

# MAKING THE TEAM

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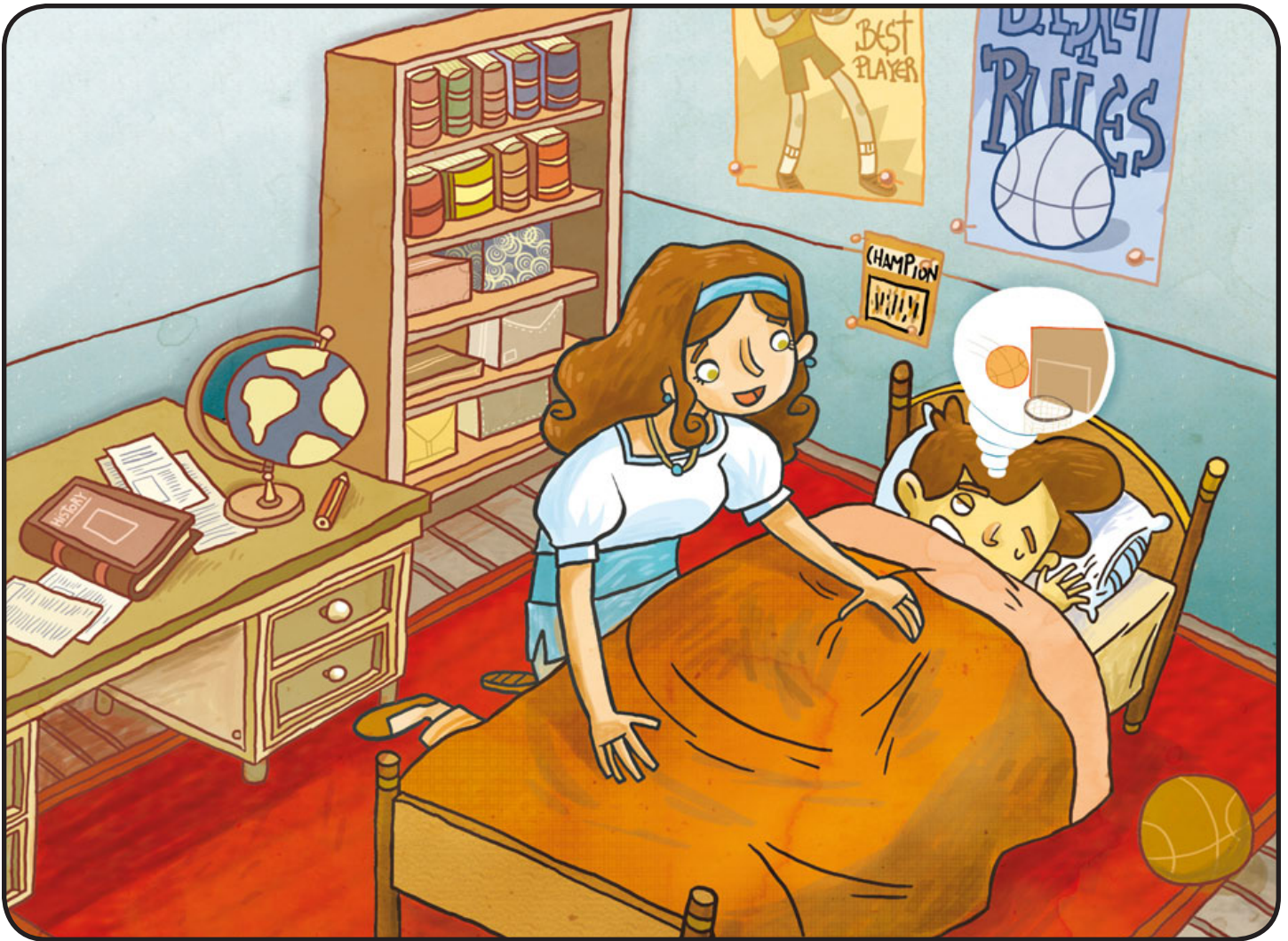
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## Chapter One

# **BASKETBALL DREAMS**

There were 10 seconds left in the basketball game. The score was tied, 25–25. The crowd counted down the seconds.

“10...9...8...7...6...5...”

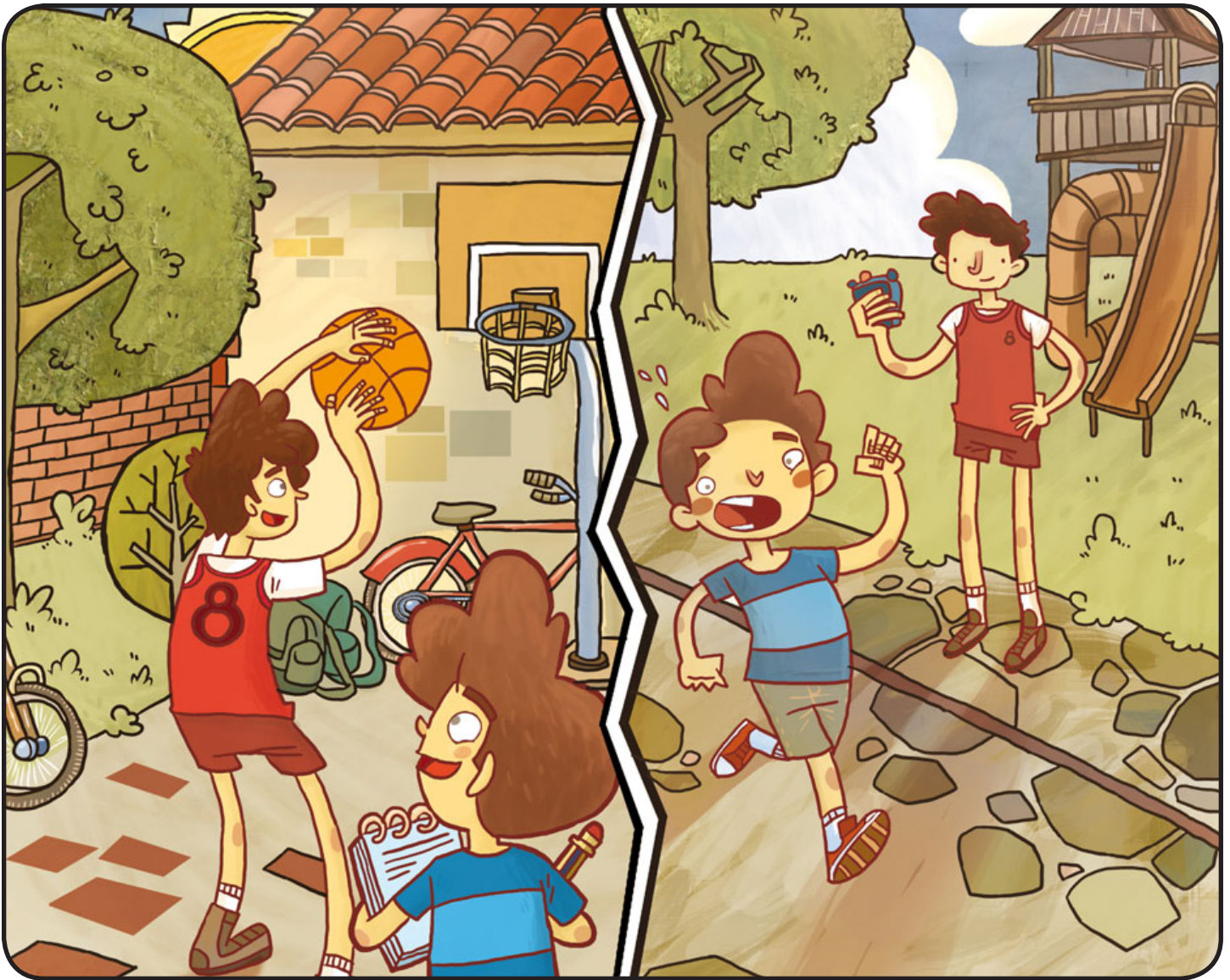
Bobby gripped the basketball. He threw a long shot. The ball dropped through the hoop. Score! His team had won the championship!

“Bob-by! Bob-by!” the crowd chanted.

“Bobby! Bobby! Wake up! It’s time for school,” Bobby’s mom said, shaking his shoulder. Bobby sighed. His winning shot had been a dream.

Bobby was 10 years old. He was not on a basketball team, but he loved basketball. There was a basketball hoop in his backyard. After school, Bobby played with his older brother, Jimmy. Jimmy was a high school basketball star. He was tall, but Bobby was short and small.





Jimmy told Bobby, “You don’t have to be tall to be a basketball star. You need to be smart and quick.”

Bobby wanted to be on a basketball team like Jimmy. He wanted to be smarter at the game, so he watched Jimmy play. He wanted to be faster, so he raced around the backyard.

## Chapter Two

# **TRYOUT TIME**

One day at school, Bobby's best friend Zach shared some exciting news.

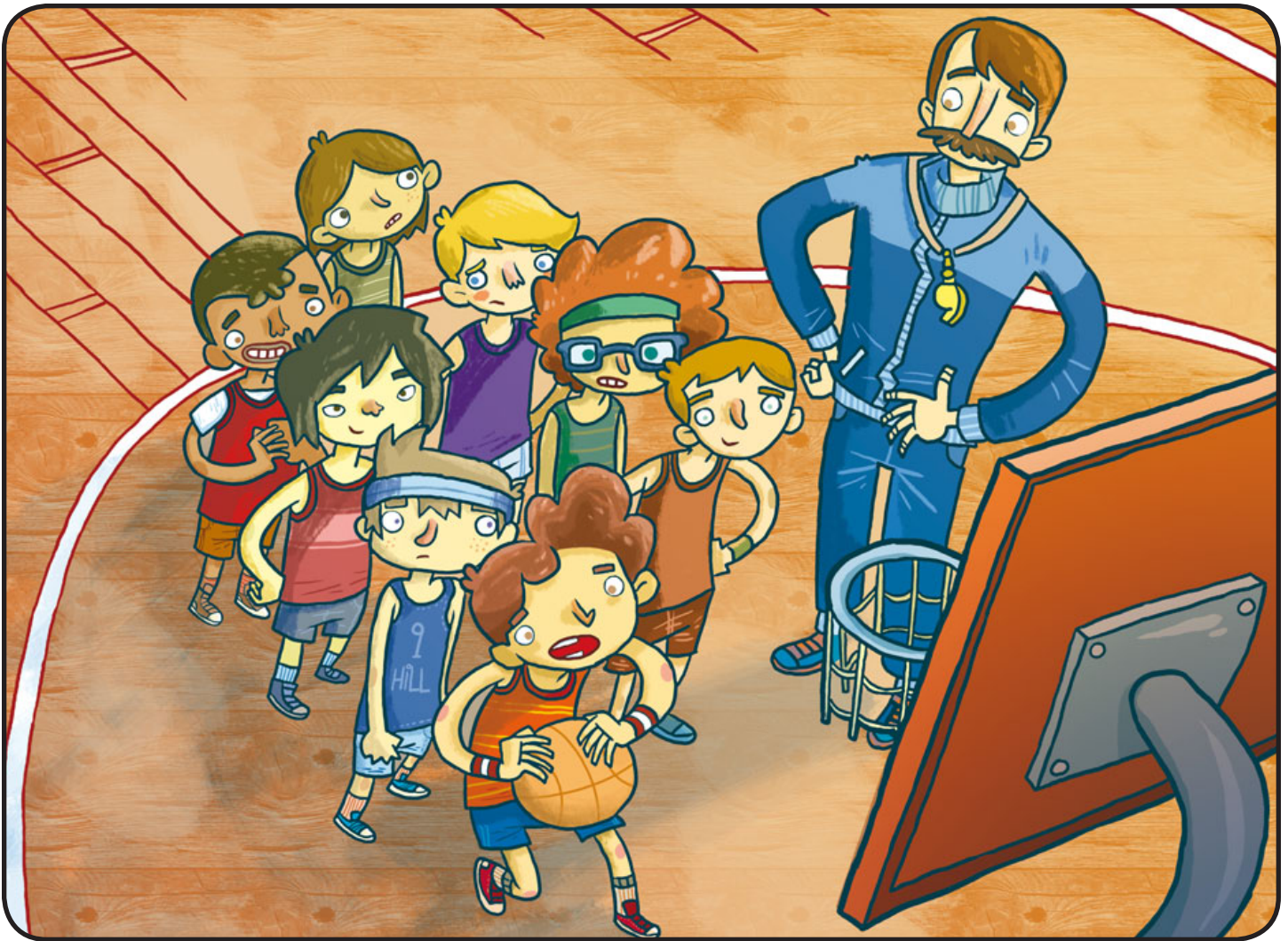
"They're starting a basketball team for our grade. There's a sign-up sheet at the gym."

Bobby signed up. Tryouts were in two weeks. Though he practiced every day, he still felt nervous.

"Relax," Jimmy said. "Just pretend you're playing in our backyard."

Finally, the day of the tryouts arrived. Coach Williams asked the boys to line up.





“Form two lines,” the coach called out loudly. “Dribble down the court. Then, take your best shot when you get to the hoop.”

One by one, the boys took shots. Then, it was Bobby’s turn. He dribbled toward the basket. When he got close, he threw the ball high. The ball went through the hoop.

“Score!” Bobby yelled out.



Soon tryouts were over and everyone went home. Bobby couldn't wait to find out if he had made the team.

Two weeks later, Bobby got a call from the coach.

“Bobby, you're on the team! Our first practice is tomorrow,” Coach Williams said.

Bobby jumped for joy. His best friend Zach had made it, too.



Chapter Three

## **THERE'S NO I IN TEAM**

The next day, Bobby and Zach met the rest of the team. They walked over to Kevin, Lee, Jeff, Jesse, Jamie, and Kyle. They shook hands and began practicing as a team.

At first, the boys didn't play like a team. They weren't passing the ball. They weren't helping each other. They were only thinking about making their own shots.

After a few minutes, Coach Williams yelled, "Time out!"



“Basketball,” he said, “is a team game. Please help each other. Pass the ball around to someone who can take the best shot.”

At first, it was a big mess. Lee passed the ball to Kyle, but Kyle wasn't paying attention. Bobby tried to pass to Jeff, but Jeff tripped as he tried to catch it.

The coach shook his head and then smiled.

“Practice makes perfect, boys. Working together makes winners!”

Coach Williams blew his whistle to end the game. “Good job, guys!” he exclaimed. “Remember, basketball is a team game. There is no *I* in the word *team*!”

The boys worked even harder at the next practices. Their passing, dribbling, and shooting had all improved. With training, they were becoming a great team.



## Chapter Four

# **TEAM WORK**

At the next practice, Coach Williams assigned their positions. Zach would be the center since he was the tallest. “The center guards the basket,” the coach explained.

Kevin, Kyle, Jesse, and Jamie would be the team’s forwards. “The forward looks for good inside shots. If a shot misses, the forward tries to get the ball before the other team.”

“Bobby, Lee, and Jeff will be the guards,” Coach Williams explained. “A guard dribbles the ball and keeps the ball moving. A guard can shoot, too.”

Bobby was happy to be a guard. He could dribble the ball, pass it, or take a shot.

Now that they knew their positions, it was time to pick a team name. Coach Williams asked the boys for ideas.

“Smart Shooters,” Jeff suggested.

“Dynamite Dunkers,” Jamie replied.

“How about Shooting Stars?” Lee suggested. Everyone agreed.

Next, they voted to see who would be the captain. “Looks like the Shooting Stars will have two co-captains,” Coach Williams announced. “Congratulations, Bobby and Zach!”

The next few weeks, they practiced every day after school. They wanted to be ready for their first game.



## Chapter Five

# **THE BIG GAME**

The day of the game finally arrived. Friends and family gathered at the gym after school. There was excitement in the air. The Shooting Stars were playing against their neighboring school's team, the Dunk Kings.





Both teams jogged onto the court. The whistle blew. The crowd grew quiet. The game began. Sneakers squeaked as the boys ran across the floor. The players crisscrossed one another. The basketball bounced from one to another. Soon they reached the last quarter of the game. There were only 20 seconds left on the clock. The score was tied, 25–25.

Kyle had the ball, but he was too far away to make the shot. He passed the ball to Kevin. Kevin dribbled it over to Zach. Zach looked right at Bobby and made a lightning-quick pass. Bobby turned around and jumped high into the air. The crowd counted down the last 10 seconds.

“10...9...8...7...6...5...”

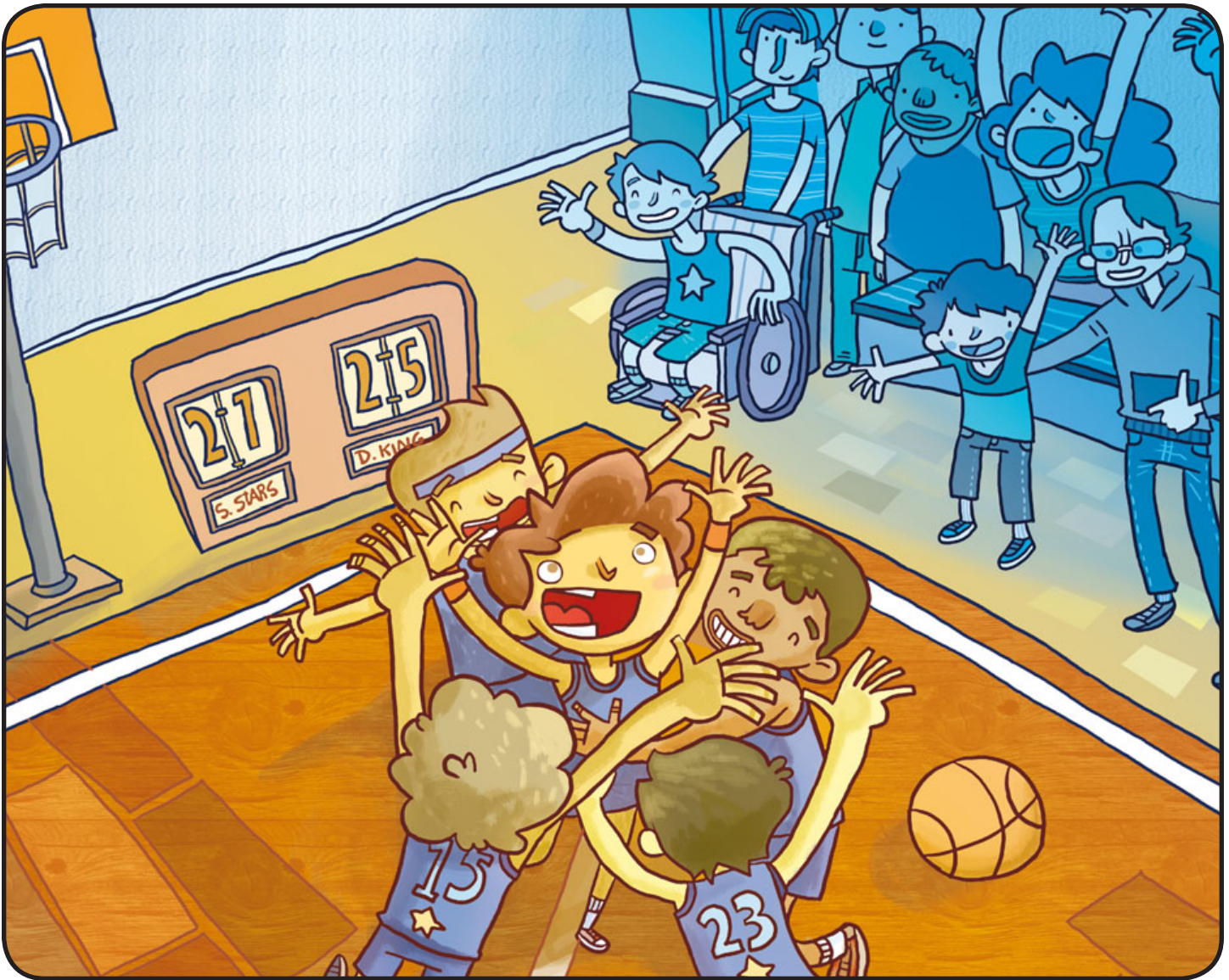
Bobby took a deep breath.

“Bob-by! Bob-by!” the crowd chanted.

He aimed for the hoop.

“4...3...2...”





Bam! Bobby made a slam dunk as the buzzer sounded! The crowd jumped to its feet. The team danced around. The Shooting Stars had won the game! Bobby and Zach gave each other high-fives.

“You did it!” shouted Zach.

“We did it,” smiled Bobby. “I guess some dreams do come true.”