



CHAPTER 6

A VERY CARELESS JUMP



Whitefoot once more was happy. When he found his snug little nest and his store of food under that old box in the darkest corner of Farmer Brown's sugar-house, he knew that Farmer Brown's boy must have placed them there. It was better than the old place under the woodpile. It was the best place for a home Whitefoot ever had had. It didn't take him long to change his mind about leaving the little sugar-house. Somehow he seemed to know right down inside that his home would not again be disturbed.

So he proceeded to rearrange his nest and to put all his supplies of food in one corner of the old box. When everything was placed to suit him he ventured out, for now that he no longer feared Farmer Brown's boy he wanted to see all that was going on. He liked to jump up on the bench where Farmer Brown's boy sometimes sat. He would climb up to where Farmer Brown's boy's coat hung and explore the pockets of it. Once he stole Farmer Brown's boy's handkerchief. He wanted it to add to the material his nest was made of. Farmer Brown's boy discovered it just as it was disappearing, and how he laughed as he pulled it away.

So, what with eating and sleeping and playing about, secure in the feeling that no harm could come to him, Whitefoot was happier than ever before in his little life. He knew that Farmer Brown's boy and Farmer Brown and Bowser the Hound were his friends. He knew, too, that so long as they were about, none of his enemies would dare come near. This being so, of course there was nothing to be afraid of. No harm could possibly come to him. At least, that is what Whitefoot thought.

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But you know, enemies are not the only dangers to watch out for. Accidents will happen. When they do happen, it is very likely to be when the possibility of them is farthest from your thoughts. Almost always they are due to heedlessness or carelessness. It was heedlessness that got Whitefoot into one of the worst mishaps of his whole life.

He had been running and jumping all around the inside of the little sugar-house. He loves to run and jump, and he had been having just the best time ever. Finally Whitefoot ran along the old bench and jumped from the end of it for a box standing on end, which Farmer Brown's boy sometimes used to sit on. It wasn't a very long jump, but somehow Whitefoot misjudged it. He was heedless, and he didn't jump quite far enough. Right beside that box was a tin pail half filled with sap. Instead of landing on the box, Whitefoot landed with a splash in that pail of sap.