



“So, all we know about today’s job is that it’s going to be especially tricky!” Kirsty Tate remarked to her best friend, Rachel Walker, as they made their way along a path through the woods.

The two girls had volunteered to spend a week of summer vacation working as junior rangers at Wild Woods Nature Reserve. “What do you think we’ll be doing, Rachel?”





“I don’t know, but I’m looking forward to finding out when we meet Becky in the meadow!” Rachel replied with a grin. Becky was the head of the nature reserve. “I hope it’s something we can do really well—and then we *might* earn another badge.”

“I *love* getting badges,” Kirsty said happily. She swung her backpack off her shoulders so she could proudly sneak a peek at the badges pinned to the pockets. This was the girls’ third day at Wild Woods, and they’d already earned two badges because they’d successfully completed their tasks on the previous two days.

The girls heard a rustling noise in the undergrowth, and a little red squirrel scampered out of the bushes. He stopped





in front of Rachel and Kirsty and gave them a mischievous glance.

“I heard what you were saying,” the squirrel told them breathlessly. “And, you’re right: You’ll have a very difficult job to do today!” Then, giggling, he bounded away.

