

“Some Big Mouths”
by Thornton Burgess

Boomer was circling and darting about this way and that. Even while Peter watched he half closed his wings and shot down with such speed that Peter actually held his breath. It looked very, very much as if Boomer would dash himself to pieces. Just before he reached the earth he suddenly opened those wings and turned upward. At the instant he turned, the booming sound which had so startled Peter was heard. It was made by the rushing of the wind through the larger feathers of his wings as he checked himself.

In this dive Boomer had come near enough for Peter to get a good look at him. His coat seemed to be a mixture of brown and gray, very soft looking. His wings were brown with a patch of white on each. There was a white patch on his throat and a band of white near the end of his tail.

“He’s rather handsome, don’t you think?” asked Jenny Wren.

“He certainly is,” replied Peter. “Do you happen to know what kind of a nest the Nighthawks build, Jenny?”

“They don’t build any.” Jenny Wren was a picture of scorn as she said this. “They don’t built any nests at all. It can’t be because they are lazy. I

don't know any birds that hunt harder for their living than do Boomer and Mrs. Boomer."

"But if there isn't any nest where does Mrs. Boomer lay her eggs?" cried Peter. "I think you must be mistaken, Jenny Wren. They must have some kind of a nest. Of course they must."

"Didn't I say they don't have a nest?" sputtered Jenny. "Mrs. Nighthawk doesn't lay but two eggs, anyway. Perhaps she thinks it isn't worth while building a nest for just two eggs. Anyway, she lays them on the ground or on a flat rock and lets it go at that. She isn't quite as bad as Sally Sly the Cowbird, for she does sit on those eggs and she is a good mother.

Think of those Nighthawk children never having any home! It doesn't seem to me right and it never will. Did you ever see Boomer in a tree?"

Peter shook his head. "I've seen him on the ground," said he, "but I never have seen him in a tree. Why did you ask, Jenny Wren?"

"To find out how well you have used your eyes," snapped Jenny. "I just wanted to see if you had noticed anything peculiar about the way he sits in a tree. But as long as you haven't seen him in a tree I may as well tell you that he doesn't sit as most birds do. He sits lengthwise of a branch. He never sits across it as the rest of us do."