

Girl Versus Squirrel



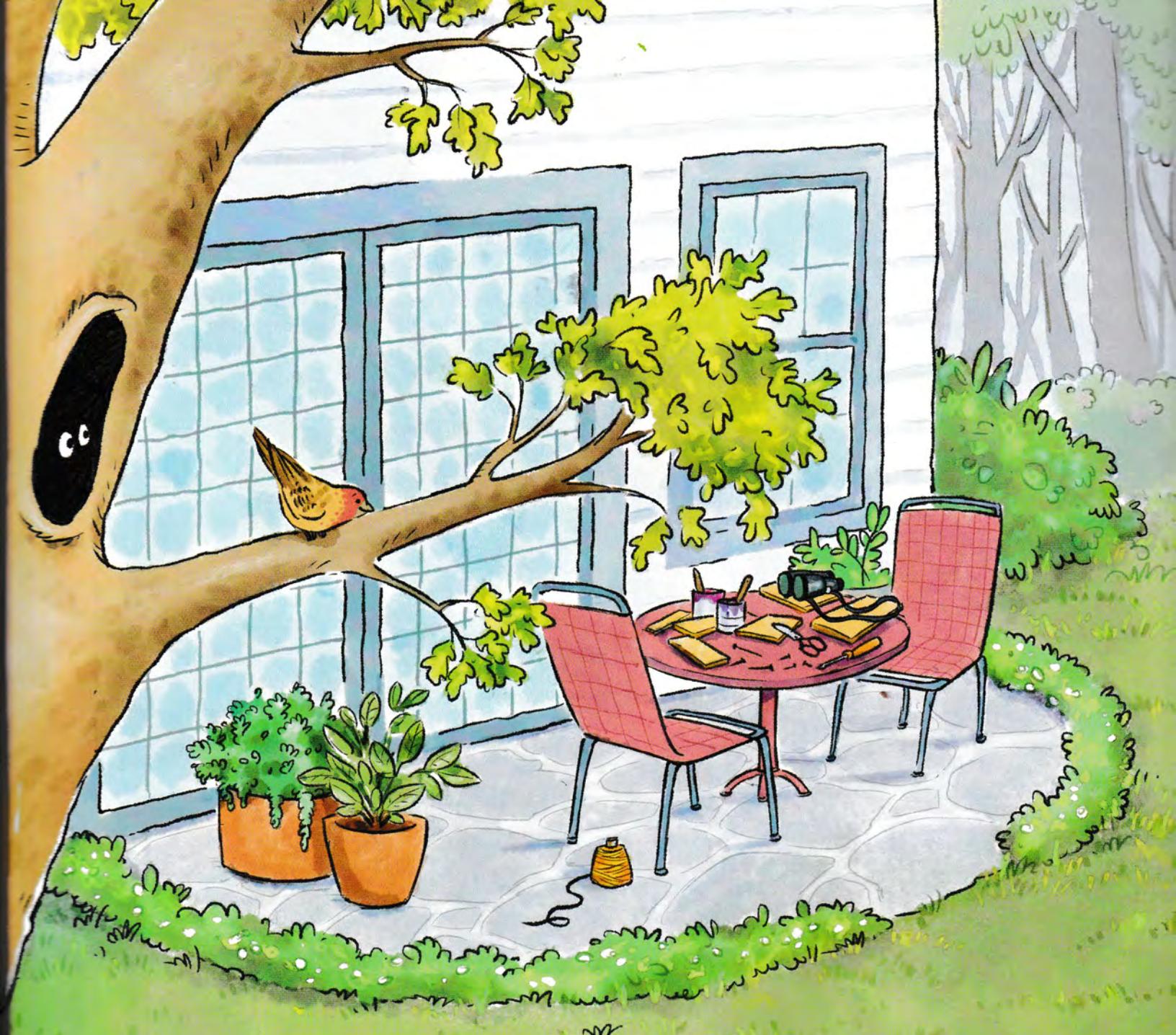
WRITTEN BY

HAYLEY BARRETT

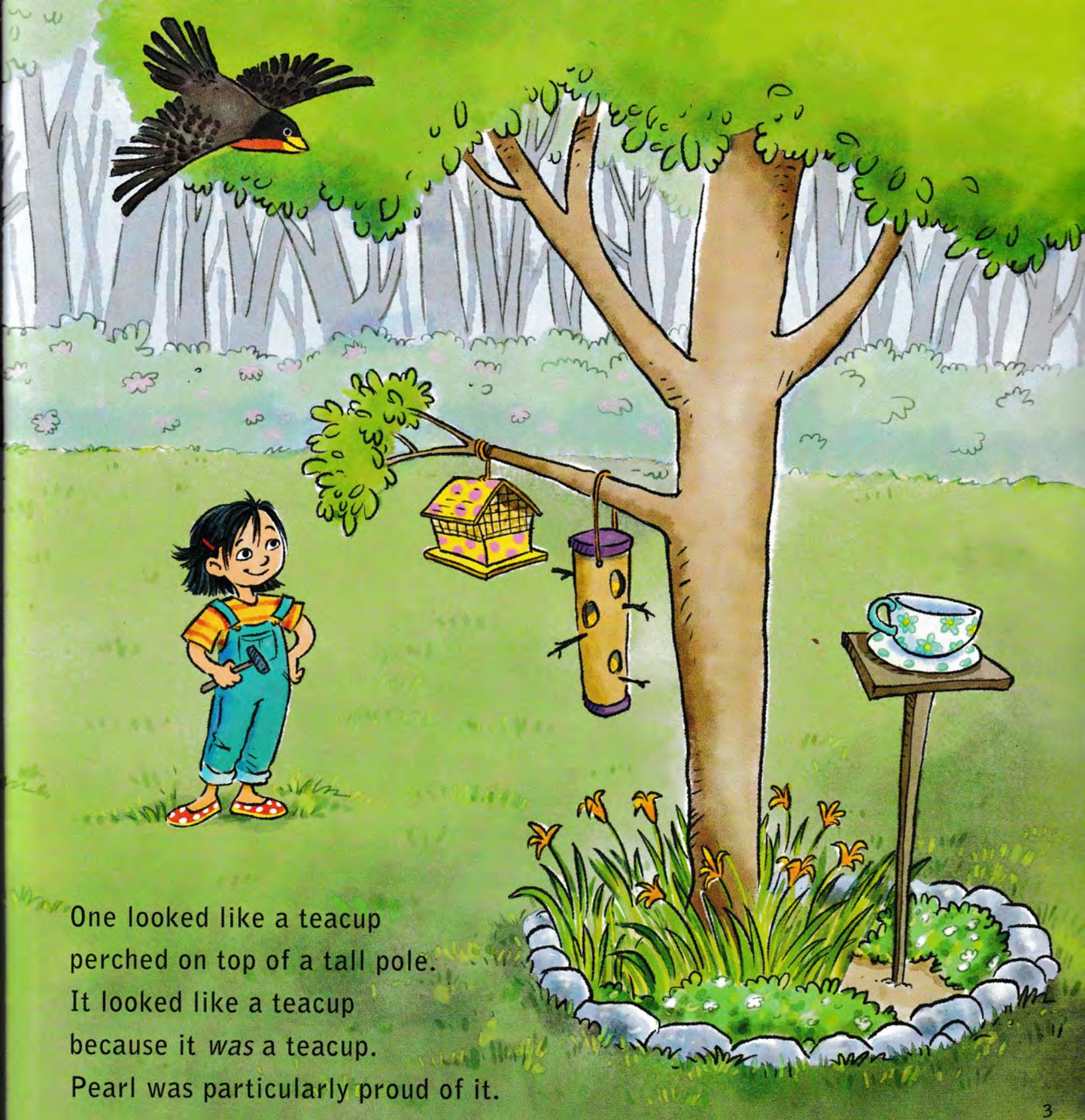
ILLUSTRATED BY

RENÉE ANDRIANI

 SCHOLASTIC



Pearl built three bird feeders.
One looked like a house.
One looked like a tube.



One looked like a teacup
perched on top of a tall pole.
It looked like a teacup
because it was a teacup.
Pearl was particularly proud of it.

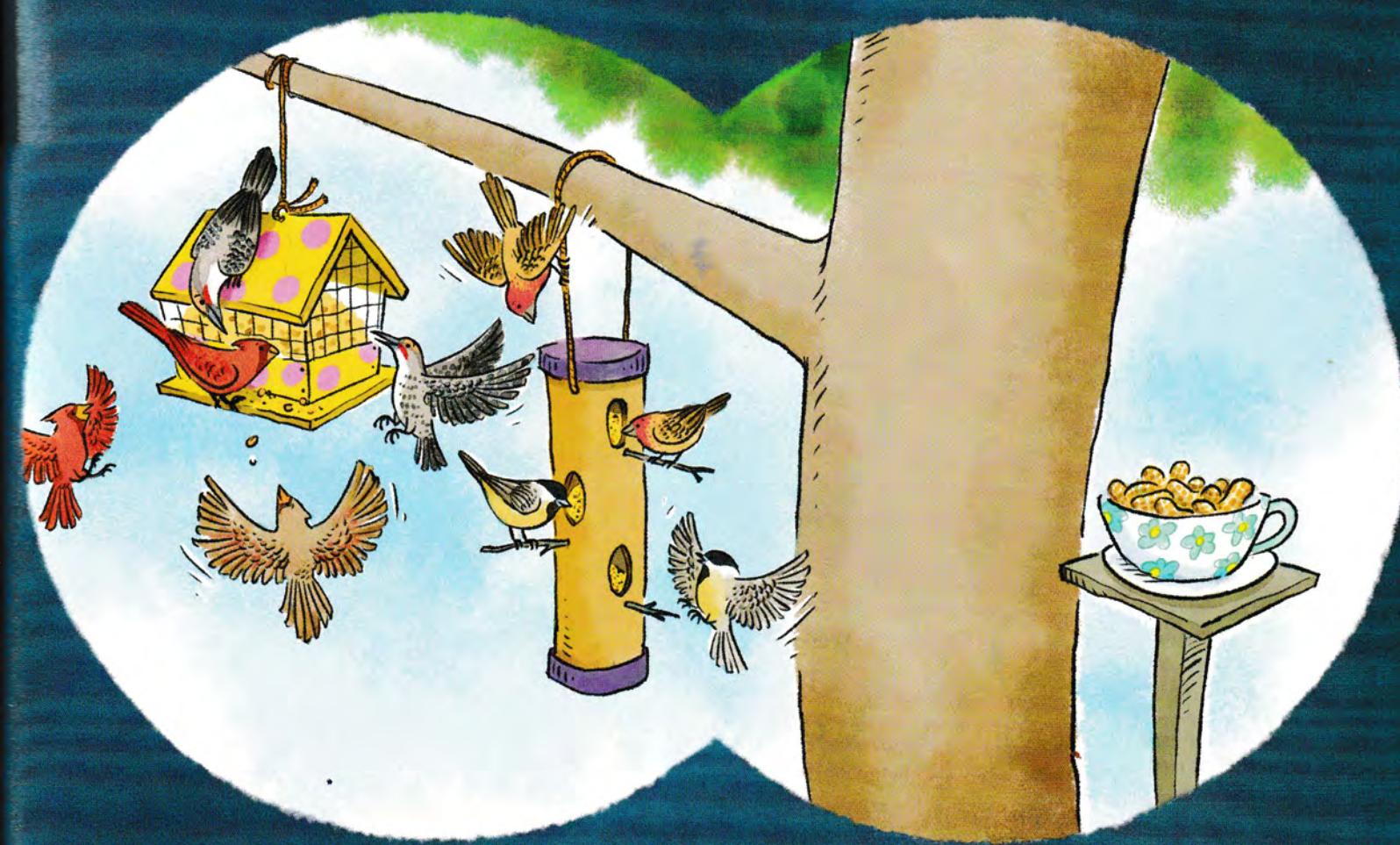


She filled the house bird feeder with suet.

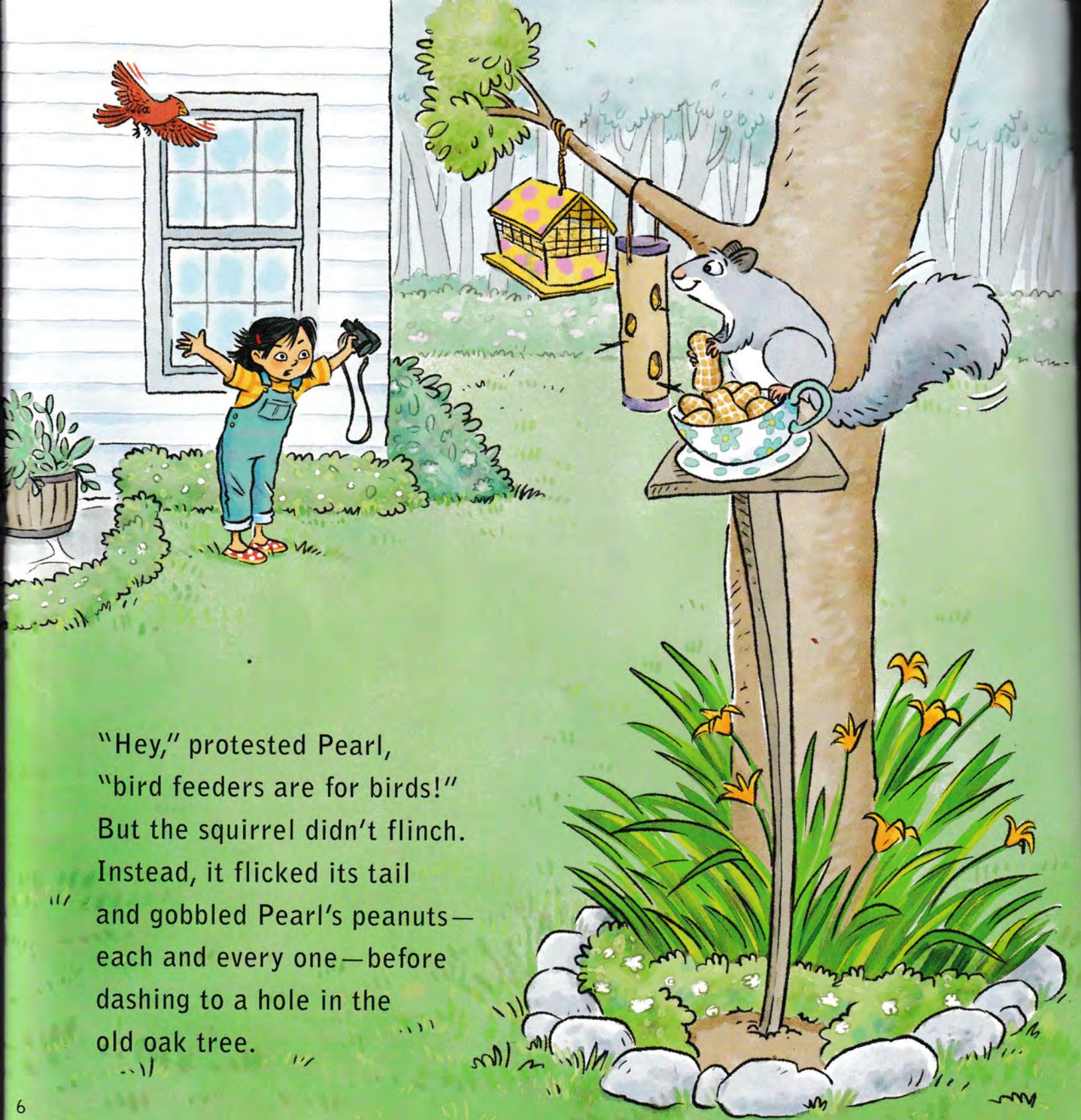
She filled the tube bird feeder with seeds.

She filled the teacup with peanuts. Lots of birds love peanuts.

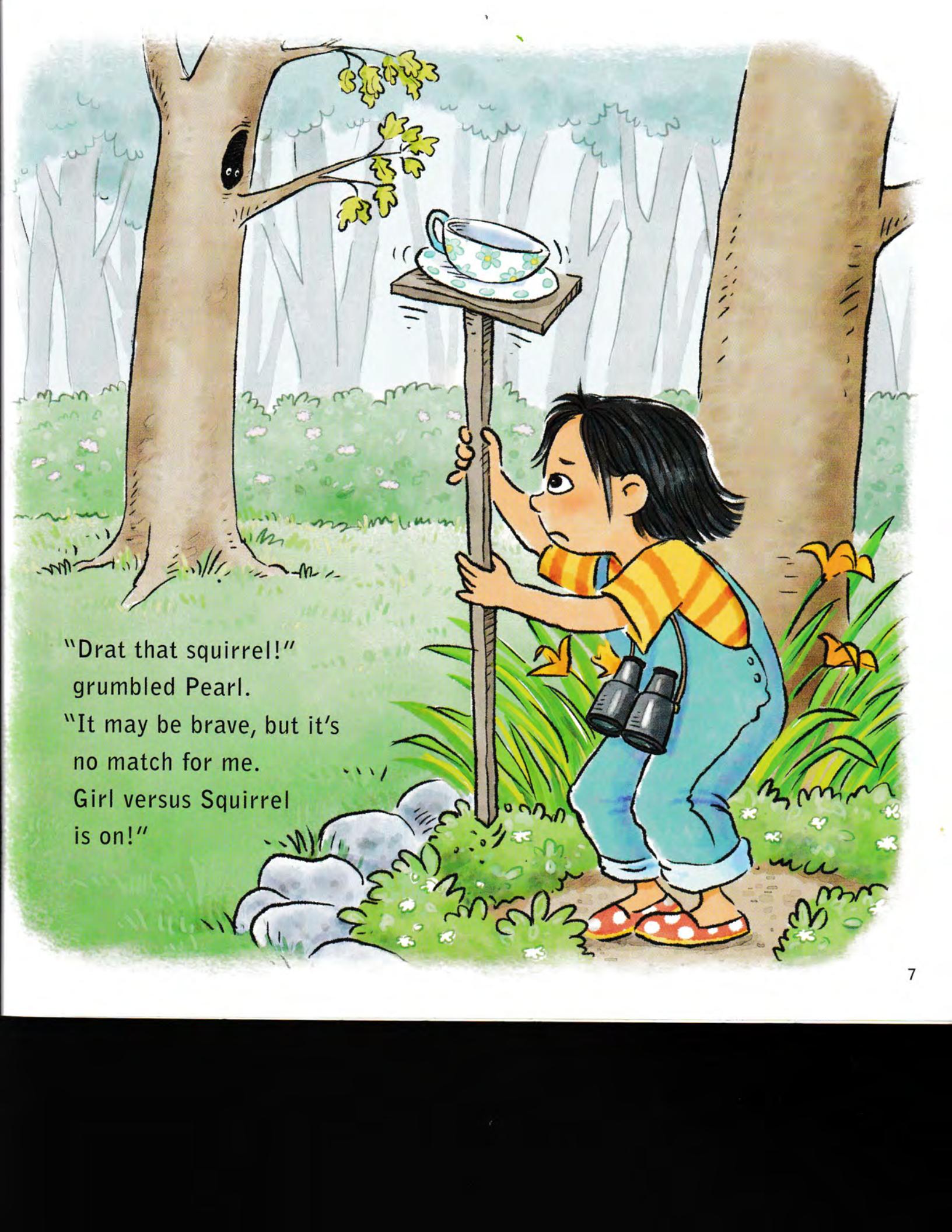
Pearl took the lens caps off her binoculars and waited.



Cardinals and flickers swooped in for suet.
Finches and chickadees sailed in for seeds.
But not a single bird could settle on the teacup.
Because something else wanted those peanuts.



"Hey," protested Pearl,
"bird feeders are for birds!"
But the squirrel didn't flinch.
Instead, it flicked its tail
and gobbled Pearl's peanuts—
each and every one—before
dashing to a hole in the
old oak tree.

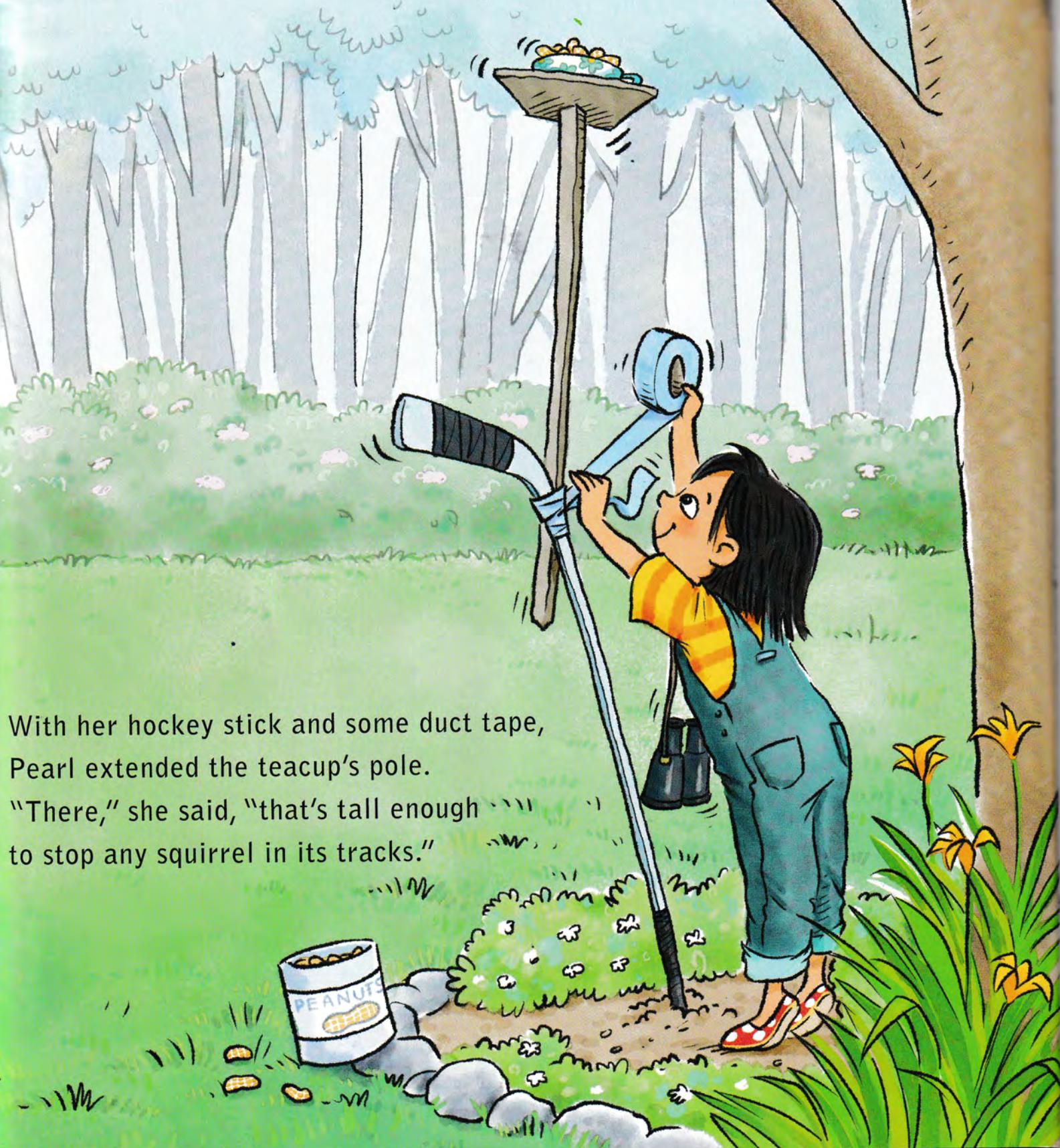


"Drat that squirrel!"

grumbled Pearl.

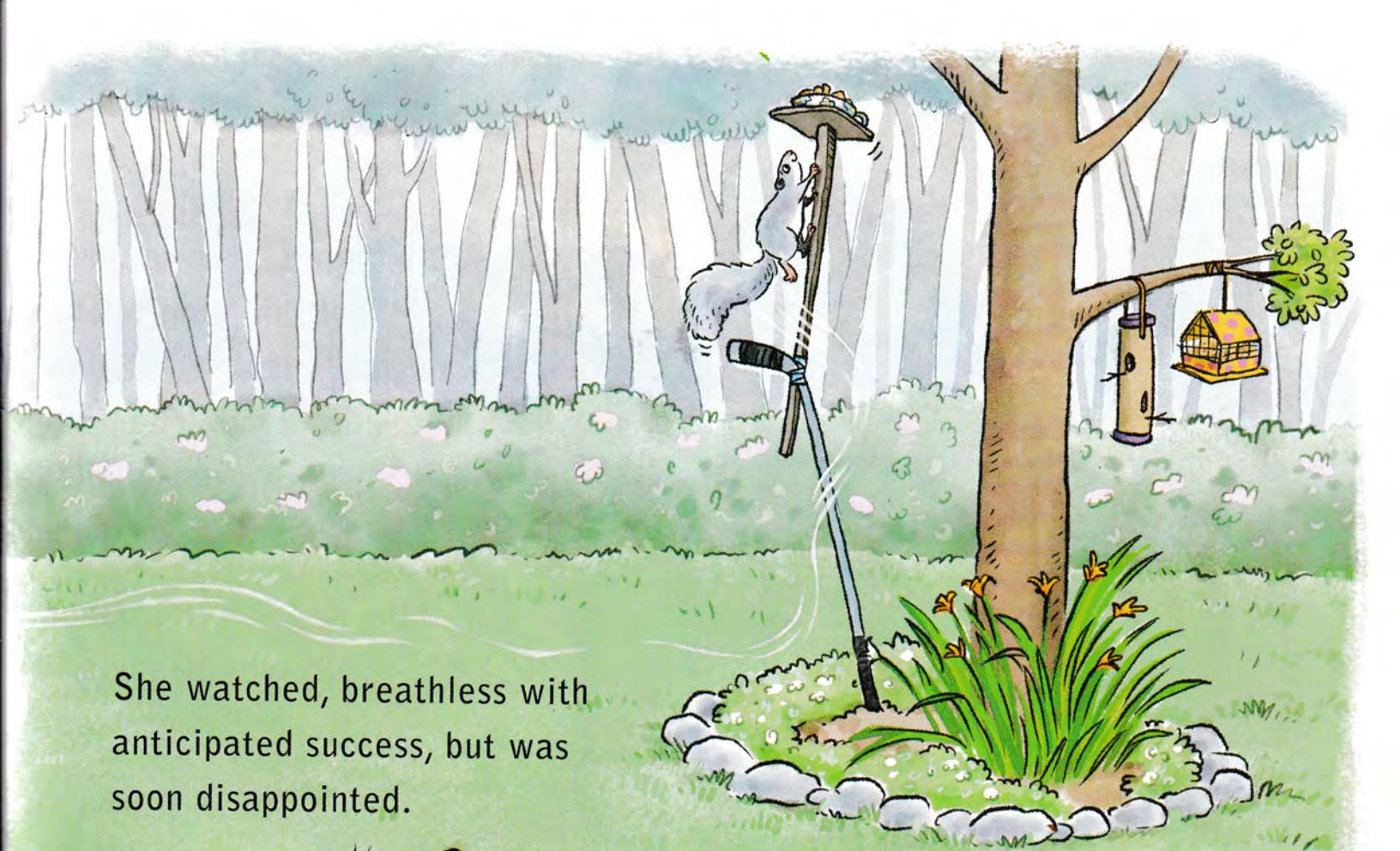
"It may be brave, but it's
no match for me.

Girl versus Squirrel
is on!"

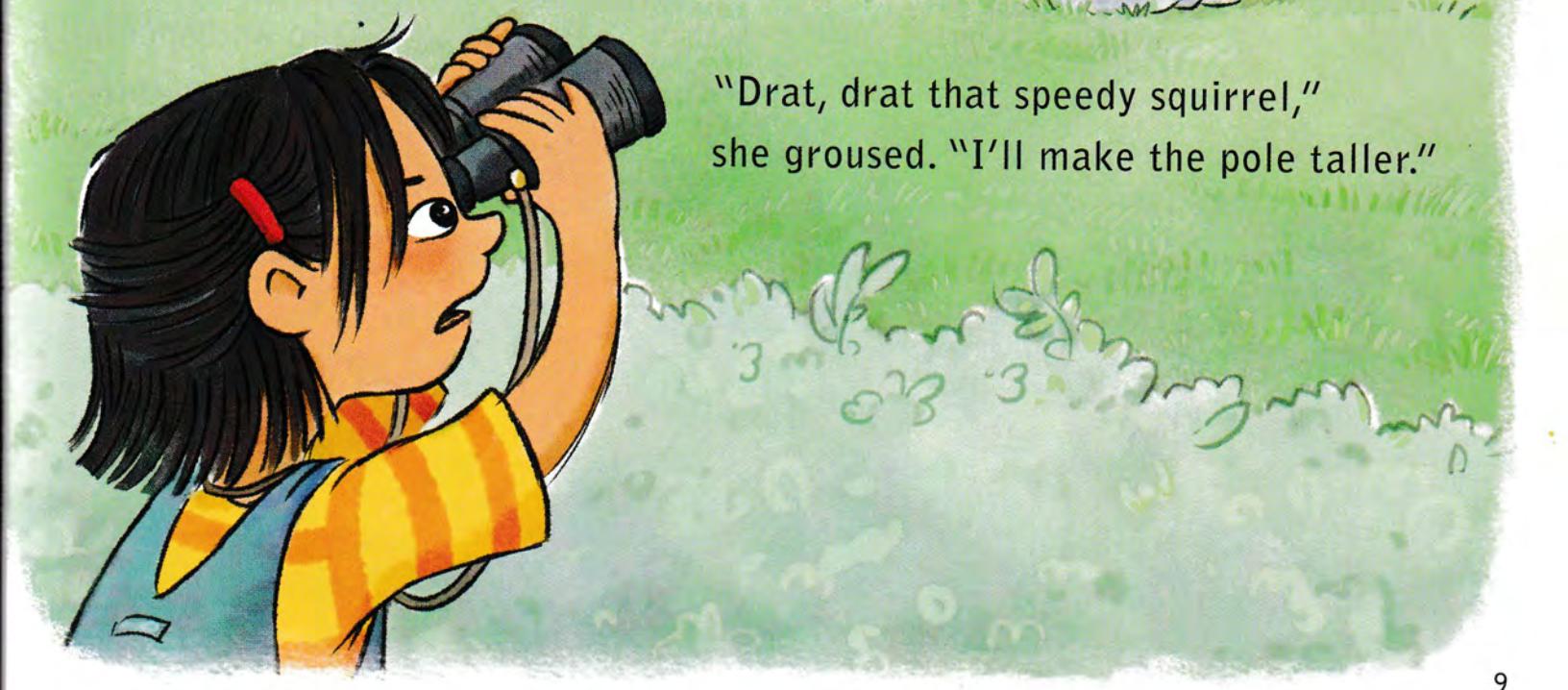


With her hockey stick and some duct tape,
Pearl extended the teacup's pole.

"There," she said, "that's tall enough
to stop any squirrel in its tracks."



She watched, breathless with anticipated success, but was soon disappointed.



"Drat, drat that speedy squirrel," she groused. "I'll make the pole taller."

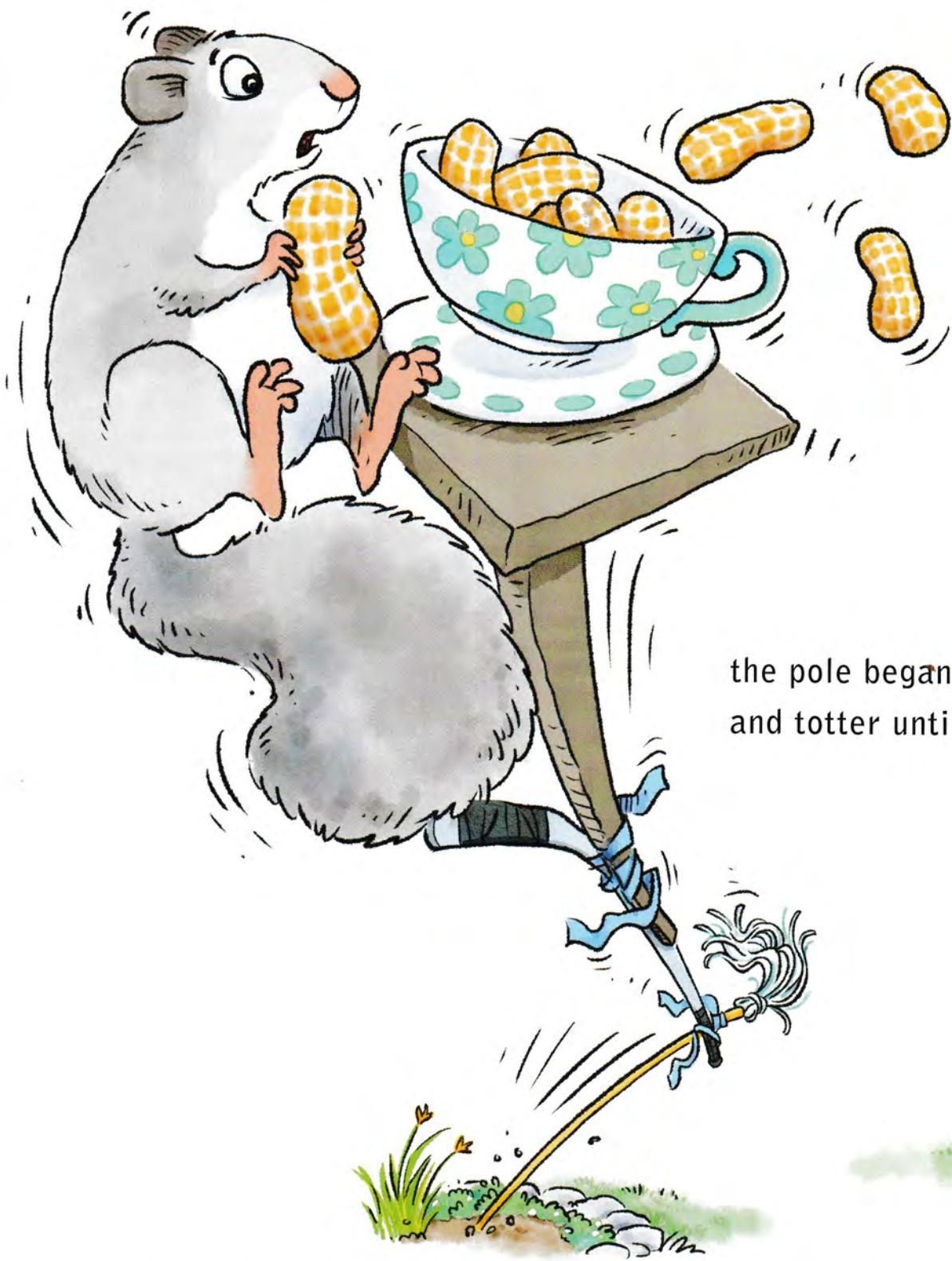


Now the teacup towered,
but that didn't deter
the squirrel. It scurried up
the mop, scrabbled up the
hockey stick, and shinnied
straight up the pole.

"Oh, no," Pearl groaned.
"Brave, speedy, and
determined too."

The squirrel stared at
Pearl and seized an especially
plump peanut. But before it
could take a nibble . . .





the pole began to teeter
and totter until . . .





THUD!

It toppled to the ground. The teacup popped off the pole, the handle snapped off the teacup, and the startled squirrel skedaddled to the tip-top twig of the old oak tree.

"Drat, drat, drat you, squirrel!" growled Pearl. "You're a bird-feeder-crashing, teacup-smashing, peanut-poaching pest!"



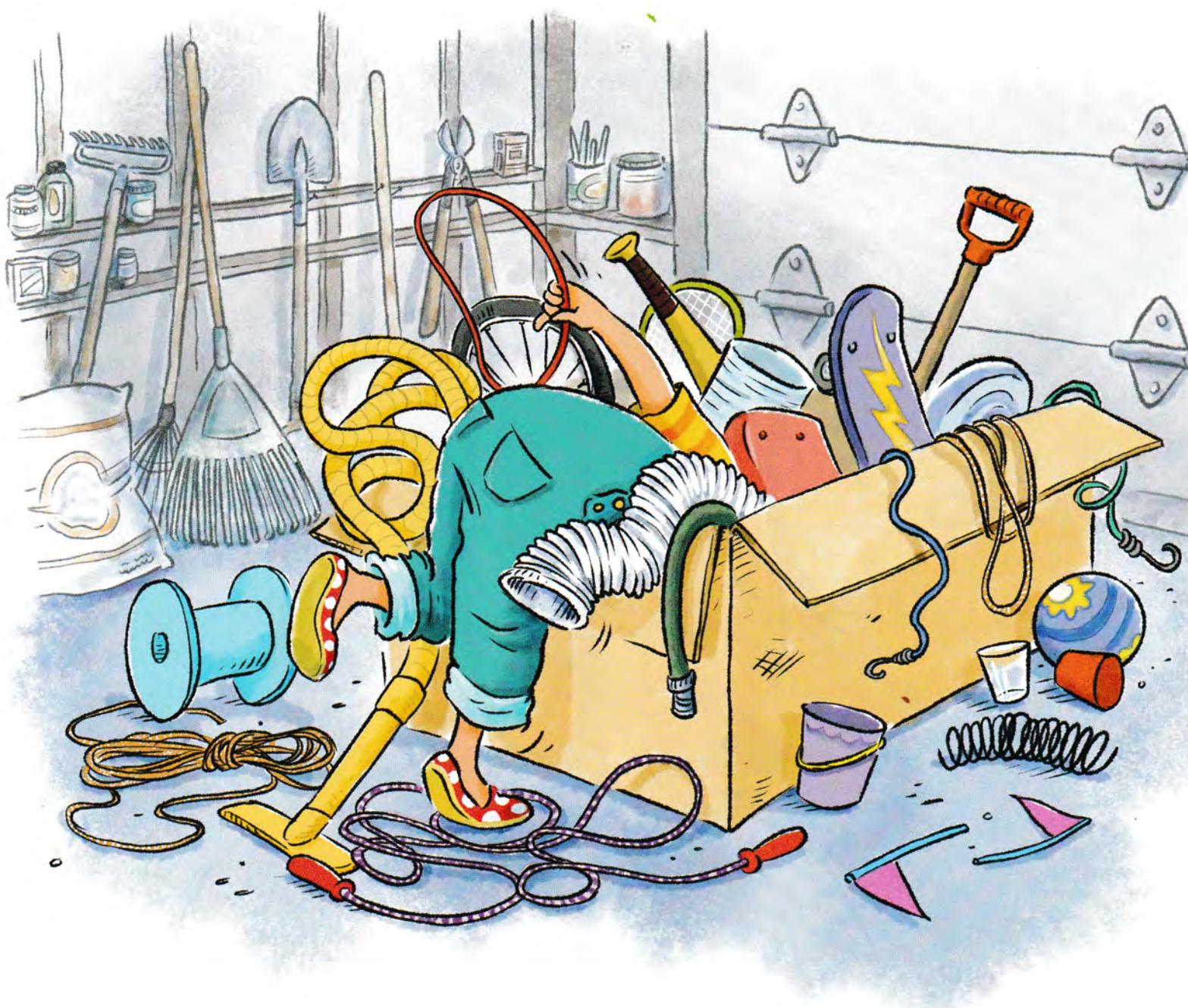


Pearl poked through grass and peanuts to
find the teacup's handle and muttered,
"But you will never, ever, ever be
a match for me."

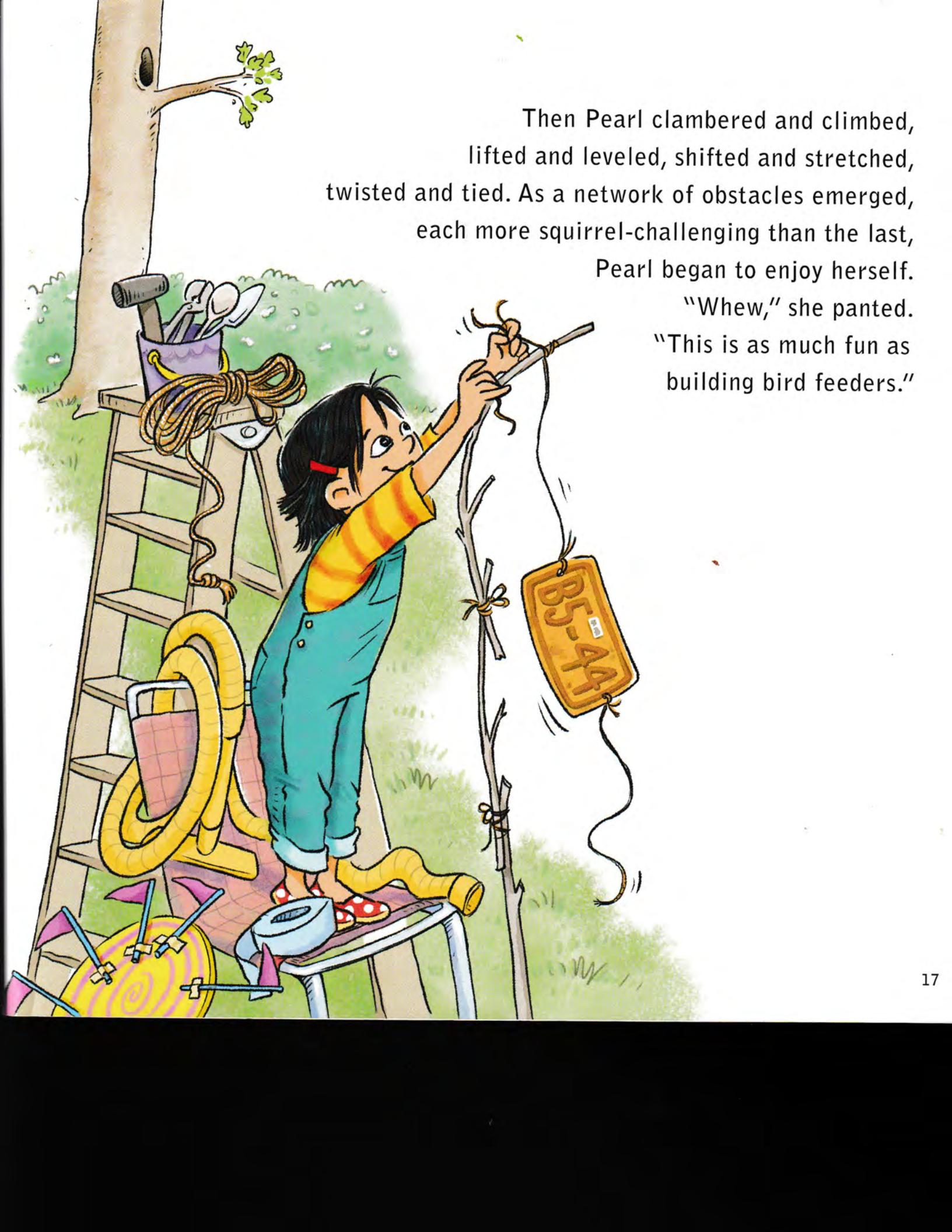


While Pearl glued her teacup,
she pondered and plotted. Step by step,
she pulled together a plan to put
that squirrel to the test.





She rummaged through her box of useful odds and ends.



Then Pearl clambered and climbed,
lifted and leveled, shifted and stretched,
twisted and tied. As a network of obstacles emerged,
each more squirrel-challenging than the last,

Pearl began to enjoy herself.

"Whew," she panted.

"This is as much fun as
building bird feeders."



When everything was ready, Pearl tumbled more peanuts into the teacup. "Bold, speedy, and determined won't be enough," she pronounced. "This time, teacup triumph will require nerves of squirrelly steel."



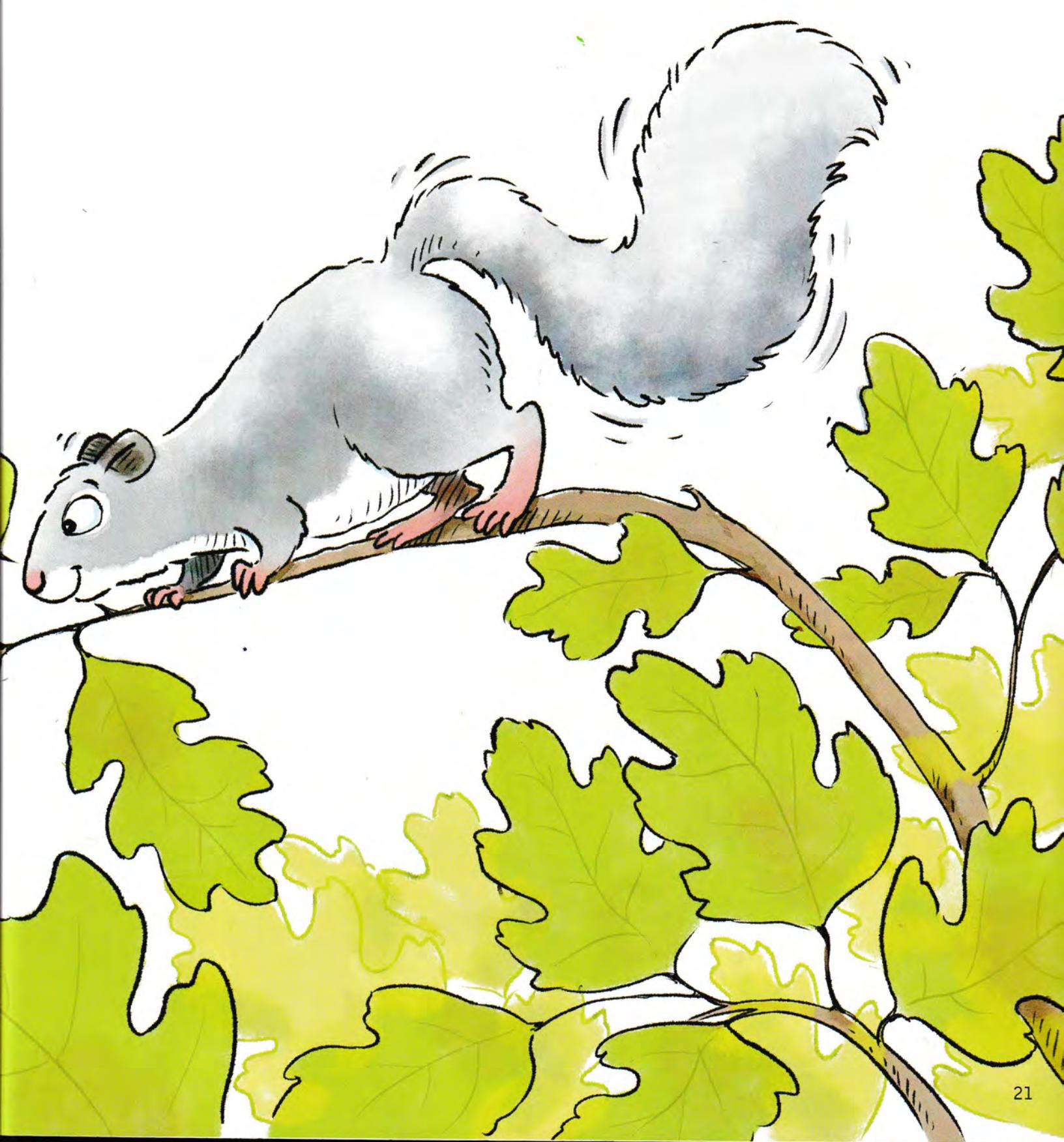
Training her binoculars on the old oak tree,
Pearl scanned up—branch by branch—until . . .

There!

"I've done my best to best you, squirrel!" shouted Pearl.
"Now let's see what you can do. Ready, set . . ."

But before she could shout GO, that squirrel was gone.
Headfirst, scuttling down the tree and . . .





LEAP!

SCAMPER!

SWING!

WHIRL! WHIRL! WHIRL!

SPIN! SPIN! SPIN!

SCRAMBLE!

JUMP!

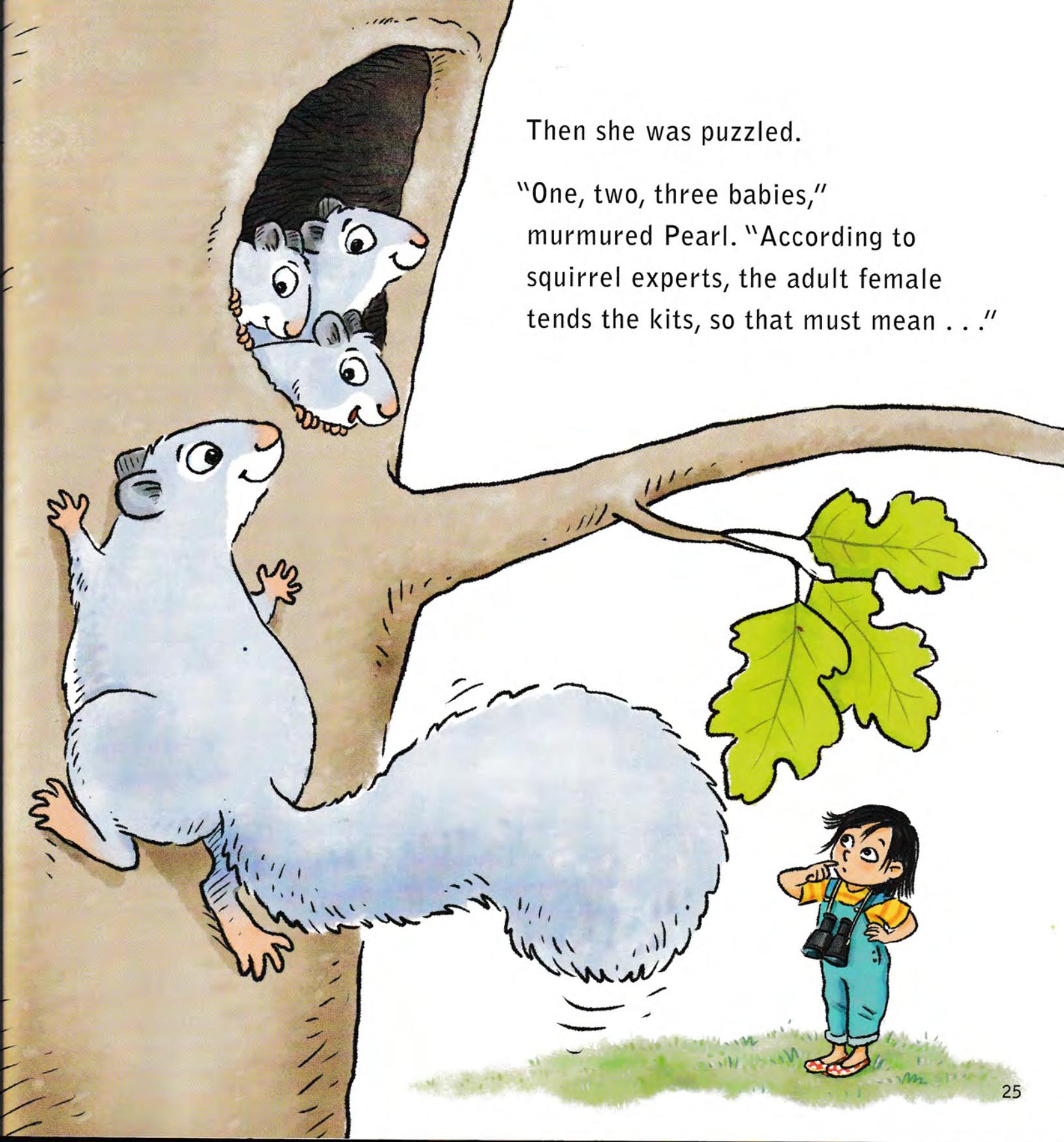
CLUTCH!

CLAMBER!

CRUNCH!

Pearl was dazzled.





Then she was puzzled.

"One, two, three babies," murmured Pearl. "According to squirrel experts, the adult female tends the kits, so that must mean . . ."



The quick and nimble ninja squirrel was a mother!

Pearl's can-do, will-do, just-did squirrel . . . was quite a girl.

"I proclaim your victory," cheered Pearl, "and I salute you,
fearless, fluffy sister!"



"She'll teach them everything she knows," Pearl said. "How to climb and balance, how to think and plan. She'll develop their attention span." And then—right then—Pearl knew she wanted to help the squirrel family. And she knew how to do it.



Pearl built bird feeders.

She filled the house feeders with suet.
She filled the tube feeders with seeds.

She filled the teacups with peanuts.

Lots and lots of peanuts.

