munch and climb trees), so Peter tags along with them as they

gather walnuts. They get too close to Owl, though, and they only narrowly escape. Apparently Owl doesn't like it when people steal his walnuts! The close call makes Peter realize that he's just not cut out for life as a squirrel.

Further down the road, Peter meets Thomasina Tittlemouse and her family of mice. They are kind enough to allow Peter to stay with them, but he has to be able to sew like they do (the mice live with a tailor who puts them to work in exchange for their home). Peter gives it an honest try, but he just doesn't seem to be able to pull off being a mouse either. That, and narrowly escaping the Tailor's cat, sends Peter back on the road again. Will he ever find an animal that he can truly be?

Finally he meets Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, a kind hedgehog who makes a dynamite carrot stew. Even hedgehogs work, though, and after eating Peter is sent out to earn his keep delivering

laundry. It's not too bad, but there's still something missing.

Little does Peter know, but his last delivery stop is his own house. His mother and sisters are all inside, and Peter's afraid they won't want him back. He realizes now how much he loves and misses them, and that he doesn't need to be anything other than a rabbit. After overhearing them talking, he decides to go in. They welcome him back with joy, though his mother warns he better not ever do anything like that again!



Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

The activities in this guide address the following Missouri Show Me Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

MO: CA1, 3; FA2, 3, 4, 5; MA1; SC3  
IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 16, 25, 27

# words to the wise

**Servant:** someone who does stuff for other people, like a butler

**Geezer:** kind of a not-so-nice way to refer to an old person (don't call Grandpa a geezer, whatever you do!)

**Terrifying:** really super scary

**Scurry:** to move quickly with short, quick steps

**Munch:** to loudly crunch on what you eat (you know, what you do to annoy your big brother or sister at the dinner table)

**Shriveled:** wrinkled and shrunken up, like a raisin

**Property:** something that belongs to somebody (your stuff)

**Appetizer:** a small dish of food that you eat to warm up for a bigger meal, like buffalo chicken wings

**Bandage:** not only can bandage be a noun (the actual strip of gauze, bandaid, cotton or wrap used to cover an ouchie), but it can also be a verb that means to place a bandage upon a wound

**Sweatshop:** a sweatshop is a harsh, dirty factory where people get paid only a little bit of money to do an awful lot of work

**Tailor:** someone who makes or alters clothing for people, like suits, pants or jackets

**Scarecrow:** a dummy dressed up like a real person and set up in a farm field to scare off birds who eat crops

“Who Said It?”  
Answer key

1. C; 2. B; 3. A; 4. C;  
5. B; 6. C; 7. B; 8. C;  
9. A; 10. A

# read more about it

We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books, videos and websites.

**Potter, Beatrix. *Beatrix Potter The Complete Tales*, Warne, 2006.** Check out all the stories of Peter and his friends with the complete series of Beatrix Potter books!

**Flader, Susan. *Exploring Missouri's Legacy: State Parks and Historic Sites*, University of Missouri Press, 1992.**

Why was Beatrix so interested in nature? Because there's so much cool stuff out there to see and do! Like what, you ask? Well check out this book and find out!

***The Tales of Beatrix Potter*, 90 minutes, DVD. Lion's Gate, 2009.** You've seen the play, you know the stories, so why not check out the movie!

<http://mdc.mo.gov/nathis/>  
If you want to know more about Missouri's wildlife and conservation, check out the official Missouri Department of Conservation website!

<http://www.mdc.mo.gov/conmag/>  
Want more conservation action? Check out the Missouri Department of Conservation magazine, *Missouri Conservationist*, online!



# Face to Face: Beatrix Potter

Beatrix Potter (born Helen Beatrix Potter in 1866) wrote 31 children's books, most famously *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and its ensuing series. She was born into a well-to-do English family and educated by governesses (private teachers hired to home school those wealthy enough to afford it). Though she would spend most of her childhood isolated from other children, young Beatrix was never alone. She always had an amazing array of pets, including frogs, newts, ferrets, bats and rabbits. Between her time alone and with her pets, Beatrix developed a love for nature and the land from a very early age. In fact, Beatrix was not only known as a famous author and illustrator, she was also a respected mycologist (one who studies fungi) and conservationist.

When Beatrix turned 15, her parents expected her to take on the duties of housekeeper and drop any intellectual pursuits. Ironically, this actually promoted her growth as a writer as she began keeping a detailed daily journal of her



life. Before long, her creative inspiration demanded a greater outlet, and by the time she was in her 30s she had become a full-time writer.

Potter's first book was *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, which was published in 1902. This book follows Peter specifically in his adventures (and mischief) in Mr. McGregor's garden. From there, Beatrix wrote one to two books a year for the next 11 years, all focusing on different characters in Peter's world, from Benjamin Bunny to Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle.

Having finally found financial independence, Beatrix purchased a large farm all her own. She continued to write and enjoy nature, and she would buy up as many pieces of land as she could afford.

Though she didn't live to see it (Beatrix passed away in 1943), her stories and characters became as common as many fairy tales for young children by the latter part of the 20th century. Her life and work have been the subject of various film and television shows, and references to her stories and characters are everywhere.

While her literary legacy is undeniable, perhaps more important to Potter was the gift of conservation she left behind. Upon her death, she left almost all of her land—4,000 acres—to the National Trust, (short for National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty) an organization interested in preserving the land. Her properties are now a part of England's Lake District National Park and remain largely the way she left them.



# English Adventure



Located on the southern and central part of the island of Great Britain, England is a large part of the United Kingdom (or UK), consisting of over half the UK's territory and around 84% of its overall population (England alone consists of 51 million people). Here are some quick facts about England.

## Geography and Climate

Most of England consists of what are lowlands, or land below sea level. The climate tends to be more damp and mild than what we might be used to around these parts. Winters usually don't get any colder than around 34 degrees Fahrenheit (though the English would probably measure in Celsius, which would be 1 degree for them) and summers don't typically get any hotter than around 70 degrees Fahrenheit or 21 degrees Celsius.

## Government

The English are governed by both a constitutional monarchy (that is—a King or Queen may rule but only within rules set up by the constitution) and a parliamentary democracy (a system of ministers and representatives). While the monarchy has held

most of the power in the past, Parliament and the Prime Minister tend to do the heavy lifting of governmental work these days.

## Culture and the Arts

While the English enjoy much of the same popular culture as we do—we share many of the same popular musicians, movies and television shows—there are some distinct differences in their entertainment habits. Perhaps one of the most striking is England's interest in theatre. There are around 150 theatres in England today, producing a variety of plays from tried and true classics by William Shakespeare to new and exciting plays by writers like Tom Stoppard.

## Food

Though you might be able to pop into a pub and grab a relatively familiar burger, traditional English favorites include a good Sunday roast (that's beef, lamb or chicken roasted and served with boiled vegetables and gravy), fish and chips (deep fried battered fish with deep fried chipped potatoes like fries), and shepherd's pie (meat pie with a crust made from mashed potatoes and beef).

## Sports

While many American sports like basketball have caught on in England, the strongest athletic traditions in England are in sports like football (not American football, it's actually soccer), rugby (more like American football, though without the pads!), cricket (kind of like baseball with a big flat bat) and tennis.



# Backyard Buddies

You know all about Peter and his friends. Or do you? Check out the facts on these real-life animals!

## Rabbit (Peter's family, Benjamin)

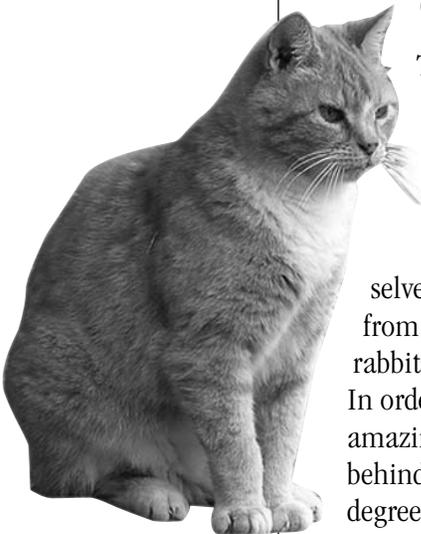
Though they can be found in many places across the globe, over half the world's rabbit population can be found here in North America. Their underground burrows (or rabbit holes) can be found in meadows, woods, forests and even in your own back yard. There are a variety of species out there (like the volcano rabbit, the pygmy rabbit or just your average cottontail variety), and all of them are strictly herbivores, meaning they eat no meat. Their favorite foods are actually grass and leafy greens, not carrots. Though they are social animals, at first glance rabbits are very alert and shy animals. They'd rather run from you than get eaten by you, and who could blame them?

## Squirrel (Twinkleberry, Nutkin)

Squirrels are medium sized rodents that are a variety of colors (brown, red and grey among others) and types (like tree squirrels, ground squirrels and flying squirrels, for example). They can live almost anywhere from deep in the forest to the heart of the city. They're clever little creatures that are typically active during the day while sleeping at night. While squirrels are portrayed as preferring nuts, they'll eat seeds, cones, fruits, fungi and even insects, eggs, small birds, young snakes and smaller rodents.

## Owl (Owl)

There are around 200 species of owls stretched all over the world, living everywhere except for Antarctica, Greenland and some other remote islands. These birds of prey are solitary (that is, they keep to themselves) and nocturnal, hunting anything from insects to small mammals (watch out rabbits and squirrels!) and even other birds. In order to see anything in the dark, owls have amazing vision and the ability to easily look behind either shoulder giving them a 270 degree field of view.



## Mice (Thomasina and her children)

There seems to be no limit to where these small rodents can live, as they are able to squeeze their way into just about any nook and cranny. However, life's no piece of cake for the average mouse in the wild. While they're known to live up to two and a half years in captivity (as a pet), they typically only live four months out in the wild. They seem to be on everyone's list of what's good to eat, including cats, wild dogs, foxes, birds of prey, snakes and even certain insects.

## Cat (Simpkin)

Though Simpkin isn't the best example of all that a cat can be, cats must be doing something right because their history as one of the most popular pets in the world stretches back some 9,500 years. They're often utilized for their ability to hunt out various household pests and vermin (like snakes, insects and yes, even mice), though they're also social animals that can be great companions.



## Hedgehog (Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle)

Hedgehogs are spiny little mammals that are native to Europe, Asia, Africa and New Zealand. While they might be easy to spot because of their spines, you might have a hard time finding them around since they're nocturnal. While they are often confused with porcupines (who are native to North America), these little guys are different in that their spines are a lot like our teeth. They shed their baby spines as they grow up and replace them with adult spines (only once, just like us). If you ever happen to come across one be sure not to feed it any cheese, milk or dairy products as hedgehogs are naturally lactose-intolerant!

# Who Said It?

So now that you know a thing or two about Peter and his friends, can you identify them? Imagine that you're having a party with Peter and his friends. See if you can correctly match each quotation below with the right character. (Hint—you can identify the right quotes if you think about how each animal is unique and what they did in the story!)

1. “Man, I love walnuts, but if Owl’s in the way I’m just fine with seeds, fruits or even eggs if you’ve got them.”

**A.** Peter   **B.** Owl   **C.** Twinkleberry

2. “Oh, that’s quite alright, people are always mistaking me for a porcupine, dear. Unlike them, my spines are more like your teeth than your hair—it hurts to remove them and they don’t grow back!”

**A.** Simpkin   **B.** Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle   **C.** Twinkleberry

3. “You know, sometimes a guy just wants to kick back and relax with a good leafy green like cabbage... all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy!”

**A.** Peter   **B.** Simpkin   **C.** Thomasina Tittlemouse

4. “Just try and sneak up behind me and my walnuts! I prefer to be left alone, and I can see as if I had eyes in the back of my head!”

**A.** Mother   **B.** Flopsy   **C.** Owl

5. “Listen, I don’t know why I’m getting such a bad rap here, man! I wasn’t going to eat Peter! I was just playing! I prefer other household pests like mice!”

**A.** Thomasina Tittlemouse   **B.** Simpkin   **C.** Owl

6. “Well I might be able to live just about anywhere but the outside world is just so dangerous, so many predators! I just couldn’t pass up the opportunity to live with the Tailor, I just couldn’t!”

**A.** Mopsy   **B.** Nutkin   **C.** Thomasina Tittlemouse

7. “Listen, you gotta just chill out, Peter! We’re two dudes that are very alert and ready to spring off on a moment’s notice! Mr. McGregor will never get us!”

**A.** Peter   **B.** Benjamin Bunny   **C.** Tailor

8. “Well of course I don’t eat walnuts, but that’s beside the point! I enjoy anything from insects to small mammals, even other birds, and I’ll only hunt them at night!”

**A.** Simpkin   **B.** Mr. McGregor   **C.** Owl

9. “Oh, no meat for me please! And I’d really prefer grass over carrots, if I have the choice.”

**A.** Flopsy   **B.** Owl   **C.** Nutkin

10. “I have a cousin who flies, another who lives in a tree, and still another who’s red. You can’t even begin to imagine our family reunions!”

**A.** Nutkin   **B.** Thomasina Tittlemouse   **C.** Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle



# Add It Up

Peter and Benjamin have been busy swiping treats from Mr. McGregor's garden. Add up all the vegetables in their pockets and see who got the most food.



## PETER

2 heads of lettuce  
+ 5 radishes

\_\_\_\_\_



8 carrots  
+ 1 squash

\_\_\_\_\_



3 eggplants  
+ 2 pumpkins

\_\_\_\_\_



4 onions  
+ 5 zucchini

\_\_\_\_\_

3 ears of corn  
+ 6 tomatoes

\_\_\_\_\_

## BENJAMIN

1 head of lettuce  
+ 3 radishes

\_\_\_\_\_



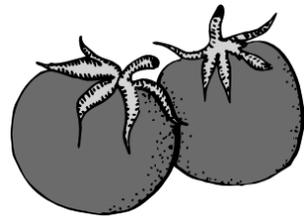
4 carrots  
+ 2 squash

\_\_\_\_\_



2 eggplants  
+ 1 pumpkin

\_\_\_\_\_



8 onions  
+ 3 zucchini

\_\_\_\_\_

5 ears of corn  
+ 7 tomatoes

\_\_\_\_\_



**BONUS:**

Add all the numbers together for each rabbit to find out who made off with the most food!

# Write On!

Do you like Beatrix Potter's stories? Try writing one of your own!

## 1. CHARACTERS

Who will be in your story? Beatrix Potter loved the animals that she saw in her yard or had as pets, so she made them a part of her stories. Choose three characters for your story.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. PLOT

The plot of your story is the action, or what will happen. Maybe someone will leave home for an adventure like Peter or maybe someone will find a magic wand. Write a few lines here about what will happen in your story.

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## 3. CONCLUSION

The conclusion is the end of your story, when everything wraps up. In Peter's conclusion, he heads back home and realizes that's the place he's meant to be. How will your story end?

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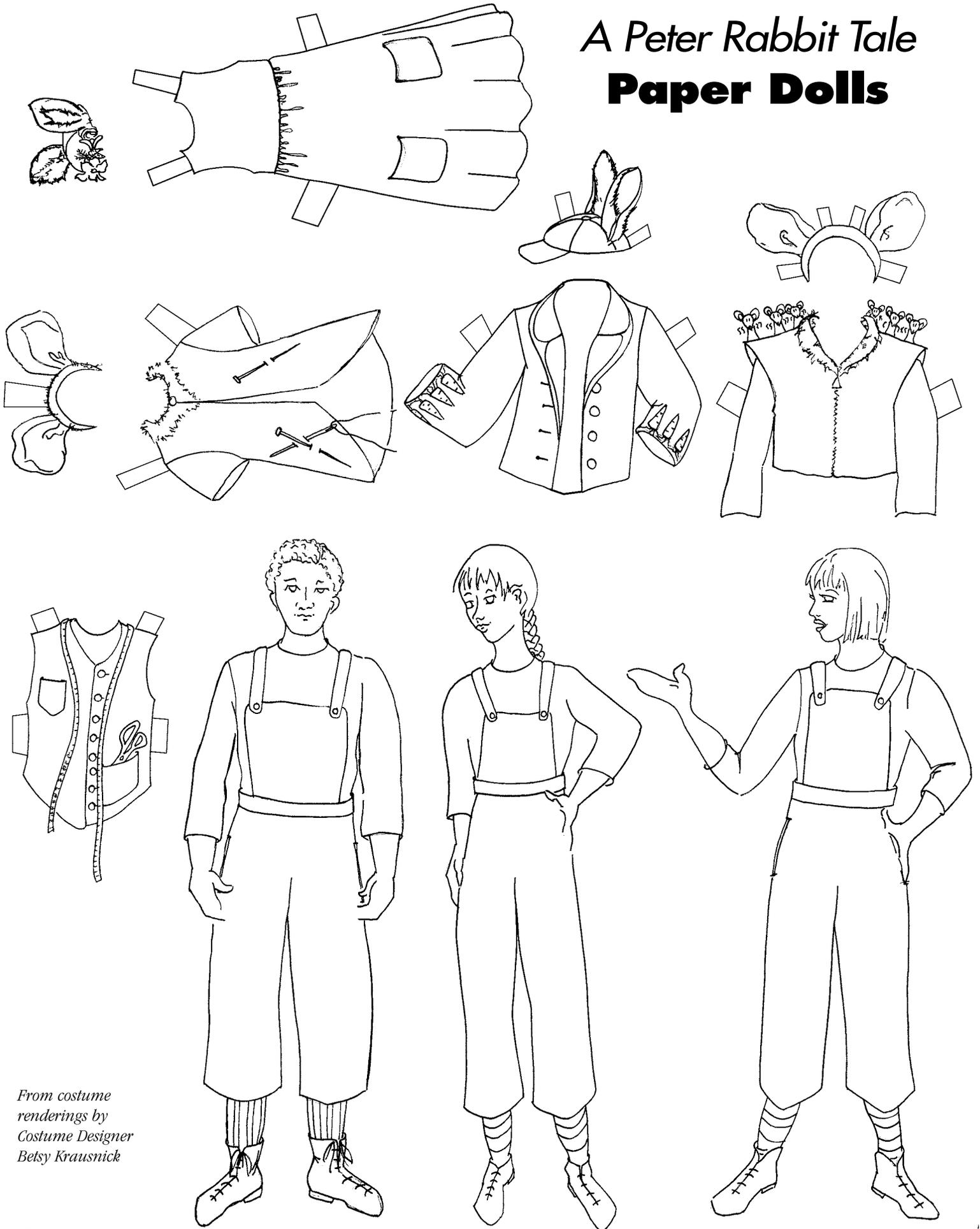
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Now put it all together. On your own sheet of paper, write your story from start to finish!



# A Peter Rabbit Tale Paper Dolls



From costume renderings by  
Costume Designer  
Betsy Krausnick