



CHAPTER 3

FARMER BROWN'S BOY BECOMES ACQUAINTED



It didn't take Farmer Brown's boy long to discover that Whitefoot the Woodmouse was living in the little sugar-house. He caught glimpses of Whitefoot peeping out at him. Now Farmer Brown's boy is wise in the ways of the little people of the Green Forest. Right away he made up his mind to get acquainted with Whitefoot. He knew that not in all the Green Forest is there a more timid little fellow than Whitefoot, and he thought it would be a fine thing to be able to win the confidence of such a shy little chap.

So at first Farmer Brown's boy paid no attention whatever to Whitefoot. He took care that Whitefoot shouldn't even know that he had been seen. Every day when he ate his lunch, Farmer Brown's boy scattered a lot of crumbs close to the pile of wood under which Whitefoot had made his home. Then he and Farmer Brown would go out to collect sap. When they returned not a crumb would be left.

One day Farmer Brown's boy scattered some particularly delicious crumbs. Then, instead of going out, he sat down on a bench and kept perfectly still. Farmer Brown and Bowser the Hound went out. Of course Whitefoot heard them go out, and right away he poked his little head out from under the pile of wood to see if the way was clear. Farmer Brown's boy sat there right in plain sight, but Whitefoot didn't see him. That was because Farmer Brown's boy didn't move the least bit. Whitefoot ran out and at once began to eat those delicious crumbs. When he had filled his little stomach, he began to carry the remainder back to his storehouse underneath the woodpile. While he was gone on one of these trips, Farmer Brown's boy scattered

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more crumbs in a line that led right up to his foot. Right there he placed a big piece of bread crust.

Whitefoot was working so hard and so fast to get all those delicious bits of food that he took no notice of anything else until he reached that piece of crust. Then he happened to look up right into the eyes of Farmer Brown's boy. With a frightened little squeak Whitefoot darted back, and for a long time he was afraid to come out again.

But Farmer Brown's boy didn't move, and at last Whitefoot could stand the temptation no longer. He darted out halfway, scurried back, came out again, and at last ventured right up to the crust. Then he began to drag it back to the woodpile. Still Farmer Brown's boy did not move.

For two or three days the same thing happened. By this time, Whitefoot had lost all fear. He knew that Farmer Brown's boy would not harm him, and it was not long before he ventured to take a bit of food from Farmer Brown's boy's hand. After that Farmer Brown's boy took care that no crumbs should be scattered on the ground. Whitefoot had to come to him for his food, and always Farmer Brown's boy had something delicious for him.