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books

THE WORLD OF  
PETER RABBIT™

CHRISTMAS

Tales



PUFFIN



## The Christmas Tree

**I**T WAS the second of December. Peter and his sisters decided it was time for a tree, so they talked to their mother.

'All right, but just a little one,' Mrs. Rabbit said, stirring a turnip soup they were going to have that evening.

'Thank you, Mother!' said Flopsy. 'We'll choose the perfect tree.'

'But where will we find it?' asked Cotton-tail.

'Oh, we'll find it,' Peter said confidently, although he wasn't quite sure where.

'Off you go, then,' said their mother. 'And be careful.'

The rabbits stuck their noses out of the burrow. The air smelled crisp.

It was exactly the right kind of weather for finding a Christmas tree.

'Let's look down by the pond,' suggested Mopsy.

But all they found were holly bushes.

'Can we use holly instead?' asked Cotton-tail.

'No,' said Peter. 'It wouldn't be the same.'

And they continued through the wood.

Before long, they spotted a sign that read

CHRISTMAS TREES HERE.

Peter was delighted.



‘What did I tell you?’ he cried. He hurried in the direction the arrow pointed.

His sisters followed him, but they soon bumped into his back, because he’d suddenly stopped. Peter had seen a smartly dressed gentleman next to some saplings. A gentleman with a red bushy tail.

‘Mr. Tod!’ gasped Peter.

‘Good morning,’ said the fox, stroking his whiskers. He bowed to the frightened rabbits. ‘Please, come and choose a tree.’

The rabbits stood quite still.

‘Oh, come, come. It’s perfectly safe,’

Mr. Tod said. ‘It’s nearly Christmas, after all. I’m merely spreading goodwill among my fellow creatures by directing them to a tree that they can decorate.’

Then he stepped back so that he was almost in the bush behind him. ‘Look, I promise I’ll stay here while you examine the trees.’

‘What shall we do?’ whispered Cotton-tail.

‘Run home!’ said Flopsy and Mopsy together.

‘But we need a tree!’ said Peter. He watched Mr. Tod closely, and saw that the fox was looking everywhere but at the rabbits.

