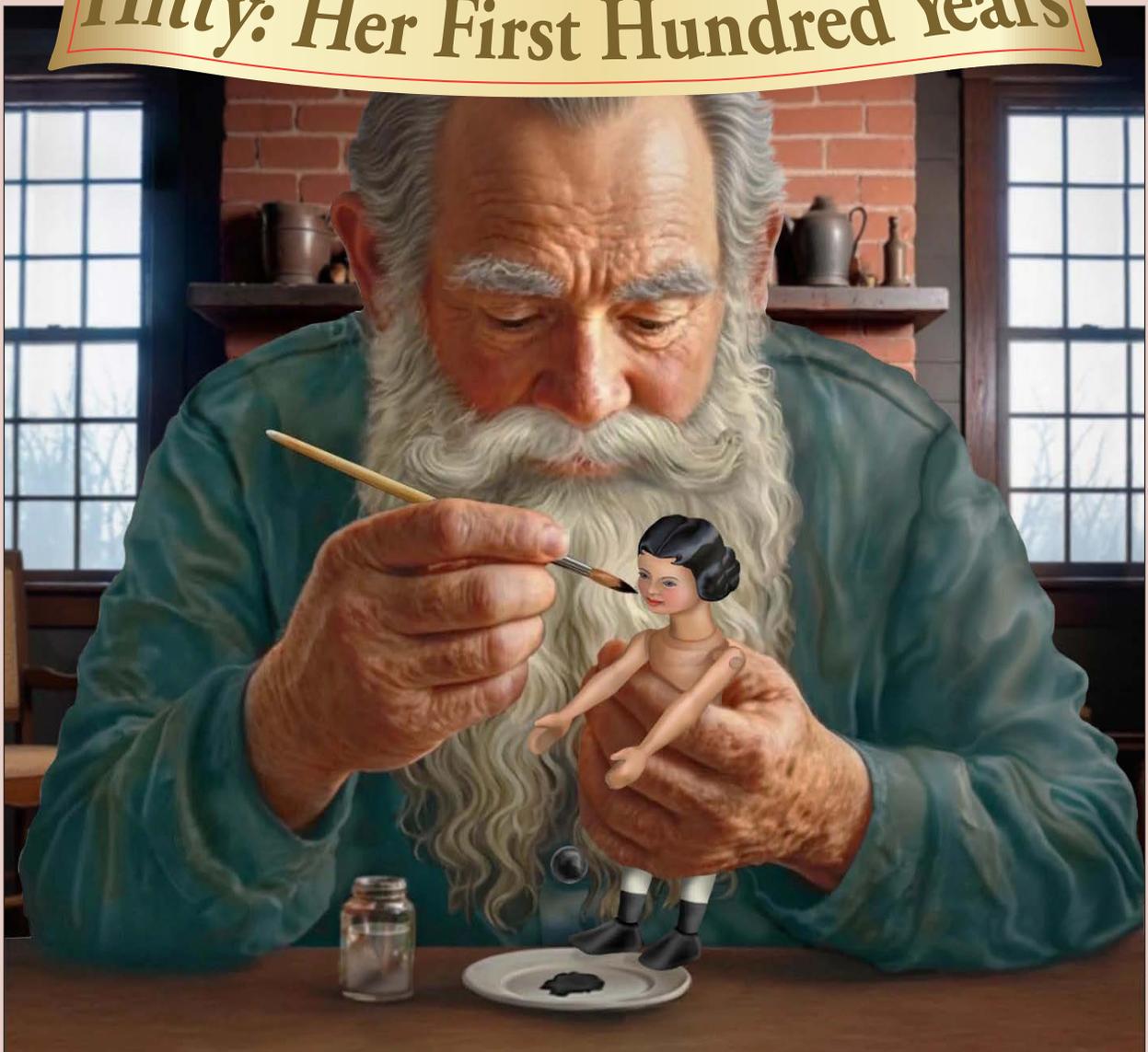


Hitty's First Adventure

FROM RACHEL FIELD'S

Hitty: Her First Hundred Years



Adapted and Illustrated by Wendi Dunn

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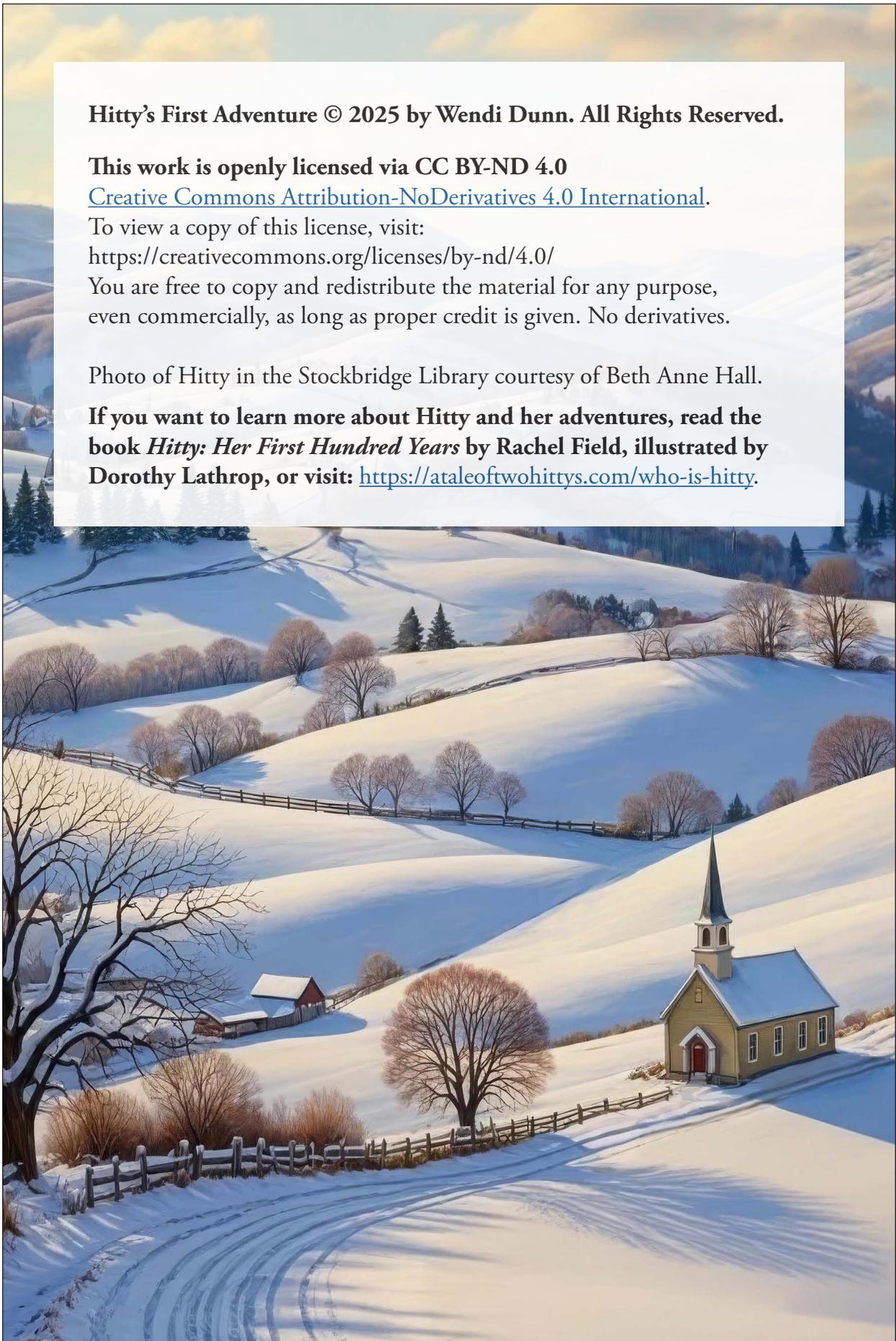
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Photo of Hitty in the Stockbridge Library courtesy of Beth Anne Hall.

If you want to learn more about Hitty and her adventures, read the book *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years* by Rachel Field, illustrated by Dorothy Lathrop, or visit: <https://ataleoftwohittys.com/who-is-hitty>.



Dear Friends,

Have you heard of my Great-Aunt Hitty? She is a tiny wooden doll who lives in the Stockbridge Library in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. In 1928, Rachel Field and her friend, Dorothy Lathrop, found Hitty in an antique store in New York City. They began to daydream about all the adventures she must have had. Rachel wrote her story which Dorothy illustrated. The result was the book *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years*, and it won the Newbery Award for children's literature in 1930.



Great-Aunt Hitty doesn't travel anymore. She is nearly 200 years old and seems quite content to sit on her gray bench in the library. Whenever I visit, I love hearing about her adventures. I know her story by heart: how the Old Peddler carved Hitty from a piece of mountain ash wood for seven-year-old Phoebe Preble. It was in the dead of winter in Maine... but I am getting ahead of myself.

The original Hitty book had mostly black and white illustrations. Great-Aunt Hitty explained how she patiently posed as Dorothy drew each one. I thought it would be fun to create new color illustrations, so I asked Great-Aunt Hitty if she would be willing to pose again. She smiled and said, "My joints are too old and fragile now, but that sounds like the perfect project for you."



I am happy to be a stand-in for Great-Aunt Hitty to help illustrate her story. I hope you enjoy "Hitty's First Adventure!"

Love,

Flat Hitty

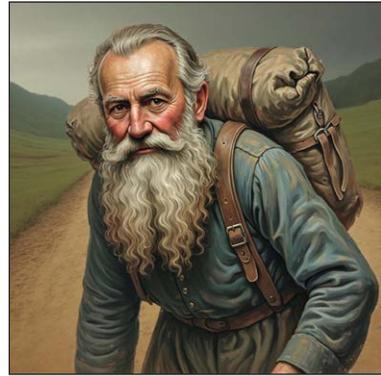
The Preble Family



Hitty Preble
Hand-carved wooden doll



Phoebe Preble
Seven-year-old owner of Hitty



The Old Peddler
Traveler who carved Hitty



Mrs. Kate Preble
Phoebe's mother



Captain Daniel Preble
Phoebe's father



Andy
Family helper/cabin boy

The book *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years* tells the fictional story of a hand-carved wooden doll. For the first two years of her life, Hitty lived with the Preble family of Maine. Author Rachel Field wrote the book while staying in her cottage on Sutton Island, near the Cranberry Isles in Maine. Hitty's Preble family is fictional, but Rachel used her knowledge of the area and its history to add realism. Hitty's life story began in the winter of 1828, exactly one hundred years before Rachel and her friend Dorothy Lathrop, who illustrated the book, purchased the real Hitty doll in an antique shop. Read on to enjoy this timeless children's story in a new, simplified format.

More about the Preble family: <https://ataleoftwohittys.com/the-preble-family>



In January during the year 1828, the Old Peddler carved me as a gift for seven-year-old Phoebe Preble. He was staying with the Preble family after getting caught in a snowstorm.

“See, now the doll has a face!” Those were the first words I heard from Phoebe. She was a lively girl with curly golden hair and sea green eyes.

Standing next to her was an old man with a white beard. “She will bring you luck, Phoebe,” he said. “I carved her out of a piece of magical mountain ash wood that I brought with me from Ireland.”

That scene happened in Maine a long time ago. Since then, I have had many adventures all over the world. Now I sit quietly on a desk in an antique shop, waiting for someone to buy me. Next to me is an old quill pen and an inkwell. That gives me an idea. I can use this time to write my story.

Phoebe called me “Hitty,” because my original name, “Mehitabel,” took too long to say. Phoebe lived with her mother and Andy, a boy who helped out with chores on their farm in Maine. Her father was a sea captain, and he was away on a voyage.

Mrs. Preble told Phoebe she must make me some clothes before she could play with me. Phoebe made my underwear from white linen trimmed with lace. Then Mrs. Preble used red thread to stitch my name in tiny letters on my undershirt.

“Now, whatever happens to her she can always be sure of her name,” said Mrs. Preble.

“But nothing is ever going to happen to her, Mother!” cried Phoebe, “because she will always be my doll.”

Phoebe made my dress from pretty yellow calico fabric printed with tiny pink roses. She finished it on a Saturday evening. Sadly, her mother said it was too late to play with me.

The next day, Phoebe started to reach for me. Then she told me, “No, Hitty, this is Sunday, and I must not play with you until after sunset tonight.” Phoebe’s family had very strict rules about Sundays. No toys were allowed, but she found me too hard to resist. She picked me up and placed me in her muff: a tube made out of fur to keep her hands warm.

“No one will guess that you are in my muff, Hitty,” whispered Phoebe. It felt warm and cozy, but rather cramped with her hands inside. Mrs. Preble did not notice me as she helped Phoebe up into the horse-drawn sleigh. Soon I could hear the tinkling of sleigh bells and the sound of Charlie the horse pulling the sleigh through the snow.

I could not see what was happening at church. But I could hear the people as they started to sing together in harmony:

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow

Praise Him all creatures here below...

Then the preacher began his sermon. Phoebe started to squirm. After a while, she must have fallen asleep, because her grip on the muff slipped. I fell headfirst to the floor, and the muff rolled away. Andy picked up the muff and gave it to Phoebe. He didn’t see me under the pew.

When the church service was over, everyone left. No one knew that I had been left behind.

During the lonely days and nights that followed, I felt my wooden joints crack with the cold. The wind howled outside.

I had nothing to do except look at an illustrated Bible on the floor beside me. It showed a scary picture of a man being swallowed by a whale.





Then there were the bats. One roosted under the pew just inches away from me. I was watching him when I saw a man enter the church. He started to sweep the floor with his broom. I tried to get his attention by waving my mitten-shaped hands, but he was too far away to notice. Then I lifted my legs and lowered my pegged feet to the floor three times.

Clomp! Clomp! Clomp!

In the empty church it made a very loud noise. The man was so startled that he dropped his broom.

“It’s a ghost!” he yelled as he ran out of the church. Now I felt more alone than ever.

Before the week ended, Phoebe told her mother what she had done. Andy and the Old Peddler went to the church and brought me home. No quill pen could express my joy at being with my family again!

Phoebe’s punishment was to stitch a motto in her sampler about how to be good. This took her many days to finish. I was left on a shelf until the final stitch was put in.

Spring was late that year. The roads thawed out in March, but all the mud kept the Old Peddler from traveling. In May the first pussy willows bloomed. Buds appeared on the lilac bushes, and we saw yellow and blue violets. We gathered tiny star-shaped mayflowers in the woods near the farm.



Finally, it was time for the Old Peddler to leave us. Phoebe and Andy walked with him to the road that led to Portland. He lifted his heavy backpack and waved goodbye to them.

Not long after that, Phoebe's father came home. Captain Preble arrived in a carriage overflowing with large boxes, bales and sea chests. They were all stuffed with treasures from every port of call.

Phoebe rushed over to him, saying, "This is my new doll, Hitty." Then she told him how the Old Peddler had carved me from mountain ash wood and about my adventure in the church. Captain Preble laughed hard when he heard the story.

"It isn't a laughing matter, Dan'l," said Mrs. Preble. "You will have Phoebe spoiled as a popinjay inside a week." A popinjay must be a very rare type of bird. I have not seen a single one in all my years since.



Meet the Designer

Wendi Dunn is the creator of the Flat Hitty paper doll and the blog *A Tale of Two Hittys*. She is a retired graphic designer who enjoys sharing her love of dolls with the world. For more Hitty fun, see the links below:

A Tale of Two Hittys Website/Blog

<https://ataleoftwohittys.com>

Flat Hitty on Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/flat_hitty

Teachers Pay Teachers Store

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/store/a-tale-of-two-hittys>

