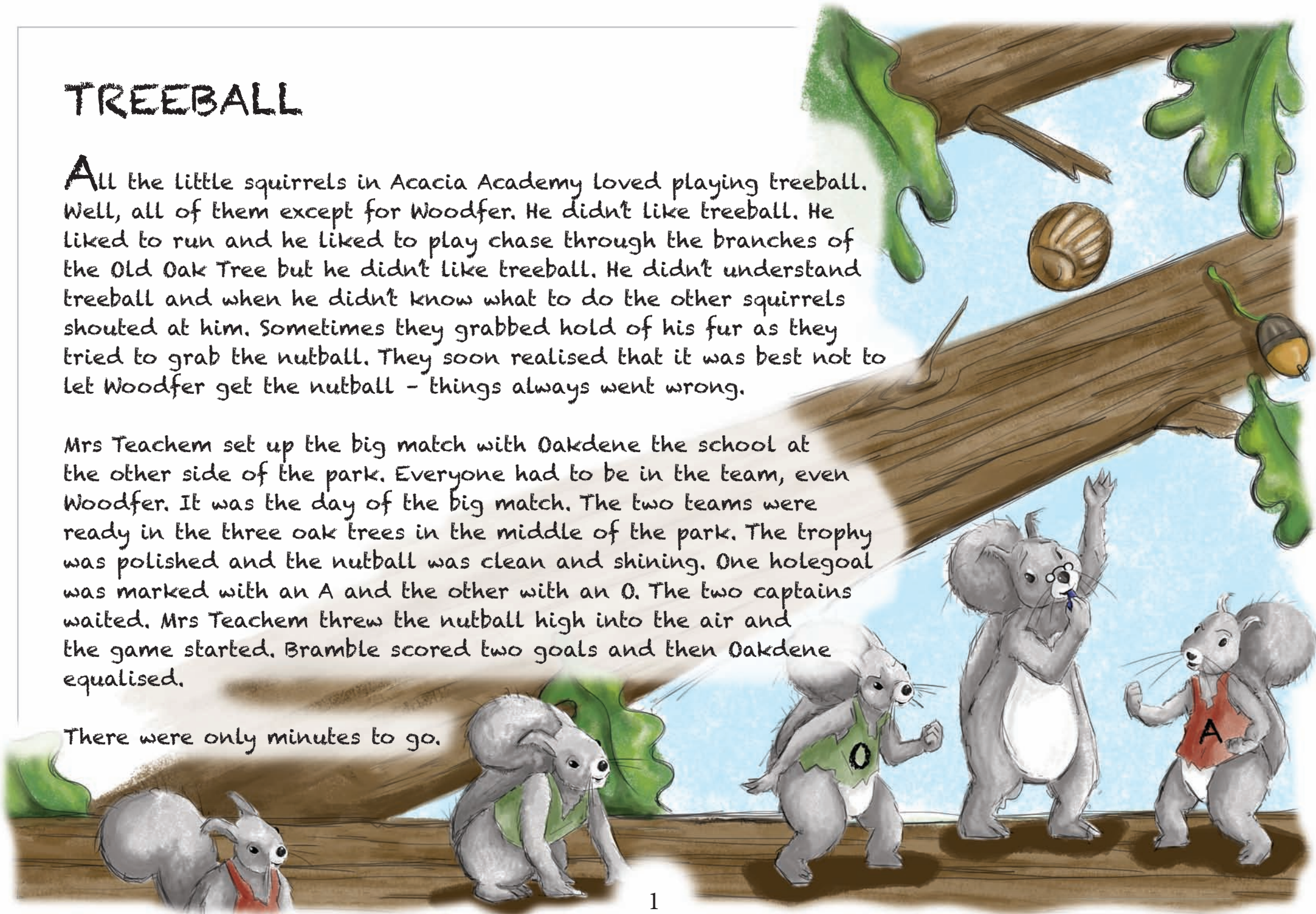


TREEBALL

All the little squirrels in Acacia Academy loved playing treeball. Well, all of them except for Woodfer. He didn't like treeball. He liked to run and he liked to play chase through the branches of the Old Oak Tree but he didn't like treeball. He didn't understand treeball and when he didn't know what to do the other squirrels shouted at him. Sometimes they grabbed hold of his fur as they tried to grab the nutball. They soon realised that it was best not to let Woodfer get the nutball - things always went wrong.

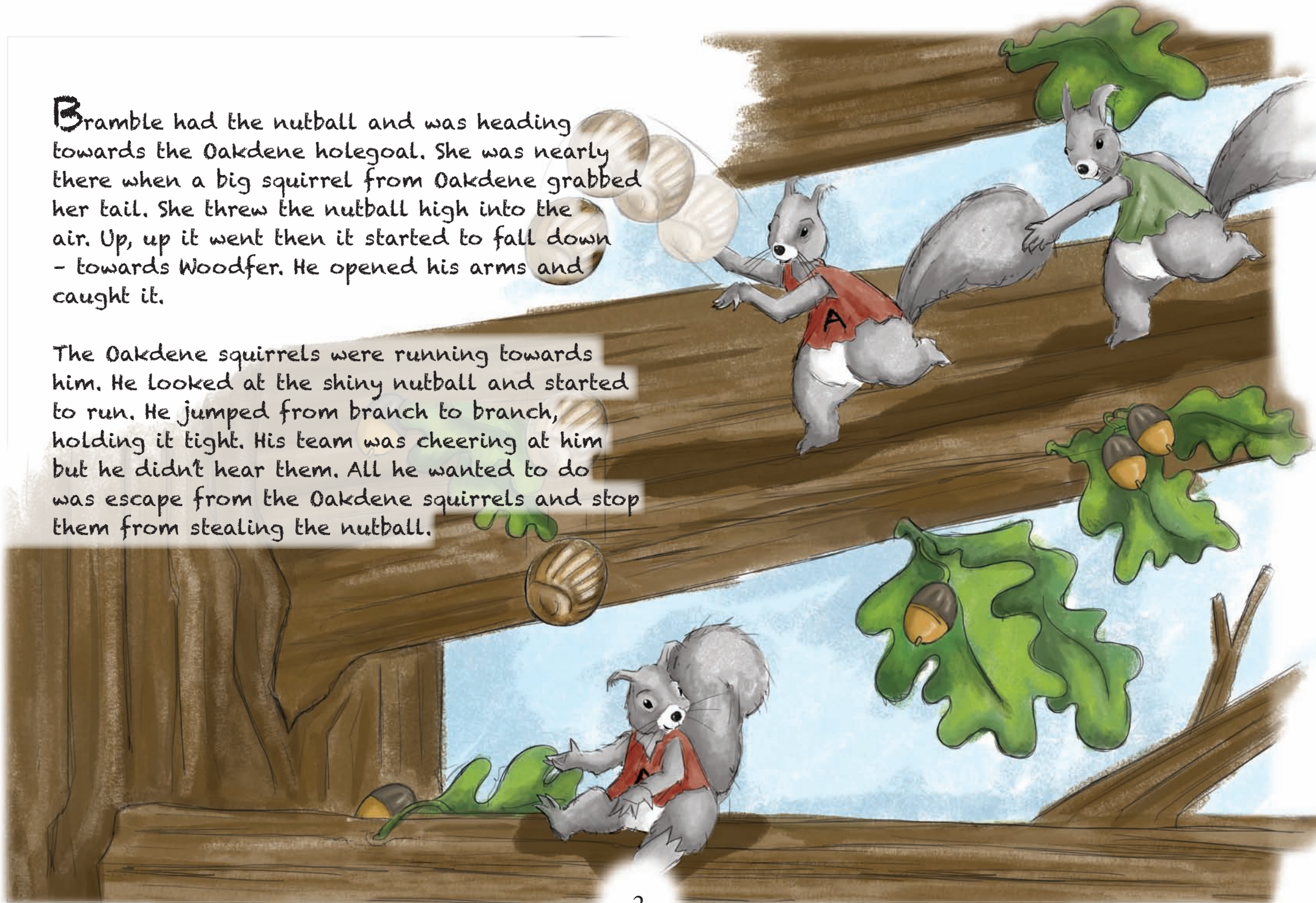
Mrs Teachem set up the big match with Oakdene the school at the other side of the park. Everyone had to be in the team, even Woodfer. It was the day of the big match. The two teams were ready in the three oak trees in the middle of the park. The trophy was polished and the nutball was clean and shining. One holegoal was marked with an A and the other with an O. The two captains waited. Mrs Teachem threw the nutball high into the air and the game started. Bramble scored two goals and then Oakdene equalised.

There were only minutes to go.



Bramble had the nutball and was heading towards the Oakdene holegoal. She was nearly there when a big squirrel from Oakdene grabbed her tail. She threw the nutball high into the air. Up, up it went then it started to fall down - towards Woodfer. He opened his arms and caught it.

The Oakdene squirrels were running towards him. He looked at the shiny nutball and started to run. He jumped from branch to branch, holding it tight. His team was cheering at him but he didn't hear them. All he wanted to do was escape from the Oakdene squirrels and stop them from stealing the nutball.

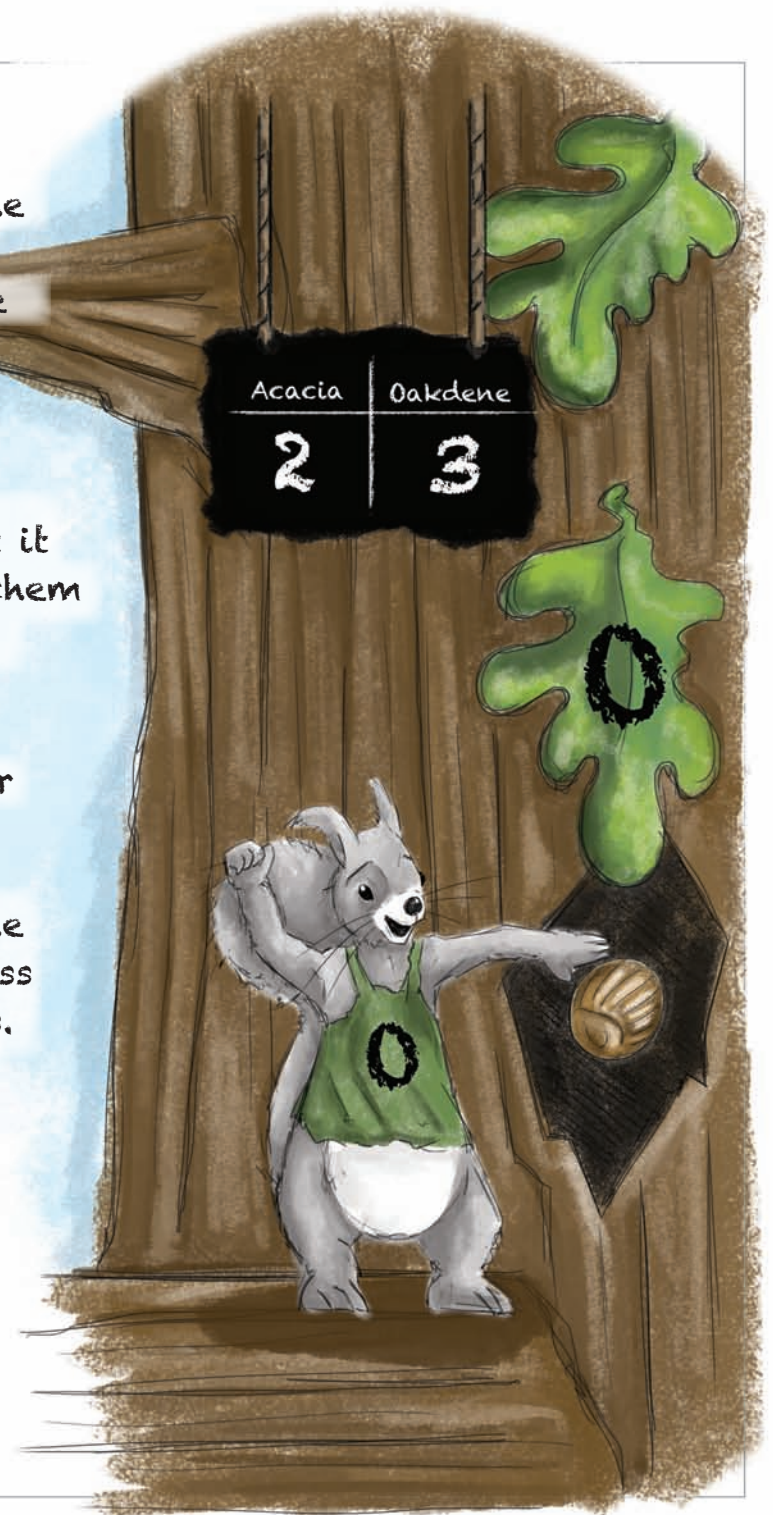


The Acacia holegoal was up ahead. He was nearly there. Then he saw the biggest and most beautiful acorn he had ever seen. It was hanging in the tree just above him. It was bigger and more beautiful than the nutball. He reached up and grabbed it.

He dropped the nutball and it fell. The Oakdene captain caught it and ran as fast as he could to the Oakdene holegoal. Mrs. Teachem blew the whistle and the game was over. Oakdene had won and Acacia had lost!

The Acacia squirrels were disappointed. They looked at Woodfer sitting high up in the tree with the new acorn.

It was his fault. If only he hadn't caught the nutball - if only he had put it in the holegoal. Bramble was cross, the team was cross but Hercules the biggest squirrel in Acacia Academy was furious.



As the squirrels walked back to the Acacia bush. He came up to Woodfer and said, "It's your fault. You made us lose the game!" Woodfer wasn't listening he was admiring his new acorn. "It's beautiful," he said. This made Hercules even more furious. He growled at Woodfer "You're history!"



Woodfer smiled. He liked History at school. "Thank you. I like the story about when the Great Grey Squirrel came across the sea to England ..."

But Hercules wasn't listening. He jumped down from the branch and was running across the park shaking his head. "Nutty old nutcase," he said.

Woodfer looked at his new acorn picked it up and took it back to the hole in the Old Oak Tree and put it in the very middle of his nut collection. It had been a good day!

