

“Peter Gets a Lame Neck”
by Thornton Burgess

“Oh, Fidget!” cried Peter, hurrying after the restless bird. “Oh, Fidget! I’ve been looking everywhere for you.”

“Well, here I am,” retorted Fidget.

“You didn’t look everywhere or you would have found me before. What can I do for you?” All the time Fidget was hopping and flitting about, never still an instant.

“You can tell me where your nest is,” replied Peter promptly.

“I can, but I won’t,” retorted Fidget. “Now honestly, Peter, do you think you have any business to ask such a question?”

Peter hung his head and then replied quite honestly, “No I don’t, Fidget. You see Sprite told me that you had a nest not very far from his. I’ve looked at bunches of moss until I’ve got a crick in the back of my neck.”

“Bunches of moss!” exclaimed Fidget. “What under the sun do you think I have to do with of moss?”

“Why—why—I just thought you probably had your nest in one, the same as your cousin Sprite.”

Fidget laughed right out. “I’m afraid you would have a worse crick in the back of your neck than you’ve got now before ever you found my nest in a bunch of moss,” said he. “Moss may suit my cousin Sprite, but it doesn’t suit me at all. Besides, I don’t like those dark places where the moss grows on the trees. I build my nest of twigs and grass and weed-stalks and I line it with hair and rootlets and feathers. Sometimes I bind it together with spider silk, and if you really want to know, I like a little hemlock-tree to put it in. It isn’t very far from here, but where it is I’m not going to tell you. Have you seen my cousin, Weechi?”

“No,” replied Peter. “Is he anywhere around here?”

“Right here,” replied another voice and Weechi the Magnolia Warbler dropped down on the ground for just a second right in front of Peter.

The top of his head and the back of his neck were gray. Above his eye was a white stripe and his cheeks were black. His throat was clear yellow, just below which was a black band. From this black streaks ran down across his yellow breast. At the root of his tail he was yellow. His tail was mostly black on top and white underneath.