

Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle

Betty MacDonald

Characters:

Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle – A very small woman who has a hump on her back that she says is a big lump of magic. She has brown sparkly eyes, brown hair worn in a knot on top of her head, goldy brown skin and smells of sugar cookies. She wears high heels all of the time and lets the children use her clothes for dress-up. She has no family at all, but understands children better than anybody in the whole world.

Mr. Piggle-Wiggle – was a pirate who died after burying all of his treasure in the back yard.

Wag – Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's dog

Lightfoot – Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's cat

Mary Lou Robertson – An eight-year-old girl who runs away from home because she hates to wash dishes

Kitty Wheeling – Mary Lou's best friend. She despises making beds

Bobby – Kitty's little brother

Dicky – Bobby's friend

Hubert Prentiss – A little boy who gets many presents from his grandfather, but never puts them away.

Mary O'Toole - a red-headed girl who answers back and is impudent.

Penelope Parrot – A large, rude, cross-looking green bird who only talks to children

Dick Thompson – A selfish, greedy boy

Patsy – A little girl who hates baths

Bobby, Larry, and Susan Gray – children who do not want to go to bed

Allen – a Slow-Eater-Tiny-Bite-Taker

Joan and Anne Russell – twins who fight and quarrel all of the time

Questions:

What is the most remarkable thing about Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's house? (it is upside down, except for the bathroom, kitchen and staircase)

What do boys dig for in Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's back yard? (Mr. Piggle-Wiggle's buried treasure)

Who are Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's friends? (All of the children in town)

How does Mary Lou learn to like washing dishes? (Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle tells her to pretend to be a princess who has been captured by a witch and can regain her freedom by washing the dishes well.)

How does Mr. Piggle-Wiggle get Kitty to enjoy bed-making? (By pretending that she is a cruel queen who will throw her into the dungeon if there is even one wrinkle on the bed.)

What does Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle show Bobby? (How to sneak out and get fireplace logs without getting caught by Indians)

What does Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle show Dicky? (How a lawnmower is a magic machine that mows down the enemy)

What does Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle teach Max? (How to take out the ashes quietly, so that the train robbers wouldn't know that he and the sheriff had camped there)

What is the Won't-Pick-Up-Toys-Cure? (Hubert's mother stops picking up his toys for him and eventually he becomes trapped in his room. The only way that he can get out and join his friends in the circus parade is to tidy up his room)

What is the Answer-Backer Cure? (Mary realizes how awful she has been sounding when Penelope Parrot repeats all of her rude comments and talks back to her)

What is in the selfishness kit? (Twenty-five padlocks, labels, paint and a pastry bag for marking all of Dick's things with his name)

How does the Selfishness Cure work? (All of Dick's things, including his lunch, are labeled "Dick's – don't touch" and all of his drawers and doors at home are padlocked. At first, Dick likes this, but changes his mind when he loses the keys to the locks and all of the children at school start laughing at him and no longer want to play with him.)

What is the Radish cure? (A cure for children who won't take baths- After a few weeks radish seeds are sprinkled on a child's dirty arms and head. When the radishes begin to grow, the child becomes upset and decides to bathe.)

How does Mrs. Gray cure her Never-Want-to-Go-to Bedders? (She lets them stay up as late as they want. Eventually, the children suffer the consequences of not getting enough rest and ask their parents if they may go to bed at eight o'clock every night.)

How does Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle cure Allen, the Slow-Eater-Tiny-Bite-Taker? (She has his mother serve his meals on dishes that get progressively smaller every day. On the last day, Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle calls Allen to come and ride her horse, Spotty. He is too weak from hunger to ride him until he eats a decent meal.)

How does Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle tell Mr. and Mrs. Russell to cure their Fighter-Quarrelers? (By imitating the girls' quarrels and showing them how unpleasant they are.)

In What Book...

Does a small woman live in an upside down house?

Does a woman provide parents with cures for their children's bad habits?

Does a mother use a rake to get food to her son through his bedroom window?

Does a parrot talk rudely to a little girl?

Does a boy padlock and label all of his belongings?

Do radishes begin sprouting from a girl's arms and forehead?

Do three children stay up most of the night playing parchesi?

Does a boy use a fork to eat his cereal grain by grain?

Does a girl trick her sister into thinking there's a big black spider on her side of the bed?