A Football team and a Squirrel

How we got a team

The new community hall and its gardens were almost finished, and the village council wanted suggestions for the spare ground behind. The three tiny Teds, and the Imp, liked kicking a ball around in the garden. Bit of fun, but they did imagine themselves as mini football heroes. They suggested a sports field, lots of grass, part marked out for a football pitch. And so it was, and a running track and a general play area. But even the sportiest grass takes time to grow, impatiently awaited, by the spring it was ready.

The Teds hadn't been idle, "We could have a team now" said one, heads nodded "and our friend Bertie Bee could be our trainer". Bertie was good at organising, and had his own fitness plan. He was also too big to be a player. Bertie agreed, of course, and so they started to look for a fifth player. First choice was Mr. Wizzle, he wasn't keen, but did promise to be their strategy expert if they ever got started, not that he had any idea, but that didn't count as an obstacle. After all, he'd taught himself to dance jigs, and everybody who'd seen him agreed he was very good at that.

The search went on and on, reactions from I'm not interested, too old, hurt my leg last year, were all that the team heard. "Do you get 4-a-side teams?" was the Imp's next idea. But the simple answer was no! Slowly getting desperate, the oldest ted did mention just in passing another little friend, a squirrel. Squirrels are very agile, can jump, , and can hold things like nuts, maybe footballs, too. But nobody had seen the squirrel for some time. "He only comes out at meal times, then disappears with his food" said one friend. "I know where he goes" said another, pointing in the general direction of an old walnut sideboard stood against the wall. It took a day or two to decide who else might be good to ask, even thinking of friends in the village, though really they wanted a house team. Plucking up courage, and thinking a good time would be after he'd taken his food back in the evening, and had time to eat it, the Teds, Imp, Bertie and Mr Wizzle went to look. Under the sideboard, there were no holes in the skirting, nothing to see on the sideboard. Politely knocking before opening the drawers, they found a few items of cutlery, and a tablecloth, but no squirrel. Then there were two cupboard doors. Left or right first? Left! A gentle knock brought an answer "nobody here, gone away". Wizzle knocked again "we only want to say hello". After a couple of rounds of whys and why nots, or is that whys not, something stirred in the cupboard, the door opened slightly, and two eyes stared out at the company. "We want to ask you something" six voices in unison. "I'm very busy, can one of you come back tomorrow, or the day after, or not at all?" "Can I come in now, just me, I'm only little, like you and I'd really like to talk to you if it isn't too much trouble, please". I believe there was some sincerity in one of the tiny ted's words, he wasn't just laying it on thick, and it seemed to have an effect on Squirrel N, "Oh, it isn't very tidy in here, I never have visitor's, and you'll have to sit on the floor, or the bed. Bit I suppose you'd better come in. Ever so quietly the others moved away, leaving their pal to talk. "You really haven't got much comfort in here, such a big cupboard, too". Squirrel N explained how he had come to get away from horrid pests, who upset him every time they could. And he had never had much apart from his dreams. He was afraid it would all start again, so he kept hidden as much as he could. Ted told him about living here, and how there were squabbles but everyone made up, and how everyone had agreed when they moved in about how to settle differences and how to get along.

“Yes, but you haven’t come to talk about that, have you?”. Oh that was a critical moment, Ted was nearly caught, he didn’t want to say anything wrong, but beans had to be spilled at some time, so he just came out with it “we need another player”. “I’m no good at cards, I’ve seen some of you , playing so well”. “It isn’t cards, or chess, or dominoes, it’s football”. “ You mean like kicking a ball around in the garden, you don’t need me for that”. “No, you are a squirrel, and what squirrels can do is jump and leap and hold things and stuff like that”. “So?” “ We want you to come and try out being goalie for the house team”.