Peter Rabbit

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I. Introduction

Since Peter Rabbit appears, a lot of people are crazy for the products about Peter Rabbit from adornments to baby wears. Its influence is significant and lasting. Thus, we would like to study the history and background of Peter Rabbit. Who gave birth to this lovely rabbit? Why can it remain its popularity among people of all ages for over a century? With eagerness to know more about Peter Rabbit, we decided to study it and write down what we learned. We surfed the Net and looked up the encyclopedia to get the information. In this thesis, we write about several aspects of Peter Rabbit.

First, we write down the history of Peter Rabbit, the cause that made Ms. Potter to write this Peter Rabbit Series, and the process of its publication. Secondly, we write our findings about the author, Beatrix Potter, such as her living background and her thoughts. Thirdly, we talk about the main character, Peter Rabbit. Who is this famous rabbit? What’s his story? We write a summary based on the original story of Peter Rabbit, the features, and the reasons why people love it. Lastly, we find some information about its relative products. In a word, we find many aspects as we can research on the charming rabbit. And we are glad to share here with you.

II. Thesis

1. Origin of the Peter Rabbit Stories

On September, 1893, in order to encourage her ex-tutor’s eldest son, who has been sick in bed for a period of time, Ms. Potter wrote a letter about her rabbit, Peter, to him. Years later, Potter decided to turn this story into a book. At first, the plan didn’t go well; however, the Frederick Warner & Co., which once rejected Potter’s draft, later promised that they would publish the story as long as Potter could colored the pictures. Eventually, the Tale of Peter Rabbit was published in1902. It became the best-seller overnight.

Being interesting and heartwarming, Peter Rabbit is known as a household fairy tale. Since its appearance in 1902, Peter has become the most famous rabbit in the world. In addition to a naughty Peter Rabbit, there are lots of
illustrations drawn by Ms. Potter, featuring the beautiful countryside scenery of England, giving a picturesque and classical air about it. Over the past century, Peter Rabbit series has been translated into more than 30 languages and been published in over 100 countries. Products featuring Peter Rabbit are popular, too. The extraordinary life of the creator of Peter Rabbit, Ms. Potter, is so delighted-talked that it had been made into a movie in 2007.

2. The Author of the Peter Rabbit

2-1. Living Background

Beatrix Potter(1866 – 1943), was an English author and illustrator known for her charming children’s stories about small animals. Her books combine stories of adventure and humor with delicate water colors that capture the action and mood of the text. Potter’s first and most famous story is The Tale of Peter Rabbit (1902).

Potter wrote and illustrated about 25 books. In addition to Peter Rabbit, her characters include Squirrel Nutkin, Benjamin Bunny, Tom Kitten, Jemima Puddle-Duck, the Flopsy Bunnies, and Pigling Bland.

Helen Beatrix Potter was born on July 28, 1866, in London to wealthy parents. She began drawing plants and animals as a child. Potter based many of her illustrations on the animals and rural landscapes of the Lake District of northern England.

Beatrix Potter was born in South Kensington, London on 28 July 1866. Educated at home by a succession of governesses, she had little opportunity to mix with other children. She had two rabbits, frogs, newts, ferrets and even a pet bat. Potter would watch these animals for hours on end, sketching them. Gradually the sketches became better and better, developing her talents from an early age.

Potter made numerous drawings of lichens and fungi. As the result of her observations, she was widely respected throughout England as an expert mycologist. She also studied spore germination and life cycles of fungi. Potter’s set of detailed watercolor of fungi, numbering some 270 completed by 1901, is in the Armitt Library, Ambleside.
The basis of her many projects and stories were the small animals that she smuggled into the house or observed during family holidays in Scotland and the Lake District. When she was 27 and on one such holiday in Scotland, in a letter dated 4 September 1893 she sent a story about rabbits to Noel Moore, the five-year-old son of her last governess. She was encouraged to publish the story so she borrowed it back in 1901 and made it into the book entitled *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. However, she struggled to find a publisher for it and eventually had 250 copies printed privately. In October, 1902, Frederick Warne & Co. agreed to publish 8,000 copies in a small format, easy for a child to hold and read, having asked Beatrix to re-illustrate it in color. It was extremely well received and, by the end of the year, 28,000 copies had been printed.

Potter eventually wrote 23 books, all in the same small format. Her writing efforts finally abated around 1920 due to poor eyesight. *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson* was published in 1930; however, the actual manuscript was one of the first to be written and far predates this publication date.

On moving to the Lake District, Potter became engrossed in breeding and showing Herdwick sheep. She became a respected farmer, a judge at local agricultural shows, and President of the Herdwick Sheep Breeders’ Association. When Potter’s parents died, she used her inheritance to buy mare farms and tracts of land. After some years, Potter and Heelis (her husband) moved down into the village of Sawrey, and into Castle Cottage—where the local children knew her for her grumpy demeanour, and called her “Auld Mother Heelis.” Her letters of the time reflect her increasing concerns with her sheep, preservation of farmland, and World War II.

Beatrix Potter died at Castle Cottage in Sawrey on 22 December 1943. Her body was cremated at Carleton Crematorium, Blackpool, and her ashes were scattered in the countryside near Sawrey.

In her will, Potter left almost all of her property to the National Trust—4,000 acres (16 km²) of land, cottages, and 15 farms. The legacy has helped ensure that the Lake District and the practice of fell farming remain unspoiled to this day. Her properties now lie within the Lake District National Park. The Trust’s 2005 Swindon headquarters are named “Heelis” in her honor.
2-2. Thoughts and Ideas of the Lake District Conservation

The beautiful Lake District scene is not only the source of Ms. Potter’s origin of inspiration but also adds some sense of reality to the fantasy world created by Potter. Ms. Potter not only drew the peace and beauty of the Lake District but also spent most of her royalties on buying land for preserving her favorite land. She cooperated with the National Trust, which was just established then, on protecting the threatened country resources. With her husband, William’s help, she purchased pieces of land in the Lake District. In order to keep the beautiful scenery lasting, she donated most of her property to the National Trust. The legacy has helped ensure that the Lake District remains unspoiled to this day.

The most important inheritance that she left for all kids around the world is not only the 23 original Peter Rabbit books but also the picturesque Lake District.

3. Summary of the Story

Peter, an adventurous young bunny, lives with his mother and his three sisters under the roof of a large fir tree. One day, he invades Mr. McGregor’s garden, despite his mother’s warning not to do so, as his father met an unfortunate accident there. However, he still helps himself to some of the garden’s vegetables, and then gets chased by the angry Mr. McGregor. After three dangerous situations, Peter finally makes it safely out of the garden and goes back home. Peter is a lovely but naughty little rabbit who loves to take adventures and is boldhearted. Without doubt, Peter is not only a rabbit but also an embodiment of a little boy.

4. Marketing of All Lines of Peter Rabbit Products

Not only the books of Peter Rabbit have been sold around the world, but also the other products of his have a wide selling market from kids to adults. Besides, the film of Peter Rabbit had been directed and released by the Frederic Warne company in British in 1993. This film can be described as the most expensive and worthiest in producing films in the history. It has been sold over 50 countries and received many praises. The film has made the originally popular Peter Rabbit become a fad which is here to stay for a long time. The story of Ms. Beatrix Potter, the author of Peter Rabbit, had also
been made into movies and novels. In 1997 the film *The Tales of Beatrix Potter*, directed by Reginald, was released. In 2006, *Miss Potter*, a biographical film, is also released.

Also, Peter Rabbit has been turned into many products and appeared on such products as lunch boxes, bed sheets, decorations, wrapping paper, etc. Those products have made lots of profits. And in London, England, Peter Rabbit’s hometown, there’s even a museum exhibiting everything related to Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit is not a product of a short—term frenzy, but permanent. Peter Rabbit won’t be obsolete in the market. It will be in perpetuity. That is quite a success.

5. Characteristics of the Peter Rabbit Series

As far as children’s books are concerned, that the series of Peter Rabbit can remain its charm until today is a miracle since there are so many new children books popping up every day. As a best seller, Peter Rabbit has lots of features that make it so attractive and different from others. We collect information from the Internet and the encyclopedias. Besides, we add our thoughts in. Then we have got the following explanations for its popularity.

First, Ms. Potter modeled the characters in the stories after real animals. Her distinguished water colored illustrations and amazing creation also make the characters in the story as vivid as life. From these characters, we can find Ms. Potter’s optimistic attitude about nature and life. The easy atmosphere around the entire story makes readers enchanted by the plots.

Secondly, the book combined the real world with natural scenery as well as Ms. Potter’s imagination. It’s a mixture of reality and creation. The characters are realistic. Readers can feel that Peter Rabbit is not fictional but a real creature living under the same sky with us.

Thirdly, Peter Rabbit is a book especially written for kids, so the leading character, Peter, has the similar personality as a little boy. He loves taking adventures, and he is curious about everything around him. We may smile at the thought of having the same experiences in our childhood when we read
about Peter's story.

Fourthly, the plot of Peter Rabbit is vivid, interesting and creative. It's helpful for the intellectual development of kids. It also offers a chance for parents to read with their children. Both parents and children will be attracted to the story.

With these reasons, there’s no doubt that Peter Rabbit isn’t obsolete in the book market and can still keeps its irresistible charm until now.

III. Conclusion

Childhood is regarded as the most wonderful part of human lives. At that time, we are innocent, creative and having much fancy about the world; however, as we grow up and start to know more about the world, we begin to feel disappointed. And we become wizened-minded because we are restricted by the formularized school education and the ordinary concept that how most people think about everything.

Nevertheless, Ms. Potter wasn’t trapped in that web. The biggest difference to tell us apart is that she still kept her childlike innocence. That's the most important essence that why Peter Rabbit could be so fully loved by people around the world. Adults find their lost pure heart in Ms. Potter’s books. Kids see themselves in these stories. Actually, the characters in the story are children in reality. Peter performs the children’s nature. His adventurous and mischievous behaviors are what children desire to do in the depth of their hearts but aren't allowed to do so. They show the hesitation of children between excitingly searching for adventures outside home or staying safely but boringly inside with their mothers. Children would not only take sympathy on these animals but also fond of them because they can get the happiness of taking adventures from reading Ms. Potter's stories. And that’s exactly what Ms. Potter wanted—helping children gain happiness from her books.

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