



## CHAPTER 8

## THE RESCUE



When Whitefoot made the heedless jump that landed him in a pail half filled with sap, no one else was in the little sugar-house. Whitefoot was quite alone. You see, Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy were out collecting sap from the trees, and Bowser the Hound was with them.

Farmer Brown's boy was the first to return. He came in just after Whitefoot had given up all hope. He went at once to the fire to put more wood on. As he finished this job he heard the faintest of little squeaks. It was a very pitiful little squeak. Farmer Brown's boy stood perfectly still and listened. He heard it again. He knew right away that it was the voice of Whitefoot.

"Hello!" exclaimed Farmer Brown's boy. "That sounds as if Whitefoot is in trouble of some kind. I wonder where the little rascal is. I wonder what can have happened to him. I must look into this." Again Farmer Brown's boy heard that faint little squeak. It was so faint that he couldn't tell where it came from. Hurriedly and anxiously he looked all over the little sugar-house, stopping every few seconds to listen for that pitiful little squeak. It seemed to come from nowhere in particular. Also it was growing fainter.

At last Farmer Brown's boy happened to stand still close to that tin pail half filled with sap. He heard the faint little squeak again and with it a little splash. It was the sound of the little splash that led him to look down. In a flash he understood what had happened. He saw poor little Whitefoot struggling feebly, and even as he looked Whitefoot's head went under. He was very nearly drowned.

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Stooping quickly, Farmer Brown's boy grabbed Whitefoot's long tail and pulled him out. Whitefoot was so nearly drowned that he didn't have strength enough to even kick. A great pity filled the eyes of Farmer Brown's boy as he held Whitefoot's head down and gently shook him. He was trying to shake some of the sap out of Whitefoot. It ran out of Whitefoot's nose and out of his mouth. Whitefoot began to gasp. Then Farmer Brown's boy spread his coat close by the fire, rolled Whitefoot up in his handkerchief and gently placed him on the coat. For some time Whitefoot lay just gasping. But presently his breath came easier, and after a while he was breathing naturally. But he was too weak and tired to move, so he just lay there while Farmer Brown's boy gently stroked his head and told him how sorry he was.

Little by little Whitefoot recovered his strength. At last he could sit up, and finally he began to move about a little, although he was still wobbly on his legs. Farmer Brown's boy put some bits of food where Whitefoot could get them, and as he ate, Whitefoot's beautiful soft eyes were filled with gratitude.