

“Some Big Mouths”  
by Thornton Burgess

Jenny Wren added, “I guess Whip-poor-will finds them just as useful as you find yours, and a little more so. I know this much, that if I had to catch all my food in the air I’d want whiskers and lots of them so that the insects would get tangled in them. I suppose that’s what Whip-poor-will’s are for.”

“I beg your pardon, Jenny Wren,” said Peter very humbly. “Of course Whip-poor-will has whiskers if you say so. By the way, do the Whip-poor-wills do any better in the matter of a nest than the Nighthawks?”

“Not a bit,” replied Jenny Wren. “Mrs. Whip-poor-will lays her eggs right on the ground, but usually in the Green Forest where it is dark and lonesome. Like Mrs. Nighthawk, she lays only two. It's the same way with another second cousin, Chuck-will's-widow.”

“Who?” cried Peter, wrinkling his brows.

“Chuck-will's-widow,” Jenny Wren fairly shouted it. “Don't you know Chuck-will's-widow?”

Peter shook his head. “I never heard of such a bird,” he confessed.

“That's what comes of never having traveled,” retorted Jenny Wren.

“If you’d ever been in the South the way I have you would know Chuck-will’s-widow. He looks a whole lot like the other two we’ve been talking about, but has even a bigger mouth. What’s more, he has whiskers with branches. Now you needn’t look as if you doubted that, Peter Rabbit; it’s so. In his habits he’s just like his cousins, no nest and only two eggs. I never saw people so afraid to raise a real family. If the Wrens didn’t do better than that, I don’t know what would become of us.” You know Jenny usually has a family of six or eight.