

THE TALE OF MRS. TITTMOUSE



TM

BY
BEATRIX POTTER

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Mrs. TITTMOUSE

By BEATRIX POTTER

Author of "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" etc.



FREDERICK WARNE



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NELLIE'S LITTLE BOOK



ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A
WOOD-MOUSE, AND HER NAME WAS
Mrs. Tittlemouse.

SHE LIVED IN A BANK UNDER A
hedge.

SUCH A FUNNY HOUSE! THERE
WERE YARDS AND YARDS OF SANDY
PASSAGES, LEADING TO
STOREROOMS AND NUT-CELLARS AND
SEED-CELLARS, ALL AMONGST THE
ROOTS OF THE HEDGE.





THERE WAS A KITCHEN, A
parlour, a pantry, and a larder.

ALSO, THERE WAS MRS.
TITTLEMOUSE'S BEDROOM, WHERE
she slept in a little box bed!

MRS. TITTMOUSE WAS A MOST
TERRIBLY TIDY PARTICULAR LITTLE MOUSE,
ALWAYS SWEEPING AND DUSTING THE
soft sandy floors.

SOMETIMES A BEETLE LOST ITS
way in the passages.

"SHUH! SHUH! LITTLE DIRTY FEET!"
SAID MRS. TITTMOUSE, CLATTERING
her dust-pan.





AND ONE DAY A LITTLE OLD woman ran up and down in a red spotty cloak.

"YOUR HOUSE IS ON FIRE, MOTHER LADYBIRD! FLY AWAY HOME TO YOUR children!"

ANOTHER DAY, A BIG FAT SPIDER
came in to shelter from the rain.

"BEG PARDON, IS THIS NOT MISS
Muffet's?"

"GO AWAY, YOU BOLD BAD SPIDER!
LEAVING ENDS OF COBWEB ALL OVER
my nice clean house!"





SHE BUNDLED THE SPIDER OUT AT A window.

HE LET HIMSELF DOWN THE HEDGE WITH a long thin bit of string.

MRS. TITTMOUSE WENT ON HER WAY TO A DISTANT STOREROOM, TO FETCH CHERRY-STONES AND THISTLE-down seed for dinner.

ALL ALONG THE PASSAGE SHE sniffed, and looked at the floor.

"I SMELL A SMELL OF HONEY; IS IT THE COWSLIPS OUTSIDE, IN THE HEDGE? I AM SURE I CAN SEE THE marks of little dirty feet."





SUDDENLY ROUND A CORNER, SHE MET BABBITTY BUMBLE—"Zizz, Bizz, Bizz!" said the bumble bee.

MRS. TITTMOUSE LOOKED AT HER SEVERELY. SHE WISHED THAT SHE HAD A BROOM.

"GOOD-DAY, BABBITTY BUMBLE, I SHOULD BE GLAD TO BUY SOME BEESWAX. BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE? WHY DO YOU ALWAYS COME IN AT A WINDOW, AND SAY ZIZZ, BIZZ, BIZZ?" MRS. TITTMOUSE BEGAN TO GET CROSS.

"Zizz, Wizz, Wizz!"

REPLIED BABBITY BUMBLE IN A
FEEVISH SQUEAK. SHE SIDLED
DOWN A PASSAGE, AND
DISAPPEARED INTO A
STOREROOM WHICH HAD BEEN
USED FOR ACORNS.

MRS. TITTMOUSE HAD
EATEN THE ACORNS BEFORE
CHRISTMAS; THE STOREROOM
OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN EMPTY.

BUT IT WAS FULL OF UNTIDY DRY
MOSS.





MRS. TITTLEMOUSE BEGAN TO PULL OUT THE MOSS. THREE OR FOUR OTHER BEES PUT THEIR HEADS OUT, AND BUZZED fiercely.

"I AM NOT IN THE HABIT OF LETTING LODGINGS; THIS IS AN INTRUSION!" SAID MRS. TITTLEMOUSE "I WILL HAVE THEM TURNED OUT—" "BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!"—"I WONDER WHO WOULD HELP ME?" "BIZZ, WIZZ, WIZZ!"

—"I WILL NOT HAVE MR. JACKSON; HE NEVER WIPES HIS feet."

MRS. TITTMOUSE DECIDED TO LEAVE THE BEES TILL AFTER dinner.

WHEN SHE GOT BACK TO THE PARLOUR, SHE HEARD SOME ONE COUGHING IN A FAT VOICE, AND THERE SAT MR. JACKSON himself!

HE WAS SITTING ALL OVER A SMALL ROCKING-CHAIR, TWIDDLING HIS THUMBS AND SMILING, WITH his feet on the fender.

HE LIVED IN A DRAIN BELOW THE HEDGE, IN A VERY DIRTY WET ditch.





"HOW DO YOU DO, MR JACKSON? DEARY ME, YOU have got very wet!"

"THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MRS. TITTMOUSE! I'LL SIT AWHILE AND DRY MYSELF," SAID MR. JACKSON.

He sat and smiled, and THE WATER DRIPPED OFF HIS COAT TAILS. MRS. TITTMOUSE WENT ROUND with a mop.

HE SAT SUCH A WHILE THAT HE HAD TO BE ASKED IF HE WOULD take some dinner?

FIRST SHE OFFERED HIM CHERRY-STONES. "THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MRS. TITTMOUSE! NO TEETH, NO TEETH, NO TEETH!" SAID MR. JACKSON.

HE OPENED HIS MOUTH MOST UNNECESSARILY WIDE; HE CERTAINLY had not a tooth in his head.



THEN SHE OFFERED HIM THISTLE-DOWN SEED —"TIDDLY, WIDDLY, WIDDLY! POUFF, POUFF, PUFF!" SAID MR. JACKSON. HE BLEW THE THISTLE-DOWN ALL OVER THE room.

"THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MRS. TITTMOUSE! NOW WHAT I really—really SHOULD LIKE —WOULD BE A LITTLE DISH OF honey!"



"I AM afraid I have not got any, Mr. Jackson," said Mrs. Tittlemouse.

"TIDDLY, WIDDLY, WIDDLY, MRS. TITTLEMOUSE!" SAID THE SMILING MR. JACKSON, "I can *smell* it; THAT IS WHY I came to call."

MR. JACKSON ROSE PONDEROUSLY FROM THE TABLE, AND BEGAN TO LOOK INTO THE CUPBOARDS.

MRS. TITTLEMOUSE FOLLOWED HIM WITH A DISH-CLOTH, TO WIPE HIS LARGE wet footmarks off the parlour floor.





WHEN HE HAD CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT THERE WAS NO HONEY IN THE CUPBOARDS, HE BEGAN TO walk down the passage.

"INDEED, INDEED, YOU WILL stick fast, Mr. Jackson!"

"TIDDLY, WIDDLY, WIDDLY, MRS. Tittlemouse!"

FIRST he squeezed into the pantry.

"TIDDLY, WIDDLY, WIDDLY? NO HONEY?
no honey, Mrs. Tittlemouse?"

THERE WERE THREE CREEPY-CRAWLY
PEOPLE HIDING IN THE PLATE-RACK. TWO
OF THEM GOT AWAY; BUT THE LITTLEST ONE
he caught.





THEN HE SQUEEZED INTO THE
LARDER. MISS BUTTERFLY WAS
TASTING THE SUGAR, BUT SHE FLEW
away out of the window.

"TIDDLY, WIDDLY, WIDDLY, MRS.
TITTMOUSE, YOU SEEM TO HAVE
plenty of visitors!"

"AND WITHOUT ANY INVITATION!"
SAID MRS. THOMASINA
Tittlemouse.

THEY
WENT ALONG
THE SANDY
passage—
"Tiddly
widdly—"
"Buzz!
Wizz!
Wizz!"

HE MET
Babbitty
ROUND A
CORNER, AND
snapped

HER UP, AND
PUT HER
down again.

"I DO NOT
LIKE BUMBLE
BEES. THEY
ARE ALL OVER
bristles,"
SAID MR.
Jackson,
WIPING HIS
MOUTH WITH
HIS COAT-
sleeve.

"GET OUT,
YOU NASTY
OLD TOAD!"
shrieked
Babbitty
Bumble.

"I SHALL
go
distracted!"
scolded
Mrs.
Tittlemouse.





SHE SHUT HERSELF UP IN THE NUT-CELLAR WHILE MR. JACKSON PULLED OUT THE BEES-NEST. HE SEEMED TO HAVE NO OBJECTION TO STINGS.

WHEN MRS. TITTMOUSE VENTURED TO COME OUT—everybody had gone away.

BUT THE UNTIDINESS WAS SOMETHING DREADFUL—"NEVER DID I SEE SUCH A MESS—SMEARS OF HONEY; AND MOSS, AND THISTLEDOWN—AND MARKS OF BIG AND LITTLE DIRTY FEET—ALL over my nice clean house!"

SHE GATHERED UP THE MOSS AND
the remains of the beeswax.

THEN SHE WENT OUT AND FETCHED
SOME TWIGS, TO PARTLY CLOSE UP THE
front door.

"I WILL MAKE IT TOO SMALL FOR MR.
Jackson!"





SHE FETCHED SOFT SOAP,
AND FLANNEL, AND A NEW
SCRUBBING BRUSH FROM THE
STOREROOM. BUT SHE WAS TOO
TIRED TO DO ANY MORE. FIRST
SHE FELL ASLEEP IN HER CHAIR,
and then she went to bed.

"WILL IT EVER BE TIDY
AGAIN?" SAID POOR MRS.
Tittlemouse.

NEXT MORNING SHE GOT UP
VERY EARLY AND BEGAN A
SPRING CLEANING WHICH
lasted a fortnight.

SHE SWEEPED, AND
SCRUBBED, AND DUSTED; AND
SHE RUBBED UP THE FURNITURE
WITH BEESWAX, AND POLISHED
her little tin spoons.





WHEN it was all beautifully neat
AND CLEAN, SHE GAVE A PARTY TO
FIVE OTHER LITTLE MICE, WITHOUT MR.
JACKSON.

HE SMELT THE PARTY AND CAME
UP THE BANK, BUT HE COULD NOT
squeeze in at the door.

SO THEY HANDED HIM OUT
ACORN-CUPFULS OF HONEY-DEW
THROUGH THE WINDOW, AND HE
WAS NOT AT ALL OFFENDED.

HE SAT OUTSIDE IN THE SUN,
AND SAID—"TIDDLY, WIDDLY,
WIDDLY! YOUR VERY GOOD HEALTH,
Mrs. Tittlemouse!"



THE END

Transcriber's Note: Punctuation normalized.

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