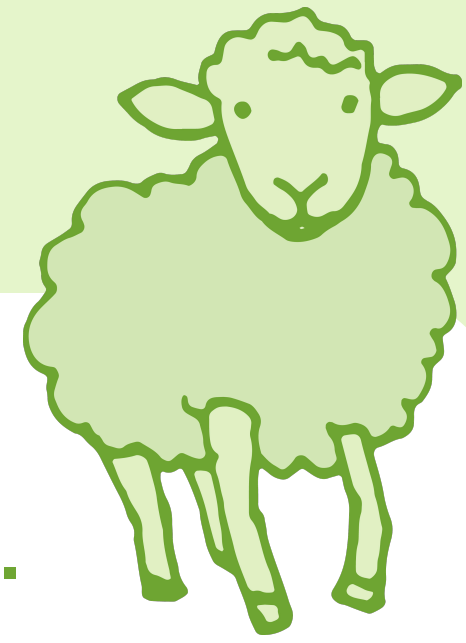
Nursery Rhymes and Songs about

SHEEP



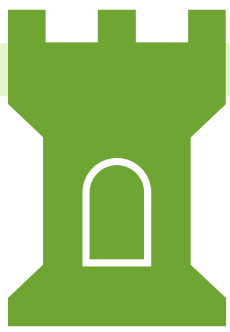
Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep
and doesn't know where to find them.
Leave them alone, and they'll come home
bringing their tails behind them.

2. Little Bo Peep fell fast asleep
And dreamt she heard them bleating;
But when she awoke, she found it a joke,
For they were all still fleeting.

3. Then up she took her little crook,
Determined for to find them;
She found them indeed, but it made her heart bleed
For they'd left their tails behind them.

4. It happened one day, as Bo Peep did stray
Into a meadow hard by.
There she espied their tails side by side,
All hung on a tree to dry.

5. She heaved a sigh, and wiped her eye
And over the hillocks went rambling.
And tried what she could, as a shepherdess should,
To tack again each to its lambkin.







THE STORY
BEHIND THE RHYME...

King Charles I, reigned from 1625 to 1649, and is well known for causing the English Civil War that led to his overthrow and execution. He increased taxes to fund wars and his own inflated lifestyle. Higher taxes led to a rise in smuggling. Records show that a tower called "Bo Peep" at St Leonards, near Hastings, was used by the King's customs officers. Smuggled goods were transported down a minor road a few miles west – Bopeep Lane. Information was often passed coded in the form of slang or rhyme.
In this context, Little Bo Peep could easily refer to the customs men with the sheep being the smugglers and the lost tails being the illicit contraband that was hidden throughout the neighbourhood to be collected when the customs men were not in the area. However, in the rhyme Little Bo Peep it would appear that the smuggled goods have been recovered by the authorities!

Source:
https://medium.com/@johnwelford15/little-bo-peep-is-there-a-hidden-meaning-to-this-rhyme-20cf9c260130