

PETER RABBIT

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Adapted for radio by Alex Lynch

THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT

SCENE 1

SUNNY WOODLAND
SOUND OF BIRDS CHIRRUPING
SOUND OF TREES SWAYING IN THE BREEZE
SOUND OF TINY RABBIT FEET PATTERNING ABOUT
CHILD-LIKE LAUGHTER

NAR: Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were-Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter.

MORE CHILD-LIKE LAUGHTER AND GENERAL FROLICS
LEAVES BEING TRAMPLED

NAR: They lived with their Mother in a sand-bank, underneath the root of a very big fir-tree.

OLD MRS. RABBIT: Now my dears...

CHILD FROLICS QUIETEN DOWN AS THEY LISTEN TO THEIR MOTHER

OLD MRS. RABBIT: You may go into the fields or down the lane, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden:

SILENCE. QUIET WIND

OLD MRS. RABBIT: Your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.

GASPS AND NERVOUS CHATTER FROM THE LITTLE RABBITS

OLD MRS. RABBIT: Now run along, and don't get into mischief. I am going out.

NAR: Then old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, and went through the wood to the baker's. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns.

RABBIT FEET PATTERNING DOWN THE LANE
CHILD-LIKE VOICES CALLING TO EACH OTHER 'WAIT UP FLOPSY' ETC.

NAR: Flopsy, Mopsy and Cotton-tail, who were good little bunnies, went down the lane to gather blackberries. But Peter, who was very naughty, ran straight away to Mr. McGregor's garden

PETER RUNNING, LAUGHING

NAR: And squeezed under the gate

PETER GRUNTING AS HE SQUEEZES HIMSELF UNDER THE GATE

SCENE 2

PETER IN AWE 'WOW'

RABBIT MUNCHING ON VEGETABLES

NAR: First, he ate some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes

PETER GORGING HIMSELF AND GOING 'MMMM...'

SOUND OF STOMACH CHURNING

PETER GROANING

NAR: And then, feeling rather sick, he went to look for some parsley.
But round the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but...

PETER: MR. MCGREGOR!

MR MCGREGOR: STOP THIEF!

RABBIT FEET SPRINTING ACROSS PATCHES

HEAVY BOOTS TRAMPLING ACROSS PATCHES

PETER PUFFING PANTING

MCGREGOR: (Yelling) Get back here you little...

RAKE BEING WAVED WITH A 'WHACK' SOUND

NAR: Peter was most dreadfully frightened; he rushed all over the garden, for he had forgotten the way back to the gate

PETER: Argh, my shoe!

NAR: He lost one of his shoes among the cabbages, and the other shoe amongst the potatoes.

RABBIT RUNNING ON ALL FOURS

PETER PUFFING AND PANTING, SHORT PANICKED BREATHING

SCENE 3

NAR: After losing them, he on four legs and went faster. He might have got away altogether if he had not unfortunately...

PETER: AARGH! OOF!

PETER FALLING DOWN

NAR: ... Run into a gooseberry net, and got caught by the large buttons on his jacket

PETER STRUGGLING, PANICKING, MORE SHORT AND RAPID BREATHING

NAR: It was a blue jacket with brass buttons, quite new.

PETER STARTS CRYING / WAILING

NAR: Peter gave himself up for lost, and shed big tears;

SOUND OF SPARROWS TWEETING
WINGS FLAPPING

NAR: But his sobs were overheard by some friendly sparrows, who flew to him great excitement, and implored him to exert himself. Mr. McGregor came up with a sieve, with he intended to pop upon the top of Peter

MR. MCGREGOR EMITING A FRUSTRATED SOUND AS HE COMES DOWN ON PETER WITH THE SIEVE
PETER SCREAMING
BANG OF A SIEVE HITTING THE GROUND
RABBIT FEET HURRIEDLY SPRINTING AWAY

NAR: But Peter wriggled out just in time, leaving his jacket behind him.

MR. MCGREGOR: BAH!

SPARROWS TWEETING
WINGS FLAPPING AS THEY FLY AWAY

SCENE 4

NAR: Peter rushed into the tool shed, and jumped into a can. It would have been a beautiful thing to hide in,

SPLASH!
PETER SHIVVERING

NAR: If it had no had so much water in it.

DOOR OPENING
PETER SHIVVERING BUT TRYING TO KEEP QUIET
FEET SLOWLY TRUDGING

NAR: Mr. McGregor was quite sure that Peter was somewhere in the tool shed

MCGREGOR: Where are you? I know you're in here rabbit... Perhaps hidden... Underneath – A FLOWER POT! Hrrm... No... Hmmm...

NAR: He began to turn them over carefully, looking under each flower-pot.

PETER: Ah... Ahhh... Ahhhh... Kertyschoo!

MCGREGOR: AHA!

PETER SCREAMS
LEAPS OUT OF THE CAN, WATER SPLASHING EVERYWHERE

MCGREGOR: GRRR! Why you little-

NAR: Mr. McGregor was after him in no time. And tried to put his foot upon Peter, who jumped out of a window

SOUND OF POT PLANTS SMASHING

MCGREGOR: ARGH!

NAR: Upsetting three plants. The window was too small for Mr. McGregor, and he was tired of running after Peter.

MCGREGOR: Bah! Rabbits...

NAR: He went back to his work.

SCENE 5

PETER SPRINTING, PUFFING PANTING
HIS BREATHING AND RUNNING DECREASES, GETTING SLOWER AND SLOWER UNTIL
PETER EMITS A FINAL SIGH THOUGH STILL SHAKING

NAR: Peter sat down to rest; he was out of breath and trembling with fright, and he had not the least idea which way to go. Also, he was very damp with sitting in that can.

SOUND OF PETER SQUEEZING WATER OUT OF HIS FUR
PETER SLOWLY MOVING, SMALL PITTER PATTERN OF FEET
A BEAT...

NAR: After a time he began to wander about, looking all round. He found a door in a wall

PETER TRYING A DOOR WHICH RATTLES BUT WON'T BUDGE

NAR: But it was locked, and there was no room for a fat little rabbit to squeeze underneath.

BIRDS TWEETING
TREES SWISHING AND SWAYING
TINY MOUSE FEET RUNNING OVER STONE, MUFFLED SQUEAKS

NAR: An old mouse was running in and out over the stone doorstep, carrying peas and beans to her family in the wood.

PETER: Excuse me mouse, please - which is the way to the gate?

NAR: But she had such a large pea in her mouth that she could not answer.

MUFFLED SQUEAKS

NAR: She only shook her head at him.

PETER SOBBING. THE ATMOSPHERE AND THE SOBBING FADES OUT

SCENE 6

FADE IN

NAR: Then he tried to find his way straight across the garden, but he became more and more puzzled. Presently, he came to a pond where Mr. McGregor filled his water-cans.

POND WATER MOVING, QUIET SPLISH SPLOSH

NAR: A white cat was staring at some gold-fish, she sat very, very still, but now and then the tip of her tail twitched as if it were alive.

SOUND OF POND LIFE – SERENE

NAR: Peter thought it best to go away without speaking to her; he had heard about cats from his cousin, litte Benjamin Bunny.

SCENE 7

NAR: He went back towards the tool shed

SCRITCH SCRATCH SOUND

PETER GASPS

BUSHES RUSTLING

TWIGS SNAPPING

Peter scuttered underneath the bushes...

A BEAT

NAR: But presently, as nothing happened, he came out

SOUND OF FEET ON METAL

NAR: Climbed upon a wheelbarrow and peeped over.

FAINT SCRITCH SCRATCH SOUND

BIRDS TWEETING

MR. MCGREGOR MUTTERING TO HIMSELF

NAR: The first thing he saw was Mr. McGregor hoeing onions. His back was turned towards Peter, and beyond him...

PETER: There's the gate!

FEET ON METAL. EACH FOOTSTEP BEING MADE SLOWLY WITHIN THE GAPS OF THE NEXT LINE

NAR: Peter got down... Very quietly... Off the wheelbarrow.

FEET PICKING UP PACE, RUNNING

NAR: And started running as fast as he could go, along a straight walk behind some black-currant bushes.

MCGREGOR: What?!

NAR: Mr. McGregor caught sight of him at the corner, but Peter did not care. He slipped underneath the gate

PETER SCRABBLING IN THE DIRT, STILL PUFFING AND PANTING

NAR: And was safe at last in the wood outside the garden

PETER'S RUNNING AND RAPID BREATHING FADING INTO THE DISTANCE

FEET TRAMPLING

CLOTHES BEING PICKED UP AND HUNG UP

NAR: Mr. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scare-crow to frighten the blackbirds

BLACK-BIRDS CAWING

MCGREGOR: Hmmm...

SCENE 8

NAR: Peter never stopped running or looked behind him till he got home to the big fir tree.

FEET TRAMPLING OVER LEAVES AND DIRT

DOOR BEING FLUNG OPEN

PETER FLOPPING DOWN ON THE FLOOR

OLD MRS. RABBIT: Oh!

NAR: He was so tired that he flopped down upon the nice soft sand on the floor of the rabbit-hole and shut his eyes...

SOUND OF A SAUCEPAN BOILING

OLD MRS. RABBIT: Peter? Peter! What have you done with your clothes?

PETER: (Half asleep mutters something inaudible)

OLD MRS. RABBIT: (Tuts) That's the second little jacket and shoes you've lost in a fortnight. Peter...

SAUCEPAN BOILING FADES OUT

SCENE 9

NAR: I am sorry to say that Peter was not very well during the evening.

SOUND OF DUVET BEING TUCKED INTO A BED
SOUND OF SPOON GENTLY STIRRING IN A TEACUP

NAR: His mother put him to bed, and made some camomile tea

PETER GROANING, SIPS HIS TEA

OLD MRS. RABBIT: One table-spoonful to be taken at bed-time. Goodnight Peter

PETER: (Groggily) Goodnight mum...

BEDROOM DOOR CLOSING

SCENE 10

CHILDLIKE SOUNDS
DINNER ATMOSPHERE

NAR: But Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail had bread and milk and blackberries for supper.

MILK BEING POURED INTO CUPS
BREAD BEING CUT
RABBITS MUNCHING ON FRUIT
CHILDREN AND OLD MRS. RABBIT CHATTING

FADE OUT

THE END

END CREDITS AND MUSIC