

“A Fishing Party”
by Thornton Burgess

So Peter hopped along until he was near enough to talk to Grandfather Frog. “What kind of a nest does Rattles the Kingfisher build?” repeated Grandfather Frog. “Chug-arum, Peter Rabbit! I thought everybody knew that Rattles doesn’t build a nest. At least I wouldn’t call it a nest. He lives in a hole in the ground.”

“What!” cried Peter, and looked as if he couldn’t believe his own ears. Grandfather Frog grinned and his goggly eyes twinkled. “Yes,” said he, “Rattles lives in a hole in the ground.” “But—but—but what kind of a hole?” stammered Peter.

“Just plain hole,” retorted Grandfather Frog, grinning more broadly than ever. Then seeing how perplexed and puzzled Peter looked, he went on to explain. “He usually picks out a high gravelly bank close to the water and digs a hole straight in just a little way from the top. He makes it just big enough for himself and Mrs. Rattles to go in and out of comfortably, and he digs it straight in for several feet. I’m told that at the end of it he makes a sort of bedroom, because he usually has a good-sized family.”

“Do you mean to say that he digs it himself?” asked Peter.

Grandfather Frog nodded. “If he doesn’t, Mrs. Kingfisher does,” he replied. “Those big bills of theirs are picks as well as fish spears. They loosen the sand with those and scoop it out with their feet. I’ve never seen the inside of their home myself, but I’m told that their bedroom is lined with fish bones. Perhaps you may call that a nest, but I don’t.”

“I’m going straight down the Laughing Brook to look for that hole,” declared Peter, and left in such a hurry that he forgot to be polite enough to say thank you to Grandfather Frog.