

“Peter Gets a Lame Neck”  
by Thornton Burgess

“Isn’t it rather lonesome over here by yourselves?” asked Peter.

“Not at all,” replied Sprite. “We are not as much alone as you think. My cousin, Fidget the Myrtle Warbler, is nesting not very far away, and another cousin Weechi the Magnolia Warbler is also quite near. Both have begun housekeeping already.”

Of course Peter was all excitement and interest at once. “Where are their homes?” he asked eagerly. “Tell me where they are and I’ll go straight over and call.”

“Peter,” said Sprite severely, “you ought to know better than to ask me to tell you anything of this kind. You have been around enough to know that there is no secret so precious as the secret of a home. You happened to find mine, and I guess I can trust you not to tell anybody where it is. If you can find the homes of Fidget and Weechi, all right, but I certainly don’t intend to tell you where they are.”

Peter knew that Sprite was quite right in refusing to tell the secrets of his cousins, but he couldn’t think of going home without at least looking for those homes. He tried to look very innocent as he asked if they also were in hanging bunches of moss. But

Sprite was too smart to be fooled and Peter learned nothing at all.

For some time Peter hopped around this way and that way, thinking every bunch of moss he saw must surely contain a nest. But though he looked and looked and looked, not another little round hole did he find, and there were so many bunches of moss that finally his neck ached from tipping his head back so much. Now Peter hasn't much patience as he might have, so after a while he gave up the search and started on his way home. On higher ground, just above the low swampy place where grew the moss-covered trees, he came to a lot of young hemlock-trees. These had no moss on

them. Having given up his search Peter was thinking of other things when there flitted across in front of him a black and gray bird with a yellow cap, yellow sides, and a yellow patch at the root of his tail. Those yellow patches were all Peter needed to see to recognize Fidget the Myrtle Warbler, one of the two friends he had been so long looking for down among the moss-covered trees.