



CHAPTER 4

WHITEFOOT BECOMES ANXIOUS



*'Tis sad indeed to trust a friend
Then have that trust abruptly end.*

—Whitefoot

I know of nothing that is more sad than to feel that a friend is no longer to be trusted. There came a time when Whitefoot the Woodmouse almost had this feeling. It was a very, very anxious time for Whitefoot.

You see, Whitefoot and Farmer Brown's boy had become the very best of friends there in the little sugar-house. They had become such good friends that Whitefoot did not hesitate to take food from the hands of Farmer Brown's boy. Never in all his life had he had so much to eat or such good things to eat. He was getting so fat that his handsome little coat was uncomfortably tight. He ran about fearlessly while Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy were making maple syrup and maple sugar. He had even lost his fear of Bowser the Hound, for Bowser had paid no attention to him whatever.

Now you remember that Whitefoot had made his home way down beneath the great pile of wood in the sugar-house. Of course Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy used that wood for the fire to boil the sap to make the syrup and sugar. Whitefoot thought nothing of this until one day he discovered that his little home was no longer as dark as it had been. A little ray of light crept down between the sticks. Presently another little ray of light crept down between the sticks.

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It was then that Whitefoot began to grow anxious. It was then he realized that that pile of wood was growing smaller and smaller, and if it kept on growing smaller, by and by there wouldn't be any pile of wood and his little home wouldn't be hidden at all. Of course Whitefoot didn't understand why that wood was slipping away. In spite of himself he began to grow suspicious. He couldn't think of any reason why that wood should be taken away, unless it was to look for his little home. Farmer Brown's boy was just as kind and friendly as ever, but all the time more and more light crept in, as the wood vanished.

"Oh dear, what does it mean?" cried Whitefoot to himself. "They must be looking for my home, yet they have been so good to me that it is hard to believe they mean any harm. I do hope they will stop taking this wood away. I won't have any hiding-place at all, and then I will have to go outside back to my old home in the hollow stump. I don't want to do that. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I was so happy and now I am so worried! Why can't happy times last always?"