



CHAPTER 20

WHITEFOOT MAKES HIMSELF AT HOME



*Look not too much on that behind
Lest to the future you be blind.*

—Whitefoot.

Whitefoot didn't wait to be told twice of that empty house. He thanked Timmy and then scampered over to that stub as fast as his legs would take him. Up the stub he climbed, and near the top he found a little round hole. Timmy had said no one was living there now, and so Whitefoot didn't hesitate to pop inside.

There was even a bed in there. It was an old bed, but it was dry and soft. It was quite clear that no one had been in there for a long time. With a little sigh of pure happiness, Whitefoot curled up in that bed for the sleep he so much needed. His stomach was full, and once more he felt safe. The very fact that this was an old house in which no one had lived for a long time made it safer. Whitefoot knew that those who lived in that part of the Green Forest probably knew that no one lived in that old stub, and so no one was likely to visit it.

He was so tired that he slept all night. Whitefoot is one of those who sleeps when he feels sleepy, whether it be by day or night. He prefers the night to be out and about in, because he feels safer then, but he often comes out by day. So when he awoke in the early morning, he promptly went out for a look about and to get acquainted with his new surroundings.

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Just a little way off was the tall, dead tree in which Timmy the Flying Squirrel had his home. Timmy was nowhere to be seen. You see, he had been out most of the night and had gone to bed to sleep through the day. Whitefoot thought longingly of the good things in Timmy's storehouse in that same tree, but decided that it would be wisest to keep away from there. So he scurried about to see what he could find for a breakfast. It didn't take him long to find some pine cones in which a few seeds were still clinging. These would do nicely. Whitefoot ate what he wanted and then carried some of them back to his new home in the tall stub.

Then he went to work to tear to pieces the old bed in there and make it over to suit himself. It was an old bed of Timmy the Flying Squirrel, for you know this was Timmy's old house.

Whitefoot soon had the bed made over to suit him. And when this was done he felt quite at home. Then he started out to explore all about within a short distance of the old stub. He wanted to know every hole and every possible hiding-place all around, for it is on such knowledge that his life depends.

When at last he returned home he was very well satisfied. "It is going to be a good place to live," said he to himself. "There are plenty of hiding-places and I am going to be able to find enough to eat. It will be very nice to have Timmy the Flying Squirrel for a neighbor. I am sure he and I will get along together very nicely. I don't believe Shadow the Weasel, even if he should come around here, would bother to climb up this old stub. He probably would expect to find me living down in the ground or close to it, anyway. I certainly am glad that I am such a good climber. Now if Buster Bear doesn't come along in the spring and pull this old stub over, I'll have as fine a home as any one could ask for."

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And then, because happily it is the way with the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows, Whitefoot forgot all about his terrible journey and the dreadful time he had had in finding his new home.