

ENCHANTMENT THEATRE COMPANY

Igniting Children's Imaginations Everywhere!

PETER RABBIT™ TALES

based on *The Original Peter Rabbit Books*™
by Beatrix Potter



In arrangement with
F. Warne and Co., 2015



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Beatrix Potter



Beatrix Potter portrait
courtesy of the Victoria
and Albert Museum.

Beatrix Potter is known throughout the world for her beloved animal characters and inventive tales. The particular pleasure of her stories is their truthfully humorous observation of animals and celebration of the natural world. She combined exquisite drawings with imaginative, witty and highly original story-telling. Born in 1866, Beatrix Potter came from an upper middle-class family and grew up in London. As a child, she was educated at home and had limited opportunities to spend time with other children. Her nursery became the home to a menagerie of pets that she and her brother Bertram collected. She observed her pets closely, studied their characteristics and drew them with great skill.

Through extended family vacations, first in Scotland and later in the Lake District, Beatrix fell in love with the English countryside. Her curiosity, artistic ability and keen observational skills led her to an interest in studying and drawing nature. As a young woman in the 1890s, she yearned to use her talents to find her purpose in life and gain financial and personal independence from the confines of her Victorian family. She began to sell some of her drawings for greeting cards and hoped to get one of her stories published. Her first story, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, was originally written in 1893 as a letter to cheer a sick child. In 1901 she privately published a small edition of the story when she was unable to find a publisher. The book was taken up by Frederick Warne & Company in 1902 and became an instant classic. Twenty-two tales followed, with most published over the next ten years. In 1905, Beatrix's editor, Norman Warne, asked her to marry him. Although her parent's disapproved, Beatrix accepted. Tragically Norman Warne died only a few weeks later.

Within the same year Beatrix bought Hill Top Farm in the village of Sawrey in the Lake District. She spent as much time as she could there and her illustrations of the farm and village began to appear in her tales. Working with a local solicitor, William Heelis, she began to purchase properties in the area, with the intention of preserving the farms and conserving the land. In 1913 Beatrix married William Heelis and made Sawrey her permanent home. For the next thirty years they shared a passion for farming and land preservation. When Beatrix Heelis died in 1943, at the age of 77, she left over 4,000 acres of land and fifteen farms to the National Trust of England. Brilliant artist, imaginative writer, passionate naturalist and pioneer in land conservation; Beatrix Potter shared her love of nature with millions of children through her distinctively original tales and by preserving the land that inspired them.

For more information on Beatrix Potter read Dr. Ellen Handler Spitz's in-depth essay online at <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/north-american-tours/discover>

Peter Rabbit™ Tales

Story Adapted by Jennifer Blatchley Smith, Leslie Reidel and Landis Smith

Music by Charles Gilbert

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