

my manager, Dolby, on the steps of the hotel. The street was practically deserted due to the weather, but a stout, whiskered gentleman with a beautifully tailored overcoat and a top hat dusted with snow was approaching with his young daughter. They halted just short of the steps where I was standing. The little girl couldn't stop staring at me. At that moment, I saw a small object slip from her fingers to the ground.

A Tale of Two Hittys

Wendi Dunn

Tiny Doll Books
Los Alamos, NM



Mary Angela Dickens in 1866

Chapter 1

London, October 1868

I have been told that a doll only comes to life when she is loved by a child. My very first memory is the feeling of being wrapped in a soft linen handkerchief. I could see very little through the finely woven fabric until I was lifted up, and the handkerchief fell away. Looking down at me was a chubby-cheeked child

work independently. I also gave the man your picture to work from. Don't you think she looks like you?"

"Oh yes, she does!" she agreed. Mekitty stroked my light brown hair carved in a style similar to her own, drawn back from the forehead and secured with a narrow ribbon. My eyes were painted blue, the same color as hers.

"Naturally, I insisted that she be carved from 'Proper English Oak' which will make her a

"In the snow only inches from my feet was a small doll. I picked her up and brushed off her fine clothing. She fit nicely in my hand. I saw that she was carved from wood, with painted hair and eyes, and I could tell that her eyes held many secrets." He paused as a faraway look came into his eyes.

"When I looked up, the child had her mouth gaping open. She appeared to be about eight years old, with thick, chestnut

she explained, 'Miss Pinch found her in the attic,' then continued in a rush, 'She made all of Hitty's clothing from our fabric scraps, and she said the doll belonged to her. But I thought she was too old to play with dolls. So Papa bought Hitty from her and gave her to me. He says Hitty is carved from Mountain Ash Wood. And she has her name embroidered in cross-stitch on her chemise.'

"Well, well, that is inter-

esting. She is quite elegantly dressed. Miss Pinch must be an excellent seamstress.'

"Yes, but she doesn't love Hitty the way I do. I take her everywhere with me. Hitty even listens when we read your books together. And now I can tell everyone that Hitty met the great Charles Dickens! Isabella turned her face to look up at me then, and with her cheeks pink from the cold and her bright sparkling eyes, she reminded me of my own dear

sturdy companion for you. Your Aunt Georgy made all her clothing, and now she is ready for adventures. I have a feeling this doll has an adventurous spirit, just like you, Mekitty."

Now his voice took on a serious tone. As he looked at Mekitty, he said, "There is one more thing you must do. What are you going to name her?"

"Well," Mekitty considered, "I think she should be called, 'Kitty' because it sounds like Hitty, and they are sisters!"

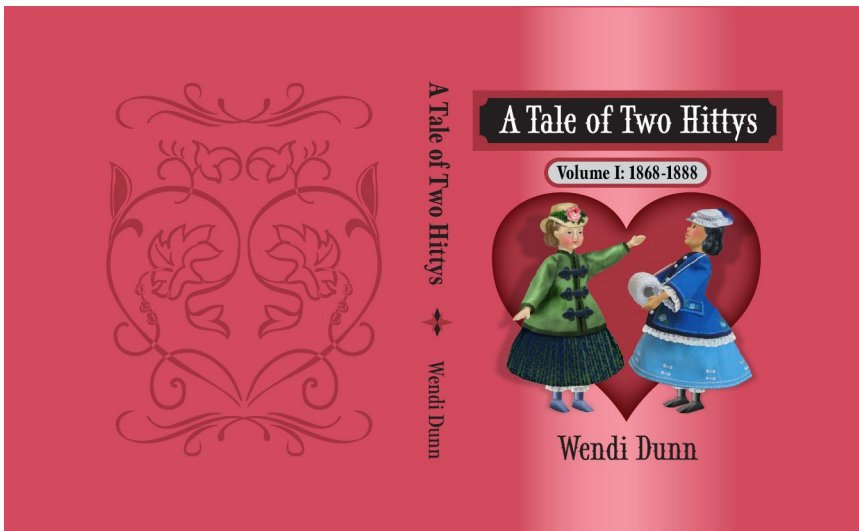
After he finished, he set me down on top of the well-worn leather writing surface. Next to me was a blue ceramic jug filled with flowers. I could also see a cheeky-looking china monkey wearing a suit with a bow-tie and jaunty cap. He was about the same size as I was, but he simply looked at me with hollowed-out eyes and a frozen smile.

"Now, Mekitty, make sure you let the ink dry properly before you play with her."

I could see her squirm with impatience, but she agreed to do as he said. "Will you tell me another story while we wait?" she asked.

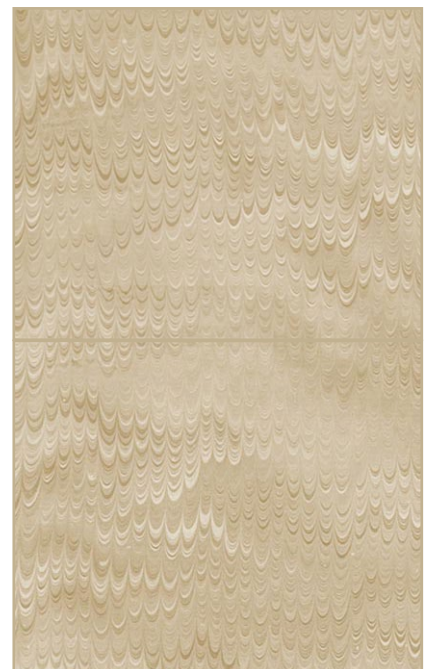
"Of course. Today is your birthday, and it is also Halloween. How about a ghost story?" He knew that Mekitty had a particular love for thrilling tales, even at the tender age of six years old. Mekitty smiled and nodded. She settled into his lap once again as Charles Dickens began his story.

Book Cover



Scale line is 4.5" long

Endpapers



with sensitive eyes. She cradled me against her chest and said, "Oh, thank you, Venerables! I love her." Then I was almost crushed, as she leaped into the arms of an elderly gentleman sitting in an overstuffed armchair.

"Please tell me the Hitty story again!" she cried.

The man hugged her tight, then replied, "Certainly, my dear. I am sure your new doll would like to know how she came into existence. Have a

To Rachel Field and Charles Dickens: whose works of fiction have brought joy to millions of people.

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This is a work of fiction. Many of the names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents are products of the author's imagination. While some historical figures, places and events are included, their use is for entertainment purposes only and is not intended to be factual. Any relationship to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Printed in the U.S.A.

seat here with me." The little girl snuggled into his lap, still holding me tight.

"It was a cold December morning in New York," he began as he absent-mindedly stroked his beard. "I was staying at the Brevoort House, a fine hotel with at least 500 bedrooms. I had only gotten through half of my scheduled book readings when a winter storm came on, which closed the railways for days. To pass the time, I was chatting with

granddaughter..."

"That's ME!" my little girl interrupted. I was already starting to feel a bit possessive about her.

"Yes, Mekitty, I meant you. But let me finish. After that, the Van Rensselaers said their goodbyes, but that little doll made an impression on me." Charles Dickens' deeply lined face suddenly broke into a smile.

"After I returned to England from my American tour, I

for me to shake. 'It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Mr. Dickens. My daughter and I are great fans of yours, and of late we have been reading Nicholas Nickleby every evening.'

"I am pleased to hear it, sir. But I must admit I am curious about this little doll of yours.' I turned to look at the little girl again. 'Tell me more about Hitty.'

"Isabella quickly overcame her previous reserve, as

curls under her little white hat, embellished with a red feather. She quickly overcame her shock and said, 'Her name is Hitty.'

"I gave her a polite bow and then delivered the doll into her eager hands. 'And what is your name, my dear?' I asked.

"Isabella Van Rensselaer,' she replied. I then turned to the gentleman standing next to her. 'Then you must be Mr. Van Rensselaer.'

"He held out his gloved hand

couldn't stop thinking about Hitty. Since you liked her story so much, I knew a doll would be the perfect birthday present for you.

"Would you believe this little doll took a skilled woodworker a whole week to carve? He used a lathe to make the body, and do you see the way her arms and legs are pegged, so that she can move them?" he said as he demonstrated by turning my arms and legs. "But I improved the design by making the arms

It may have been the ink drying, but I suddenly felt a chill travel up my spine. I had no idea at the time that this was the beginning of a series of adventures which would one day lead to finding my sister Hitty doll, the one Charles Dickens had described so well. It was she who inspired me to set down these memoirs... but I am getting ahead of myself. Let me start at the beginning and tell of those early days with Mekitty.

her grandfather, and I could feel myself enveloped in the warm hand of the great Charles Dickens, although at the time I had no idea of his importance.

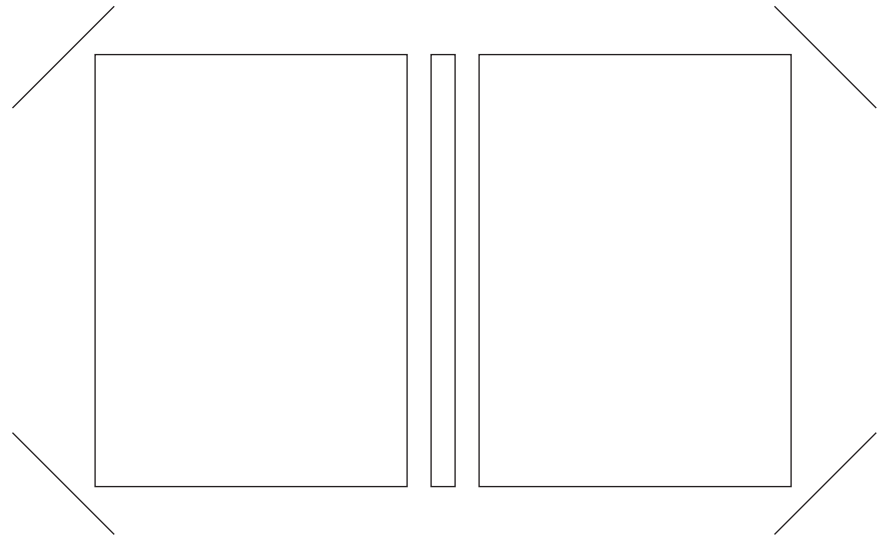
With his right hand, he dipped his goose quill pen into a glass inkwell, and with care and precision, began to write the letters K-I-T-T-Y on my back. I could feel the light scratching of the quill pen and the coldness of the ink as it seeped into the grain of my sturdy oak body.

"Excellent idea, my dear." And with that, he stood up and strode towards a desk sitting in a bay window across the room. "Bring her to me, and I shall write her name on her back."

Mekitty practically skipped to the desk. She quickly unbuttoned and removed my green silk paletot, a sort of overcoat which was worn at the time, and my cotton chemise, but she left my matching striped skirt and petticoat in place. Then she reached up towards

TO BE CONTINUED...

For more Hitty fun, visit: <https://ataleoftwohittys.com/>



Cut 2 pieces of cardboard for covers 1 5/8" x 2 1/4"
Cut 1 piece of cardboard for spine 2 1/4" x 1/8"
Glue cardboard in place along template lines.