

“Some Feathered Diggers”
by Thornton Burgess

Peter could see a fat grasshopper in Killy’s claws. Back to the top of the dead tree he flew and ate it. When finished, he sat up straight and still, so still that he seemed a part of the tree. With his wonderful eyes, he watched for another grasshopper or a careless Meadow Mouse.

Very trim and handsome was Killy. His back was reddish-brown crossed by bars of black. His tail was reddish-brown with a band of black near its end and a white tip. His wings were slaty-blue with little bars of black, the longest feathers leaving white bars. Underneath he was a beautiful buff,

spotted with black. His bluish head had a reddish patch right on top. Before and behind each ear was a black mark. His rather short bill, like the bills of all his family, was hooked.

As Peter sat there admiring Killy, who was handsome enough for any one to admire, he noticed a hole high up in the trunk of the tree, such a hole as Yellow Wing the Flicker might have made and probably did make. Right away Peter remembered what Jenny Wren had said about Killy's making his nest in just such a hole. "I wonder," thought Peter, "if that is Killy's home."

Just then Killy flew over and dropped in the grass just in front of Peter, where he caught another fat

grasshopper. “Is that your home up there?” asked Peter hastily.

“It certainly is, Peter,” replied Killy.

“This is the third summer Mrs. Killy and I have had our home there.”

“You seem to be very fond of grasshoppers,” Peter ventured.

“I am,” replied Killy. “They are very fine eating when one can get enough of them.”

“Are they the only kind of food you eat?” ventured Peter.

Killy laughed. It was a shrill laugh. “I should say not,” said he. “I eat spiders, worms, and all sorts of insects big enough to give a fellow a decent

bite. For real good eating, give me a fat Meadow Mouse. I don't mind a Sparrow or a small bird, especially with hungry youngsters to feed. Take it the season through, I live mostly on grasshoppers, insects, and Meadow Mice. I do a lot of good in this world.”

Peter said that he supposed this was so, but all the time he kept thinking what a pity that Killy ever killed his feathered neighbors. As soon as he could, he politely bade Killy good-by and hurried home to the dear Old Briar-patch to think over how queer it seemed that a member of the hawk family should nest in a hollow tree and a member of the Swallow family should dig a hole in the ground.