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# The Story of Miss Moppet

**Beatrix Potter** · *1906 · English original, Project Gutenberg #14848*

A kitten hunts a mouse who is not afraid of her. She misses, hurts her own head, and then pretends to be ill. When the mouse comes close she catches him—and teases him, which Potter says is not at all nice. He escapes through a hole in the duster, and dances a jig on top of the cupboard.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

## What happens when a hunt turns into a tease, and the teaser forgets the hole in her own duster?

*"And because the Mouse has teased Miss Moppet—Miss Moppet thinks she will tease the Mouse; which is not at all nice of Miss Moppet."*
The duster

Miss Moppet ties the mouse up and tosses him about like a ball. But she forgot about that hole in the duster; when she untied it, there was no Mouse. He has wriggled out and run away, and he is dancing a jig on the top of the cupboard. The last laugh is his, and Potter has already said the teasing was not nice.

KEY CHARACTERS

**Miss Moppet**
*a kitten who hunts, pretends to be hurt, and then teases*

**The Mouse**
*makes fun at first, comes too close, and escapes through the hole*

**Grades K–2**
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
### A Pussy and a Mouse
OPENING
*She thinks she has heard a mouse; he is not afraid of a kitten.*

- This is a Pussy called Miss Moppet, she thinks she has heard a mouse!
- This is the Mouse peeping out behind the cupboard, and making fun of Miss Moppet.
- He is not afraid of a kitten.

02
### Just Too Late
THE CUPBOARD
*She jumps, misses, and hits her own head.*

- This is Miss Moppet jumping just too late; she misses the Mouse and hits her own head.
- She thinks it is a very hard cupboard!
- The Mouse watches Miss Moppet from the top of the cupboard.

03
### A Hole in the Duster
BY THE FIRE
*She looks ill; the mouse comes closer and closer.*

- Miss Moppet ties up her head in a duster, and sits before the fire.
- The Mouse thinks she is looking very ill. He comes sliding down the bell-pull.
- Miss Moppet looks worse and worse, and looks at him through a hole in the duster. The Mouse comes very close.

04
### Not at All Nice
THE CATCH
*She jumps upon him, and then teases him.*

- All of a sudden—Miss Moppet jumps upon the Mouse!
- Because the Mouse has teased her, she thinks she will tease the Mouse; which is not at all nice of Miss Moppet.
- She ties him up in the duster, and tosses it about like a ball.

> *"And because the Mouse has teased Miss Moppet—Miss Moppet thinks she will tease the Mouse; which is not at all nice of Miss Moppet."*
> The catch

05
### A Jig on the Cupboard
THE CLOSE
*She forgot the hole; he wriggles out and dances.*

- But she forgot about that hole in the duster; and when she untied it—there was no Mouse!
- He has wriggled out and run away.
- And he is dancing a jig on the top of the cupboard!

Pride | A Missed Leap | Pretence | Teasing | Escape

## What to watch for as you read

GRADES K–2

1. Potter herself judges the teasing: it is not at all nice of Miss Moppet. Keep that line; do not soften it, and do not add a longer scolding.
2. The hole in the duster is shown twice: first as the way she looks at the mouse, then as the way he gets out. Watch how the same detail turns the catch inside out.
3. The mouse is not a cartoon villain. He peeps, makes fun, comes close, and at the end dances a jig on the cupboard.
4. This is a very short complete tale (1906, Project Gutenberg #14848), for reading aloud in the early grades. Do not pad it into a longer book.

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