BOOK 2 · AGES 3 TO 8

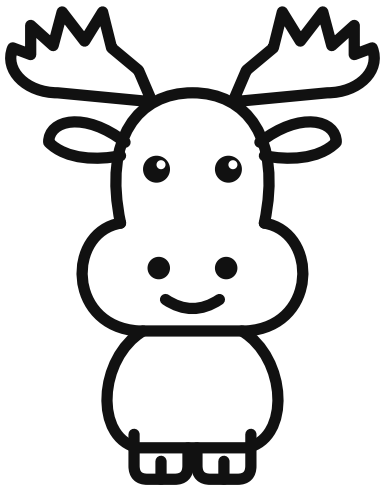
Advent Overflow

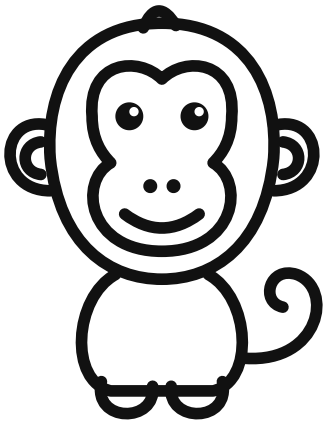
December Activity Book

A Kids' Companion for

The Overflow Adventure in Wanderful Woods

Directed by Andrew Eoff · Written and illustrated with AI





This book belongs to _____

♡ For Grown-Ups

Every day has six pages (eight on celebration days). Each day opens on a left-hand page and fills three spreads, so you can always see two pages at once.

1. The story. Read the day's Wanderful Woods story out loud while your child colors the picture. The same story is in The Overflow Adventure in Wanderful Woods.

2. Think & Do, then a fun page. Ask the two Let's Talk questions; most answers will be spoken, not written. Your Turn is the kid-sized part of today's practice, and drawing always counts. Sammy's joke sits at the bottom, and across the page is something just for fun.

3. Read With Me, then My Thank-You (My Gift on giving days). The short story is for your child to read with you. It uses only the sounds a beginning reader has met so far, and it gets a little harder every few days. Friends' pictures stand in for their names. Point to each word as your child reads, and let them draw the story in the box. On the facing page, your child traces the day's sentence and fills in the blank. Below it is the day's themed activity.

Every week has the same shape. Days 1 to 3 notice a gift we got: from someone at home (a gold ornament), someone outside our home (a red one), and something nobody made (a white one). Day 4 celebrates. Days 5 to 7 give it away: our time, our things, and our words. In Love week the ornaments are stars.

Safety first. Pages that use scissors, candles, glass jars, or food need a grown-up nearby. Check ingredients for allergies before any food activity.

No hurry. If a page doesn't fit today, skip it. Nothing later depends on finishing it. No Hurry = No Worry.

Each week starts with a map. Each day, your child finds and colors the stone with that day's number, where that day's story happens. On the last day of the week, count the ladybugs you found hiding in that week's pictures in the Wanderful Woods storybook (The Overflow Adventure).

Answers for the jokes, mazes, I Spy, Feelings Match, story order, spot the difference, and hidden pictures are at the back of the book.

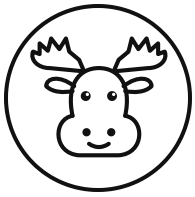
THE MONTH AT A GLANCE (DAY 3 IS ALWAYS: NOBODY MADE _____. IT IS A GIFT!)

Generosity December 1 to 7	Thank you, _____, for giving to me.
Hope December 8 to 14	Thank you, _____, for helping me keep going.
Peace December 15 to 21	Thank you, _____, for making things right.
Joy December 22 to 28	Thank you, _____, for making me so glad.
Love December 29 to January 4	Thank you, _____, for doing a hard thing for me.

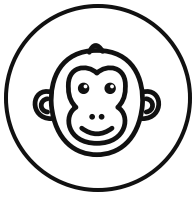
Advent Overflow December Activity Book: A Kids' Companion for The Overflow Adventure in Wanderful Woods. Copyright © 2026 Andrew Eoff. All rights reserved. Part of Advent Overflow. 2026 Edition. Andrew Eoff created the Wanderful Woods world, its characters and the idea behind every story and activity, and directed each one. The stories and activities were written with the help of an AI writing assistant, and the pictures were made with the help of an AI image generator. Movie titles named in this book belong to their owners; this book is not affiliated with or endorsed by them. The text is set in the Fraunces, Nunito Sans and Andika typefaces.
AdventOverflow.com

☆ Meet the Friends

In the Read With Me stories, a friend's picture means you say their name. Point and say each one!



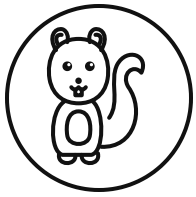
Mr. Moose



Mr. Monkey



Ricky Raccoon



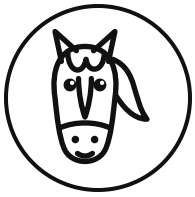
Sammy Squirrel



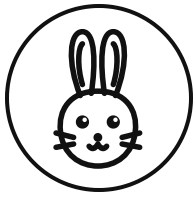
Bruno Bear



Dottie Dog



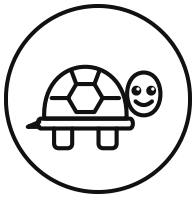
Hazel Horse



Benji Bunny



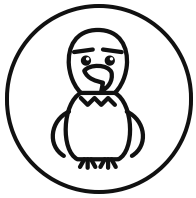
Shiloh Sheep



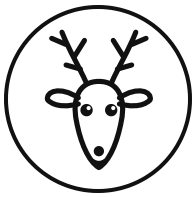
Tessie Turtle



Orion Owl



Everest Eagle



the Silent Stag



Look for ladybugs hiding in the color pictures of your Wanderful Woods storybook. Count them!

↑ Draw yourself here. You are a friend in the Woods too!

My name is _____

♡ How It Works (for grown-ups)

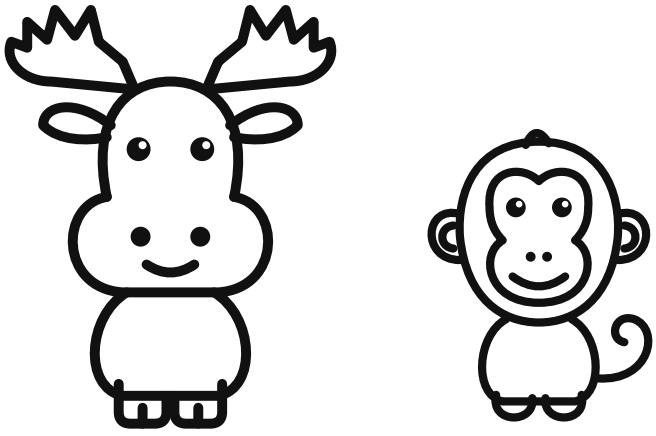
The Giving Tree. On November 30, the paper trunk is cut down to a stump. In December it grows back as an evergreen: a new green paper layer each week, from Generosity to Joy.

Every week has the same shape. On Days 1 to 3, everyone notices a gift and writes it on a paper ornament: gold for each person in your house, red for someone outside it, and white for a good gift no person made. Day 4 is a celebration day. Days 5 to 7 give it away: your time, your things and your words.

Celebration days. On the evenings of December 4, 11 and 18, on Christmas morning and on New Year's Day, your family lights one more candle and reads the gold ornaments by its light. On those days, this book adds two Celebrate pages at the end of the day, so your child has their own part.

Love week. On December 29, a big Star of Agape goes on top of the tree, and that week's ornaments are paper stars.

When this book says... "your family's ornaments," "your family's stars" or "the Opening" (reading the ornaments together), this is what it means. If your family does it a little differently, use your way.



☆ Our December

Every week in December goes like this. (In the last week, the ornaments are stars!)

1	Notice a gift from someone at home	gold
2	Notice a gift from someone outside your home	red
3	Notice a gift nobody made	white
4	Celebrate! Light a candle and read your ornaments	
5	Give your time	
6	Give your things	
7	Give your words	

DRAW YOUR FAMILY'S ORNAMENTS







COLOR THE TITLE!

Generosity

Who gave up something so I could have something good?

This week we notice who gave to us. Then we give, too: our time, our things, and our words.

THIS WEEK'S STORIES

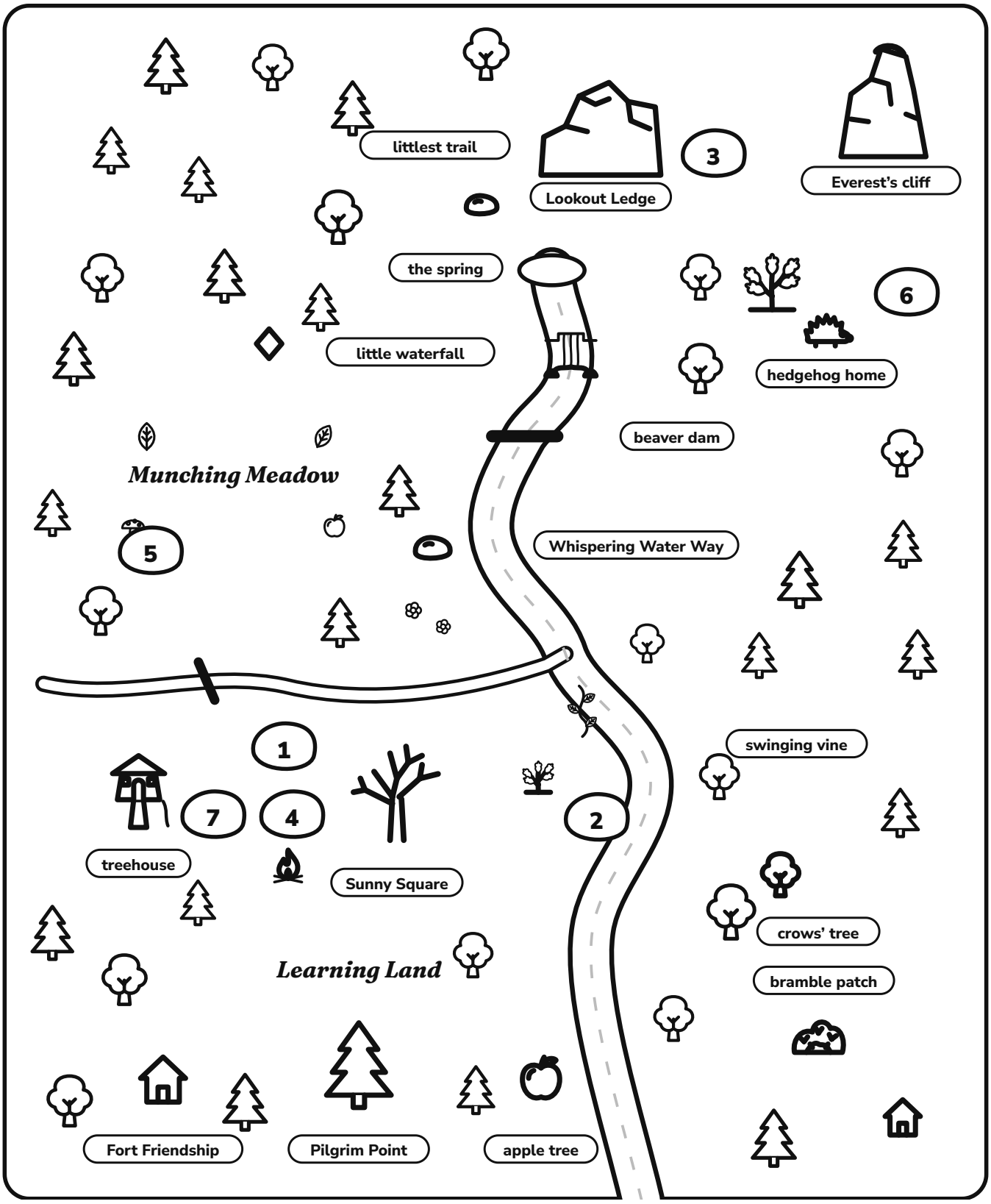
1. **Tuesday, Dec. 1:** The Candle That Got Smaller
2. **Wednesday, Dec. 2:** Sammy's Forgotten Acorns
3. **Thursday, Dec. 3:** The Eagle Who Came Down
4. **Friday, Dec. 4:** Thanks First
5. **Saturday, Dec. 5:** The Best Sledding Day
6. **Sunday, Dec. 6 (St. Nicholas Day):** It's a Secret!
7. **Monday, Dec. 7:** Not a Secret

THIS WEEK'S THANK-YOU:

Thank you, _____, for giving to me.
Then we give: time, things, and words.

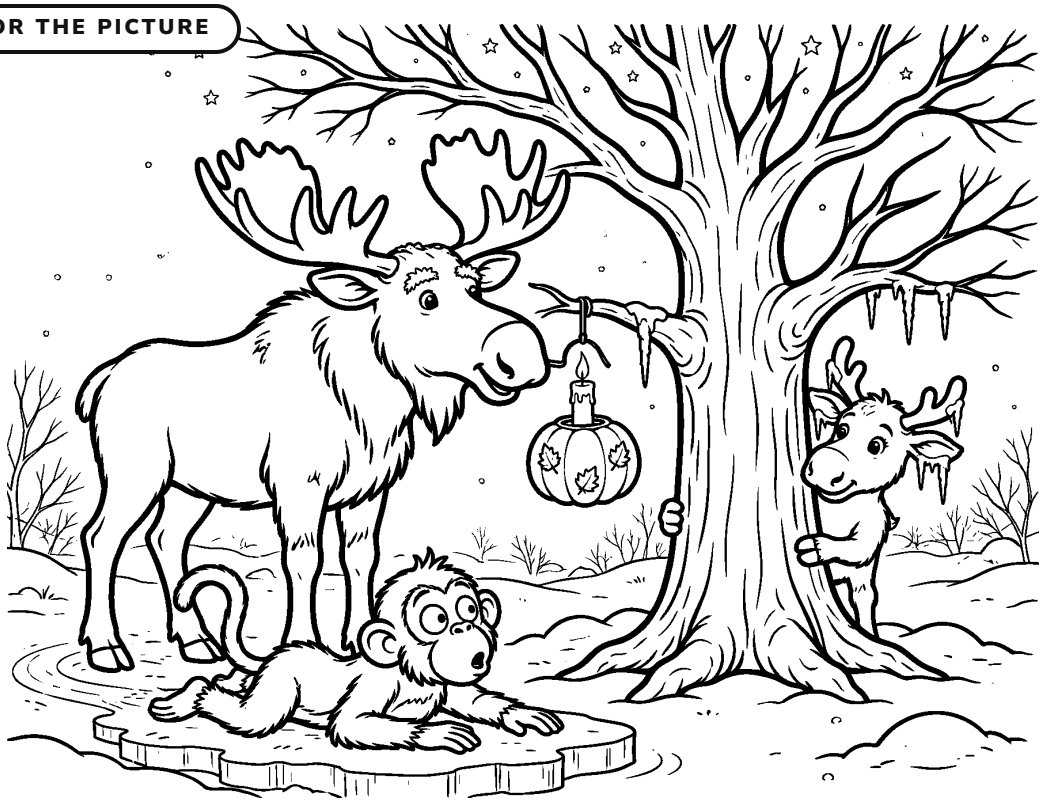
Where We'll Go This Week

Each day, find the stone with that day's number and color it. It shows where the day's story happens!



The Candle That Got Smaller

COLOR THE PICTURE



December came to Wanderful Woods with a fresh coat of snow. It sat on every branch like frosting, and when the wind blew, little puffs of it slid off the treetops, *fffsh*, and sparkled all the way down.

In the middle of Sunny Square sat the Swap pile, neat and tall. Beside it, stuck in the snow, was Ricky's new piece of bark. At the top it said WHO NEEDS THEM? Underneath, it didn't say anything at all.

Mr. Monkey couldn't wait. "I know who needs them!" he said. "Everybody!"

He grabbed a present off the pile and gave it to Bruno. He grabbed another one and gave it to Dottie. He gave one to Hazel and one to Shiloh, as fast as he could.

Bruno tore his open. Inside was a honeycomb, wrapped in a leaf. He stared at it. "This is MY honeycomb," he said. "I wrapped this. I gave this." He took a big bite. "I love it."

Dottie opened hers. It was a stick. Her own stick, the one she ran all over the woods to make bigger.

Hazel opened hers. Inside, wrapped very carefully in a big leaf, was a flat, round piece of ice. "My puddle!" she said. "It froze!"

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, with honey on his nose.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Everybody got their own present back!"

Ricky looked at all of them, holding their own presents. "That's a swap again," he said. "Backward."

Mr. Moose looked at Ricky's list. "Who needs them," he said slowly. "Bruno doesn't need his own honey."

"I kind of do," said Bruno.

But he wrapped it back up, mostly, and put it back on the pile. So did everybody else.

"We'll find out who really needs them," said Ricky. "And then we'll give them. And nobody will even know it was us."

That's when Mr. Moose noticed the lantern.

It was still glowing on the lowest branch of the Wishing Tree, the same as it had every night since the Thankful Feast. Its little leaf-shaped lights flickered gold on the snow. Mr. Moose looked at it for a long time.

"Mr. Monkey," he said. "A candle doesn't last a whole week."

"So?"

"So somebody puts a new one in. Every morning. Before anybody's awake."

Mr. Monkey's eyes went wide. "Who?"

"Let's find out," said Mr. Moose.

So that night, Mr. Monkey slept over at the Moose home under the big maple. It was a strange, dark night inside. There was no candle on the table, and no candle by the bed. Mama Moose told the bedtime story by moonlight, with the snow glowing blue in the window.

"Mama," whispered Mr. Moose, "where are our candles?"

"We're using them for something," said Mama Moose, and she kissed him on the nose.

Long before the sun came up, Mr. Monkey poked Mr. Moose. "Now," he whispered.

They crept out the door into the cold, dark morning. Mr. Moose tiptoed as carefully as a moose can tiptoe. But icicles were hanging all along the edge of the roof, and his antlers went right through them. *Ting-ting-ting-ting-tingle-ting.* It sounded like a whole row of tiny bells.

Mr. Monkey stopped. "Mr. Moose. You're ringing."

"I'm trying not to," whispered Mr. Moose, and the icicles went *ting-tingle-ting* again.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, into his hands. "You're a jingle-jangle moose!"

Then Mr. Monkey stepped onto a patch of ice. His feet went one way. His tail went the other way. And he slid on his tummy all the way across Sunny Square, *shhhhhhhhooop*, spinning slowly around, until he bumped to a stop right at the bottom of the Wishing Tree, between two very big, very hairy legs.

He looked up.

It was Daddy Moose.

Daddy Moose was standing in the snow in the dark, with frost on his eyebrows and little clouds puffing out of his nose. In his mouth was a candle. He reached up, very carefully, opened the little squash lantern, and put the new candle in, right next to the old one. Then he lit it from the last flicker of the old one, just before it went out.

He looked down. "Good morning, Mr. Monkey," he said around the candle.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, coming slowly across the ice behind. Then he saw what his daddy was holding, and he stopped laughing.

"Daddy," he said. "Is that our candle?"

"It's the last one," said Daddy Moose.

"Every morning?"

"Every morning."

Daddy Moose held out the old candle. It wasn't really a candle anymore. It was just a little puddle of wax with a tiny black wick in the middle, all melted down flat.

Mr. Moose looked at it for a long time. Yesterday morning it had been a whole candle, tall and smooth. Now there was hardly anything left. All night long, all that light on the snow had come out of this candle. And it couldn't make the light and stay big, too.

"It got smaller," said Mr. Moose softly. "It has to melt to make the light."

Mr. Monkey's chest went tight. He thought about Daddy Moose coming out here every single morning in the cold and the dark, while everybody else was asleep. He thought about the Moose home last night, with no candle on the table. Daddy Moose had given away his sleep. He had given away the warm. And he had given away his own family's light, so the lantern could keep shining. And nobody even knew.

"Mr. Moose," whispered Mr. Monkey. "Your house is dark. Because of the lantern."

Mr. Moose was thinking. They couldn't tell Daddy to stop. They'd learned that with the blanket: when somebody gives you something, giving it back stops them from giving. But they could make sure he knew they saw.

"We say thank you," said Mr. Moose. "And then we give him some light back."

When the sun came up, Mama Moose had something waiting: a little green pine tree in a pot, set right by the door. "In December," she said, "our thank-yous go on a green tree. Thank-you circles. Paint who it's for on the front. And on the back, paint what they gave you, and what it cost them."

Mr. Moose painted a round gold circle of birch bark. On the front, Daddy's face, with frost on his eyebrows. On the back, a big moose in the dark snow, with a candle in his mouth and shiver lines all around him, and a dark little house behind him.

Mr. Monkey painted one for Mama Monkey, for the morning she let him lick the whole honey spoon, even though she had been saving that honey for her tea. They hung them on the little pine with the painted side to the trunk.

Then they went to find Bruno.

"Bruno," said Mr. Monkey. "We need some honeycomb wax."

Bruno looked at his honeycomb. He had just unwrapped it again. He looked at it for a long, long time. Then he broke off a big piece of wax. "That's a lot of wax," he said. "And not a lot of honey."

Mama Moose rolled the wax into a fat new candle. "And when this one burns low," she said, "I'll roll the next one and light it from this one. Then the light never has to start over." Mr. Moose held it steady. And Mr. Monkey lit a twig from the squash lantern and, very carefully, lit the candle.

They carried it inside and set it in the middle of the Moose home's table.

When Daddy Moose came in from the cold, the whole house was glowing gold. He stopped in the doorway. He looked at the candle. Then he looked at the little pine tree by the door, where a gold circle with his own frosty face on it was hanging.

He didn't peek. He just smiled, slowly, all the way.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Everybody got their own present back, and Hazel got a frozen puddle. Mr. Moose rang the icicles like bells. I slid across the ice and found Daddy Moose with a candle in his mouth. The candle melted to make the light. And now the Moose house has light again."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And under the big maple, the first home lit from the little lantern glowed warm and gold, while the snow outside turned pink with morning.

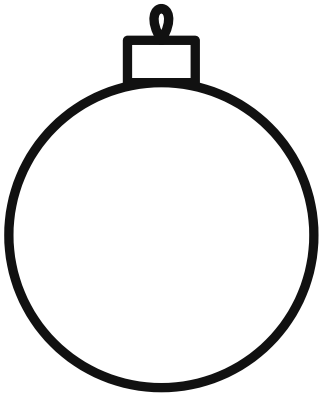
Let's Talk

1. Every morning, Daddy Moose put the family's last candle in the lantern. Why does a candle have to get smaller to make light?
2. Who in our house gave something that cost them, so you could have something good?

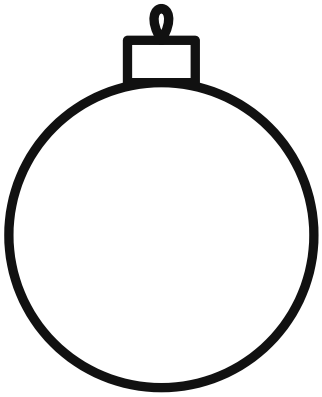
Your Turn

Make a gold ornament for someone in our house who gave you something. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



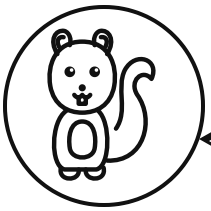
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is gold. Color it yellow or gold when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do you call a frozen puppy?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

u p p

CLUE



A ___ ___ ___-sicle!

Draw Bruno Bear!

The gray parts are new. Draw them in!

1



2



3



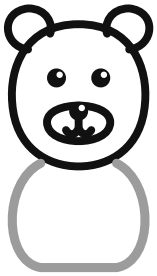
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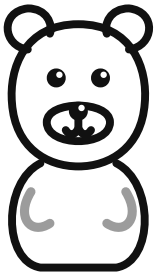
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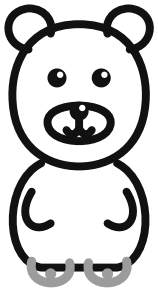
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7



8



MY BRUNO BEAR

Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Dad and the Lamp

 and  get up. It is not yet sun-up.

Dad is at the lamp. He sets wax in it.

The lamp is lit!

 sees the wax. It is the last wax!

“Dad, it is the last wax!” said  .

“It is a gift,” said Dad.

 hugs Dad. The lamp is lit.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey

For grown-ups: New sounds: j, y (as in yes), and x.

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

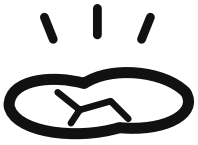
Trace the dark word, then the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

for giving to me.

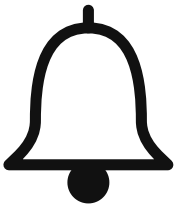
☆ Would You Rather?

Circle your pick in each row. Tell why!



slide across the ice on your tummy

OR



ring icicles like bells with your antlers

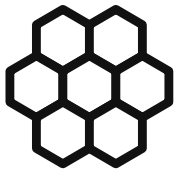


carry a lantern through the snow

OR



hang gold circles on a little pine



eat a whole honeycomb

OR



drink a giant mug of cocoa

Sammy's Forgotten Acorns

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sun came out over Wanderful Woods, and all the snow began to sparkle and drip. Little lumps of it fell off the branches, *plop, plop, flumph*, and every pine needle had a tiny drop of water on the end, shining like a bead.

Sammy came zipping down a tree so fast that she sent a shower of snow onto Bruno's head.

"I know what I'm giving!" she said. "For Ricky's list! For whoever needs it! I have the BIGGEST acorn pile in the whole woods! Way up in my nook! I've been saving them all fall! Hundreds! Thousands! A WHOLE BUNCH!"

And she zipped straight back up the tree to get them.

Everybody waited. Then they heard her from the top of the tree.

"Oh no."

Sammy came back down much slower this time. She was holding her nose with one paw, and in the other paw was an acorn. It was soft. It was squishy. It was covered in fuzzy green stuff.

"PEE-YOO," said Sammy.

Bruno leaned in and sniffed it. "Is that cheese?"

"Haw haw haw," he added, and then he sniffed it again and made a face. "It's not cheese."

"They're ALL like that," said Sammy. Her tail drooped all the way down to the snow. "Every single one. I saved them and saved them and saved them, and now nobody can eat them."

Then her ears popped up. "Wait! The tiny oak! The one in Sunny Square! It grew from an acorn I forgot! So maybe I have more trees! Baby ones! I'll find them all and give THEM!"

So Sammy went hunting for baby oaks. Every little bump in the snow, she poked with her nose. The first bump was a rock. The second bump was a pinecone. The third bump was very big and very round, and when Sammy poked it, it went, "Hrrmph."

It was Bruno. While everybody was talking, he had lain down for a little nap, and so much snow had dripped off the branches onto him that he had turned into a bump.

Bruno sat up with a snow hat on his head. "Am I a tree?"

"Haw haw haw," he added. "I'm not a tree."

Sammy poked the next bump, and up popped Dottie, with snow on her nose and a long white bone in her mouth. "I buried this in the summer!" she said. "And I FOUND it! Ha! Ha!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Sammy found a Bruno and a bone!"

But there were no more baby oaks in Sunny Square. Just the one, in its ring of stones. Sammy sat down in the

snow beside it and stopped zipping. For Sammy, that was the saddest thing anybody had ever seen.

"Just one," she said. "I buried hundreds, and I only made one tree. And the ones I kept are all fuzzy." She looked at the squishy acorn in her paw. "I don't have anything to give."

Mr. Monkey felt it right in his chest. Sammy was always zipping, always joking, always fast. And now she was just sitting there, small and still. He sat down right beside her.

Mr. Moose looked at the tiny oak. Then he looked up, past it, at the big oaks all around the edge of Sunny Square, tall and old, with snow on every branch. He thought about it for a long time. Every big oak was a little oak once. And every little oak was an acorn once. And an acorn can't walk.

"Sammy," he said slowly. "Where do you zip?"

"Everywhere," said Sammy. "Up the trees, down the trees, to the river, to the meadow, to Learning Land, back again."

"Come with me," said Mr. Moose. "I think I know where your acorns went."

So they went, all of them, following Sammy's zipping paths through the woods.

Along the path to the river there was a whole row of little oaks poking up through the snow, some only as tall as Benji's ears, some taller than Mr. Monkey. By the river bend, there was a young oak with a branch just right for climbing. At Fort Friendship, the oak that held up one whole side of the lookout. And over Benji's burrow, the big old oak with its roots wrapped around his door.

Everywhere Sammy zipped, there were oaks.

Sammy stood very still. "Those are… mine?"

Tessie was sitting under the old oak by the clover patch, sunning herself in the snow. She looked up slowly at all the branches. "Every oak in Wanderful Woods," she said, "started as an acorn that some squirrel forgot. This one was here… before I was."

Benji came out of his burrow and looked up at the big oak over his door. Then he looked at Sammy. "I've lived under this tree my whole life," he said softly. "It keeps the snow off my door. I never knew who to thank."

Sammy's mouth opened. Nothing came out. That had never happened to Sammy before.

Mr. Monkey looked from the squishy acorn in Sammy's paw to the big old oak, and back again. "The ones you kept went yucky," he said. "And the ones you forgot turned into trees."

"I didn't even know I gave them," whispered Sammy.

"Nobody knew," said Mr. Moose. "Not even you."

Then Sammy's ears shot straight up. She checked her cheeks. She still had three good acorns tucked in there from the morning, shiny and brown.

"I'm going to give these," she said. "Right now. While they're good. To the birds by the meadow. They can't find anything under all this snow."

"And the rest?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Sammy thought about it. Then she grinned. "I'll forget them," she said. "On purpose."

They gathered acorns from under the big old oaks, the good ones that had fallen in the fall, and carried them in baskets all around Sunny Square. Mr. Moose dug little holes with his hoof. Mr. Monkey dropped an acorn in each one. And Sammy patted the snow back over the top.

"Now I'm forgetting," said Sammy, squeezing her eyes shut. "I'm forgetting… I'm forgetting…" She opened one eye. "I still remember!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!" laughed Sammy. "I'll forget by lunch!"

That afternoon, while Sammy was off at the meadow with her three good acorns for the birds, everybody else sat down by the little green pine at the Moose home's door. Mama Moose brought out red paint this time.

"These are for somebody outside your own home," she said. "Somebody who gave you something good."

Benji painted Sammy's face on the front of his red circle, with her big fluffy tail. On the back, he painted the big old oak over his burrow, with snow sliding off its branches and a little dry bunny door underneath.

Bruno painted Sammy too, and on the back, a big bear asleep in the shade of an oak. Mr. Monkey painted the climbing oak by the river, with a monkey upside down in it. And Mr. Moose painted a whole row of little oaks poking up through the snow, all the way down the path.

They hung them on the little pine, back side to the trunk, faces out, so that Sammy's face looked out from the tree four times.

When Sammy came zipping back and saw them, she stopped so fast that she skidded.

"That's me," she said. "That's me, and me, and me, and me."

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Sammy's acorns turned fuzzy, and Bruno thought they were cheese. Sammy poked every bump in the snow and found Bruno and Dottie's bone. Then we followed Sammy's paths and found oak trees everywhere. And now Sammy is forgetting acorns on purpose."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And all around Sunny Square, under the snow, a whole bunch of forgotten acorns lay snug in the dark, waiting for spring.

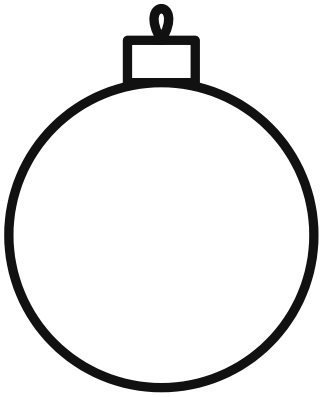
Let's Talk

1. The acorns Sammy kept went fuzzy. What happened to the acorns she forgot?
2. Who outside our house gave you something good, maybe without even knowing it?

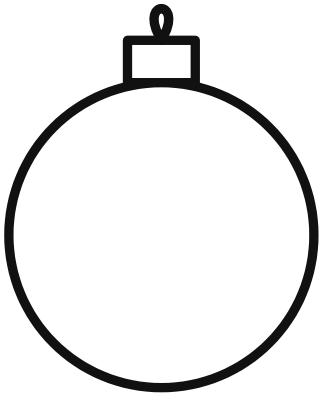
Your Turn

Make a red ornament for someone outside our house who gave you something good. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



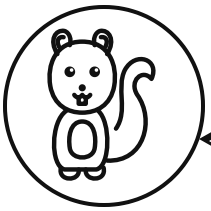
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is red. Color it red when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What is a squirrel's favorite ballet?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

n **t** **u**

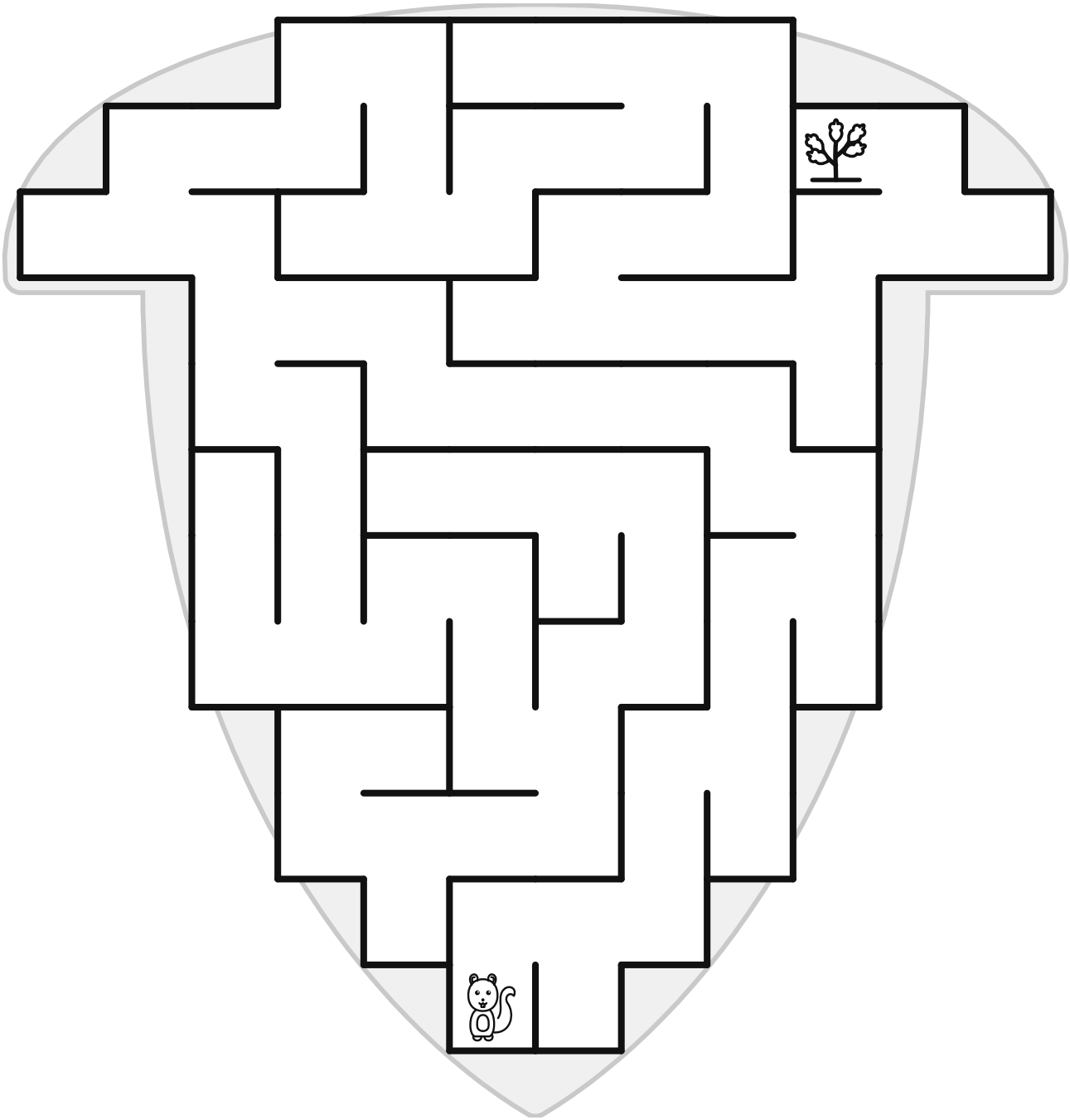
CLUE



The ___ ___ ___ cracker!

☆ Where Did the Acorns Go?

Help Sammy zip to the oak tree that grew from an acorn she forgot. Start at Sammy Squirrel.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Hid Nuts

hid *a* nut. hid six nuts!

Did get the nuts? did not.

The nuts *sat* in the mud. The sun got hot.

Up, up, up! The nuts get big, big, big!

sits on top. is glad!

PICTURE WORDS Sammy

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

Trace the dark word, then the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

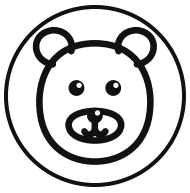
for giving to me.

♡ Feelings Match

How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



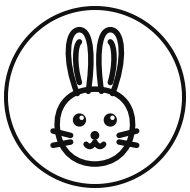
Sammy, when her saved acorns were all fuzzy



Bruno, waking up as a snowy bump



Dottie, finding the bone she buried in the summer



Benji, finding out who to thank for his oak



excited



sleepy



happy



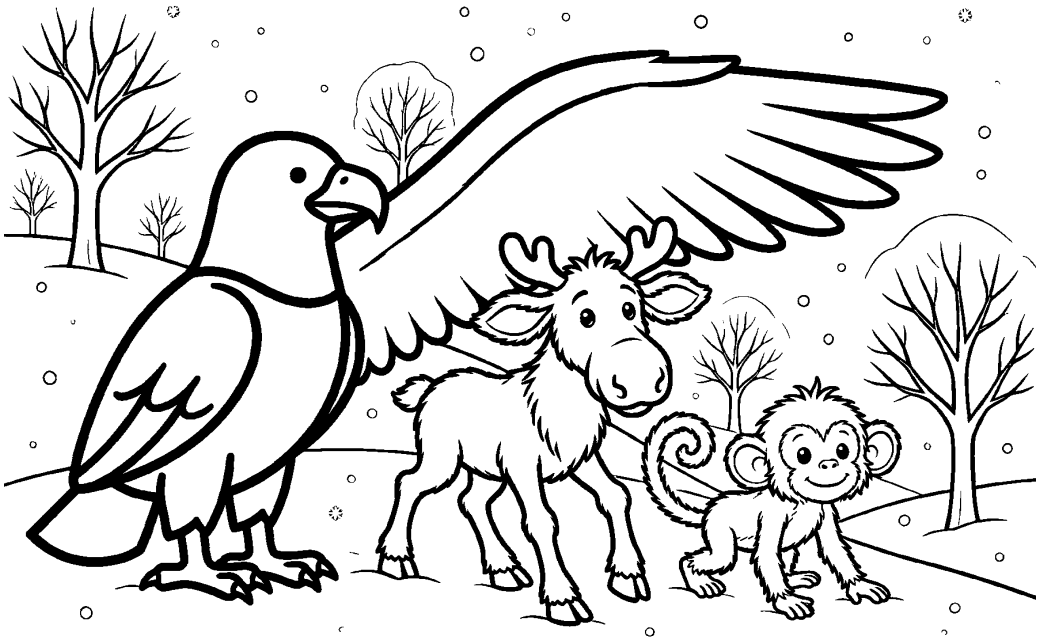
angry



sad

The Eagle Who Came Down

COLOR THE PICTURE



The afternoon was gray and soft and still. Big, slow snowflakes were drifting down over Wanderful Woods, so fat and so lazy that Mr. Monkey could catch one on each finger.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Where are we going?"

"Up the hill," said Mr. Moose. "Just a little way. I want to see the top of Everest's cliff."

Mr. Monkey knew why. Ever since the day Everest Eagle had carried the two leaves with no names all the way up to the top, Mr. Moose kept looking up at that cliff. He looked at it at breakfast. He looked at it at lunch. It was his wish, the highest place in the whole woods.

So they climbed. Past the edge of Sunny Square. Past the last of the oaks. Up the long white hill toward Lookout Ledge, where the snow was deep and fresh and nobody had stepped in it yet.

It was the best snow they had ever seen.

Mr. Monkey flopped down on his back and swished his arms and legs and tail, and when he stood up, there was a perfect snow monkey in the snow, tail and all. Mr. Moose tried to make a snow moose, but he was so heavy that he just sank, *crumff*, and when he stood up, there was a big moose-shaped hole.

Then they slid. They slid down a little slope on their bottoms, *whoooosh*, and climbed back up and slid again, and the snow kept falling on Mr. Moose's antlers, and falling, and falling, until there was a great big pile of snow balanced on top of them, taller than Mr. Monkey.

"Mr. Moose," said Mr. Monkey. "You're wearing a snow hat."

Mr. Moose looked up, very carefully, without moving his head. "Is it big?"

"It's the biggest hat in the whole woods."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, and the snow hat wobbled, but it stayed.

Then the wind came.

It came all at once, cold and strong, and the slow, lazy snowflakes turned into fast, swirly ones. They blew sideways. They blew in circles. Soon, everywhere Mr. Moose looked, it was all white: white sky, white ground, white air in between. He couldn't see the hill. He couldn't see the trees. He turned around to look for the little gold light of the lantern in Sunny Square, the one that was always there.

It was gone. Everything was white.

"Mr. Monkey," said Mr. Moose. His voice was very quiet. "Which way is home?"

Mr. Monkey looked. He couldn't tell either. Their footprints were already filling up with snow.

Mr. Moose started to worry. What if they went the wrong way? What if they went down the wrong side of the hill? What if it got dark? His legs started to feel shaky,

the way they did when something was new and he didn't know what would happen.

Mr. Monkey could see it. He could see the worry all over Mr. Moose's face, and it made his own tummy hurt. He scooted in close, right up against Mr. Moose's leg, so Mr. Moose would know he was there.

"We're together," he said. "That's one thing."

Mr. Moose leaned down against him. That helped a little. And then he made himself think. Who could see the way home? Somebody who could see the whole woods at once. Somebody who lived up high.

"Everest," said Mr. Moose. "Everest can see everything. Maybe if we call him, he'll show us which way to go. He could drop a feather. Or call down. Or point."

So they called. "EVEREST!" shouted Mr. Monkey. Mr. Moose tried to shout too, but he was a soft-spoken moose, and it came out more like a very loud whisper. "Everest?"

The wind blew. The snow swirled.

Then, out of all that white, something enormous came down.

Everest Eagle didn't drop a feather. He didn't call down from the sky. He didn't point. He landed. Right there, in the deep snow, beside them, so close that the wind from his wings blew the whole snow hat off Mr. Moose's antlers, *floomph*, all at once, right on top of Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Monkey stood there, white from his ears to his toes, with just two eyes blinking out.

"Hee hee hee!" he went, and he shook himself like a wet dog, and the snow flew everywhere.

Everest looked at them both with his great golden eyes. Then he did something nobody in Wanderful Woods had ever seen him do. He folded his huge wings. And he walked.

He walked down the hill beside them, one big, slow step at a time, in the deep snow, where any eagle could have flown home in a minute. When the wind blew hardest, he opened one great wing and held it over them both, like a roof, and the snow hit the feathers instead of them. Underneath it was quiet and warm and dark brown, and it smelled like sky.

The feathers tickled Mr. Monkey's nose. He tried not to. He tried very hard. "Ah... ah... ah... CHOOMPF!"

Everest looked down at him under his wing. And for just a moment, one golden eye seemed to crinkle.

"Ha-ha-ha," whispered Mr. Moose. "Bless you."

Everest didn't hurry them. When Mr. Moose's long legs got stuck in a deep drift, Everest stopped and waited. When Mr. Monkey got tired, Everest bent his wing a little lower, so Mr. Monkey could hold on to a feather. Step by step. All the way down. He never once left them.

And then, through the swirling white, a little gold light appeared. Then another. Then all the leaf-shaped lights of the squash lantern, flickering on the Wishing Tree. Sunny Square.

They were home.

Everest stepped out from over them and looked at them both, one more time. Then he opened his wings, and with three great beats, *whumm, whumm, whumm*, he rose up into the snow and was gone.

Mr. Moose stood in Sunny Square for a long time, looking up at where he went.

"He could have just pointed," he said.

"He could have dropped a feather," said Mr. Monkey.

"But he came himself," said Mr. Moose. "He came all the way down. And he walked."

Mr. Monkey thought about how it felt under that wing. Warm. Quiet. Not scared at all. A feather would have shown them the way. But it wouldn't have held the wind off.

"He was the present," said Mr. Monkey.

Then the wind stopped. The snow stopped. And the clouds slid away, and over Wanderful Woods came out more stars than Mr. Monkey had ever seen in his life. Thousands of them. Little white sparkles from one side of the sky to the other, bright and cold and perfectly still.

So that night, by the little green pine at the Moose home's door, Mama Moose brought out white paint.

"These are for the gifts nobody can hold," she said. "The ones that come from farther away than anybody can reach."

Mr. Moose painted a white circle. On the back, he painted the night sky full of stars, and underneath it, two little friends under a great big brown wing. He left the front empty, the same as the sunrise leaf and the spring leaf, because he didn't know whose name to paint.

Mr. Monkey painted one too: a whole sky of white snowflakes and stars, every one of them a little dot, and there were so many dots that it took him all the way until bedtime.

They hung them on the little pine with the painted side to the trunk. Now the tree had gold, and red, and white.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "I made a snow monkey, and Mr. Moose made a snow hole. Mr. Moose wore the biggest snow hat in the woods, and then it landed on me. We got lost in the white. And Everest didn't point. He came down and walked us home under his wing, and I sneezed on his feathers."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And high on the top of the highest cliff, under all those stars, a great eagle settled down beside two small leaves in the snow.

Let's Talk

1. Everest lives in the highest place in the woods. Why did he come all the way down?
2. What good gift came to you that nobody could make? Snow? Stars? A brand-new day?

Your Turn

Make a white ornament for a gift nobody made. Front: what it is. Back: draw it.

FRONT: WHAT IT IS



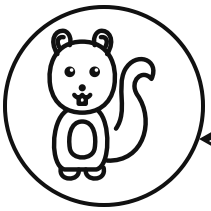
BACK: DRAW IT



This one stays white. When you are done, trace its edge with a gray crayon.

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What is a bunny's favorite kind of music?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

i h p

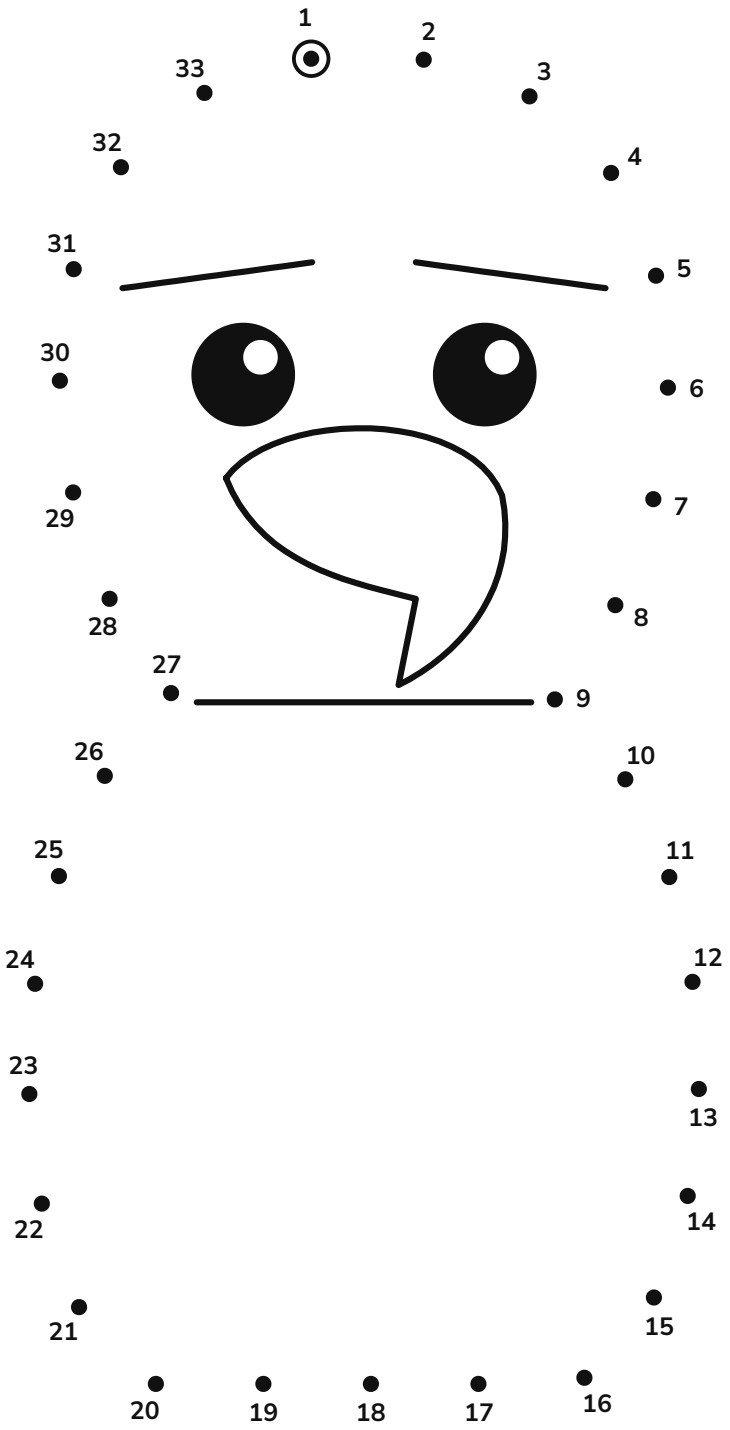
CLUE



___ ___ ___-hop!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find the friend who came all the way down. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 33. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

 Is Big

The wind is fast.  and  are lost!

 can not see.  can not see.

Flap!  lands.

 is big, big, big!

 and  get in next to  . It is snug.

Step, step, step.  gets  and  to Mom and Dad.

PICTURE WORDS  Everest  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey



For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: are.

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

Trace the dark word, then the light words. What good gift did nobody make? Write it or draw it on the line.

Nobody made

It is a gift

👁 Light Hunt

Light is a gift. Find things that give light. Check each one!



a lamp ☐



sun coming in a window ☐



a candle (just look!) ☐



something shiny ☐



the moon or a star outside ☐



a fire in a fireplace (just look!) ☐

Thanks First

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sky over Sunny Square was dark blue and full of stars, and the snow crunched and squeaked under everybody's feet as they came. The fire crackled inside its sparkly gravel ring, and the squash lantern glowed on the Wishing Tree, and next to the Moose home's door, the little green pine was covered in painted circles, gold and red and white, all turned to the trunk.

Ricky stood up on a stump with his old bark roll. The one with all the Swap rules on it.

"Everybody," he announced. "We are going to give the Swap pile away. The other way. Not a swap. Just giving. So I need new rules."

"Oh no," whispered Mr. Monkey.

"But first," said Ricky, "I'm getting rid of the old ones."

He unrolled the bark and read the first one out loud. "Rule two. All the presents have to be the same size." He took a lump of charcoal from the fire and scratched it out. *Skritch.*

"Rule nine. No presents that are alive." *Skritch.*

"Rule fifteen. No presents that are Bruno." *Skritch.*

Bruno sat up very straight. "So now I CAN be a present?"

"I guess so," said Ricky.

Bruno grabbed the biggest leaf he could find, wrapped it around his tummy, tied a vine around himself in a big floppy bow, and sat down in front of Mama Monkey.

"For you," he said.

Mama Monkey looked at the big bear in a bow. "Bruno," she said, "you're just what I wanted."

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno.

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" went Hazel.

Ricky kept going. *Skritch. Skritch. Skritch.* Rule twenty-two, no peeking. Rule thirty-five, all presents wrapped. Rule thirty-six, the size of a present is how far it came. He scratched out every single one, all the way down the bark, until there was nothing left but a long row of black scratches.

Then he picked up his brand-new bark, the one that said WHO NEEDS THEM? at the top. He held the charcoal over it. He thought. He thought some more.

"I don't know what rule comes first," he said.

Mr. Monkey and Mr. Moose looked at each other. Mr. Monkey could see that Ricky really wanted to get it right this time, and that he didn't know how.

Mr. Moose was thinking about Thanksgiving. The Swap had fallen down, and nobody had minded. And what everybody had talked about, all night, was the leaves. The thank-you leaves had come first. And then, after, everybody wanted to give.

"Ricky," said Mr. Moose. "What did we do at the Feast, right before the Swap?"

Ricky thought. "We opened the leaves."

"And after the leaves?"

"We wanted to give the lantern away," said Mr. Monkey.

"And the presents."

Ricky looked down at his bark for a long time. Then he wrote one rule, in big letters, right under WHO NEEDS THEM?

THANKS FIRST.

He looked at it. He didn't add any more.

"That's all?" asked Shiloh.

"That's all," said Ricky. "One rule."

So they started the way the rule said. Thanks first.

Mama Moose brought out a tall new candle and set it on a flat stone by the fire, where everybody could see it. "This is the first one," she said. "The first light of December. We get it from the lantern, and then we give it away."

Mr. Monkey took a little twig, held it to the lantern, and carried the tiny flame across the snow with both hands, very slowly, so it wouldn't go out. He touched it to the new candle. It caught. And now there were two lights in Sunny Square, the little lantern and the tall new candle, side by side.

"Now," said Mama Moose, "everybody find the gold circles with your own face on them."

So everybody went to the little green pine. Daddy Moose found his, with his frosty face on the front. Mama Monkey found hers. They took them down and turned them over, and sat by the candle, and looked.

Daddy Moose looked at the back of his for a long time: the big moose in the dark snow with a candle in his mouth, and the little dark house behind him. Then he looked at Mr. Moose and nodded, just once, slowly, the way he did when something really mattered.

Mama Monkey saw herself handing a little monkey a big, dripping honey spoon. "You remembered that?" she said, laughing, and she pulled Mr. Monkey into her lap and kissed the top of his head.

Then Sammy zipped up the little pine and found four red circles with her own face on them. She turned every one over, hanging upside down by her tail to read the backs. And for once in her whole life, Sammy stayed in one place for a long, long time.

Then Mr. Moose found one more gold circle on the little pine, with his own face on the front. He hadn't made it. He turned it over. On the back, somebody had painted a little moose in the dark, with icicles on his antlers, and a little monkey sliding across the ice beside him.

"From me," said Daddy Moose. "For coming out in the cold to see."

Mr. Moose held it against his chest for a long time.

Then Tessie cleared her throat, very slowly.

"When I was small," she said, "my grandmother told me a story. About somebody who had more than he needed."

Everybody scooted in close.

"One winter," said Tessie, "he heard about a family… who didn't have enough. Not enough food. Not enough to keep warm. So in the night… when everybody was asleep… he crept up to their door… and left a gift. And he went away… before anybody saw."

She stopped. She stopped for so long that Bruno, still wrapped up in his leaf and bow, fell asleep against Hazel. "*Hrrrrrrr-snoooo,*" went Bruno.

"Heh… heh… heh," went Tessie, very slowly. Then she went on.

"The next night… he did it again. And the next night… again. But on the third night… the papa of that family was waiting by the door. And he caught him."

Benji's ears stood straight up. "What did he say?"

"He said…" Tessie looked around at all of them. "'Please… don't tell anybody it was me.'"

"Did the papa tell?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Tessie thought about it for a long time. "Well," she said, "somebody did. Or I wouldn't know the story."

"Hee hee hee," went Mr. Monkey.

Ricky looked down at his list. He looked at the pile of presents. Then he looked at his new rule. THANKS FIRST.

"Then that's how we do it," said Ricky. "We give them at night. At people's doors. And nobody knows it's us."

"Who's going to get them?" asked Mr. Moose.

Everybody turned to look at Benji, because Benji had the best ears in the whole woods, and Benji had been listening all week.

"The hedgehogs," said Benji softly. "I heard the little ones coughing when we were there. And the old badger past the meadow. His roof caved in under all the snow. And the birds at Munching Meadow can't find anything to eat."

Ricky wrote it all down under THANKS FIRST.

"Tomorrow, we help the birds," said Mr. Moose. "And then, the night after, the doors."

"And the night after that?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"We'll figure it out," said Ricky. "Rule one first."

Then, because it was a Celebrate night, Ricky stood up on his stump one more time. "I have a joke," he said. "Why did the candle go to school? To get a little… brighter."

Nobody laughed. The candle flickered. Ricky looked very pleased.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey as everybody started home. "Ricky scratched out every single rule. Bruno wrapped himself up and gave himself to my Mama. I carried the light from the lantern to the new candle, and we opened the gold circles. Tessie told a story, and Bruno snored in the middle. And now Ricky has only one rule. Thanks first."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And in Sunny Square, the little lantern and the tall new candle burned side by side in the snow, two small lights where there used to be one.

Let's Talk

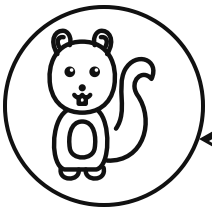
1. Ricky crossed out every old rule. What one new rule did he write?
2. Tonight your family hears about Nicholas and lights the first candle. Who do you think wrote you a gold ornament?

Your Turn

Tonight you'll hear about Nicholas, who gave gold in secret. Draw a secret gift you could give.

I could give _____ in secret.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What does a snowman put on his cake?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

o r t s f

CLUE



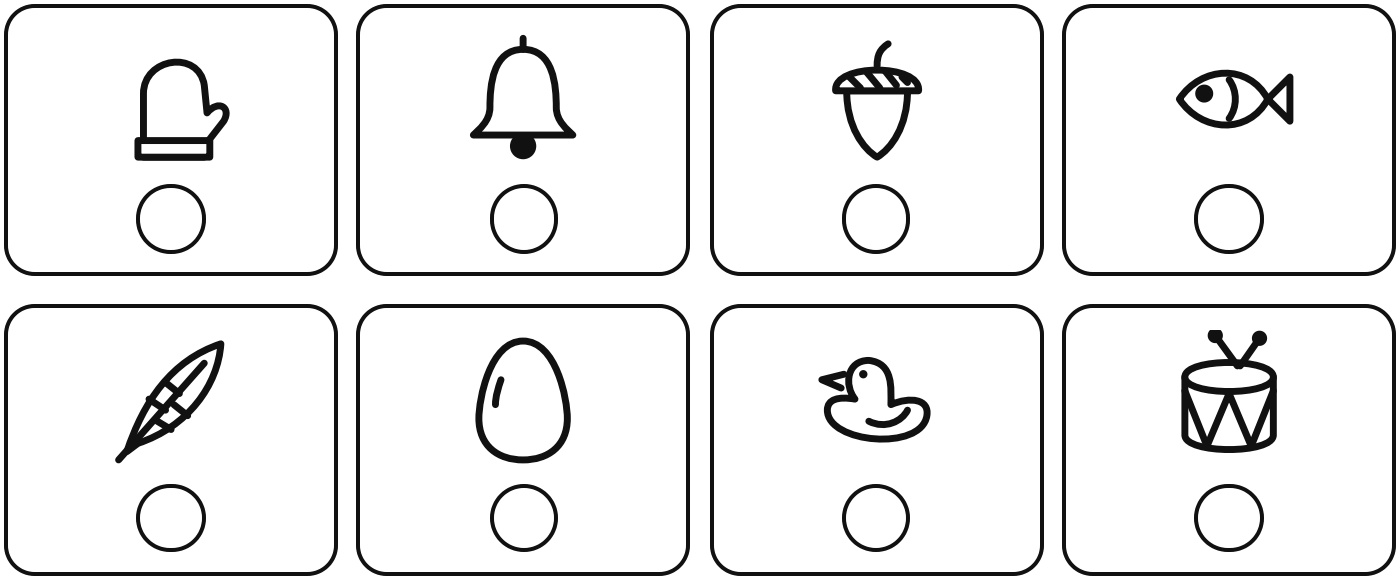
_____ing!

Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

 Is *a* Gift!

 gets in *a* big box.

 sets *a* top on the box.

Is it *a* gift? It is  !

“I *am a* gift to  ’s Mom!” said  .

 ’s Mom hugs the big box.

It is the best gift!

PICTURE WORDS  Bruno  Ricky  Mr. Monkey



Color a star each time you read it.

My Thank-You

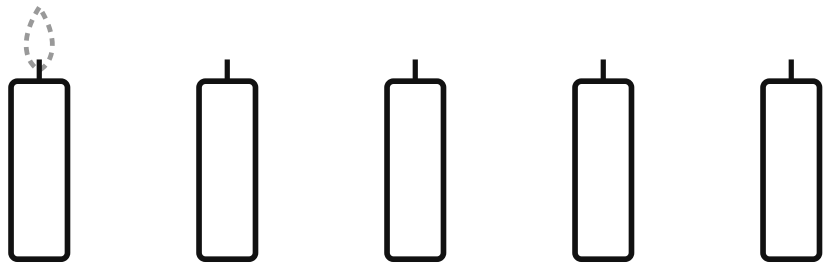
Trace the dark word, then the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

for giving to me.

Tonight's Candle

Tonight your family lights the first of five candles. On each celebration day, one more candle gets lit, until all five shine on New Year's Day.



Dec. 4 Dec. 11 Dec. 18 Dec. 25 Jan. 1

Trace the flame on candle 1!

THE CANDLE WORDS: A GROWN-UP SAYS EACH LINE, AND YOU SAY IT BACK

Grace comes in. (cup your hands)
Gratitude sees it. (point to your eyes)
And graciousness passes it on. (open your hands to the candle)

Grown-up: "What do we pass on?" You: **Generosity!**
One light. Passed along.

DRAW YOUR FAMILY WITH YOUR CANDLES

☆ Celebration Night

Tonight your family celebrates. It has three parts:

1. **Remember:** Nicholas and the first candle
2. **Rejoice:** The Opening
3. **Ready:** Shoes and a plan

☆ Remember: Who Was Nicholas?

A grown-up tells you the story of Nicholas. Then your family lights the first candle.



Nicholas was a real person. He lived about 1,700 years ago in a town by the sea. Today that town is in the country of Turkey.



His mom and dad followed Jesus. Jesus taught that when you give to help someone, you should keep it a secret.



A poor father had three daughters and no money. One night, Nicholas tossed a bag of gold through their open window and hurried away before anyone saw him. Later, he did it again!



The third time, the father caught him! Nicholas said, "Don't thank me. Thank God." Then he asked the father to keep it a secret.



This is a famous story, but nobody knows for sure how much of it really happened.



Today, kids in some countries set out their shoes the night before Nicholas's day, December 6. They hope to find a treat inside.

For grown-ups: Nicholas of Myra (4th century) was a real bishop. The story of the three bags of gold, like most stories about him, is a legend. Jesus' teaching on secret giving is Matthew 6:3–4.

Rejoice: The Opening

Your family reads the gold ornaments by candlelight. Find the ones with **your** name on the front. A grown-up can read them with you.

I found ☐ gold ornaments with my name!

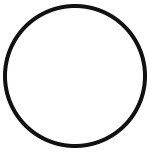
Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from: (Draw their face or write their name.)

Ready: Check Your Shoes

Did your family line up everyone's shoes by the front door? After the Opening, go check yours! Is there money inside? It's a gift you didn't earn, like Nicholas's gold. On December 6, Nicholas's day, you get to give it away in secret.

Who could my secret gift help? Draw their face or write their name.



Ready: Plan the Giving

Then plan the next three days of giving with your family. Draw or write your ideas in the boxes.

DEC. 5
Your time

Who will get your time, even when you'd rather rest?

DEC. 6
Your things

What will you give in secret? Your shoe money goes here!

DEC. 7
Your words

Who needs a kind note from you?

EXTRA, IF YOUR FAMILY DOES IT

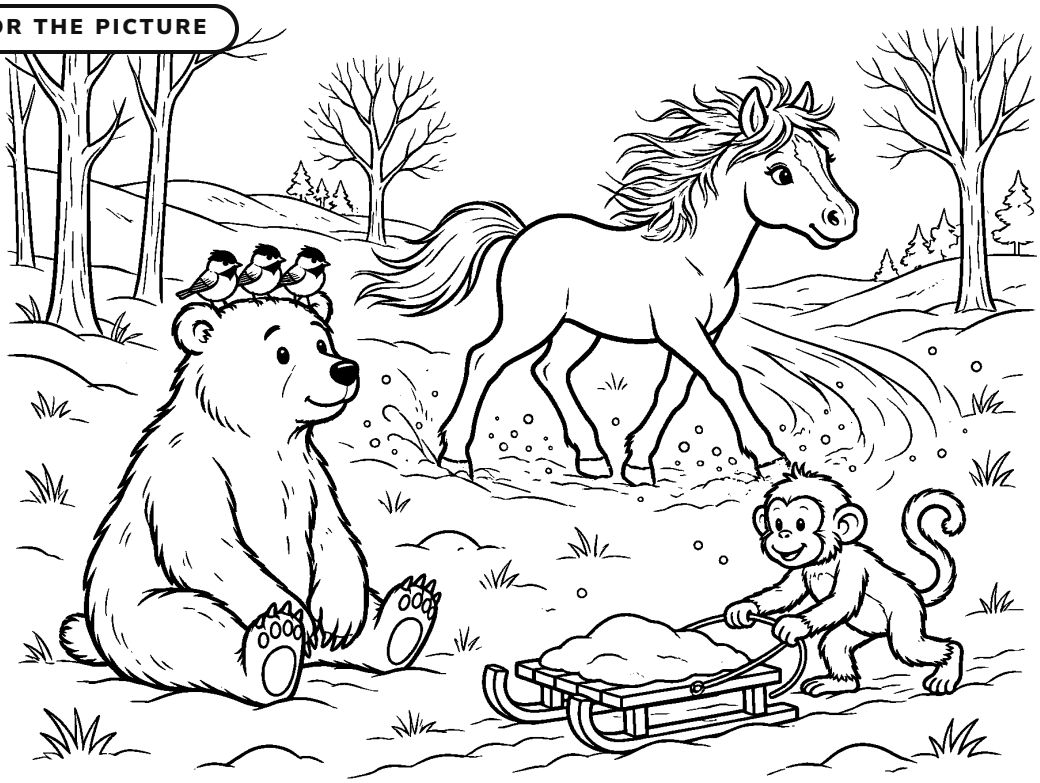
The Better Batch

Sometime this week, your family bakes two batches of a treat. Pick the batch that looks best and give that one to a neighbor or friend. You can leave it with no name, like Nicholas! Your family keeps the other batch.



The Best Sledding Day

COLOR THE PICTURE



Overnight, the snow had frozen hard and smooth, and in the morning, the whole hill below Lookout Ledge shone like glass. When Mr. Monkey stepped on it, his feet went *skrrrrritch* and slid right out from under him.

"Mr. Moose," he said, sitting on his bottom. "It's PERFECT."

It was the best sledding snow of the year. Everybody knew it. And Daddy Monkey had built a brand-new sled out of an old piece of the bark slide from Fort Friendship, long and curved and smooth, with a vine to hold on to.

"Just one ride," said Mr. Monkey. "Before we help the birds."

He jumped on the sled, pushed off, and went *ZOOOOOOOM* down the hill, faster than anything, past the oaks, past the rocks, and straight into a big soft snowbank at the bottom. *FLOOMPF.*

The sled stuck out of the snowbank. So did Mr. Monkey's feet, kicking.

Mr. Moose pulled him out by the feet, and Mr. Monkey came out upside down, with snow in his ears and the biggest grin in the woods. "Hee hee hee! AGAIN!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

"Okay," said Mr. Monkey, shaking the snow off his ears. "We'll help the birds really fast. And then we'll sled ALL DAY."

So they went to Munching Meadow with one basket: Sammy's good acorns, and a bundle of Mama Moose's dried berries, and a few seeds from Daddy Moose's cellar. That was all they had. Ricky came with his list. Bruno came because Mr. Moose was going. And Hazel, Dottie, Benji, Shiloh and Sammy came because everybody else was.

When they got to the meadow, they all stopped.

They had thought there would be a few birds. There were not a few birds. There were birds on every branch of every bush. Little brown birds, little gray birds, red ones and blue ones, all puffed up round against the cold. And under the bushes were rabbits, and mice, and a mama deer with two fawns, all pawing at the snow and finding nothing underneath but more snow.

The whole meadow was hungry.

Everybody turned and looked at the one little basket.

"Uh-oh," said Bruno.

Mr. Monkey looked at all the puffed-up birds. A tiny chickadee was sitting on a twig right in front of him, so round and fluffy it looked like a ball with a beak. It was looking at the basket.

He felt it in his chest, the way it always came. He wanted to go sledding. He really, really did. It was the best snow of the year. But these birds were cold, and they were hungry, and they had been looking for food under the snow all morning, and there wasn't any.

"Mr. Moose," he said quietly. "We can't feed all of them with one basket."

Mr. Moose was thinking. He looked at the meadow. Under all that snow were the berry bushes, still full of dried-up berries. The tall grass, still full of seeds. The clover, still green at the bottom. It was all there. It was just buried.

"The food is already here," said Mr. Moose slowly. "It's just under the snow. If we clear the snow off the bushes and the grass, everybody can find their own."

"The whole meadow?" said Ricky.

"The whole meadow."

Everybody looked at the meadow. It was very big. Then they looked back up at the shiny sledding hill. Nobody said anything for a while.

"It will take all day," said Mr. Moose.

Mr. Monkey looked at the hill. Then he looked at the little round chickadee. "Okay," he said. "All day."

Ricky held up his list. "Rule one!" he said. "Thanks first."

So before they did anything else, they said it. "Thank you, Sammy, for the acorns." "Thank you, Mama Moose, for the berries." "Thank you, Daddy Moose, for the seeds." Sammy's tail went all fluffy.

Then they set the basket down in the middle of the meadow, so the littlest birds could eat first.

Bruno shook the snow off the berry bushes, very gently, one bush at a time, *fwump, fwump, fwump*, until the dried red berries showed through. Hazel swept the snow off the grass with her long tail, back and forth, until the seed heads stuck up. Sammy zipped up every bush to knock the snow off the top branches. Dottie dug. Dottie dug so fast that snow flew out behind her in a great white fountain, and landed, *fllumph*, all over Shiloh.

Shiloh stood there, a woolly white lump. "I'm a snowball," he said.

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie. "Sorry, Shiloh!" And she kept digging, in the other direction.

Mr. Moose pushed the snow with his nose, in long, slow lines, like a plow. And Mr. Monkey put the snow on the sled and dragged it away to the edge of the meadow, load after load after load.

The birds didn't wait. As soon as a bush was clear, they landed on it. As soon as the grass showed, the mice ran out. When Bruno sat down to rest for a minute, three chickadees landed on his head, two on his ears, one on his nose, and four in a row along his arm.

Bruno held very still. "I'm a bird tree," he whispered.

"Haw haw haw," he whispered, very quietly, so they wouldn't fly away.

Sammy zipped by overhead with snow on her tail. "Hey! What do you call a bird in the winter?" And she was gone, up another bush.

A minute later, from the far side of the meadow: "A BRRRRRD!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, and the little chickadee on the twig fluffed up even bigger, like it had heard.

They worked all morning. They worked all through lunch, which was a few of Sammy's acorns and a handful of berries. They worked all afternoon. Mr. Monkey's arms got tired. Mr. Moose's nose got cold. And every time they looked up, there was the shiny sledding hill, waiting.

But the meadow was full now. Full of birds, eating. Full of mice, nibbling. The mama deer and her two fawns were munching clover at the edge, where Mr. Moose had cleared a long green path just for them. And when they all finally stopped and looked around, there was so much food showing that the birds couldn't eat it all.

Ricky filled the empty basket with leftover berries and seeds. "For the old badger," he said. "For tomorrow night."

The sun was going down. Its long orange light came sideways across the meadow and turned the snow pink. Everybody was tired, and cold, and very, very happy.

Mr. Monkey looked up at the hill one more time. It was still shiny. There was just a little bit of light left.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "One ride?"

"One ride," said Mr. Moose. "All of us."

So they all climbed onto the sled together. Mr. Monkey in the front. Then Mr. Moose. Then Benji, Sammy, Shiloh, Dottie, Hazel, and Ricky, squeezed in tight. And last of all, right at the back, Bruno.

They pushed off. The sled went... very... slowly... because it had Bruno on it. Then it went a little faster. Then it went a LOT faster. Then it went *ZOOOOOOOOOM*, all the way down the hill, past the oaks, past the rocks, and straight into the big soft snowbank at the bottom, everybody, all at once. *KER-FLOOMPF.*

When the snow settled, there was nothing to see but a pile of tails and ears and hooves and paws, all sticking out every which way.

"AGAIN!" said the whole pile.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose on the long walk home, with snow in his ears. "It was the best sledding snow, and Mr. Monkey went into the snowbank on the very first ride. Then we found the whole meadow was hungry. Dottie turned Shiloh into a snowball, and Bruno turned into a bird tree. We cleared the whole meadow, all day long. And then we all went down the hill together, even Bruno."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And in Munching Meadow, in the last pink light, a little round chickadee sat on a clear branch with a red berry in its beak, full at last.

Let's Talk

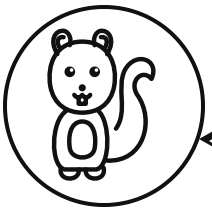
1. Mr. Monkey wanted to sled all day. What did he do with his day instead?
2. Who could use some of your time this week? What could you do together?

Your Turn

Give your time! Draw who you will spend time with and what you will do together.

I will give my time to _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do you call a hippo at the North Pole?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

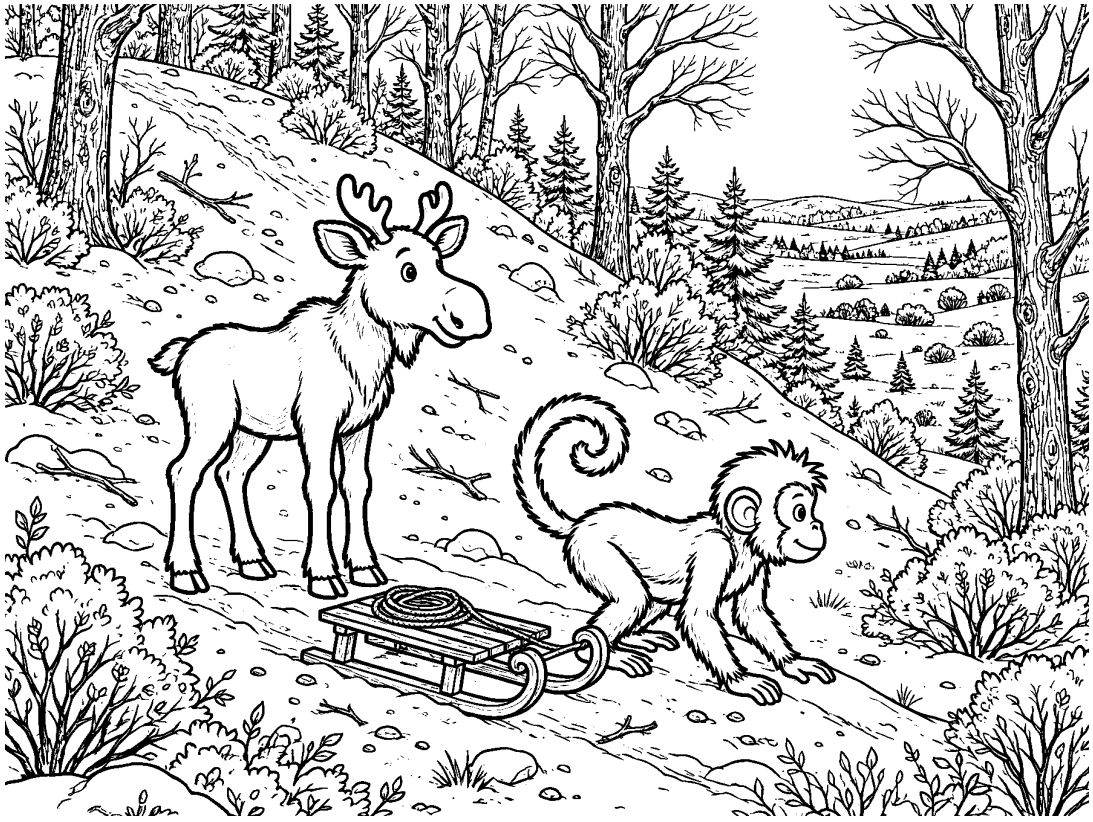
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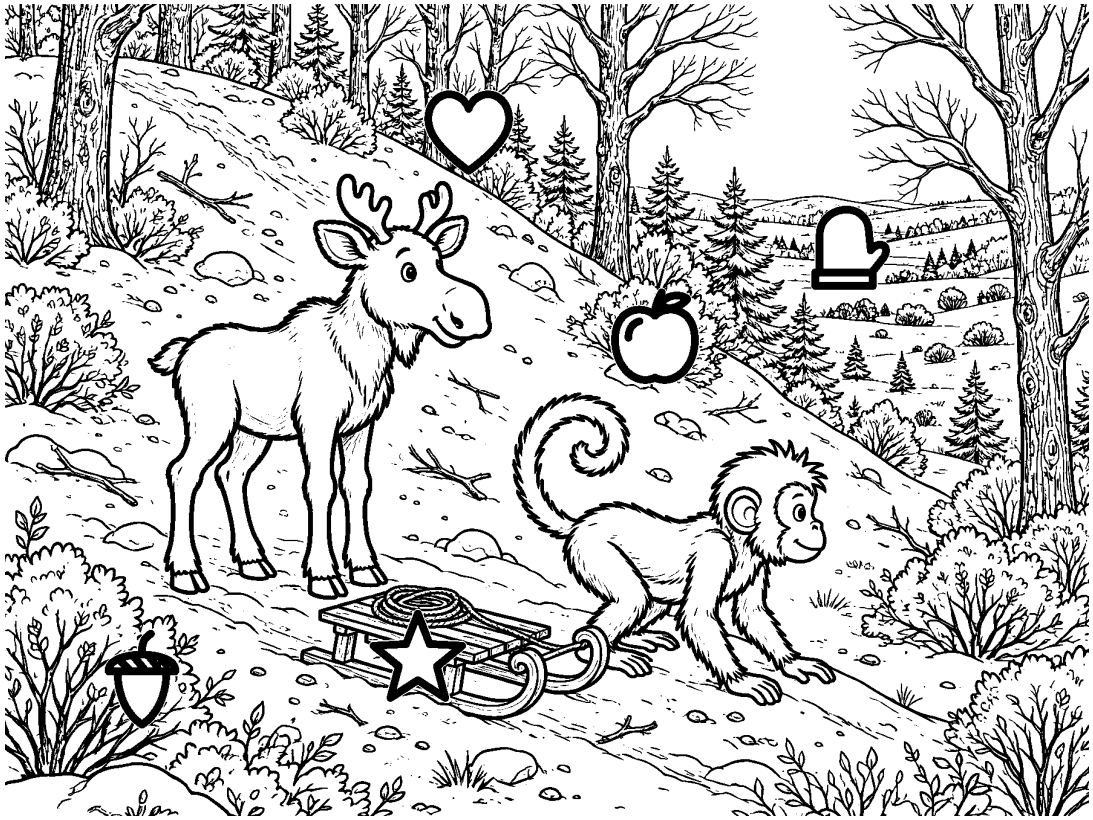
CLUE 

_____!

Spot the Difference

Look closely. Can you find 5 differences?





Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

The Best Sled Run

 has *a* sled. Zip, zip, zip!

But *a* lot of pals can not get to the plants.

 digs.  digs.  digs and digs!

Up pop the plants. The pals get fed.

At last,  and the pals get on the sled.

Zip! Bump! It is the best sled run!

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Bruno  Hazel  Dottie



For grown-ups: New sounds: qu, v, and z.

Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word, then the light words. Who did you give your time to? Write their name on the line.

I gave my time to _____.

What Happened First?

Write 1, 2, 3, 4 in the circles to put the story in order.



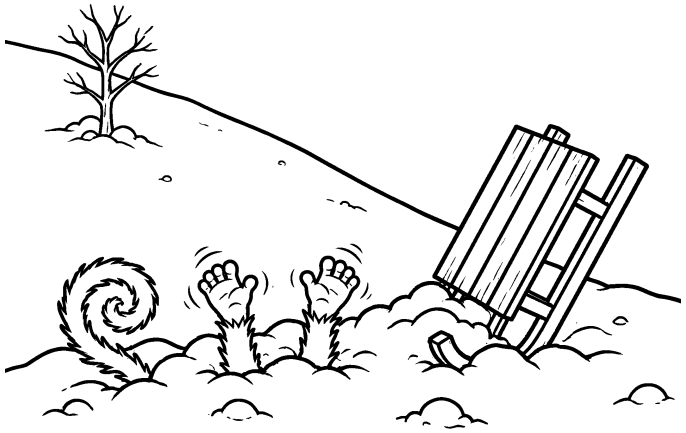
A



B



C



D

It's a Secret!

COLOR THE PICTURE



The night was cold and clear and so quiet that you could hear the snow settle. *Tink... tink...* went little bits of ice, falling off the branches. Above Sunny Square, the stars were out, and the squash lantern glowed on the Wishing Tree.

Everybody met by the Swap pile after dark.

Ricky had his list. Under THANKS FIRST, it said: HEDGEHOGS. OLD BADGER. And then, in smaller letters, some new ones that Benji had heard all week with his big, sharp ears: the mouse family in the hollow oak, whose seed pantry got wet. The beaver kits, whose mama had a sore paw. The old crow by the river, who sat alone on his branch every night.

"How did you hear all that?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Benji's ears twitched. "I listen," he said softly. "Everybody's busy talking. So I listen."

Ricky looked at Benji. Then he looked at the pile. Benji was the smallest one in the whole woods. Ricky had the most presents in the whole woods. And Benji had told him exactly where they needed to go.

So they sorted the presents into bundles, one for every door on the list. A soft woolly mitten for the crow. A bag of dry seeds for the mice. Bundles and bundles.

But Mr. Monkey was looking at the bundles and frowning.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "These are all things nobody wanted. The Swap stuff. The extras." He looked at the hedgehog bundle. "The little hedgehogs are coughing. Some extras isn't enough."

Mr. Moose thought about the candle on Daddy Moose's table. Daddy hadn't given the lantern his extra candles. He had given it the last one.

"Maybe everybody adds one thing," he said slowly. "Not an extra. Your own best thing."

Everybody got very quiet. Then Bruno went home to his den, and came back with the best piece of his honeycomb, the part with the most honey in it. He looked at it for a long, long time. "For the coughing," he said, and put it in the hedgehog bundle. "Honey is good for coughing."

Sammy put in her three shiniest acorns. Shiloh put in a big soft bundle of his own wool, the wool he'd been saving all fall to stuff his pillow. "For their nest," he whispered.

Mr. Monkey climbed all the way up to the treehouse and came back down holding something behind his back. It was a banana. The biggest one of the whole summer. He had been saving it since the last banana plant gave its last banana, and he had looked at it every single night.

He held it for a moment. It was a very good banana.

Then he put it in the old badger's basket. "He's never had a banana," said Benji.

"Now he will," said Mr. Monkey.

Daddy Monkey came along too, with his coil of vines and his bag of tools over his shoulder. "For the badger's

roof," he said, and winked.

Then Benji taught them the thump-song, so they could talk without talking.

"One thump means stop," he whispered. He thumped his back foot once on the snow. *Thup.* "Two thumps means go." *Thup-thup.* "Three thumps means HIDE." *Thup-thup-thup.*

"Let me try," said Bruno. He lifted his great big foot and brought it down on the snow. *THOOOM.*

Every tree in Sunny Square shook. Snow slid off every branch at once, *FWUMP-FWUMP-FWUMP-FWUMP*, and landed on everybody's heads.

"Haw haw haw," whispered Bruno, covered in snow. "That's a big stop."

"Hee hee hee," whispered Mr. Monkey, covered in snow too.

So they set out into the dark, carrying the bundles and the little lantern. They went to the mouse family's hollow oak. They tucked the seeds right inside the hollow, by the tiny door. Then Mr. Moose packed a little cup out of snow, Ricky stood a stub of candle in it, and Mr. Monkey lit it from the squash lantern. A tiny snow lantern, glowing by the door.

"It's a secret," whispered Mr. Monkey.

They went to the beavers' lodge. They went to the old crow's branch, where Sammy zipped up to tie on the woolly mitten, and the crow, still fast asleep, tucked his whole head right into it without waking up.

"He likes it," whispered Sammy.

"Hee hee," went Benji.

At every door, a bundle. At every door, a little snow lantern.

"It's a secret," whispered Mr. Monkey every time. And every time he got a little more excited, and he whispered a little louder.

At the old badger's den, Daddy Monkey climbed up on the caved-in roof in the dark and fixed it, one branch at a time, so quietly that the badger never woke up. They could hear him snoring inside. *Grrrrnk-whee. Grrrrnk-whee.* They set the basket of leftovers by his door, with the banana right on top, and lit a little snow lantern beside it.

"IT'S A SECRET," whispered Mr. Monkey, so loud it wasn't really a whisper anymore.

"Mr. Monkey," whispered Mr. Moose. "That was a shout."

"It was a whisper-shout," whispered Mr. Monkey.

"Ha-ha-ha," laughed Mr. Moose, very softly.

The last stop was the hedgehogs, past the little waterfall, under the big old oak. It was a long way, and it was very late. They crept up to the tiny round door in the snow. Ricky set the bundle down: the soft wool, Bruno's honey, Sammy's acorns, and a warm little blanket from the pile. Mr. Monkey lit the last snow lantern.

And the tiny door started to open.

Thup-thup-thup! went Benji. HIDE.

Everybody dove behind the nearest snowdrift. Mr. Monkey, Mr. Moose, Ricky, Benji, Sammy, Shiloh. And Bruno. But the snowdrift was small, and Bruno was big. He got his head behind it. He got his shoulders behind it. But his great big round furry bottom stuck straight up out of the top, right in the light of the snow lantern.

Mama Hedgehog stepped out of the door. She looked at the bundle. She looked at the little glowing snow lantern. Then she looked up, very slowly, at the big furry bottom sticking out of the snowdrift.

Nobody breathed.

Mama Hedgehog looked at that bottom for a long time. Then she smiled a very small smile, picked up the bundle, and went back inside. She didn't say anything. She just closed the door.

Through the little door, they heard her voice. "Look, my littles. Somebody left us honey. Somebody loves us."

"Who?" asked a tiny voice.

"Somebody who wants it to be a secret," said Mama Hedgehog. And they could hear that she was smiling.

Behind the snowdrift, Mr. Monkey grabbed Mr. Moose's leg and squeezed it, so hard, because he was so happy he could hardly stand it.

They walked home through the dark woods, slowly, and everywhere they looked, there were little lights. One by the mouse family's oak. One by the beavers' lodge. One under the old crow's branch. One by the badger's mended roof. And far behind them, one by the tiny door under the big old oak.

"She saw you, Bruno," whispered Shiloh.

"She saw my bottom," said Bruno. "That's not the same."

"Hee hee hee," whispered Mr. Monkey.

"Why can't they know it was us?" asked Shiloh.

Mr. Moose thought about it. "Because then they'd think they had to give us something back," he said. "And then it's a swap again."

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, back in Sunny Square, very quietly. "Benji heard everybody who needed something. Everybody gave their best thing, and I gave my banana. Bruno thumped so hard all the snow fell down. We left little lights at every door. I whisper-shouted. And Mama Hedgehog saw Bruno's bottom, but she didn't tell."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang, as softly as they could:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And all through Wanderful Woods, little snow lanterns glowed by doors in the dark, and nobody inside knew who had put them there.

Let's Talk

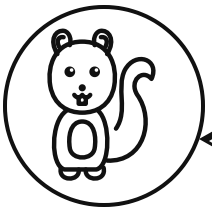
1. Everybody added their own best thing to the bundles. What did Mr. Monkey give the old badger?
2. It is St. Nicholas Day! What could you give in secret?

Your Turn

Today you give your shoe money away in secret! Draw who it will help. Shh!

It is for _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What has a neck but no head?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

j g u

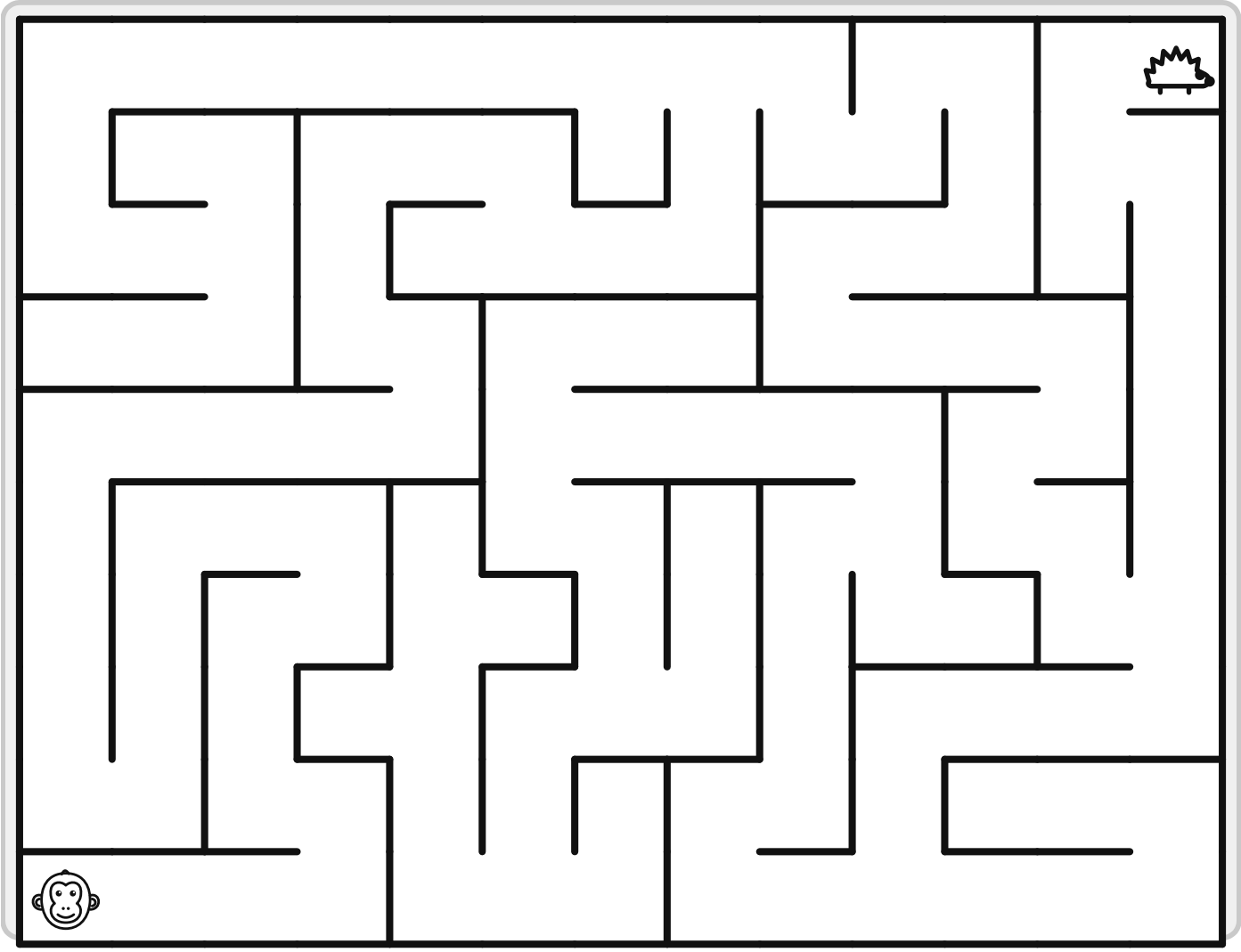
CLUE



A ___ ___ ___ !

☆ The Night of the Doors

Help Mr. Monkey carry the secret gift to the hedgehogs' door. Start at Mr. Monkey.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

A Gift *at* the Den

It is dim. Tip, t*a*p, tip.

 ,  , *a*nd  get to *a* den.

 sets *a* gift on the step. Zip! Run!

 jumps in *a* big drift. His rump is up!

The mom *a*t the den gets the gift.

“A gift! It is from *a* p*a*l!” s*a*id the mom.

The mom is glad.  is glad, in the drift.

PICTURE WORDS  Bruno  Benji  Mr. Monkey

For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: from.



Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word, then the light words. What did you give, and who got it? Fill in both spaces.

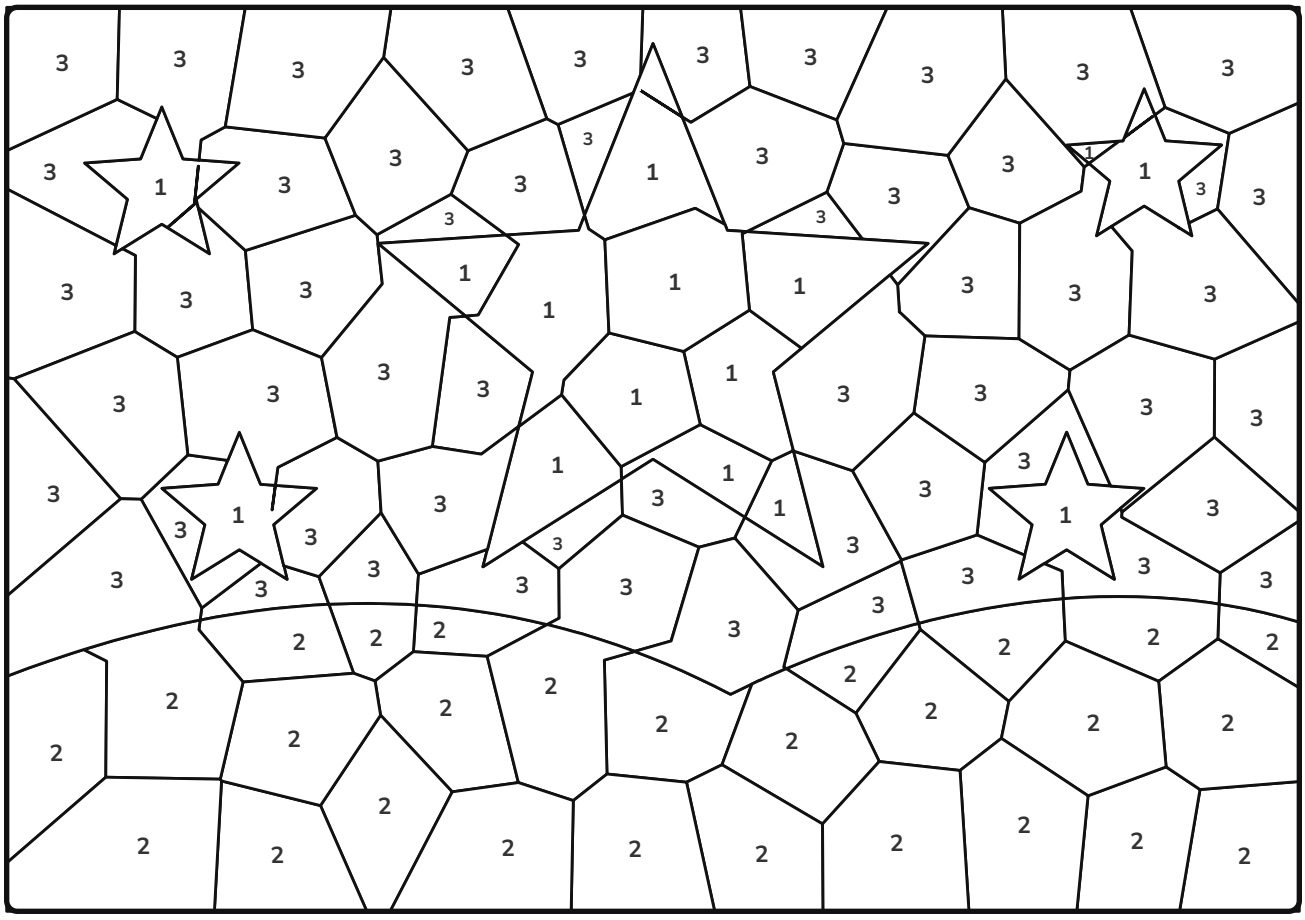
I gave

to

Song Day: Mystery Picture

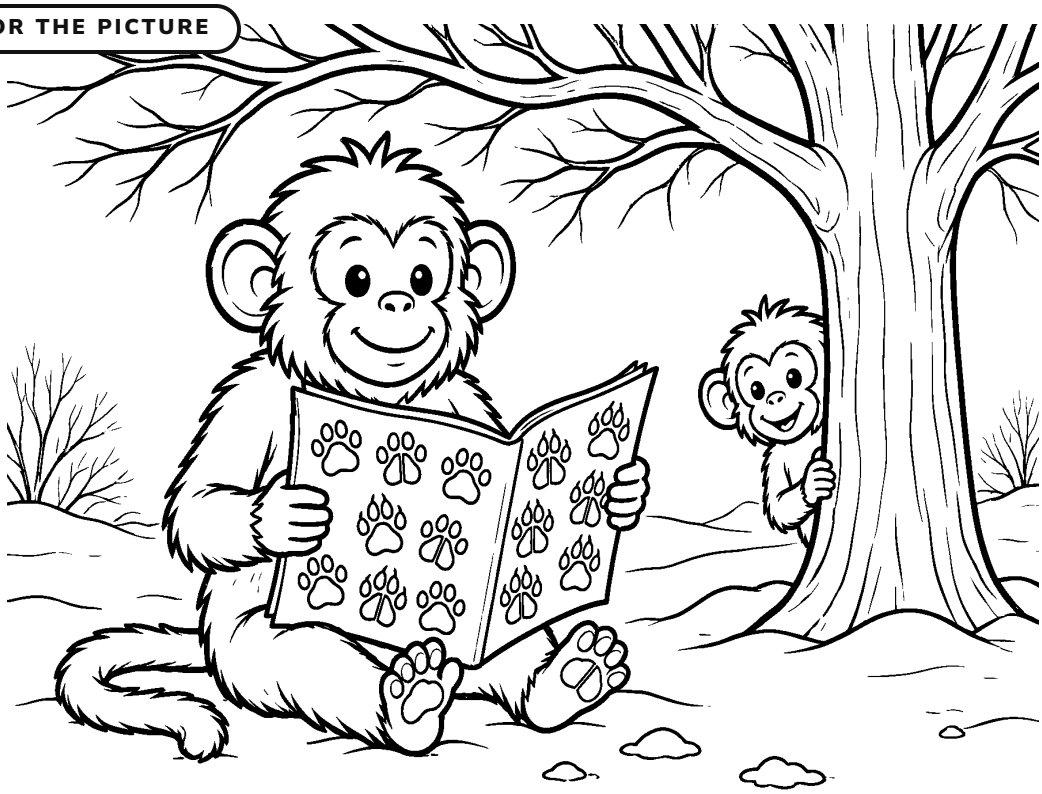
Today's song is "Do You Hear What I Hear?" Sing or listen while you color each space by its number.

1 yellow **2** light blue **3** dark blue



Not a Secret

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning after the night of the doors, the whole woods was buzzing. The snow was sparkling, the icicles were dripping, *plip, plip, plip*, and everywhere Mr. Monkey went, somebody was talking about the presents.

"Somebody fixed my roof!" the old badger was telling everybody, standing in the middle of Sunny Square in his nightcap. "In the night! And they left me a BANANA! I've never had a banana! Who would do a thing like that?"

Mr. Monkey opened his mouth. "It was…"

Mr. Moose looked at him.

Mr. Monkey clapped both hands over his mouth. "Mmmf," he said.

"Did you say something, young monkey?" asked the badger.

"Mmmf mmf," said Mr. Monkey, through his fingers.

"Ha-ha-ha," laughed Mr. Moose, very quietly.

The badger shrugged and went off to tell the beavers, and Mr. Monkey took his hands off his mouth and let out a big breath. "That was close," he whispered. "It almost jumped right out."

Then he heard a sound he knew. *Tap-tap-tap. Tap-tap-tap.*

It was Daddy Monkey. He was up on Dottie's den, fixing the door, which Dottie had bounced right off its hinges again. When he was done with that, he went to Fort Friendship to fix the bark slide where he'd cut a piece off for the sled. Then he went to Hazel's stable to fix the gate. Then he went to Benji's burrow to fix a loose root. *Tap-tap-tap. Tap-tap-tap.* All morning long.

While he worked, he told a joke. "Hey, everybody. What did one snowman say to the other snowman?"

Everybody waited.

"Do you smell carrots?"

Nobody laughed. Somewhere, an icicle dripped. Daddy Monkey looked very pleased, and went back to tapping.

Mr. Monkey followed him all morning. And then, at lunchtime, Daddy Monkey came home and swung up to the treehouse on his own old swinging vine.

It was so fuzzy. It was so frayed. It was so thin in the middle that it went *creak* when he grabbed it. It was the same old vine he'd wished to replace, way back when Ricky was signing everybody up for the Swap. His wish card was still hanging on the Wishing Tree: NEW VINE.

Mr. Monkey stopped at the bottom and looked up at it.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Daddy fixes everybody's things. And he never fixes his own."

He felt it in his chest. Daddy Monkey had fixed Dottie's door, and Hazel's gate, and the slide, and all the moss in all the cracks, and the badger's roof in the middle of the night. He fixed everything. And nobody ever said anything to him at all.

"I'm going to fix his vine!" said Mr. Monkey.

He climbed up and grabbed the frayed part, and he started tying knots in it, to make it strong. One knot. Two knots. Ten knots. Twenty knots. When he was done, the vine had so many knots in it that it looked like a long, lumpy caterpillar.

Daddy Monkey came out to see. He looked at the knots. Then he grabbed the vine and swung.

Boing. Boing. Boing. Boing. He bounced over every single knot, all the way down, bumping and bobbing like he was riding over rocks. His cheeks wobbled. His tail flapped.

He landed at the bottom. "Well," he said. "That was bumpy."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Bumpy Daddy on a lumpy vine!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

Daddy Monkey laughed too, *hoo-hoo-hoo*, and patted Mr. Monkey on the head, and went off to fix the next thing.

Mr. Monkey looked at the lumpy vine. "That didn't fix it," he said.

Mr. Moose was thinking. He thought about all the things Daddy Monkey fixed. Doors. Gates. Roofs. They broke again. Dottie would bounce off her door again next week. Things wore out. But last month, Ricky had given Mr. Moose a thank-you leaf, and Mr. Moose still had it, on the shelf by his bed. He looked at it every night. It hadn't worn out at all.

"Mr. Monkey," he said slowly. "Everybody gives your daddy things to fix. But has anybody ever told him what they see in him?"

Mr. Monkey thought. "No," he said. "Nobody ever did."

"Then that's what we give him," said Mr. Moose. "Words. And we write them down, so he can keep them."

"And this one," said Mr. Monkey, "is NOT a secret!"

They went all around Wanderful Woods to everybody Daddy Monkey had ever fixed anything for, and asked them each one thing: "What do you see in Daddy Monkey?"

And Ricky, who had the best writing paws in the woods, carried a big piece of birch bark and wrote down every answer.

"He fixed my roof in the rain," said Dottie. "And he never once said I bounced too much. Even though I did."

"He showed me how to tie my knot," said Ricky, writing it down himself. "The one that never slips."

Bruno thought for a long time. "He has the biggest tools," he said, "and the gentlest hands."

Hazel said, "He fixes my gate every single time, and he always laughs."

Shiloh said, "He fixed the meadow fence, so I never get lost anymore."

Benji whispered his into Mr. Moose's ear, and Mr. Moose said it out loud: "He fixed my root so softly that I didn't even wake up."

Mama Monkey said, "I see a monkey who makes everybody else's house warm before his own."

Mr. Moose said, "I see somebody who makes everything in the woods work. And nobody even sees him do it."

And Mr. Monkey went last. He thought very hard about getting it exactly right. "I see that you fix everybody's things," he said, "and you never fix your own. And it makes me want to be just like you."

Ricky wrote it all down. Then everybody signed the bottom, with a paw print or a hoof print or a tail print, in berry paint. Even the old badger, who didn't know what it was for, but liked signing things. Bruno signed last, very carefully, with just the tip of one claw, so all he made was the tiniest purple dot.

"That's me," he said proudly. "I was being gentle."

They found Daddy Monkey at the bottom of the Wishing Tree, packing up his tools.

"Daddy," said Mr. Monkey. "This is for you. It's from everybody. And it's not a secret."

Daddy Monkey took the bark. He started to read. Then he stopped reading and sat down, right there in the snow. He read it again, slowly, all the way to the bottom, past every paw print and hoof print, and when he got to the very last line, the one from Mr. Monkey, he put his hand over his face.

Nobody said anything. Mr. Monkey came and sat right next to him, close, so their tails touched.

"Nobody ever told me any of that," said Daddy Monkey at last, very quietly.

"We all did," said Mr. Monkey. "Just now."

Daddy Monkey rolled the bark up carefully, very carefully, and put it in the bottom of his tool bag, under all his tools, where it would be safe. Then he put his arm around Mr. Monkey and held on.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey as the sun went down. "I almost told the badger the secret, but I held it in my mouth. Daddy told the snowman joke and nobody laughed. I tied twenty knots in Daddy's vine, and he went boing-boing-boing all the way down. Then everybody told Daddy what they see in him, and Ricky wrote it all down. And Daddy sat in the snow and read it two times."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And that night, up in the treehouse, Daddy Monkey's tool bag sat by the door, with a rolled-up piece of birch bark tucked safe at the very bottom.

Let's Talk

1. The friends wrote down the good things they see in Daddy Monkey. Why do you think he read the letter twice?
2. Think of someone. What good thing is true about them? Kind? Brave? Funny?

Your Turn

Write or draw a note. A grown-up can help you write.

Dear _____ ,

You are so _____. It makes me glad because _____.

_____

_____

_____

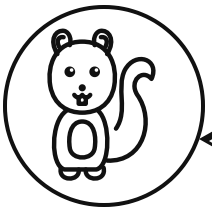
_____

_____

_____

Love, _____

SAMMY'S JOKE



Why did the turkey join the band?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

m **r** **d** **u**

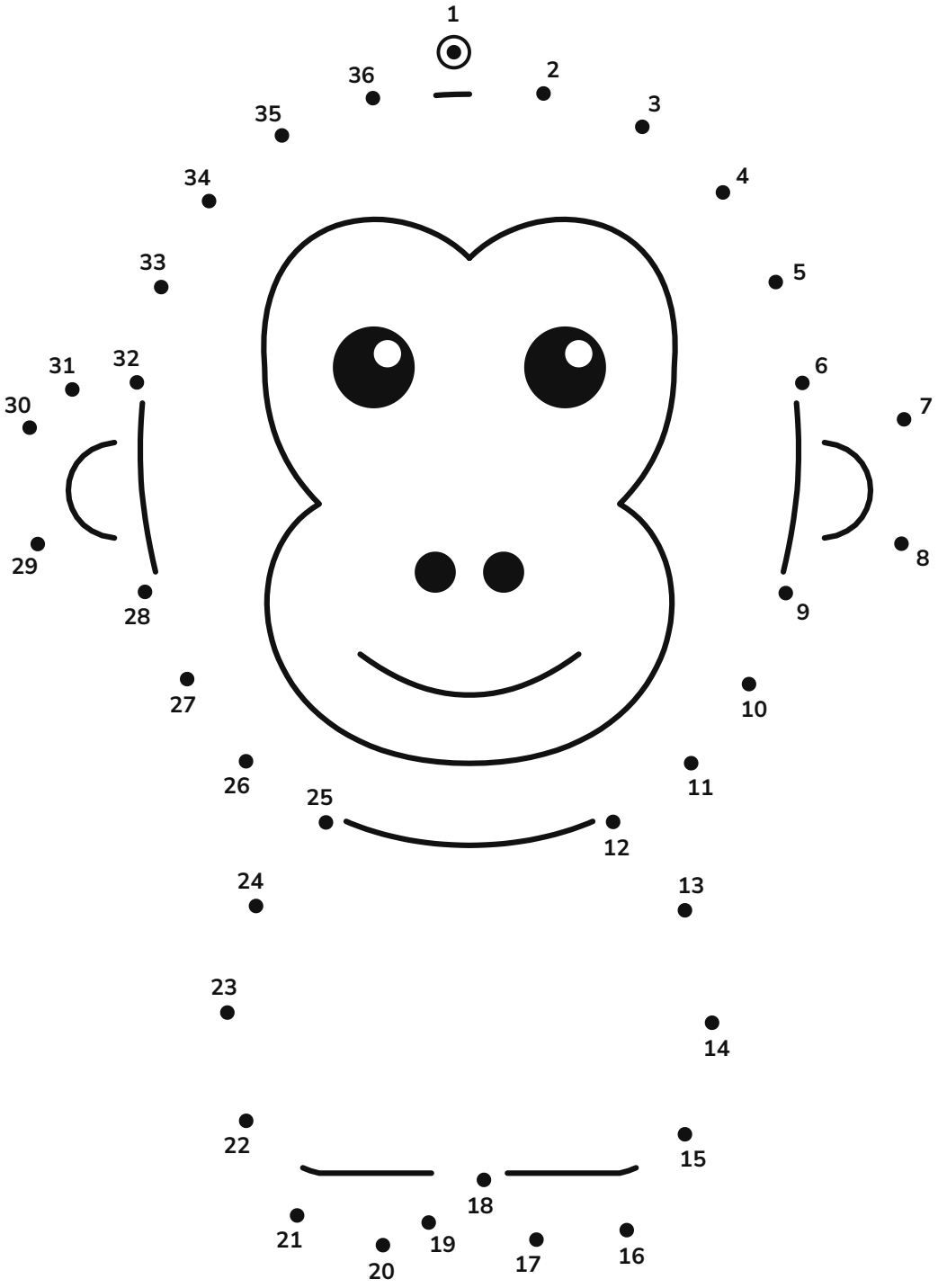
CLUE



It had ___ ___ ___ ___ sticks!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find the friend whose daddy can fix anything. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 36. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Dad Can Fix It

 's Dad can fix *a* lot.

He can fix *a* box. He can fix *a* pot. He can fix *a* big tent!

 and the pals have *a* plan. The pals jot *a* list.

It is *a* list of the best bits of Dad.

Dad gets the list. He grins and grins!

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey

For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: have.

Color a star each time you read it.

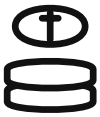
My Gift

Trace the dark word, then the light words. What good thing is true about someone? Write a word like kind, brave or funny on the line. Then tell them!

You are so _____!

☆ Movie Bingo: A Christmas Carol

Watch it with a grown-up. Color a square the first time you see each thing. Three in a row is Bingo!

 snow	 a fire	 a candle
 a clock	 **Free!**	 a hat
 money	 a door	 bells

For grown-ups: watch the last scene of any version, from Christmas morning on. For little ones, The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) is rated G, though its ghosts can still scare some kids.

WEEK DONE!



Turn back to this week's map. Color any stones you missed.



Ladybugs I found in this week's storybook pictures: _____







COLOR THE TITLE!

Hope

Who helped me keep going?

Mr. Moose says, “A wish just sits there. I want mine to walk.”

Hope is a wish that walks!

THIS WEEK’S STORIES

1. **Tuesday, Dec. 8:** A Rope for Mr. Moose
2. **Wednesday, Dec. 9:** The Littlest Trail
3. **Thursday, Dec. 10:** Yes Before How
4. **Friday, Dec. 11:** The Tail Train
5. **Saturday, Dec. 12:** The Slow Way Home
6. **Sunday, Dec. 13:** Who Left These?
7. **Monday, Dec. 14:** One Word Each

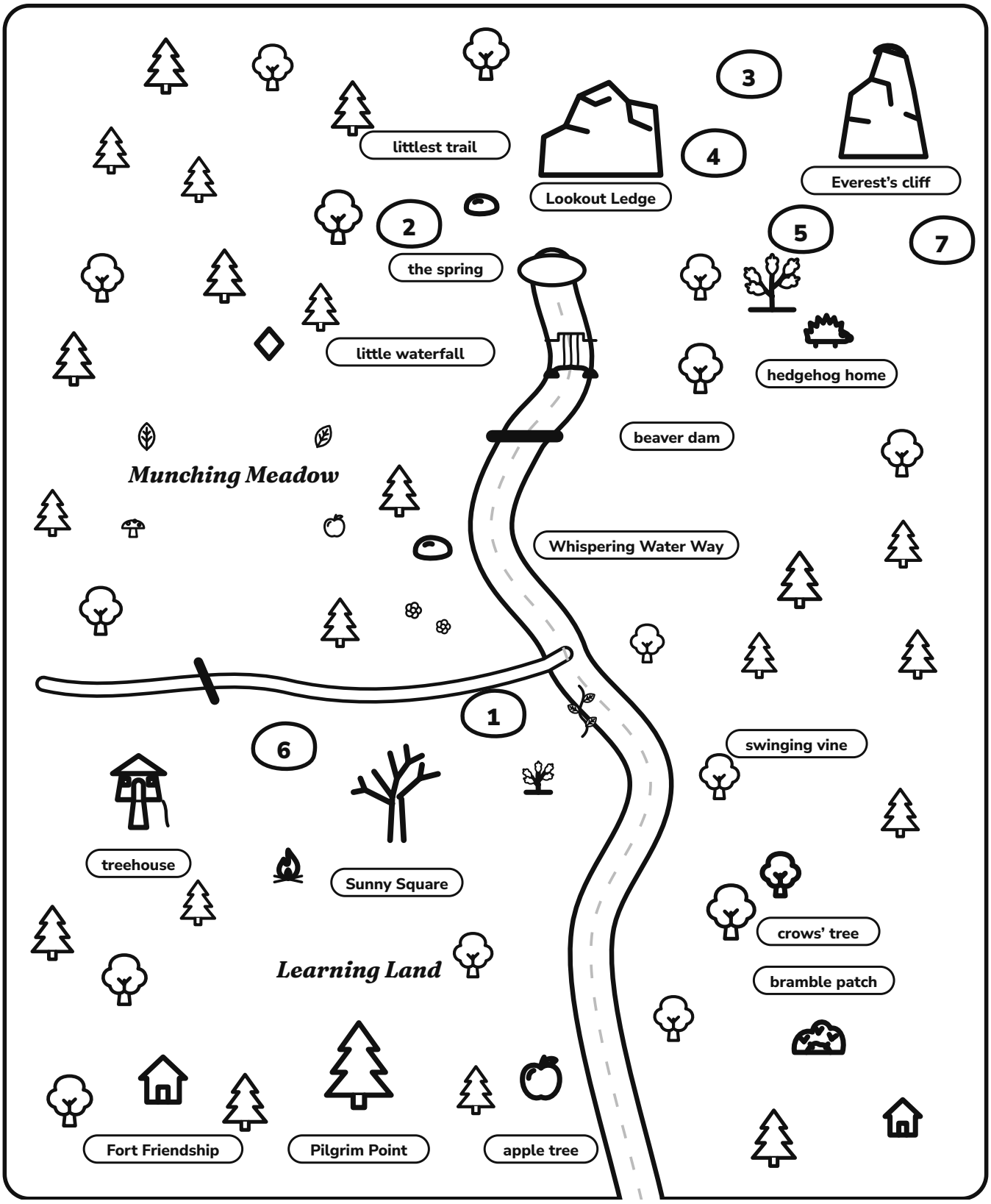
THIS WEEK’S THANK-YOU:

Thank you, _____, for helping me keep going.

Then we give: time, things, and words.

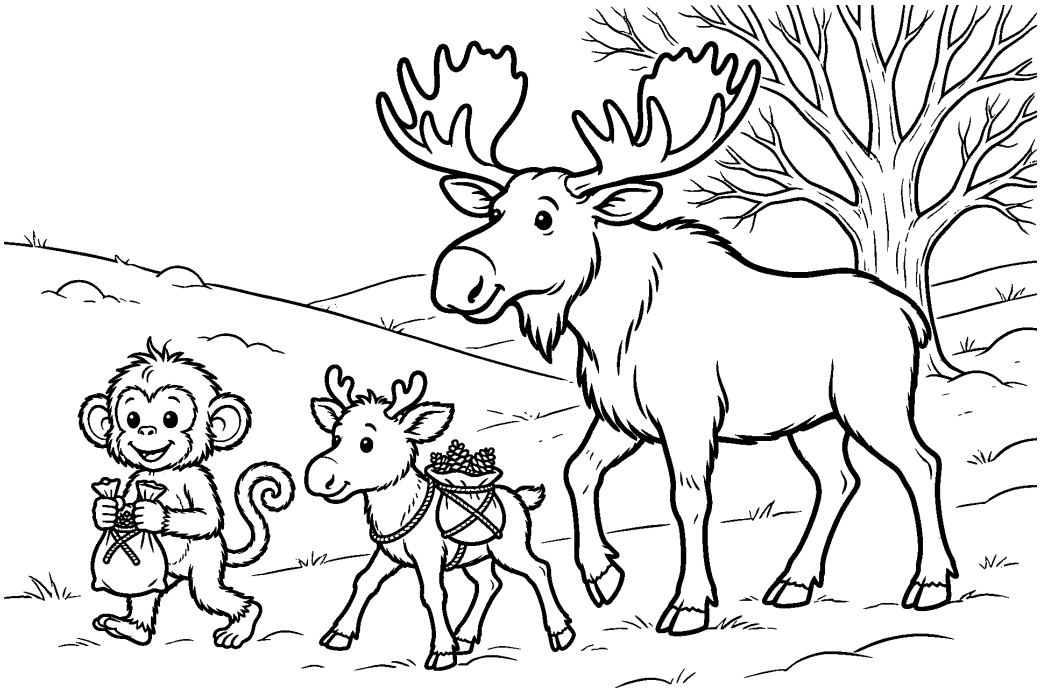
Where We'll Go This Week

Each day, find the stone with that day's number and color it. It shows where the day's story happens!



A Rope for Mr. Moose

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sun came up pink over Wanderful Woods. It touched the very top of Everest's high gray cliff first, before it touched anything else, so for a few minutes the top of the cliff glowed like a candle while the rest of the woods was still blue and asleep.

Mr. Moose stood by his door, next to the little green pine, and watched it.

"Mr. Monkey," he said. "I want to take the lantern up there."

Mr. Monkey looked at the little squash lantern on the Wishing Tree. Then he looked at the cliff. It was very far away. And very, very high.

"All the way to the top?"

"All the way to the top," said Mr. Moose. "Everest lives up there by himself. It's cold, and it's dark, and it's the highest place in the whole woods. He came all the way down to walk us home. I want to bring him some light."

Mr. Monkey's eyes went big. "Then let's go! Right now!"

Bruno was walking by with his breakfast. He stopped. "What does Mr. Moose have?"

"A big hope," said Mr. Monkey.

Bruno's ears shot up. "A big ROPE? I have a big rope!"

And before anybody could say anything, he ran off to his den and came back with the biggest coil of rope anybody had ever seen. It was so big he had to wear it, around and around his middle, like a giant doughnut.

"For your rope," said Bruno proudly, and he unwound it and wound it right around Mr. Moose instead.

Mr. Moose stood there in a big lumpy rope coat. "Thank you, Bruno."

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "Now you have two ropes."

So off they went, Mr. Moose in his rope coat, Mr. Monkey hopping ahead, toward the big hill at the bottom of Lookout Ledge.

The hill was steep. It was covered in ice from the cold night, smooth and shiny. Mr. Monkey scampered right up it on his hands and feet and tail. Mr. Moose put one hoof on the ice. Then another. Then his long legs went four different ways, and he slid all the way back down to the bottom on his tummy, *shhhhhhhhwoop*, spinning around once at the end.

He got up. He tried again. *Shhhhhhhhwoop.* Back to the bottom.

He tried a third time. *Shhhhhhhhwoop.*

"Mr. Moose," called Mr. Monkey from the top of the hill. "You're a sled!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

"Ha-ha-ha," laughed Mr. Moose, lying flat at the bottom with his rope coat all tangled. But it was a small laugh. And then he just lay there.

Mr. Monkey slid back down to him. "Mr. Moose?"

"I can't even get up the first hill," said Mr. Moose quietly. He looked up at the cliff, so far away above them. "How am I going to get all the way up there?"

He sat up in the snow. "I wish I could fly," he said. "Like Everest."

Mr. Monkey hated seeing Mr. Moose sad. And he wanted to help so badly that an idea popped right out of him.

"Then you'll FLY!"

He ran and found two big, bushy pine branches and tied one on each side of Mr. Moose with Bruno's rope. "Wings! Now flap!"

Mr. Moose flapped. The pine branches swished. Snow flew everywhere. Pine needles flew everywhere. Mr. Moose flapped and flapped until he was puffing, and he didn't go up even a little bit. All he did was blow a big pile of snow right onto Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Monkey popped up out of the pile with pine needles sticking out all over him, like a little porcupine. "Hee hee hee! You flew the SNOW!"

"Ha-ha-ha," laughed Mr. Moose, a real laugh this time. Then he stopped flapping and looked down at his pine-branch wings. "Moose can't fly, Mr. Monkey."

"I know," said Mr. Monkey. "But you looked so sad."

Mr. Moose sat down in the snow and thought. He thought about wishing. Wishing he could fly was just sitting here, flapping, going nowhere. He could wish all day long, and the cliff would still be just as far away. If he really wanted to get up there, he couldn't just want it. He had to start walking. Even if it was a little walk. Even if it was the bottom of the littlest hill.

"A wish just sits there," he said slowly. "I want mine to walk."

"How?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"I practice," said Mr. Moose. "Starting with a little hill."

And from behind them, a deep voice said, "I know a little hill."

It was Daddy Moose. He'd come out to fetch firewood, and he'd seen the whole thing: the sliding, the flapping, the snow. He untied the pine-branch wings, very carefully, and set them aside. He left Bruno's rope on.

"Behind our maple," said Daddy Moose. "It's small. It isn't icy. And I'll walk it with you."

The little hill behind the big maple wasn't very big at all. Mr. Monkey could have jumped over half of it. But Mr. Moose walked up it, one hoof at a time, with Daddy Moose walking right beside him, and he walked down. Then he walked up again. Then down again.

Daddy Moose filled a little sack with pinecones and tied it to Mr. Moose's back with Bruno's rope. "Up there," he said, "you'll be carrying the lantern. So now, you carry these."

Mr. Moose carried the pinecones up the little hill and down. Mr. Monkey carried a sack of pinecones too, just so Mr. Moose wouldn't be carrying his alone. On the fifth time up, Mr. Moose's antlers caught on a low branch. He kept walking. The branch bent, and bent, and bent, and then it let go, *THWANGGG*, and dumped a whole branch-full of snow right down the back of his neck.

"OOOOH, COLD," said Mr. Moose, and his whole body shivered from his ears to his tail.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Daddy Moose. Mr. Monkey had never heard Daddy Moose laugh out loud before. It sounded like a big drum.

Up the little hill. Down the little hill. All morning. All afternoon. Daddy Moose never hurried him and never told him how to do it. He just walked beside him, every time, steady as a tree.

By the time the sun was going down, Mr. Moose walked up the little hill and down again ten times in a row without slipping once, with his sack of pinecones on his back.

He was still very far from the top of Everest's cliff. But he wasn't sitting anymore.

That night, by the little green pine, Mama Moose brought out the gold paint again. "In this house," she said, "who helped you keep going toward something you wanted?"

Mr. Moose painted a gold circle for Daddy Moose. On the back, he painted a little hill, and a little moose walking up it with a sack on his back, and a big moose walking right beside him. Then, way up in the corner, very small, he painted the top of a cliff, glowing pink.

Mr. Monkey painted one for Mama Monkey, for the whole spring she'd spent in the river with him while he learned to swim, holding him up under his tummy every morning until he could paddle all by himself.

They hung them on the little pine with the painted side to the trunk.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Bruno thought Mr. Moose had a rope, so he brought him one. Mr. Moose slid down the icy hill three times like a sled. I made him pine-branch wings, and he flew the snow onto me. A branch dumped snow down his neck, and Daddy Moose laughed like a drum. And Mr. Moose walked up the little hill ten times."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And far away, as the sun went down, the very top of Everest's cliff glowed pink one more time, the last thing in all of Wanderful Woods to let go of the light.

Let's Talk

1. Mr. Moose said, "A wish just sits there. I want mine to walk." What did he do to make his wish walk?
2. Who in our house helped you keep going when something was hard?

Your Turn

Make a gold ornament for someone in our house who helped you keep going. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



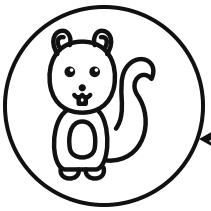
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is gold. Color it yellow or gold when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What did the dog say when he sat on sandpaper?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

f f u r

CLUE



____ ____ ____ ____!

Draw Hazel Horse!

The gray parts are new. Draw them in!

1



2



3



4



5



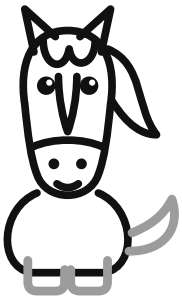
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7



8



MY HAZEL HORSE

Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Will Not Quit

 steps up the big hill.

Slip! Flop!  is back on his rump.

Will  quit?  will not!

Dad has a plan. “Get up this hill. It is not big.”

Up and back, up and back.  did ten trips!

“Next,” said  , “the big hill!”

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose

For grown-ups: New sounds: double letters at the end of a word: ff, ll, ss, zz (puff, hill, kiss, buzz).
New words to learn by heart: back, this.



Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

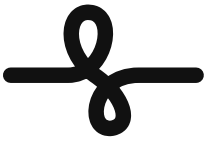
Trace the dark word, then the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you,

for helping me keep going.

☆ Would You Rather?

Circle your pick in each row. Tell why!



wear a big rope coat

OR



wear pine-branch wings

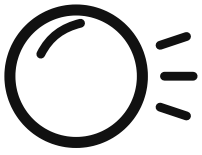


slide down an icy hill like a sled

OR



carry a sack of pinecones up a hill



get snow down your neck

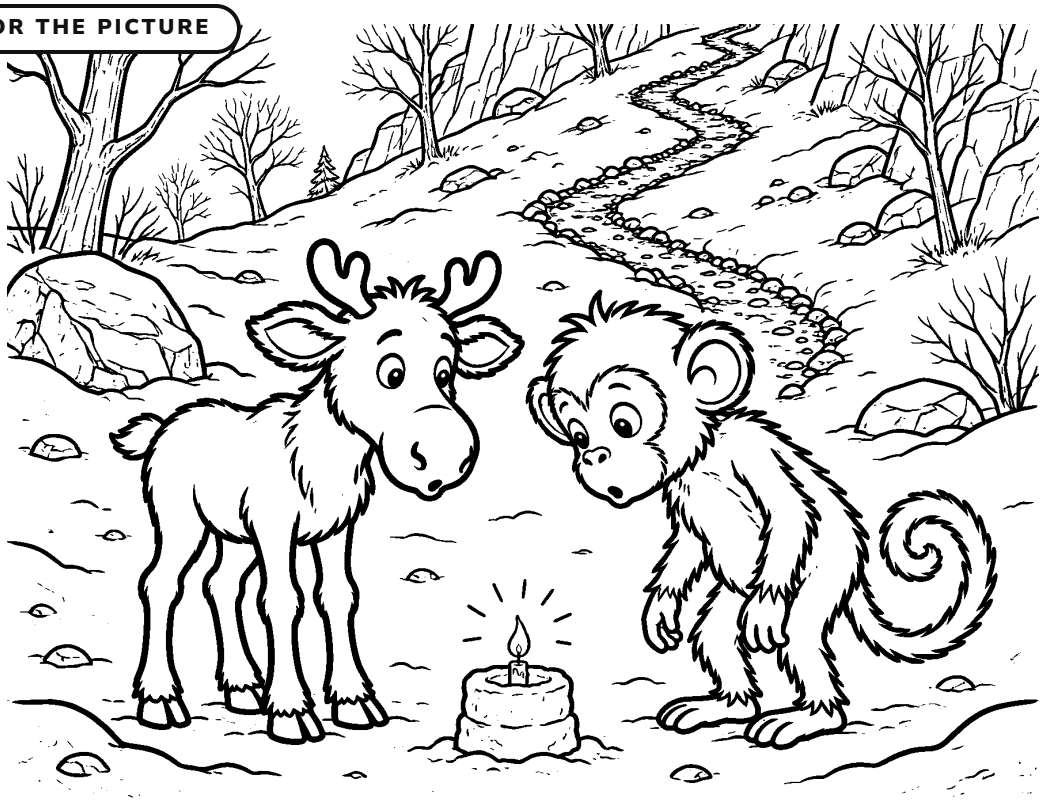
OR



get pine needles stuck all over you

The Littlest Trail

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was cold and bright, and the snow at the bottom of Lookout Ledge was so sparkly that Mr. Monkey had to squint. Little puffs of cloud came out of everybody's noses. Way, way up above them, past the rocks and the snowy trees, stood the top of Everest's cliff.

"There has to be a trail," said Mr. Moose. "A way up."

There wasn't just one trail. There were four.

They started right at the bottom of Lookout Ledge, side by side, big and wide and easy to see. One was smooth, shiny ice. One went through bushes full of frozen red berries. One was soft, fluffy snow in the sunshine. And one was wide and flat and covered in everybody's footprints, as if the whole woods had walked it.

"Which one goes to the top?" asked Ricky.

"Let's find out!" said Hazel, and she galloped onto the ice trail before anybody could stop her. Bruno went right after her.

The ice trail went up. And up. And then it curved. And then it tipped. And then it wasn't a trail at all. It was a slide.

"WHEEEEEEEEEE!" went Hazel, sliding all the way around the hill.

"HAAAAAAW!" went Bruno, right behind her.

They came shooting out at the bottom, right where they started, and landed in a big soft drift, *FOOMF, FOOMF*.

Hazel popped up with snow on her nose. "Hee hee hee... *SNORT*! That was the best trail ever!"

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "Again!" And he ran back up the ice trail and slid down it two more times, just to make sure.

"It doesn't go to the top," said Mr. Moose. "It goes back to the bottom."

So they tried the berry trail. It wound around the side of the hill through bush after bush of frozen berries, and Bruno ate every berry he passed. It went around, and around, and around, and then it came out at the bottom of Lookout Ledge, right where they started. Bruno's whole face was purple.

"Was that the top?" asked Bruno, licking his nose.

"No," said Mr. Moose. "That was the bottom again."

They tried the wide, flat trail with all the footprints. "Everybody, follow the trail!" said Mr. Moose.

Dottie's ears shot up. "Follow the TAIL?"

She looked around. The nearest tail was Hazel's. So Dottie followed it. Hazel turned around to see what Dottie was doing, and Dottie turned around too, to keep following her tail, and Hazel turned again, and Dottie turned again, and pretty soon they were both running around and around in a circle in the snow.

"I'm following the tail!" barked Dottie happily. "Ha! Ha! It keeps going!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Dottie, you're following it in a circle!"

Hazel stopped, dizzy. Dottie bumped gently into her.

And the wide, flat trail, when they finally walked it, went around one big rock and right back to the bottom too.

Everybody sat down in the snow. The four trails had been so much fun. The ice was fun. The berries were fun. The fluffy snow was fun. Following the tail was fun. And every single one of them had brought them right back to the same place.

Mr. Monkey looked up at the cliff. It was just as far away as it was this morning. "We went on four trails," he said, "and we didn't go anywhere."

Mr. Moose was quiet. He thought about it. The four big trails were so bright and so easy that they were all anybody could see. Every time he looked around, his eyes went right to them. Maybe that was the trouble.

So he did something strange. He turned his back on all four trails. He closed his eyes for a long time, until the sparkle went away. And then he opened them again and looked, slowly, at the corner where nobody had looked at all, behind a big gray rock at the very edge of the snow.

And there, beside the rock, was a light.

It was a little snow lantern, a cup of packed snow with a candle glowing inside it. And next to it, so small and so rocky that you would walk right past it if you didn't stop, was a trail. A skinny one. Steep. Twisty. Hardly wider than Benji.

It went up.

"Mr. Monkey," whispered Mr. Moose. "Look."

Mr. Monkey looked. Then he looked at the snow lantern again, and he gasped. "That's ours! That's one of the snow lanterns we left on the night of the doors! At the hedgehogs'!"

All around the little light in the snow were tiny footprints. Hedgehog footprints.

They looked over at the big old oak at the foot of the ledge, where the tiny round door was. The door opened, just a crack. Mama Hedgehog's nose peeked out. She looked at them. She looked at the little light by the trail. Then she smiled a very small smile and closed the door again, without a word.

Mr. Monkey felt it go all the way through him, warm, like cocoa. They had given Mama Hedgehog that light in secret. And she had carried it over here, in the snow, and set it at the bottom of the one trail that really went up, so anybody who came looking could find it. And she didn't say so.

"She kept it lit," he whispered. "For us."

"Then we go up," said Mr. Moose.

The littlest trail was hard. The rocks were bumpy. The snow was deep. The walls of rock came so close on both sides that they brushed Mr. Moose's antlers. Bruno had to squeeze through sideways.

"I'm a bear sandwich," said Bruno, squished flat between two rocks.

"Haw haw haw," he added, from inside the sandwich.

Mr. Monkey had packed his pack too full: pinecones, a snack, a blanket, and three snowballs just in case. Halfway up a steep part, it tipped him over backward, and he lay there on his back in the snow with his arms and legs waving in the air, like a beetle.

"Mr. Moose," he called. "I'm stuck on my pack."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, and he gently tipped Mr. Monkey right side up with his nose.

They kept going. Their packs got heavier. Their legs got tired. Down below, they could still see the four big, bright trails, shining in the sun.

"We could go back," said Hazel. "The ice slide was really fun."

Mr. Moose looked down at the ice slide. He knew exactly where it went. All the way around. Back to the bottom.

"We know where the slide goes," he said.

And they kept going.

They climbed higher than any of them had ever climbed before. Higher than the trees. And then they came out onto a flat rock, and they stopped and turned around.

The whole woods was below them. And above them, far away, the top of Everest's cliff was catching the last of the sun. A thin, bright line of light ran along its very top edge, like the light under a door.

"It's still really far," said Mr. Monkey.

"It is," said Mr. Moose. He was puffing. His pack was heavy. His legs ached. "It's heavy. But it's worth it."

The sun was going down, so they started home. But now they knew the way.

That night, by the little green pine, they painted red circles. Mr. Monkey painted Mama Hedgehog on the front, with her tiny nose. On the back, he painted a big gray rock, a skinny little trail going up, and one small snow lantern glowing at the bottom.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Hazel and Bruno slid all the way around the ice trail. Bruno ate every berry and his face turned purple. Dottie followed Hazel's tail in a circle. Then Mr. Moose closed his eyes, and we found the littlest trail, with Mama Hedgehog's light at the bottom. Bruno was a bear sandwich, and I got stuck on my back like a beetle. And we climbed higher than ever."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And at the bottom of Lookout Ledge, beside a big gray rock, one small snow lantern kept on glowing, all night long, at the start of the littlest trail.

Let's Talk

1. Four big trails were fun, but they all went back to the bottom. How did Mr. Moose find the one that went up?
2. Who outside our house helps you keep going?

Your Turn

Make a red ornament for someone outside our house who helps you keep going. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



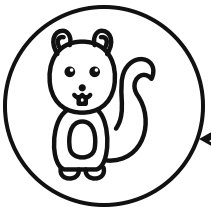
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is red. Color it red when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



Where do bees wait for *a* ride?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

b z u z

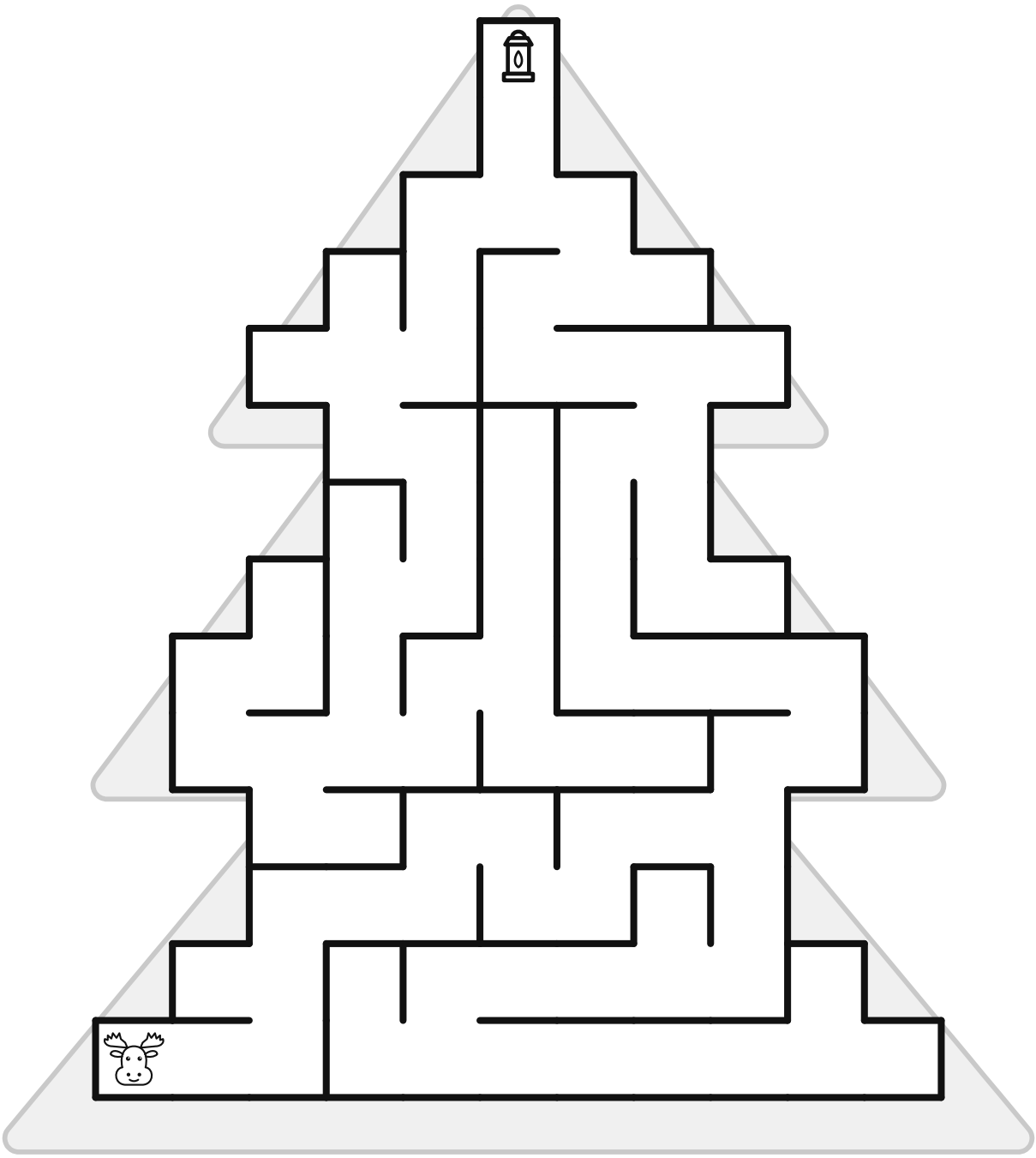
CLUE



At the ___ ___ ___ ___ stop!

☆ The Littlest Trail

Help Mr. Moose find the snow lantern at the start of the littlest trail. Start at Mr. Moose.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Up, Not Back

 and  slid. Zip, zip, zip!

It was fun! But it went back, not up.

 spun and spun. It was fun!

But it went back, not up.

 stops. He is still. He looks and looks.

 spots a lamp on a stump.

Next to it is a gap in the hill.

It is not fun. But it is up, up, up!

PICTURE WORDS  Hazel  Bruno  Dottie  Mr. Moose



For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: looks, was.

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

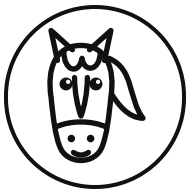
Trace the dark word, then the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

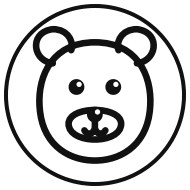
for helping me keep going

♡ Feelings Match

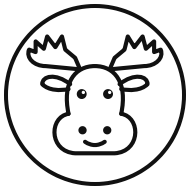
How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



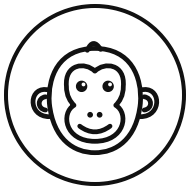
Hazel, zooming down the ice slide



Bruno, squished between two rocks like a sandwich



Mr. Moose, looking at four trails that all went back down



Mr. Monkey, when he saw Mama Hedgehog kept the light lit



worried



silly



happy



angry



excited

Yes Before How

COLOR THE PICTURE



In the night, a cold fog had crept through Wanderful Woods. It touched every branch and every rock and every blade of grass, and wherever it touched, it froze. So in the morning, when the sun came up, the whole woods was covered in tiny white feathers of frost, and everything sparkled.

The friends climbed the littlest trail again, past Mama Hedgehog's snow lantern, past the bear-sandwich rocks, all the way up to the flat rock where they had stopped the day before.

And there they stopped again.

Above the flat rock, the littlest trail ended. In front of them was a wall of gray rock, straight up, taller than the Wishing Tree. No trail. No path. Just rock.

"Oh," said Mr. Moose quietly.

Then the sun came around the side of the hill and shone right on the wall.

And the frost lit up.

All across the gray rock, the sun made the frost sparkle, and where it sparkled, you could see them: little ledges. Tiny flat places in the rock, one above another, zigging and zagging all the way up the wall. Yesterday they had been gray, just like the rest of the rock, and nobody could see them. This morning, every one of them was outlined in shining white, like somebody had drawn a staircase.

"Stairs," whispered Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose looked at the ledges, very carefully, all the way up. They were small. They were steep. A moose could never jump up there. But at the very top of the wall stood a little pine tree.

"If somebody climbed up first," he said slowly, "and tied Bruno's rope to that tree, then everybody else could hold on to the rope and come up after."

Everybody looked at Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Monkey looked at the wall. It was very high. It was very icy. He had never climbed anything like it in his life.

"Yes," said Mr. Monkey.

"But how?" asked Mr. Moose. "It's slippery, and it's high, and you've never…"

"I don't know how yet," said Mr. Monkey. "But yes."

Ricky stepped forward with his bark. "Wait. We need a plan. What if the ledges are too slippery? What if the rope is too short? What if the tree is too little? What if a bird lands on your head? What if it SNOWS? What if a fish falls out of the sky?"

"Why would a fish fall out of the sky?" asked Bruno.

"I don't KNOW," said Ricky. "That's why it's on the list." The list was getting very long. It was hanging all the way down to his feet.

"Haw haw haw," went Bruno. "A sky fish."

Sammy zipped right up the wall and back down again, because Sammy could zip up anything. "Hey, Mr. Monkey! What do you call a snowman in the summer?" And she zipped away before he could answer.

Mr. Monkey didn't wait for Ricky to finish the list. He didn't wait for the punchline either. He tied the end of Bruno's rope around his middle, and he went. Fast. As if he might change his mind if he stood still too long.

The first ledge was easy. The second one was a little harder. On the third one, his foot slipped on the frost, and both his feet came off the rock at once. But his tail was already wrapped around a little root sticking out of the wall. And there he hung, upside down, swinging gently back and forth.

"I'm okay!" he called. "I'm upside down, but I'm okay!"

"Hee hee hee!" he added, because the whole world looked funny upside down.

"Ha-ha-ha," laughed Mr. Moose, but his heart was going fast.

Mr. Monkey flipped right side up and kept climbing. Fourth ledge. Fifth ledge. He didn't know where the sixth one was until he got to the fifth. He didn't know where the seventh one was until he got to the sixth. He couldn't see the whole way. He could only see the next sparkly step. So he took it.

And then he was at the top.

He grabbed the little pine tree with both hands. He looked down. Everybody was very small.

"Now what?" he called.

"Tie the rope to the tree!" Ricky called up. "My knot! Over, under, around, and through!"

"Over... under... around... and through!" Mr. Monkey tied it. He pulled. It held. It was Ricky's knot, the one that never slips.

One by one, everybody came up the wall, holding on to the rope, stepping on the sparkly ledges. Ricky came first, still holding his list in his teeth. Then Hazel. Then Mr. Moose, very slowly, his long legs finding one ledge at a time, Mr. Monkey calling down, "Left hoof! Now the right one! Now the big step!"

Bruno came last. He pulled himself up the rope, paw over paw, huffing and puffing, and at the very top he sat down on a ledge that was much too small for him. Only half of Bruno fit. The other half hung out over the air.

"I'm half on," said Bruno.

"Haw haw haw," he laughed, and Mr. Monkey and Mr. Moose grabbed his paws and pulled him the rest of the way up.

They were higher now than they had ever been. They could see past Lookout Ledge, past Resting Ravine, all the way to the far edges of the woods. And the top of Everest's cliff was closer than it had ever been. Still far. Still high. But closer.

They sat by the little pine and ate their snacks and looked.

And while they sat there, the sun got warmer. And the frost began to melt. One by one, the sparkly white ledges on the wall below them turned back to plain gray rock, until you couldn't see the staircase at all.

Mr. Moose looked down at the wall. "The stairs are gone," he said.

"If we'd waited," said Ricky slowly, looking at his very long list, "they would have melted before we went."

Mr. Monkey looked at the gray wall, too. He hadn't known how. He'd only known the next step. If he had waited until he was sure, there wouldn't have been any steps at all.

From way down below came Sammy's voice: "A PUDDLE!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "The snowman in the summer is a puddle!"

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!" came Sammy's laugh from somewhere far below, because she had heard him, for once.

They went home the long way, around the back of the hill, where the walking was easy. The rope stayed tied to the little pine at the top of the wall, waiting for next time.

That night, by the little green pine, Mama Moose brought out the white paint.

Mr. Moose painted a white circle. He left the front empty, like the sunrise leaf and the spring leaf, because nobody had made the fog, and nobody had made the frost, and nobody had told the sun to shine on that wall at just that moment. On the back, he painted a gray wall with a sparkly white staircase going up it, and a tiny monkey at the very top, holding on to a tree.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "The frost made stairs up the wall. Ricky made a list, and it had a sky fish on it. I said yes before I knew how, and I hung upside down by my tail. Bruno was half on a ledge. The stairs melted. And a snowman in the summer is a puddle."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And high on the hill, Bruno's rope hung from the little pine in the moonlight, swaying gently down the gray wall, ready for whoever came next.

Let's Talk

1. Mr. Monkey said yes before he knew how. What would have happened if they had waited?
2. What did you see this week that nobody made? Frost? A sunny day? A starry night?

Your Turn

Make a white ornament for a gift nobody made. Front: what it is. Back: draw it.

FRONT: WHAT IT IS



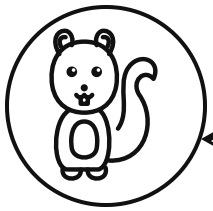
BACK: DRAW IT



This one stays white. When you are done, trace its edge with a gray crayon.

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What did the mountain say to the little hill?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

i h l l

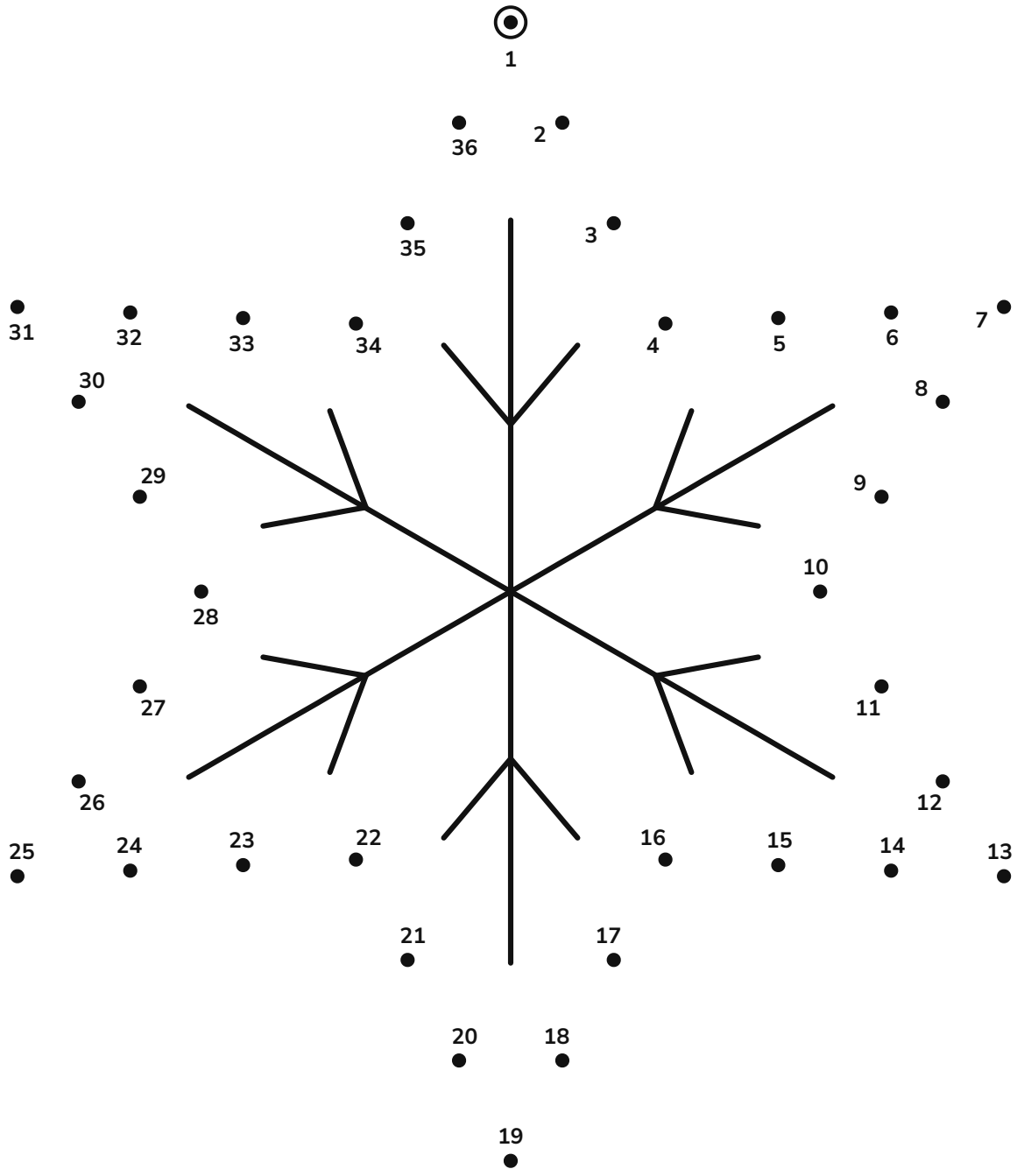
CLUE



____ ____ ____ ____-o there!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to make a snowflake. Frost is made of tiny ice shapes like this! Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 36. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Yes!

Frost is on the cliff. The frost has steps!

“Can you get up?” said  .

“Yes!” said  .

“But it is big! Will you slip?” said  .

Step, step, slip!  grabs a twig.

Step, step, step.  is at the top!

The sun gets hot, and the frost steps melt.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey  Ricky

For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: you.



Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

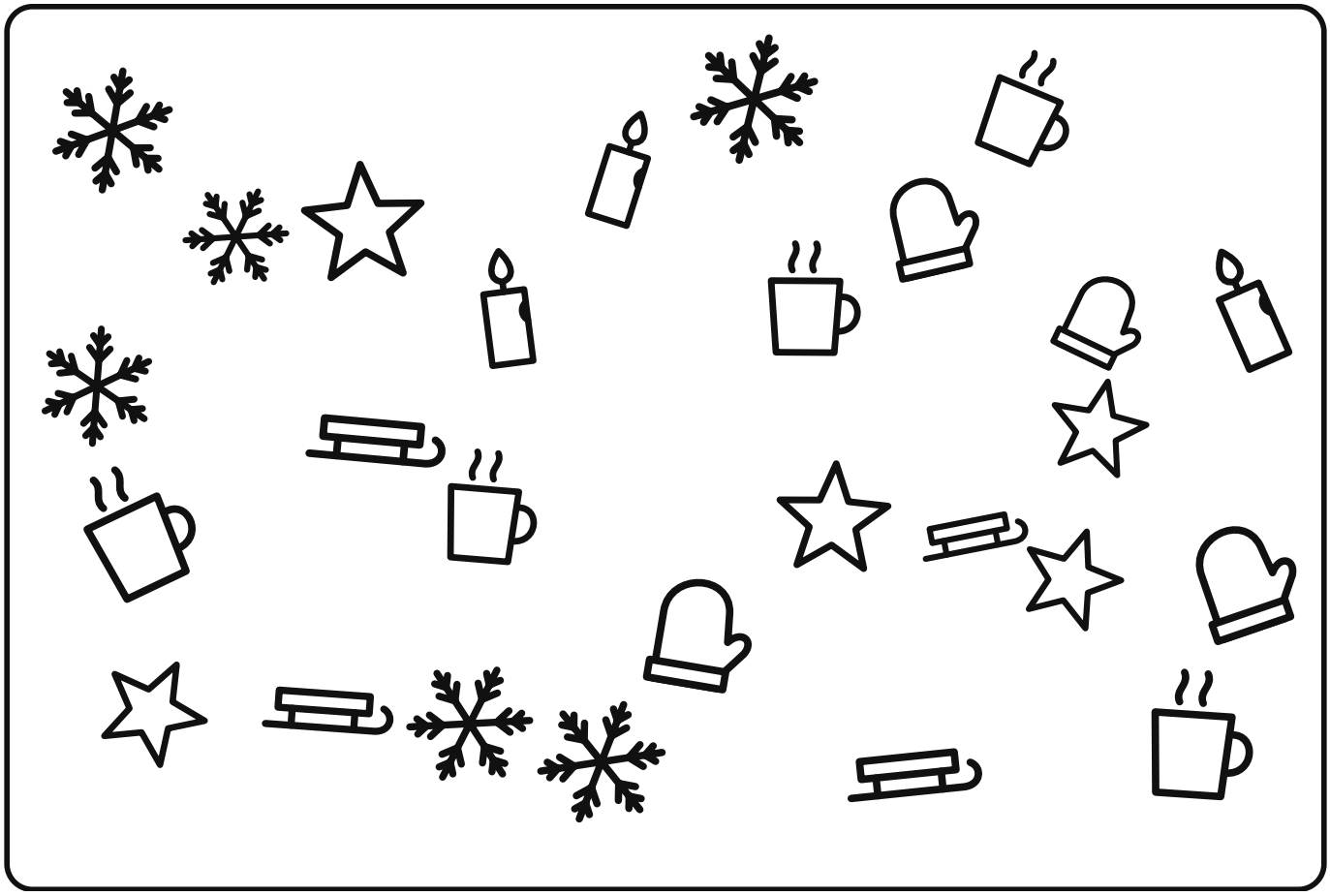
Trace the dark word, then the light words. What good gift did nobody make? Write it or draw it on the line.

Nobody made .

It is a gift.

Winter I Spy

Find and count each one. Write how many in the box.





The Tail Train

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sky over Sunny Square was turning from blue to purple, and the first stars were coming out one at a time, as if somebody was lighting them. The snow had a hard, crunchy crust on top, and every step went *krrunch, krrunch*.

Everybody gathered by the fire. The first light stood on its flat stone, burning steady in a fresh candle Mama Moose had lit from the old one that morning. Next to it stood a brand-new candle, not lit yet.

"Last week," said Mama Monkey, "we lit the first light. Tonight, the second one comes from the first. This one's for the light that keeps us walking."

Mr. Monkey took a twig and held it to the first candle until it caught. Then he carried the tiny flame over to the new one, very slowly, both hands around it.

He touched it to the wick. It caught. Now two candles burned side by side, the new one and the old one, with the squash lantern glowing on the Wishing Tree behind them.

"Now," said Mama Monkey, "the gold circles."

Everybody went to the little green pine and found the gold circles with their own faces. Daddy Moose turned his over and found the little hill, and the little moose with the sack on his back, and the big moose walking right beside him. He looked at it for a long time. Then he put it carefully inside his coat, right next to his heart.

Mama Monkey found the one about swimming. She laughed out loud, a big happy laugh, and hugged Mr. Monkey so hard his feet came off the ground.

And Mr. Monkey found one he didn't expect. It had his face on the front. He turned it over. On the back, somebody had painted a gray wall with a white staircase on it, and a tiny monkey at the very top, hanging on to a pine tree.

"From me," said Mama Monkey. "For saying yes."

Mr. Monkey looked at it so long that the candles flickered twice.

Over on the little pine, one red circle was missing: the one with Mama Hedgehog's tiny nose on the front. Nobody had seen her come. Nobody had seen her go.

Then Mr. Moose said, "Can we go look at the lights?"

"What lights?" asked Bruno.

"All of them," said Mr. Moose. "From up high."

So everybody bundled up, and they set out for Lookout Ledge, not up the littlest trail, but around the back way, where the walking was easy, even in the dark.

The path was dark under the trees. Very dark. Mr. Monkey went first, because he could see best. Mr. Moose came right behind him and held on to the end of Mr. Monkey's tail with his mouth, very gently, so he wouldn't get lost. Then Hazel held on to Mr. Moose's tail, which was very short, so it was hard. Then Dottie held on to Hazel's tail. Then Benji, then Ricky, then Shiloh. And

Bruno came last, holding on to Shiloh's tail, which was mostly wool.

"All aboard!" called Mr. Monkey from the front. "It's the Tail Train!"

"Choo choo!" said Dottie, through Hazel's tail.

They went *krrunch, krrunch, krrunch* up the dark path, all in a long wiggly line. When Mr. Monkey went left, everybody went left. When Mr. Monkey went right, everybody went right. When Mr. Monkey hopped over a log, everybody hopped over the log, one after another, *hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop*, and Bruno hopped last, *THUMP*.

Then Hazel sneezed. "*AH-CHOO!*"

Every single animal on the Tail Train jumped at the same time.

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" went Hazel.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "The Tail Train jumped!"

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno from the very back. "I jumped AND I'm still holding on!"

Then, halfway up, Dottie smelled something. A wonderful something, off to the side of the path. She let go of Hazel's tail to sniff it. And the front half of the Tail Train kept going up the hill, while the back half, Dottie, Benji, Ricky, Shiloh and Bruno, followed Dottie's nose right into a big snowy bush. *FLUMPF.*

"The train broke!" called Ricky from inside the bush.

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie, with snow on her nose. "Sorry! It smelled like cocoa!"

So Mr. Monkey came back down, and everybody grabbed a tail again, and the Tail Train was all in one piece.

And then the trees opened up, and they came out on top of Lookout Ledge, and they all let go of each other's tails and stood very still.

Down below them was Wanderful Woods, in the dark.

And it was full of lights.

There was the Moose home, its window glowing gold under the big maple. There was the squash lantern on the Wishing Tree, and the two candles by the fire in Sunny Square, tiny as fireflies from up here. But there were more. Over by the hollow oak, a little light in the mouse family's window. By the beavers' lodge, another one. On the old crow's branch by the river, one more, swinging gently. At the old badger's den, a light by his mended roof. And way down at the foot of the ledge, by the big gray rock, Mama Hedgehog's snow lantern, still glowing at the bottom of the littlest trail.

And there were even more than that. Lights nobody had left. Lights in windows they had never been to. Somebody had seen a little light by their neighbor's door, and they'd lit one too. And then their neighbor had. All over the woods.

"Look how many," whispered Benji.

Shiloh tried to count them. "One, two, three, four… eleven… twenty…" He stopped. "They keep coming," he said softly. Every time he counted one, he found another behind it.

"We only left five," said Ricky, counting. "There are… a whole bunch."

Mr. Monkey felt it bubble up inside him, warm and big. Every one of those little lights had started with the Feast fire. The Feast fire went into the squash lantern. The squash lantern went into the Moose home, and into the snow lanterns, and into the candles. And now it was everywhere, going from door to door, all by itself.

Then Mr. Moose looked up.

Above them, past the dark trees, rose the great gray shape of Everest's cliff. It was the highest place in the whole woods. And it was the only place that was completely dark.

Not one light. Not even one.

Everybody looked up at it.

"That's the only dark one left," said Mr. Monkey softly.

Mr. Moose didn't say anything for a long time. He was thinking. About the little hill behind the maple. About the littlest trail. About the frost staircase and the rope tied to the little pine. They had climbed so far. But it was still so far to go.

"That's where it needs to go," he said at last. "The lantern. All the way to the top."

"Tomorrow?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose looked at the cliff. Then he looked at his friends, and at all the little lights below. "Tomorrow," he said.

They rode the Tail Train back down the dark path, slower this time, because everybody was tired and happy. Back in Sunny Square, Mama Monkey had hot acorn cocoa waiting, and they drank it by the two candles, and nobody talked very much, because nobody needed to. Bruno drank his in one gulp and had a cocoa mustache all the way home.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "I lit the second candle from the first one. Mama painted me saying yes. We rode the Tail Train up Lookout Ledge, and Hazel sneezed, and the whole train jumped. We saw lights all over the woods, even ones we didn't leave. And Everest's cliff is the only dark place left."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And all over Wanderful Woods, little lights glowed in little windows, while high above them all, the dark cliff waited under the stars.

Let's Talk

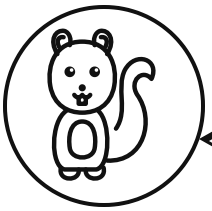
1. From the top of Lookout Ledge, the friends saw lights everywhere. Where did all those lights come from?
2. Tonight we light the second candle. What is something you hope for?

Your Turn

Get ready to give hope! Draw someone you could help keep going this week.

I can help _____ keep going.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do cows make on a hot day?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

l k i m

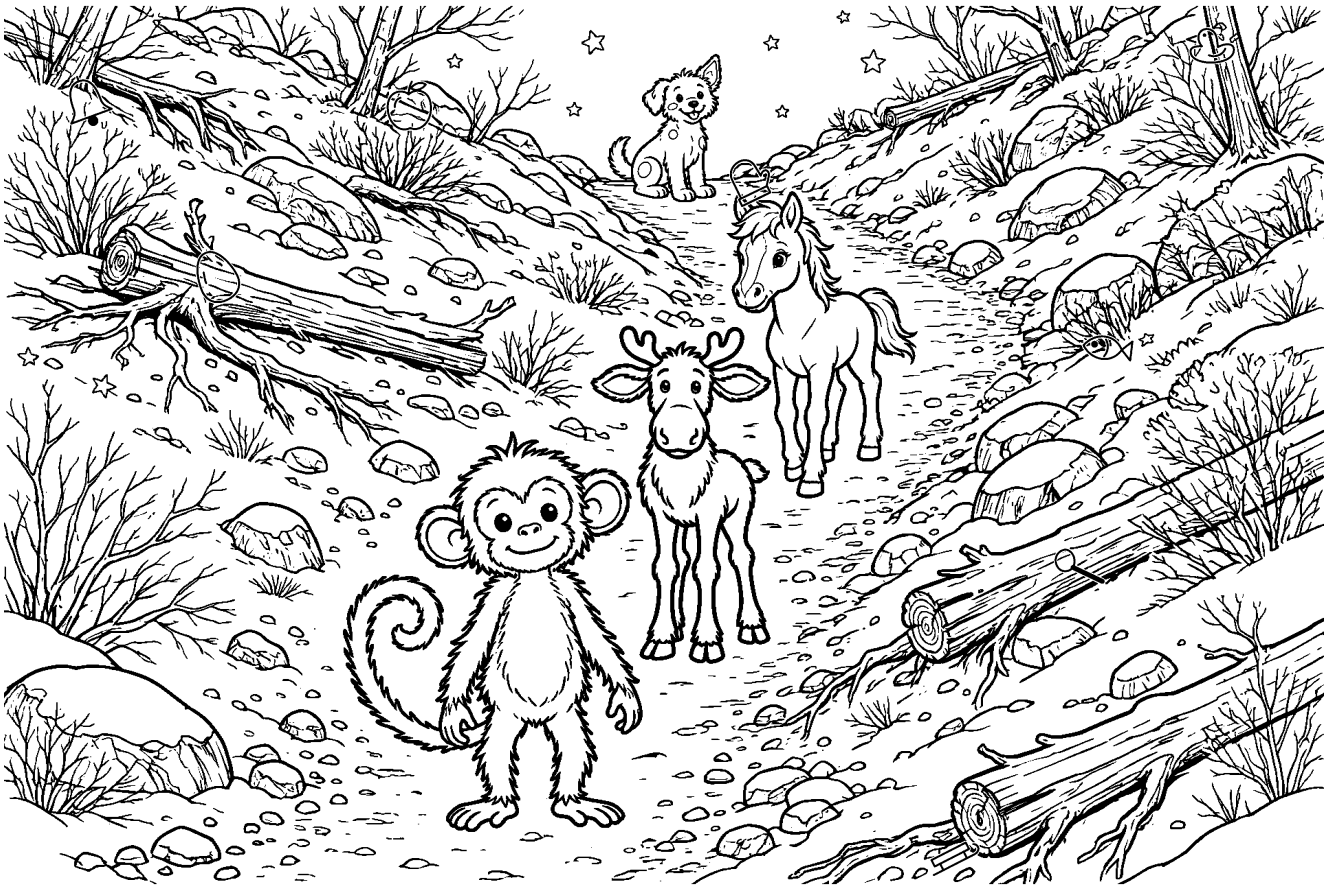
CLUE



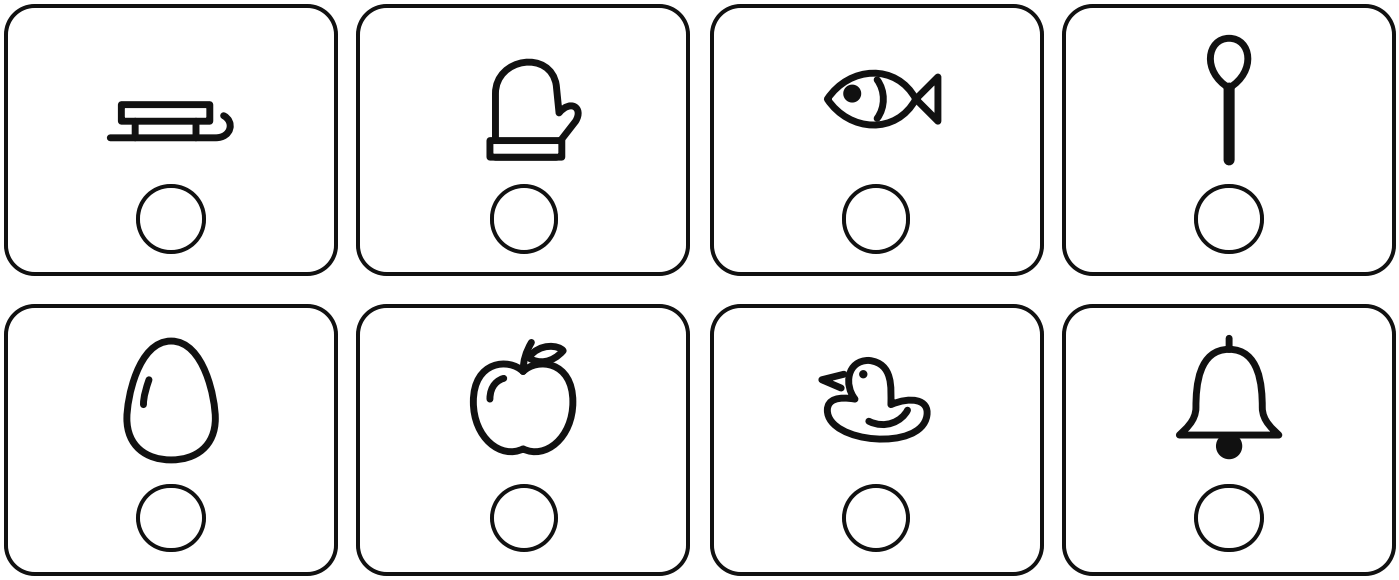
____ ____ ____ ____ shakes!

Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Hop On!

 grips  .  grips  .  grips  .

Up the hill went the pals. Hop, hop, hop!

 sniffs. “Ah… ah… AH!”

The pals jump! Ha!

At the top, the pals look.

Lamps! Lots and lots of lamps!

But the big cliff is dim.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey  Hazel  Dottie



For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: look.

Color a star each time you read it.

My Thank-You

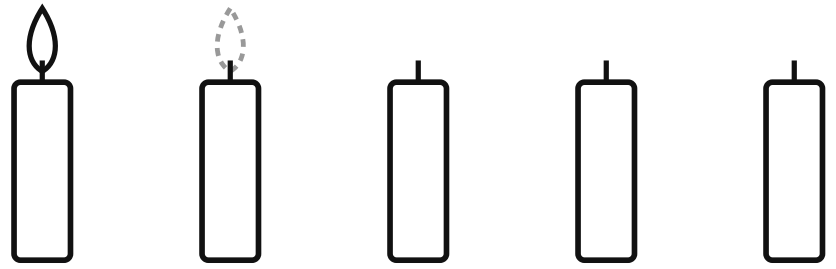
Trace the dark word, then the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you,

for helping me keep going

Tonight's Candle

Tonight the second candle gets its light from the first one. One little light can light another!



Dec. 4 **Dec. 11** Dec. 18 Dec. 25 Jan. 1

Trace the flame on candle 2! Candle 1 is already lit.

THE CANDLE WORDS: A GROWN-UP SAYS EACH LINE, AND YOU SAY IT BACK

Grace comes in. (cup your hands)
Gratitude sees it. (point to your eyes)
And graciousness passes it on. (open your hands to the candle)

Grown-up: "What do we pass on?" You: **Generosity and hope!**
One light. Passed along.

DRAW YOUR FAMILY WITH YOUR CANDLES

☆ Celebration Night

Tonight your family celebrates. It has three parts:

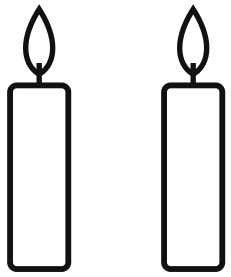
1. **Remember:** The second candle
2. **Rejoice:** The Opening
3. **Ready:** Plan the giving

Remember: One Light Lights Another

This week is about hope. Hope means wanting something good and walking toward it, even when you don't know how it will turn out.

Tonight, turn off the lights. (Ask if you can be the one to do it!) Watch a grown-up light the second candle from the first one. Then look around. What can you see by just two little candles?

DRAW WHAT YOU CAN SEE BY TWO CANDLES



Rejoice: The Opening

Your family reads the gold ornaments by candlelight. Find the ones with **your** name on the front. A grown-up can read them with you.

I found ____ gold ornaments with my name!

Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from:
(Draw their face or write their name.)

WHAT DID IT SAY? DRAW OR WRITE IT.

Ready: Plan the Giving

The next three days are for giving: your time, your things, and your words. Plan them with your family. Draw or write your ideas in the boxes.

DEC. 12
Your time

Who is waiting for something hard, like getting well? Spend time with them.

DEC. 13
Your things

What could you give to help someone's hope?

DEC. 14
Your words

Who will you cheer on with your words?

EXTRA, IF YOUR FAMILY DOES IT

Lights Drive Bingo

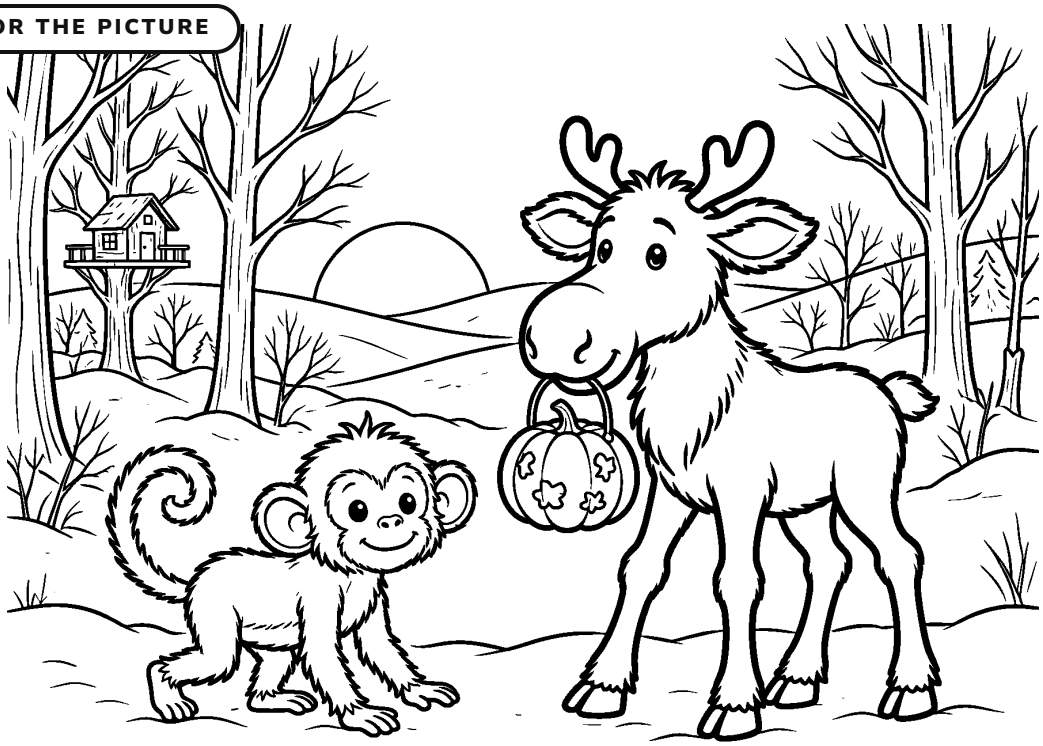
After the Plan, bundle up and go look at Christmas lights! When you see something in a square, color that square. Three in a row is Bingo!

a star	a snowman	a tree with lights
a candle	a lit-up window	a giant present
a reindeer	a bell	a snowflake

Pick your favorite house. Tell your family what you like about it!

The Slow Way Home

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was clear and cold, and the wind was already blowing. It whistled over the snow, *fweeeeee*, and picked up little sparkles of it and carried them across Sunny Square like glitter.

Mr. Moose stood under the Wishing Tree with his sack on his back. Daddy Moose reached up, unhooked the little squash lantern from its branch, and held it out.

"Careful with it," said Daddy Moose.

"I will," said Mr. Moose, and he took the handle gently in his mouth.

Mr. Monkey, Bruno, Ricky and Hazel went too. Up the littlest trail, past Mama Hedgehog's snow lantern. Through the bear-sandwich rocks. Up the gray wall, holding on to Bruno's rope, one ledge at a time, with Bruno carrying the lantern this time so Mr. Moose could use his mouth to hold the rope. Bruno held the lantern out in front of him so carefully, and walked so gently, that he went up the whole wall on his tiptoes.

"I'm being careful," whispered Bruno, on tiptoe.

"Haw haw haw," he whispered, also on tiptoe.

Past the little pine, a long, bare ridge led up toward the cliff. There were no trees up here. Just rock and snow and sky. And wind. Mr. Monkey pulled his yellow hat down tight over both ears.

The wind hit Mr. Moose's antlers and pushed. His antlers were wide, like two big hands, and the wind filled them up like sails. He leaned forward. The wind pushed harder. And Mr. Moose went sliding backward across the snow, slowly, on all four hooves, without even moving his legs.

"Mr. Monkey," he called. "I'm going the wrong way!"

"You're a sailboat!" said Mr. Monkey. "Hee hee hee!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, still sliding, until he bumped gently into Bruno, who stopped him like a big furry wall.

So Mr. Moose turned sideways, so the wind would go through his antlers instead of filling them, and they kept climbing.

Ricky had his list out. Then a gust caught it, and the whole long piece of bark flew straight up into the air and flapped over their heads, with Ricky hanging on to the bottom end.

"My list is a kite!" shouted Ricky.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, and he and Bruno grabbed Ricky's tail and pulled him and his kite back down.

Most of the list was crossed off now. "What if the wind blows the candle out?" Ricky read.

"Don't worry," said Mr. Monkey. "The squash keeps the wind off."

And for a long time, it did. They climbed and climbed. The ridge got steeper. The air got colder. The top of

Everest's cliff got closer, and closer, until Mr. Moose could see the snow on its very edge.

Then the wind came around the side of the ridge, all at once, harder than before. *WHOOOOOSH.* It went right through the little leaf-shaped holes in the squash.

The candle flickered. It bent sideways. It came back. It flickered again.

And it went out.

Everybody stood very still and looked at the lantern. It was just a squash now. A cold, dark squash with holes in it, and a little curl of smoke.

"Can we light it again?" asked Hazel.

Ricky looked around. There was nothing up here to make a fire. No dry twigs. No coals. Just snow and rock and wind. And the sun was already going down toward the hills.

"We have to go back," said Ricky quietly. "Before it gets dark."

Mr. Moose looked up at the top of the cliff. It was so close. He could almost count the stones on it. He looked at it for a long time.

Then he turned around.

They climbed back down the ridge, and down the rope, and down the littlest trail. And when they got to the bottom, everybody was cold and tired and hungry, and Bruno and Hazel and Ricky hurried on ahead toward home, toward the warm fires and the hot suppers.

Mr. Moose walked very slowly. His head was low. He carried the dark squash lantern in his mouth, and he didn't say anything at all.

Mr. Monkey was cold. His fingers were cold. His toes were cold. The tip of his tail was so cold it felt like an icicle. He could see the treehouse lights in the distance, and he knew Mama Monkey would have cocoa. He wanted to run. His legs wanted to run all by themselves.

But he looked at Mr. Moose, walking so slowly, so quietly, with his head down. And he didn't want Mr. Moose to walk home alone.

So he didn't run. He walked slowly too, right beside Mr. Moose, at moose speed, one slow step and then another.

For a long time, they didn't talk. The snow went *krrunch, krrunch* under their feet. The sky turned orange, and then pink, and then purple.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Mr. Monkey finally.

Mr. Moose set the lantern down in the snow. "I had hoped," he said, "that we'd get there today."

"Me too," said Mr. Monkey.

"I practiced on the little hill," said Mr. Moose. "And we found the littlest trail. And you climbed the wall. And we got so close. I could see the snow on the top. And then the light went out." He looked at the dark squash. "Maybe it's too far. Maybe it's just too high for a moose."

Mr. Monkey wanted to say something to fix it. He wanted to say "We'll go tomorrow!" or "It'll be easy next time!" But he didn't know if it would be easy. He didn't know anything about next time. So he didn't say any of that.

He just stayed. He sat down in the snow next to Mr. Moose and leaned against his leg, so Mr. Moose would know he was there. And he let Mr. Moose tell it, all of it, the wind and the sailboat and the candle bending over and going out, and he listened to the whole thing, all the way to the end.

Mama Monkey called from the treehouse. "Mr. Monkey! Supper!"

"In a minute, Mama!" he called back. And he stayed.

When Mr. Moose was done telling it, he was still sad. But it was a little less heavy. He picked up the lantern, and they walked the rest of the way together, slowly, all the way to the Moose home.

The window was glowing gold. Daddy Moose was standing in the doorway.

He didn't ask if they made it. He looked at the dark squash lantern, and he looked at Mr. Moose's low head, and he knew.

"Come here," said Daddy Moose.

He took the squash lantern inside, to the table in the middle of the Moose home, where the fat gold candle was still burning. The light they'd first made from Bruno's wax, kept going one candle after another. The first light the lantern had ever given away. Daddy Moose put a new candle in the squash, and he lit it from the table candle, and handed it back.

The leaf-shaped lights came back on, all over the walls.

Mr. Moose looked at it. "It's lit again," he whispered.

"It's lit again," said Daddy Moose.

Mr. Monkey finally went home for supper. His cocoa was a little cold, but he didn't mind at all.

"What a day," said Mr. Moose to himself that night, in his bed, with the squash lantern glowing on the windowsill. "Bruno carried the lantern on his tiptoes. The wind made me a sailboat. We got so close I could see the snow on the top of the cliff. Then the light went out, and we had to turn around. And Mr. Monkey walked home with me the slow way, the whole way."

And far across Sunny Square, from the treehouse window, came a little whistle. And Mr. Moose hummed back. And together, across the snow, they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And on the windowsill of the Moose home, the little squash lantern glowed again, warm and gold, pointing its leaf-shaped lights up toward the dark cliff.

Let's Talk

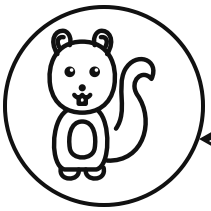
1. Mr. Monkey was cold and wanted to run home. Why did he walk slowly instead?
2. Who could use somebody to walk with them, or just listen?

Your Turn

Give your time! Draw who you will spend time with and what you will do together.

I will give my time to _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do ducks eat with their cheese?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

u q a k c

CLUE



_____ers!

Spot the Difference

Look closely. Can you find 5 differences?





Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Will Not Run

The wind puffs and puffs. The lamp is not lit.

is sad. Back he goes, step... step... step.

can run to Mom. Mom has a hot cup for him!

But will not run. He will go with .

tells it all. sits still and nods.

At 's, Dad lit the lamp. It is lit!

PICTURE WORDS Mr. Monkey Mr. Moose

For grown-ups: New sounds: all (ball, tall) and ck (duck, back). New words to learn by heart: for, go, goes, with.

Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word, then the light words. Who did you give your time to? Write their name on the line.

I gave my time to _____.

What Happened First?

Write 1, 2, 3, 4 in the circles to put the story in order.



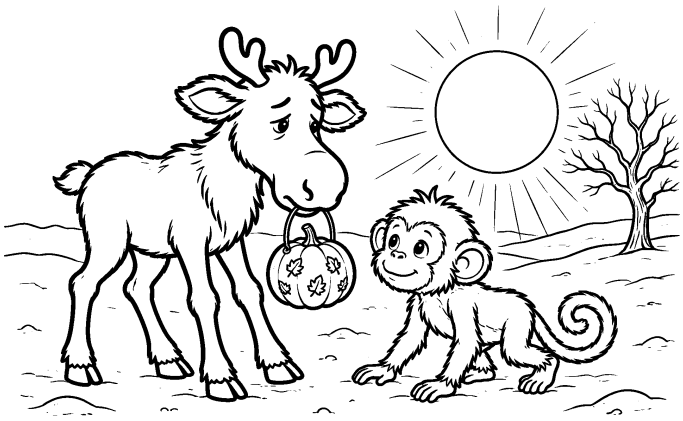
A



B



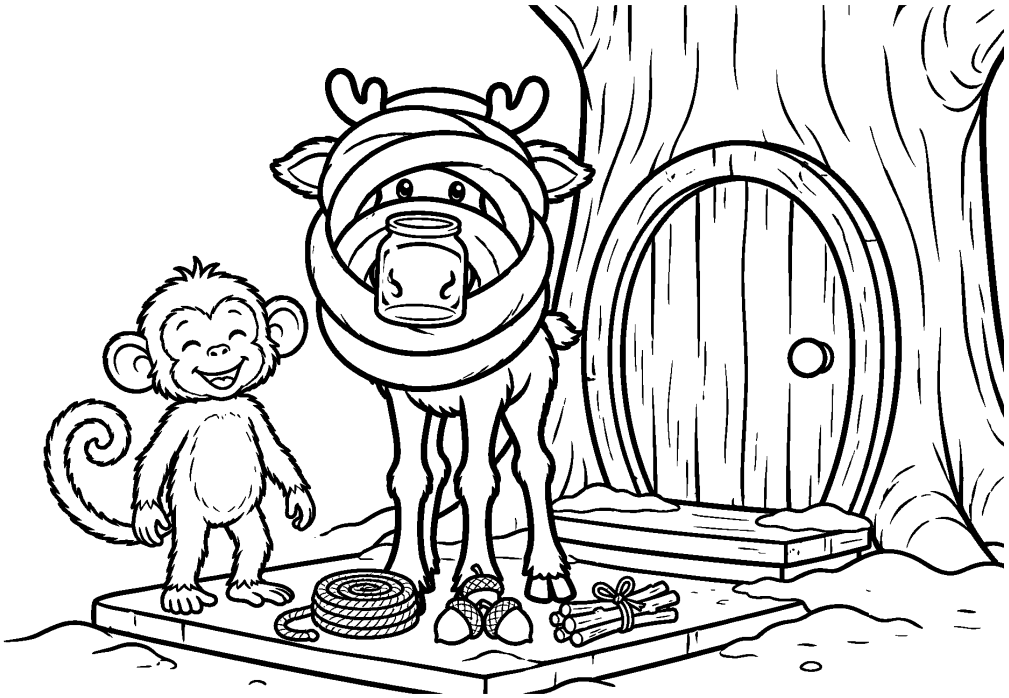
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D

Who Left These?

COLOR THE PICTURE



In the morning, the wind had gone quiet. The snow lay smooth and still over Sunny Square, and the only sound was a little bird somewhere, going *chip-chip, chip-chip*, like it was counting.

Mr. Moose opened his door.

And there, on the doorstep, in the snow, was a pile.

A round glass jar, clear and shiny, with a little handle tied on with vine. A brand-new coil of vine, long and thick and green, with not one fuzzy spot on it. A long, long woolly scarf. A honeycomb, wrapped in a leaf. A little pile of shiny acorns. And a bundle of dry twigs, tied up tight and tucked inside a big leaf so the snow couldn't get them wet.

No names. Not one.

Mr. Moose looked left. He looked right. Nobody was there. Just little prints in the snow, all different sizes, going every which way.

"Mr. Monkey!" he called.

Mr. Monkey came swinging down from the treehouse. "What? What is it?"

"Somebody left these," said Mr. Moose. "At my door. Maybe they got the wrong door."

Mr. Monkey looked at the pile. "There's only one moose on this door," he said. "It's you."

Mr. Moose didn't know what to do with all of it. So he tried it all on.

He put on the scarf. It was so long that he wound it around his neck, and around again, and around again, and it kept going, until he had wrapped it around twenty times and his whole head was a big woolly ball with two antlers sticking out the top.

Mr. Moose tried to say something, but all that came out of the wool was "Mmmf."

He picked up the vine, and it got tangled in his antlers. He picked up the acorns, and they rolled right off his hoof into the snow, *pip-pip-pip-pip*. Then he bent down to sniff the glass jar, and his nose went right into it and stuck.

He stood there on his doorstep with a woolly ball for a head, a vine in his antlers, and a jar on his nose.

"Mr. Moose," said Mr. Monkey. "You look like the Swap pile!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

"Ha-ha-ha," laughed Mr. Moose, all muffled, and the jar fell off his nose and landed in the snow, *ploff*.

Mr. Monkey helped him unwind the scarf, all twenty times around, until his face came out again, pink and surprised.

Mr. Moose sat down on the doorstep and looked at everything spread out in the snow. "Who would give all this," he said slowly, "just for me?"

He really didn't know. It was just his wish. Going up to the top of the cliff was just a thing Mr. Moose wanted. He didn't think it was something anybody else would give

things to.

Mr. Monkey looked at Mr. Moose's surprised face. And he felt something go all warm and tight in his chest, because Mr. Monkey knew something Mr. Moose didn't know yet. Everybody in the woods had watched him practice on the little hill. Everybody had heard about the frost staircase and the wind and the candle going out. And everybody wanted him to get there.

"Let's figure out who," said Mr. Monkey. "You're good at that."

So Mr. Moose looked. Very slowly. Very carefully. The way he looked at everything.

The honeycomb had a big purple paw print on the leaf. "Bruno," said Mr. Moose.

The jar's little handle was tied on with a knot. Over, under, around, and through. "Ricky's knot. And Ricky's jar. It's the shiniest thing he ever found in the river. He keeps it on his shelf."

The acorns were the shiniest, roundest, best ones in the whole woods. "Sammy."

The scarf was soft and curly and smelled a little bit like a sheep. "Shiloh."

The dry twigs were tied with a big, slow, careful knot. "Daddy," said Mr. Moose softly.

Then he looked at the coil of brand-new vine. Long and thick and strong and green.

Mr. Monkey looked at it too. And his mouth fell open.

"That's Daddy's NEW VINE," he said. "My daddy's! He finally made it! He made it yesterday, for himself, so he wouldn't have to swing on the fuzzy one anymore. It was his wish." He looked up at the treehouse. Daddy Monkey's old fuzzy vine was hanging there, the one with twenty lumpy knots in it. "He gave you his new one. He's still on the bumpy one."

Mr. Moose looked at the vine for a long time. He looked at Ricky's best jar, and Bruno's honey, and Sammy's best acorns, and Shiloh's wool. These weren't extras. These were everybody's best things.

"They all think it's worth it," said Mr. Moose very quietly. "Getting the light to the top."

"They all think YOU'RE worth it," said Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose didn't say anything. He just sat there in the snow, and his eyes got a little bit wet.

Then he started thinking. Hard. Not about who. About how.

"The candle went out," he said, "because the wind came through the holes in the squash." He picked up Ricky's jar. "But if the candle sits inside the jar, inside the squash, the wind can't reach it."

He picked up Daddy's dry twigs. "And if it does go out anyway, these will start a little fire to light it again. Even up on the ridge."

He picked up the new vine. "And this is longer than Bruno's rope. Long enough for the steep part of the ridge."

He picked up Shiloh's scarf and looked at it. Then he looked up at his own antlers, and he smiled. "And this," he said, "goes around my antlers. So the wind can't make me a sailboat."

Mr. Moose held the squash lantern steady. Mr. Monkey set Ricky's jar inside it, with the candle standing in the middle, and lit it. They tucked Daddy's twigs into the sack, and coiled Daddy Monkey's new vine on top. And Mr. Monkey wrapped Shiloh's long scarf around and around Mr. Moose's antlers, until they looked like two big woolly trees.

"Now we test it," said Mr. Moose.

Bruno came walking by, very casually, with his paws behind his back. One of them was sticky and purple.

"Bruno," said Mr. Monkey, "can you blow as hard as the wind on the ridge?"

Bruno took a huge breath. His cheeks puffed out bigger than two snowballs. And he blew.

FWOOOOOOOOOOSH.

Snow flew off the roof. Mr. Monkey's fur blew straight back, so his face looked flat. The little green pine by the door bent all the way over.

And inside the jar, inside the squash, the candle didn't even wiggle.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, out of breath. "I couldn't blow it out!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, with his fur still sticking straight back.

That afternoon, Mr. Moose stood up in Sunny Square, where everybody was. He didn't know for sure how to thank people who left their names off. So he just said it to everybody, all at once.

"Thank you," he said. "Whoever you are."

Ricky looked at the sky. Sammy looked at her tail. Shiloh looked at his hooves. Bruno looked at the trees and kept his purple paw behind his back. And Daddy Monkey, up on his old bumpy vine, just smiled.

"Tomorrow," said Mr. Moose. "We go again."

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Somebody left a whole pile on Mr. Moose's doorstep. He tried it all on and looked like the Swap pile, with a jar on his nose. Then he figured out who left everything, even my daddy's new vine. Bruno blew as hard as the wind, and the candle didn't even wiggle. And tomorrow, we go again."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And on the windowsill of the Moose home, the little squash lantern glowed with its candle safe inside Ricky's jar, steady as a star, ready for the wind.

Let's Talk

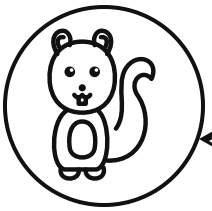
1. Everybody left their best things on Mr. Moose's step. How will each gift help him get to the top?
2. What could you give that would help someone keep going?

Your Turn

Draw something you could give to help someone reach their wish.

I will give _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What kind of ball can't you bounce?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

b l a l

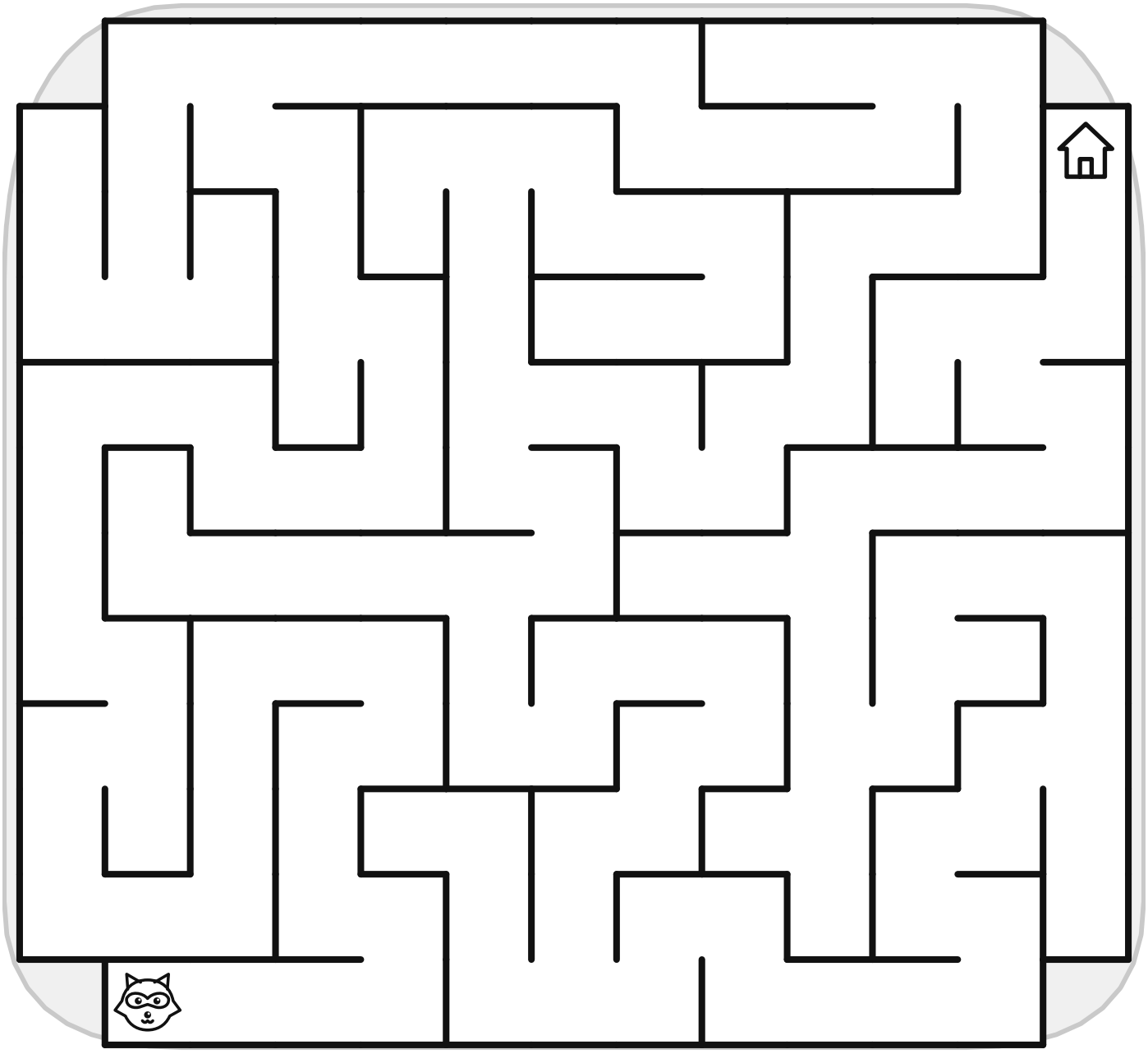
CLUE



A snow ____ ____ ____ ____ !

☆ Ricky's Best Jar

Help Ricky carry his best jar to Mr. Moose's door. Start at Ricky Raccoon.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Gifts on the Step

 gets up. A big stack of gifts is on his step!

A jug, a sack of nuts, and a lot of sticks.

 sniffs the jug. Stuck! The jug is on  !

 tugs and tugs. Pop!

Is the jug from  ? Yes! Are the nuts from  ? Yes!

The pals all want  to get to the top.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey  Ricky  Sammy



For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: want.

Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word, then the light words. What did you give, and who got it? Fill in both spaces.

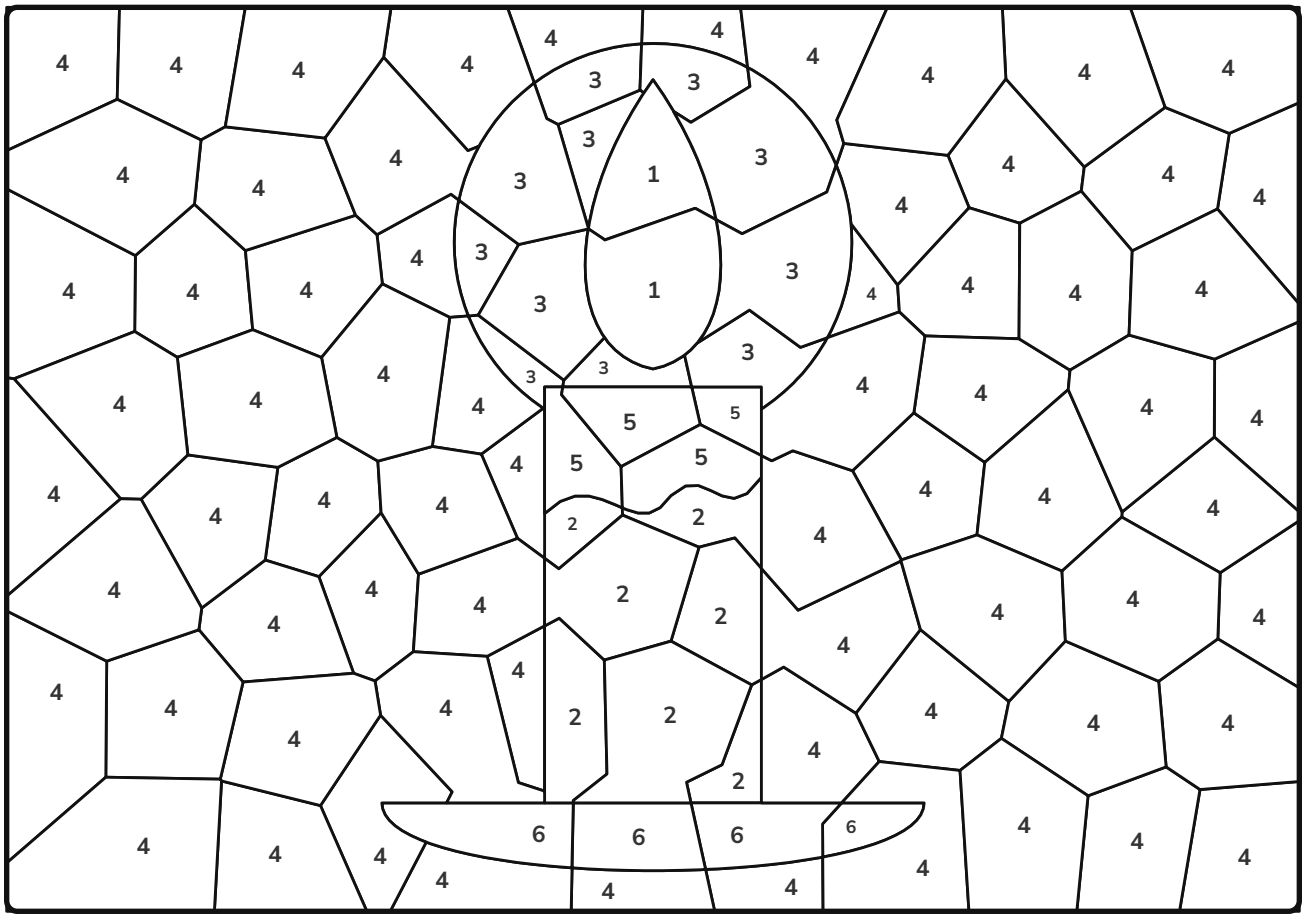
I gave

to .

Song Day: Mystery Picture

Today's song is "O Holy Night." Sing or listen while you color each space by its number.

1 yellow 2 red 3 orange 4 purple 5 pink 6 brown



One Word Each

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was gray and still, and the snow clouds sat low over Wanderful Woods like a big soft blanket.

Everything was quiet. Even the river under the ice went *glub... glub*, very softly, as if it was trying not to wake anybody.

Mr. Moose stood at his door with the squash lantern in his mouth. The candle burned inside Ricky's jar. Daddy Monkey's new vine was coiled on his back. Shiloh's scarf was wound around and around his antlers.

He didn't go.

He stood there. He looked up at the cliff. And all the what-ifs started coming. What if the wind was even stronger today? What if the jar didn't work? What if they got all the way up there again and had to turn around again? He didn't think he could stand turning around again.

"Mr. Moose?" said Mr. Monkey. "Are we going?"

"I don't know," said Mr. Moose. His voice was very small. "What if it's too high for a moose?"

Mr. Monkey felt it right in his chest. Mr. Moose had practiced and practiced. He had walked the little hill and climbed the wall and stood in the wind. He had everybody's best things on his back. And now he was stuck, right here on his own doorstep, before he had even started.

Mr. Monkey wanted so badly to help. He just didn't know how.

Then Benji hopped up, very quietly, and stood on his tiptoes, and whispered something into Mr. Moose's big soft ear.

"What did he say?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose blinked. "He said, 'Brave.'"

Mr. Monkey's eyes lit up. Of course. You couldn't carry somebody up a mountain. But you could tell them what you saw. "Everybody!" he called across Sunny Square. "Come tell Mr. Moose one word! One word for what he's going to be!"

So everybody came. One at a time, they came up to Mr. Moose and said it.

"Steady," said Daddy Moose, in his deep, slow voice.

"Climber," said Ricky. "I'd write it down, but you'd have to carry the bark."

"Brave," said Benji again, just to make sure.

"Strong," said Mama Monkey.

Hazel thought very hard. "Fast," she said.

Mr. Moose looked at his long, slow legs. "I'm not very fast."

"Maybe someday," said Hazel.

"Hee hee hee... *SNORT*!" she added.

Then Bruno came up. He thought harder than anybody. He thought for so long that everybody leaned in to hear.

"Honey," said Bruno.

Everybody looked at him.

"It's my favorite word," Bruno explained.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, and for the first time all morning, his shoulders came down from up around his ears.

Then Mr. Monkey went last. He climbed right up onto Mr.

Moose's back, so he could say it straight into his ear. "I see a moose who climbs," he whispered.

Mr. Moose stood very still. Then he took one step off his doorstep. Then another one.

"Okay," he said. "Let's go."

They went up the littlest trail, past Mama Hedgehog's snow lantern, which was still glowing. They went through the bear-sandwich rocks. They went up the gray wall on Bruno's old rope. And out onto the long bare ridge.

The wind was waiting for them up there. *FWOOOOSH.* It blew over the snow. It blew against their faces. It blew right into Mr. Moose's antlers.

But Mr. Moose's antlers were wrapped in Shiloh's scarf, so the wind went around them, and he didn't slide backward even a little bit. A tiny bird, blown off course, landed right in the woolly scarf on top of his head and decided to stay.

"Mr. Moose," said Mr. Monkey, "you have a bird in your antlers."

"Is it comfortable?" asked Mr. Moose.

The bird fluffed up and closed its eyes.

"Hee hee hee! It's very comfortable," said Mr. Monkey.

The wind blew through the little leaf-shaped holes in the squash. And inside, behind Ricky's glass jar, the candle didn't even wiggle.

They climbed past the place where the light had gone out before. Mr. Moose looked at that spot as he walked by it. He kept walking.

At the very top of the ridge, there was one more steep part. A wall of ice and rock, not very tall, but very slippery. Mr. Monkey went first, the way he had before. He tied Daddy Monkey's new vine to a rock at the top. Ricky came up next, and then Bruno, carrying the lantern. Then it was Mr. Moose's turn.

He put one hoof on the ice. It slipped. He put it on again. It slipped again.

And he stopped. He just stood there at the bottom of the last steep part, holding the vine in his mouth, with his legs shaking. He couldn't make himself take the next step.

"Mr. Moose!" called Mr. Monkey from the top. "You can do it!"

Mr. Moose didn't move.

So Mr. Monkey said a word instead. "BRAVE!"

And Ricky called, "CLIMBER!"

And Bruno, who had been thinking of a better one all the way up, called down, "STEADY! Like your daddy!"

Mr. Moose heard them. He thought about the little hill behind the maple. Up and down, ten times, with Daddy Moose beside him. He thought about the frost staircase, and how Mr. Monkey couldn't see the whole way, only the next step.

He didn't need to see the whole way. He only needed the next step.

He put his hoof on the ice. He held on to the vine. And he took it.

Then the next one. Then the next one.

And then he was at the top.

He stood there, puffing, with a bird in his antlers and the vine in his mouth. In front of him was a wide, flat, snowy place, the very top of Everest's high gray cliff. The highest place in the whole of Wanderful Woods.

"You did it!" shouted Mr. Monkey. He jumped up and down so hard that he fell over backward into the snow, and he lay there making a snow monkey, kicking his feet. "You climbed like a mountain goat! You're a Moose-y Goat-y!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, and the little bird flew off his head.

Then they looked around.

Over by the edge of the cliff, on a bare ledge of rock with no tree and no roof, sat Everest Eagle, all alone in the cold. Beside him, tucked safe under a stone, were two small leaves with empty fronts.

Everest turned his great head and looked at them.

Mr. Moose walked over, slowly and carefully, the way he did everything. He took the squash lantern from Bruno, and he set it down on the rock, right next to Everest and the two leaves.

The light came out through the little holes and spread across the snow in gold leaf shapes. It glowed on Everest's feathers. It glowed on the two leaves. For the first time, the highest place in the whole woods wasn't dark.

Everest looked at the lantern for a long time. Then he looked at Mr. Moose. And he tipped one great wing toward him, slowly, the way an eagle bows.

Mr. Moose turned around and looked out.

Far, far below lay all of Wanderful Woods, white and quiet, with little lights twinkling in little windows everywhere. He could see the Moose home. He could see the Wishing Tree. He could see the whole woods at once. It was his wish. He was standing in it.

Mr. Monkey came and stood next to him, close, so their shoulders touched.

Neither of them said anything at all. They didn't need to.

They climbed back down before the dark came, with the lantern left glowing at the top. And all the way down, every time they looked back, there it was, one small gold light at the very top of the cliff.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose, back in Sunny Square. "I almost didn't go. Then everybody gave me one word, and Bruno's was honey. A bird sat in my antlers. I got stuck at the steep part, and my friends called up the words, and I went. Mr. Monkey called me a Moose-y Goat-y. And now there's a light at the top of Everest's cliff."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And high above Wanderful Woods, at the very top of the highest cliff, a little squash lantern glowed in the dark beside a great quiet eagle, and everyone in the woods who looked up could see it.

Let's Talk

1. Everybody told Mr. Moose one word. Which word would you have told him?
2. What is someone getting better at? Reading? Riding a bike? Being kind?

Your Turn

Write or draw a note. A grown-up can help you write.

Dear _____ ,

You are getting so good at _____! I watched you _____.

_____

_____

_____

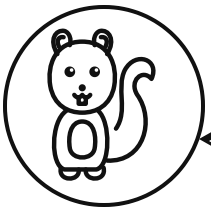
_____

_____

_____

Love, _____

SAMMY'S JOKE



Why was the little train never late?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

c **r** **k** **t** ***a***

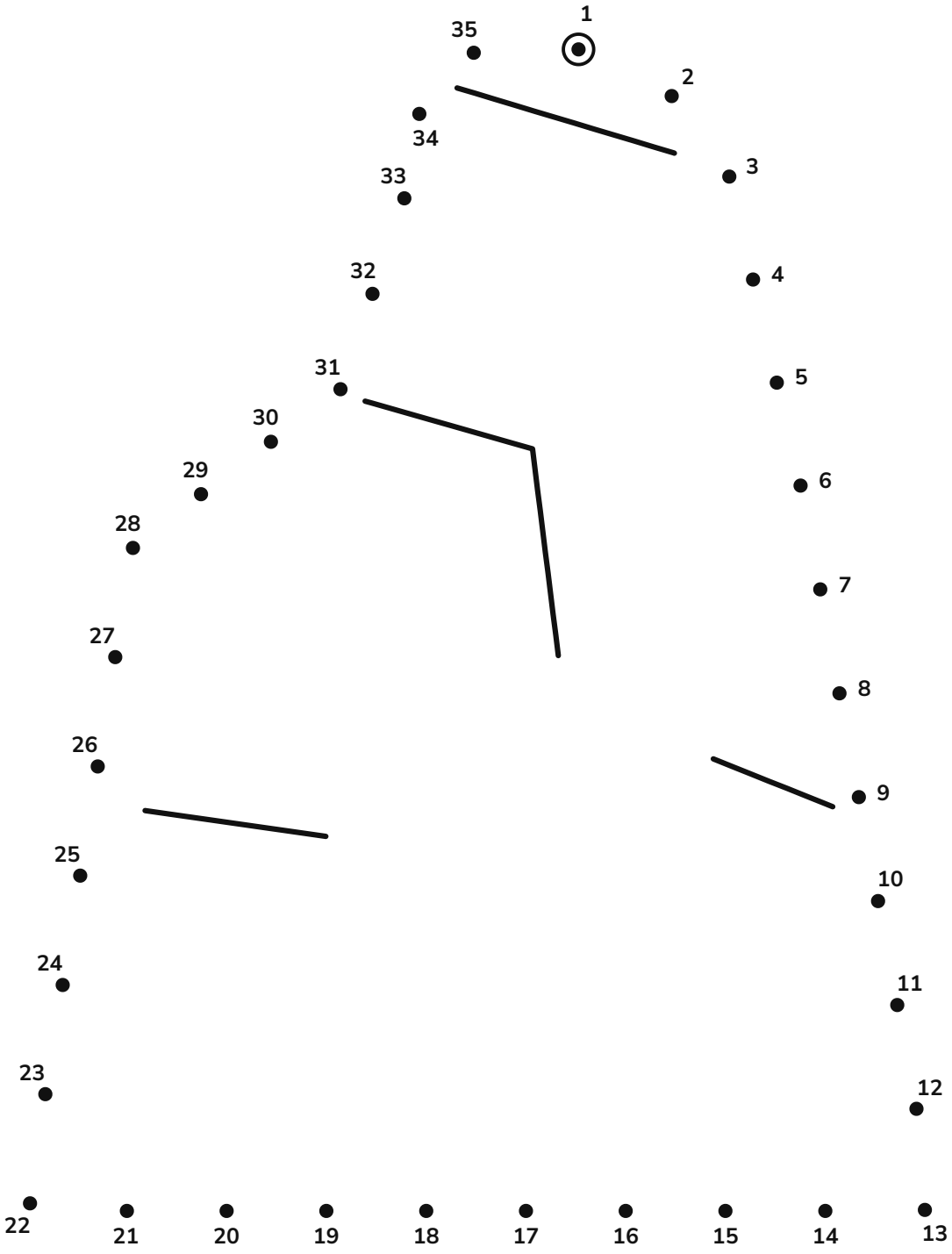
CLUE



It stayed on ___ ___ ___ ___ ___!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find the highest place in the woods. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 35. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Yes, You Can!

 is stuck at the step. Can he get to the top?

"Yes, you can!" says  .

"Fast!" says  . "Yum!" says  . Ha!

"I can see you at the top!" says  .

Step, step, step.  is at the top!

He sets the lamp next to  .

The top of the cliff is lit!

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose  Benji  Hazel  Bruno  Mr. Monkey  Everest



For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: says.

Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word, then the light words. What is someone getting better at? Write it on the line. Then say it to them!

You are getting

so good at _____!

☆ Movie Bingo: The Polar Express

Watch it with a grown-up. Color a square the first time you see each thing. Three in a row is Bingo!

 a train	 a ticket	 a hat
 snow	 **Free!**	 a window
 a present	 a bell	 a tree

For grown-ups: The Polar Express (2004) is rated G. Watch the last few minutes, when the train brings the children home. Some earlier scenes can feel scary to little ones. Santa is a story character here; talk about him the way your family does.



WEEK DONE!

Turn back to this week's map.
Color any stones you missed.



Ladybugs I found in this week's storybook pictures: _____







COLOR THE TITLE!

Peace

Who helped make things right?

Peace is when nothing is missing and nothing is broken.

THIS WEEK'S STORIES

1. **Tuesday, Dec. 15:** One Whole Evening
2. **Wednesday, Dec. 16:** Ten More Steps
3. **Thursday, Dec. 17:** The Loud Peace and the Quiet One
4. **Friday, Dec. 18:** The Third Candle
5. **Saturday, Dec. 19:** The Night on the Hill
6. **Sunday, Dec. 20:** The Truce Moose
7. **Monday, Dec. 21 (the longest night):** The Longest Night

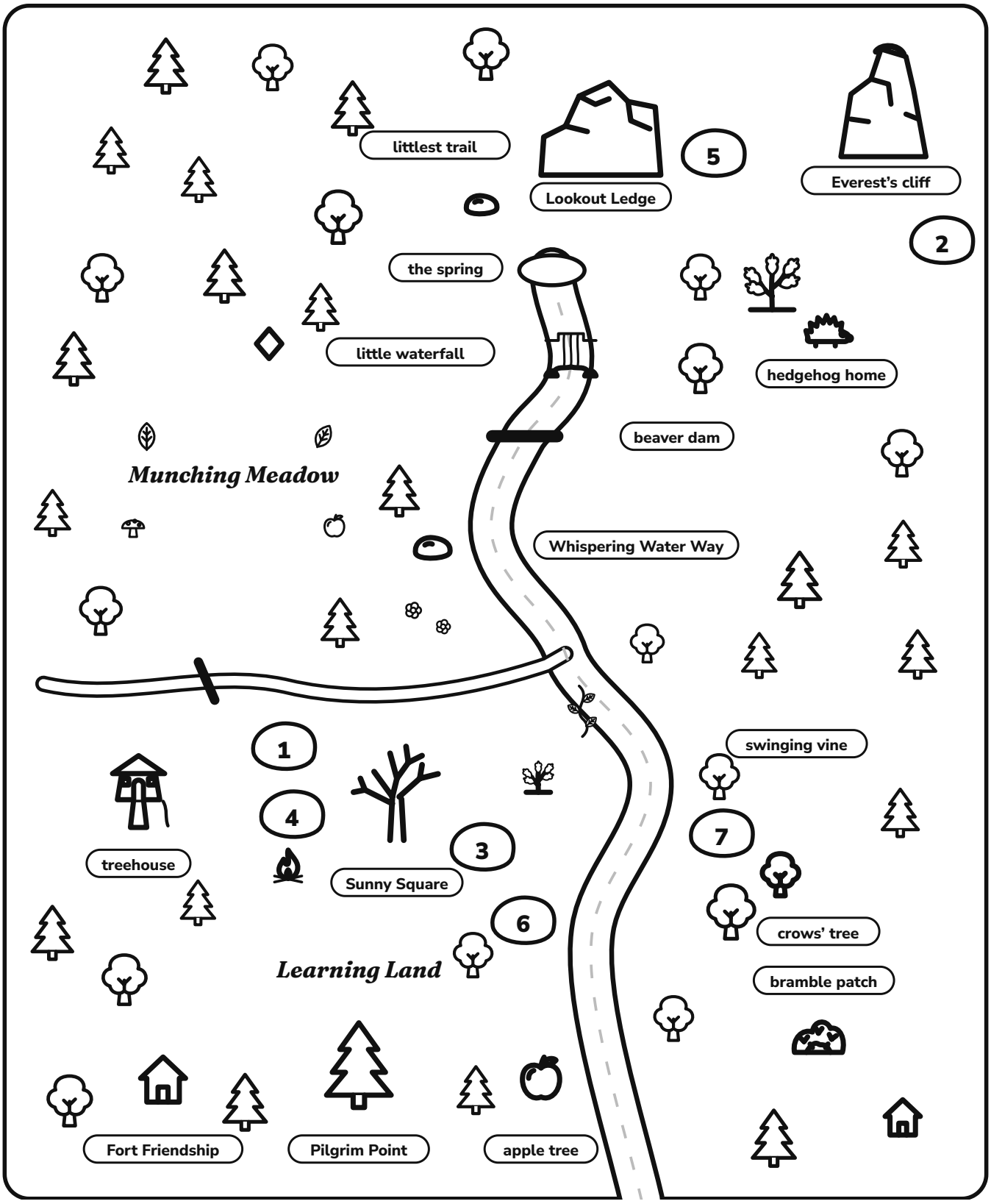
THIS WEEK'S THANK-YOU:

Thank you, _____, for making things right.

Then we give: time, things, and words.

Where We'll Go This Week

Each day, find the stone with that day's number and color it. It shows where the day's story happens!



One Whole Evening

COLOR THE PICTURE



Snow was falling softly outside the Moose home, big slow flakes drifting past the window. Inside, the fire popped, the soup pot bubbled, and the whole house smelled like carrots and onions and warm bread.

Tonight, both families were together. Mama and Daddy Moose. Mama and Daddy Monkey. And Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey, sitting side by side at the table with the paint and a pile of gold birch-bark circles, making thank-yous before supper.

Mr. Moose was painting very slowly, the way he did everything. He had the little pot of gold paint right next to him.

Mr. Monkey wanted the gold too. He'd been waiting. And waiting. And Mr. Moose was so slow.

So Mr. Monkey reached over and grabbed it.

Mr. Moose had his brush in the pot at that exact moment. The pot tipped. And gold paint went everywhere: all over Mr. Moose's circle, all over the table, and right up onto the end of Mr. Moose's nose.

Mr. Moose looked down at his circle. It had been Daddy Moose's face. Now it was just a big gold puddle.

"Mr. Monkey," he said quietly. "I was painting that for Daddy."

Mr. Monkey looked at the puddle, and at Mr. Moose's sad face with a gold nose on the end of it, and his tummy dropped right down to his feet. He hadn't asked. He'd just grabbed. And now Mr. Moose's circle was ruined.

He put the paint pot down.

"I shouldn't have grabbed it," said Mr. Monkey. "I'm sorry. I won't grab again. How can I make it right?"

Mr. Moose was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "Yeah, I didn't like that. But we all make mistakes. Thank you for apologizing. I forgive you."

"Can I help you paint a new one?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"Yes," said Mr. Moose. "You can hold the circle still."

So Mr. Monkey held a fresh circle very, very still while Mr. Moose painted, and he didn't touch the paint pot once. Then he looked at Mr. Moose's nose. It was still bright gold.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "Your nose is gold."

Mr. Moose went cross-eyed trying to see it. "Is it shiny?"

"It's VERY shiny."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Mr. Moose has a golden nose!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

Mr. Monkey tried to help. He wiped Mr. Moose's nose with the end of his tail. But that only spread the gold around, and when he looked at his tail, the tip of it was gold too.

"Now we both have gold," said Mr. Monkey.

"Hee hee hee!" he went, and he waved his golden tail like a little paintbrush. Mr. Moose didn't wipe his nose again after that.

Then it was supper.

Mama Moose filled everybody's bowl. Nothing fancy: just soup, and bread, and the gold candle in the middle of the table, the very first one the lantern had ever lit.

Daddy Monkey told the story of his bumpy vine, and how he went *boing, boing, boing* all the way down, and he did the boings with his whole body, right there in his chair. "Hoo-hee-hee! Boing!" laughed Mama Monkey, and she had to put her spoon down. Then Daddy Moose, who almost never told stories, said, "I slipped on the ice this morning and slid all the way to the woodpile on my back," and everybody stared at him, because Daddy Moose never slipped on anything.

"On your BACK?" said Mr. Monkey.

"Like a sled," said Daddy Moose seriously. "With my legs in the air."

"Hee hee hee!"

"Ha-ha-ha!"

And the laugh went all the way around the table, one person to the next, and back to the start.

Then Daddy Moose picked up his bowl and drank the last of his soup. *SSSSLLLUUUURRRRP.* It was so loud and so long that the candle flame leaned over sideways.

"Daddy!" said Mr. Moose.

"It's the best part," said Daddy Moose.

After supper, nobody wanted to get up. Mama Monkey sat by the fire with her feet up. Daddy Monkey leaned back in his chair. Mama Moose hummed while she dried the bowls. And Mr. Monkey looked around at all of it: the fire and the candle and his family and Mr. Moose's family and Mr. Moose's golden nose, all together, all warm.

He felt it in his chest, so big he could hardly hold it. He didn't want it to stop. Not ever.

"NOBODY MOVE!" said Mr. Monkey.

Everybody froze.

Mama Monkey froze with one foot in the air. Daddy Monkey froze with a spoon balanced on the end of his nose. Mama Moose froze holding a bowl over her head. Daddy Moose froze in the middle of a yawn, with his mouth wide open.

"If nobody moves," whispered Mr. Monkey, "then it never has to end."

They stayed frozen. They stayed frozen a long time. Daddy Moose's yawn got bigger and bigger. Mama Monkey's foot started to wobble. Daddy Monkey's spoon started to slide.

And then Mr. Monkey hiccuped. "*HIC!*"

The spoon fell off Daddy Monkey's nose into his lap. Mama Monkey's foot came down. Daddy Moose finished his yawn with a big "*Hwaaaaah*."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "I moved first!"

Mr. Moose was thinking. The evening hadn't stopped being good when everybody moved. It was still just as good. It wasn't good because everybody was still. So what was it?

He looked around the room. Earlier, his circle had been ruined, and he and Mr. Monkey had made it right. The light was at the top of Everest's cliff, where it was supposed to be. Nobody was mad at anybody. Nobody was missing.

"Mr. Monkey," he said softly. "It's not because nobody's moving. It's because everything is where it's supposed to be. Nothing's broken."

Mr. Monkey looked around too. Everything was. Even the gold paint was back in its pot.

"Then let's say thank you for it," he said.

They finished the gold circles together.

Mr. Moose painted one for Daddy Moose. On the back, he painted the night the light went out on the ridge, and Daddy Moose relighting it at the table, and the leaf-shaped lights coming back on all over the walls. "For telling me it was lit again," he said.

Mr. Monkey painted one for Mama Monkey, for the morning last summer when he broke her favorite bowl, and she said it was okay, and they glued it back together. "For forgiving me," he said.

Then Mr. Monkey painted one more, very carefully. On the front, a moose face with a big gold nose. On the back, two friends painting at a table, and one paint pot, sitting very still in the middle.

"That one's for you," he said. "For forgiving me today."

They hung them on the little pine by the door, painted side to the trunk.

Before Mr. Monkey went home, the two of them stood at the window and looked up through the falling snow. Way up at the top of Everest's cliff, the little light was still glowing. But it looked a tiny bit smaller than it had last night.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey at the door, all bundled up. "I grabbed the paint and spilled it on Mr. Moose's nose, and I said sorry, and he forgave me. Daddy Moose slid to the woodpile like a sled and slurped his soup so loud the candle leaned over. I said 'Nobody move,' and then I hiccuped. And everything was right where it was supposed to be."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And inside the Moose home, the gold candle burned low and warm on the table, while far above the snowy woods, a smaller gold light glowed at the top of the highest cliff.

Let's Talk

1. Mr. Monkey grabbed the paint. What did he say to make it right?
2. Who in our house has made things right with you, or forgiven you?

Your Turn

Make a gold ornament for someone in our house who made things right with you. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



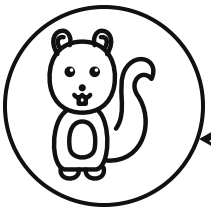
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is gold. Color it yellow or gold when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE

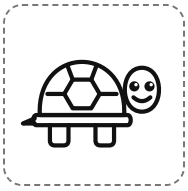


Why did the turtle cross the road?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

l e h s l

CLUE



To get to the _____ station!

Draw Dottie Dog!

The gray parts are new. Draw them in!

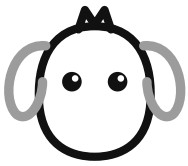
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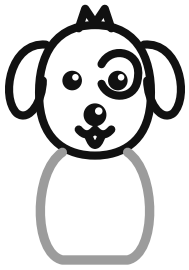
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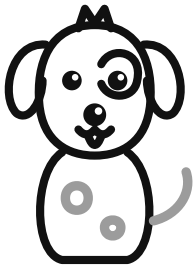
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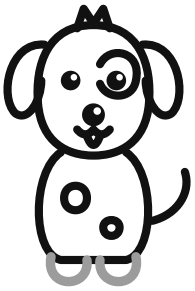
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7



8



MY DOTTIE DOG

Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Grabs It

 has the pot.  grabs it.

Splash! It is on  !

 is sad.

“I did grab it. That was bad,” says  . “Can I fix it?”

“Yes,” says  . “You can help me.”

Then  and  dab and dab, as glad as can be.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Mr. Moose

For grown-ups: New sounds: sh and th (ship, this). New words to learn by heart: be, me.



Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

for making things right.

☆ Would You Rather?

Circle your pick in each row. Tell why!



have a gold nose

OR



have a gold tail



balance a spoon on your nose

OR



slide to the woodpile like a sled



freeze like a snowman

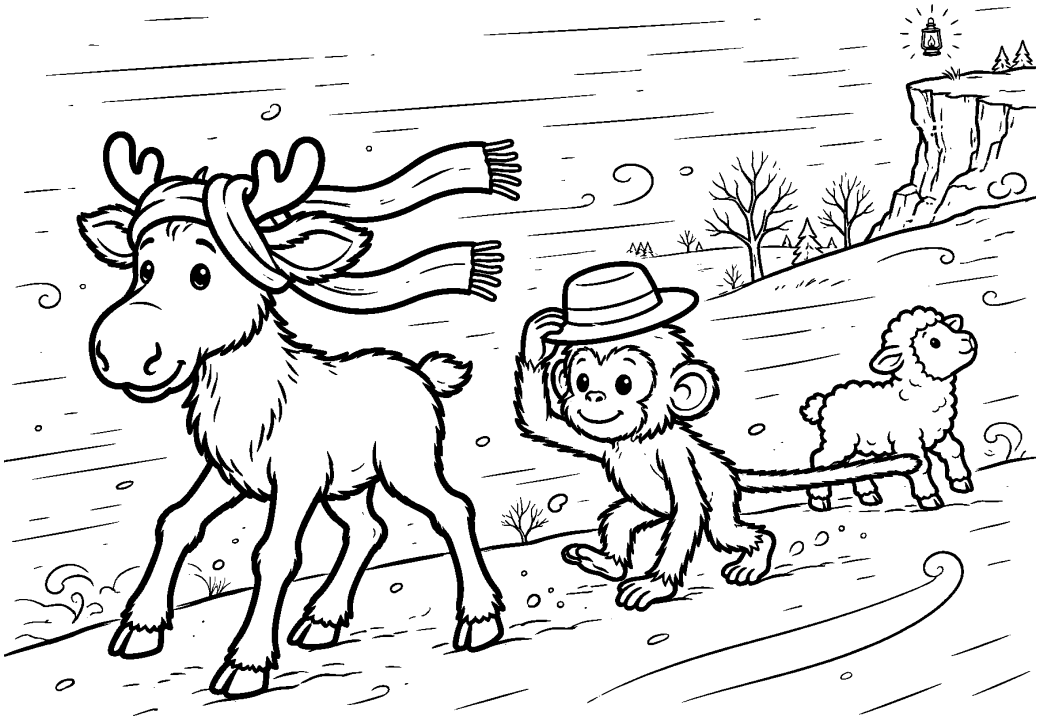
OR



slurp your soup super loud

Ten More Steps

COLOR THE PICTURE



In the morning, the wind came. It roared over Lookout Ledge, *HWOOOOO*, and shook the snow off the treetops in long white streamers, and made the little green pine by the Moose home's door bow over and stand back up, bow over and stand back up.

Mr. Moose stood in the doorway and looked up at the cliff.

The light at the top was very small now. Just a flicker.

"The candle," he said. "It's burning down. It's been burning for two whole days. If nobody brings a new one, it'll go out."

Mr. Monkey looked at the cliff. Then he looked at the wind, pulling at every branch in the woods. "Today?"

"Today," said Mr. Moose. "Before it's gone."

So Mama Moose rolled a new candle, and Ricky brought his jar, and they set off: Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey, Ricky and Bruno and Hazel and Shiloh. Up the littlest trail, past Mama Hedgehog's snow lantern, with the new candle tucked safe in Ricky's jar in Mr. Moose's sack, and Shiloh's scarf wrapped around Mr. Moose's antlers.

The wind followed them the whole way. It pushed at their backs, and then it pushed at their faces. It flapped Bruno's cheeks, *flubba-flubba-flubba*, so hard that he looked like he was talking without saying anything.

"Bruno," said Mr. Monkey, "your face is waving."

"Flubba," said Bruno.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Monkey held on to his yellow hat with one hand, and his tail blew straight out behind him, stiff as a stick. Whichever way the wind blew, his tail pointed. "I'm a weathervane!" he called.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

And then they came to the bottom of the ice trail. The big, shiny, fun one. The one that was really a slide.

Hazel stopped. She looked at the slide. She looked up the littlest trail, steep and rocky and full of wind. She looked at the slide again.

"Just one slide," she said. "Just one. Then I'll catch up."

And off she went. *WHEEEEEEEEEE*, all the way around the hill, faster and faster, and *FOOMF* into the snowdrift at the very bottom. Right back where they started that morning.

She popped up with snow on her nose. "Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" Then she looked up. Everybody was way up the hill now. She had to climb the whole first part all over again.

So she did. All by herself, huffing and puffing, she climbed back up and found them. "That was fun," she panted. "But it went the wrong way."

"It always goes the wrong way," said Ricky.

They kept going. Up the gray wall, on Bruno's rope.

Out onto the long bare ridge. And up there, the wind was the strongest it had ever been. It blew so hard that the friends had to hold on to each other in a line. It blew snow in their eyes. It blew right through their fur.

Mr. Monkey stopped.

He was cold. He was so cold. His fingers hurt, and his toes hurt, and he couldn't feel the tip of his tail at all. He thought about the Moose home, and the fire, and the soup. He thought about the slide, and how easy it would be to just go back down.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Maybe we should go home."

Mr. Moose didn't know what to say. He was cold too. His legs were tired too. And he could see the light at the top, flickering, flickering, so small.

Then a small voice spoke up behind them. It was Shiloh, who almost never spoke up about anything.

"Look up," said Shiloh softly.

Everybody looked at him.

"When I'm scared," said Shiloh, "my mama says, look up. Look at what you really want."

So Mr. Monkey looked up. Way up, at the top of the cliff, at that tiny flickering light. What did he really want? He wanted to be warm. But more than that, way more, he wanted Everest's light to keep shining. He wanted the highest place in the woods to have a light in it on the longest night of the year.

"I want the light to stay on," said Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose thought about the slide. They knew where the slide went. Around and around, and back to the bottom. Going home now would be warm. But it would leave the light to go out.

"Then this is the right path," said Mr. Moose slowly. "Even if it's hard. It's still the right one."

Mr. Monkey looked at the long ridge ahead. It was so far. He couldn't do the whole thing. Not all at once.

"I can't do all of it," he said. "But I can do ten more steps."

"Ten more steps," said Mr. Moose.

They said it out loud, all of them, into the wind:

"Look up! Right path! Ten more steps!"

And they took ten more steps. Then they stopped, and they said it again. "Look up! Right path! Ten more steps!" And they took ten more. Bruno said it loudest, so loud the wind carried it all the way down the ridge. Hazel said it while she walked. Ricky counted the steps out loud, "One, two, three…", until Bruno started counting too, "four, five, nine, twelve, ELEVENTY," and Ricky lost track.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "That was ten!"

"I don't know what that was," said Ricky.

"It was ten and eleventy more," said Bruno.

Sammy came zipping along the ridge behind them, because Sammy could zip anywhere, even in a windstorm. "Hey! What did the tree say to the wind?" And the wind grabbed her and blew her right back down the hill before she could finish.

From far, far away came her voice: "LEAF ME ALONE!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, and that made the next ten steps go faster.

Look up. Right path. Ten more steps. Over and over and over.

And then they were at the top.

The squash lantern sat on the rock beside Everest, just where they had left it. Inside it, the old candle was so short it was almost a puddle, and the little flame was bending and shivering. Everest was sitting right beside it with one great wing held out, trying to keep the wind off the flame.

Mr. Moose took the new candle out of Ricky's jar and lit it from the very last flicker of the old one, just before it went out. He stood it inside the jar, inside the squash. And the flame stood up straight.

Everest folded his wing. He looked at the friends, and he tipped one wing toward them, slowly, just once.

"That was better than the slide," said Hazel, puffing, with snow all the way up to her ears. "Way better."

"It went the right way," said Ricky.

All the way back down, they could see it behind them, not a flicker anymore, but a steady little light, shining in the wind.

That night, by the little green pine, they painted red circles. Mr. Monkey painted Shiloh on the front, curly and small. On the back, he painted a long windy ridge, a line of friends holding on to each other, and one little sheep at the back, pointing up.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "The wind made Bruno's face wave and my tail into a weathervane. Hazel took the slide and had to climb all the way back up. I wanted to go home, but Shiloh said look up. So we said look up, right path, ten more steps, over and over. And the wind blew Sammy away in the middle of her joke."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And high above Wanderful Woods, the new candle burned steady inside the jar inside the squash, while a great eagle sat beside it in the dark, watching it shine.

Let's Talk

1. When Mr. Monkey wanted to quit, what did Shiloh tell him?
2. Who outside our house helped make things right for you?

Your Turn

Make a red ornament for someone outside our house who helped make things right for you. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



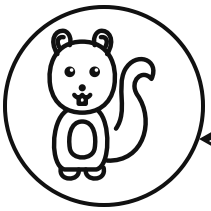
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is red. Color it red when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What kind of room has no doors?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

m s u h

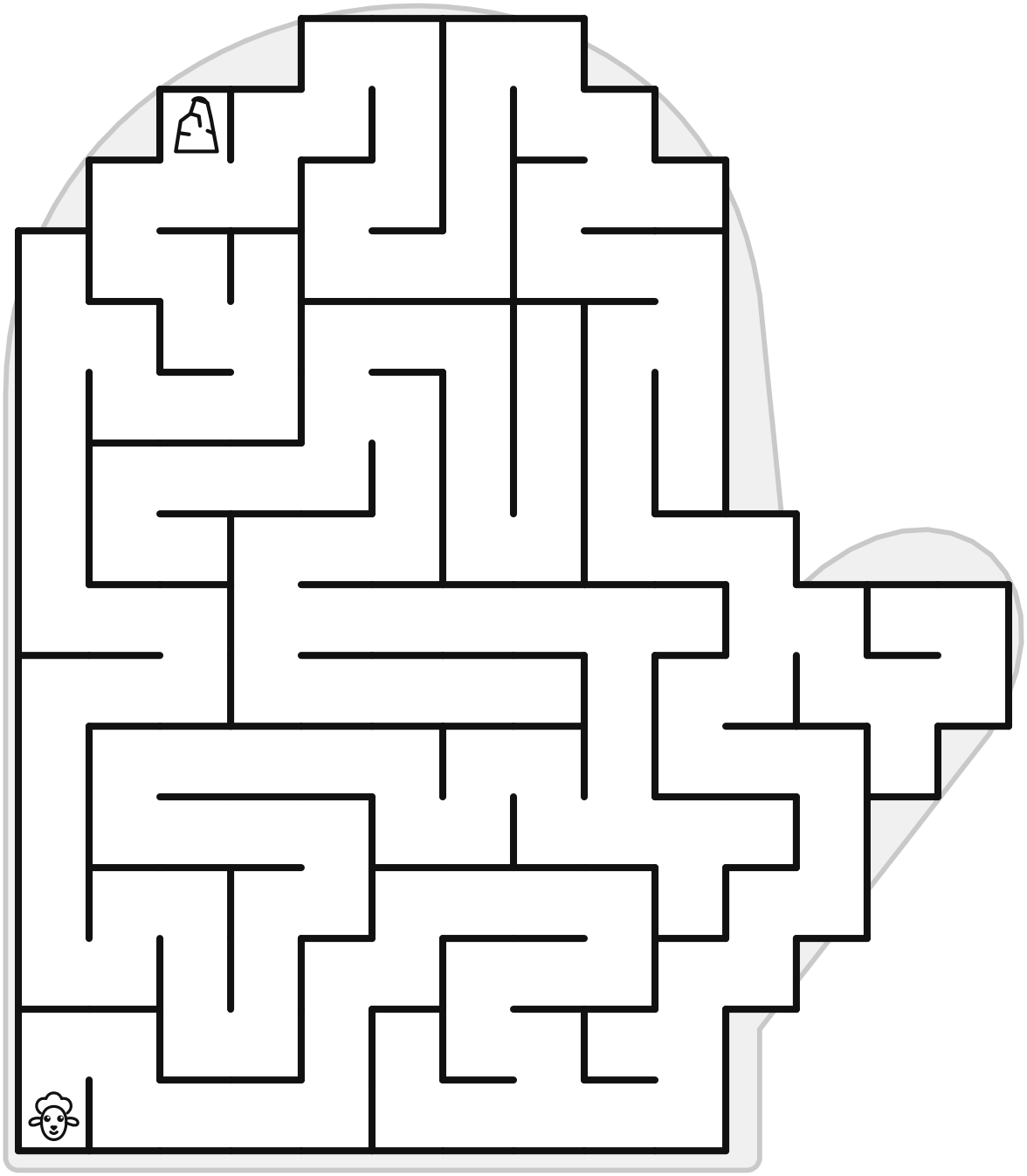
CLUE



A ____ ____ ____ ____ room!

☆ Ten More Steps

Help the friends up the windy ridge to the light at the top. Start at Shiloh Sheep.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Ten Steps!

The wind puffs and puffs.  wants to go back.

“Look up,” says  .

 looks up. The lamp at the top is dim.

“Ten steps,” says  . “Then ten, and then ten!”

Step, step, step… ten! Step, step, step… ten!

Then the pals are at the top.

The lamp is lit, and it is big!

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Shiloh

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

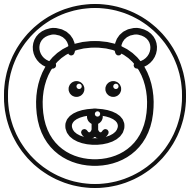
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

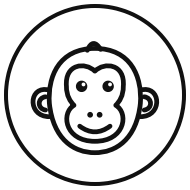
for making things right.

♡ Feelings Match

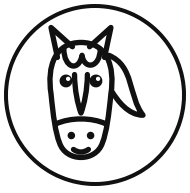
How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



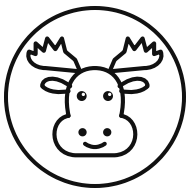
Bruno, when the wind made his face wave



Mr. Monkey, so cold he wanted to go home



Hazel, when she saw she had to climb the whole hill again



Mr. Moose, lighting the new candle at the top



surprised



sad



proud



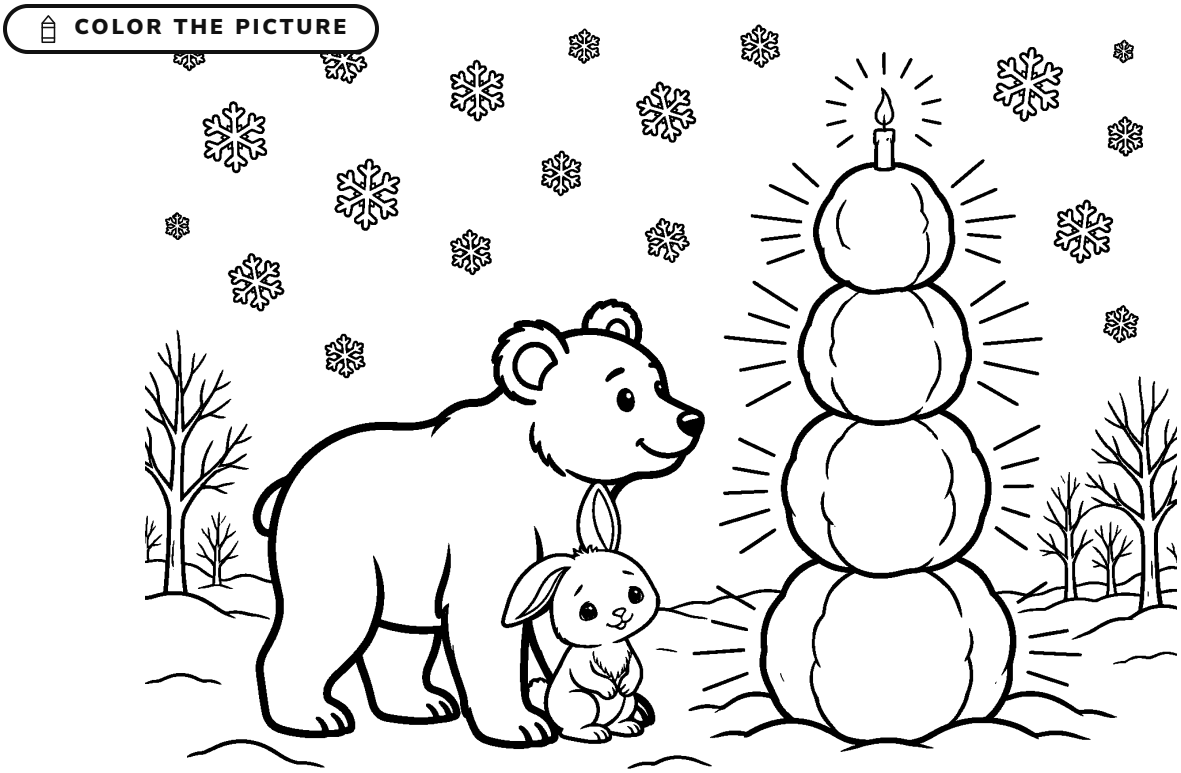
sleepy



silly

The Loud Peace and the Quiet One

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was bright and cold and perfect for snowballs. The snow in Sunny Square was the packing kind, the kind that squeaks when you squeeze it, *squik, squik*, and holds together just right.

So everybody was having a snowball fight.

Snowballs flew everywhere. Mr. Monkey threw them from the Wishing Tree. Sammy threw them from three trees at once, zipping between them. Mr. Moose didn't throw at all. He just held very still, and every snowball that missed somebody else landed on his antlers, until he was wearing a big white snowball crown.

"Mr. Moose," said Mr. Monkey from the tree, "you're catching them with your head!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, and the crown wobbled.

One of Sammy's snowballs missed everybody and landed, *plop*, right in Daddy Monkey's mug of cocoa, where he was sitting on the Listening Log, watching.

Daddy Monkey looked down into his mug. "Now it's snow-coa," he said, and he drank it anyway.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!" went Sammy, already three trees away.

Then a big clump of snow landed right on top of Benji.

Benji sat there in the snow with only his ears sticking out. "Who did that?" he asked in a tiny voice.

"Dottie did!" said Hazel.

"I did NOT!" said Dottie. "Hazel did!"

"I did NOT!" said Hazel. "You did!"

"YOU did!"

And then they were both shouting, and Ricky was shouting about who started it, and Sammy was shouting just because everybody else was shouting, and the snowball fight wasn't fun anymore at all.

Bruno stood up. He was very big. He climbed up onto the biggest stump in Sunny Square. And he took the deepest breath anybody had ever seen.

"PEACE!" roared Bruno.

The roar rolled across Sunny Square. It rolled across the river. It rolled all the way to Lookout Ledge, and hit the rocks, and came bouncing back.

"...PEACE... peace... peace..."

Bruno looked around. "Who said that?"

"...said that... that... that..."

"Stop copying me!" said Bruno.

"...copying me... me... me..."

"I said STOP!"

"...STOP... stop... stop..."

Bruno crossed his arms and glared at Lookout Ledge. Lookout Ledge didn't say anything else.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, holding on to the tree. "Bruno's fighting with the hill!"

"Haw haw haw," went Bruno, a little embarrassed.

But the shouting had stopped. Everybody was looking at Bruno now. So Bruno made a rule.

"Everybody SIT DOWN," he said, in his biggest voice.

"Nobody throws anything. Nobody says anything. That's peace."

And because Bruno was so big, everybody did it.

Hazel sat on one stump. Dottie sat on another stump, as far away from Hazel as she could get. Ricky sat on a rock with his arms crossed. Sammy sat on a branch with her tail all puffed up. Benji sat alone in the snow, still wet, still not knowing who had done it.

Nobody threw anything. Nobody said anything. Sunny Square was very, very quiet.

"See?" said Bruno proudly. "I made peace."

Mr. Monkey climbed down out of the tree and looked around. It was quiet. But it didn't feel good. It felt like something was still stuck. Hazel wouldn't look at Dottie. Dottie wouldn't look at Hazel. And Benji was all by himself, shivering.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "It's quiet. But it doesn't feel like peace."

Mr. Moose shook the snowball crown off his antlers and thought about it. Bruno had made everybody stop. That was true. But stopping wasn't the same as being okay. He thought about the soup supper, two nights ago, when everything had been right. It hadn't been good because everybody was quiet. It had been good because nothing was broken. Here, something was still broken. Nobody even knew what had really happened to Benji.

"Benji," said Mr. Moose gently. "What landed on you?"

Benji's ears twitched. He looked up, slowly, at the big old oak right above where he had been sitting. And he said, very quietly, the quietest thing anybody had said all morning:

"I think it was the tree."

Everybody looked up at the oak. Its branches were heavy with snow. And just as they looked, another big clump slid off a branch and dropped, *FLUMPF*, right on top of Bruno's head.

Bruno stood there with snow all over his face.

"It was the tree," said Bruno.

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" went Hazel.

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie.

And they looked at each other. Neither of them had done it. They'd been shouting at each other for nothing.

"Oops," said Hazel.

"Oops," said Dottie, and she wagged.

Mr. Monkey felt the stuck feeling come unstuck, all at once. Bruno's loud peace had made everybody quiet. But Benji's quiet little truth made everybody okay.

"Now let's make something," said Mr. Monkey. "All of us. Together."

"What?" asked Sammy.

Mr. Moose looked up at the cliff, where the little light was shining steady. "A lantern," he said. "Out of snow. A really big one."

Everybody rolled snowballs: big ones, middle ones, little ones. Bruno rolled the biggest ones and set them down gently, very gently, for the bottom. Hazel and Dottie rolled the middle ones together, side by side. Ricky figured out how to stack them in a circle, leaving little gaps for the light to come through. Sammy carried the littlest snowballs up to the top. And Benji put the very last one on.

It was a snow lantern as tall as Daddy Moose. Mr. Monkey climbed up inside the top with a candle and lit it from the gold candle in the Moose home, and the light came out through all the little gaps between the snowballs, and lit up the snow all around them in a ring of tiny golden stars.

As the sun went down, it started to snow.

It wasn't loud snow. It wasn't windy snow. It was the quietest snow there had ever been, big soft flakes floating straight down, so slowly you could watch each one. It fell on the stumps where everybody had been sitting apart. It fell on all the stomped-up places from the snowball fight, and the holes, and the piles. And little by little, it covered all of them.

By the time it was dark, Sunny Square was smooth and white and new again, as if nobody had ever been angry there at all.

Everybody stood together inside the ring of golden light and watched it fall. Hazel stood next to Dottie. Benji stood next to Bruno, under his big arm, out of the snow.

Then Bruno looked over at Lookout Ledge. He thought about it for a moment. And then he whispered, very softly, "Peace."

Nothing came back. Not even a little echo.

"It didn't copy me," whispered Bruno, surprised.

"Hee hee," went Benji.

That night, by the little green pine, they painted white circles. Mr. Moose left the front of his empty again, and on the back, he painted Sunny Square covered in smooth new snow, and a ring of tiny lights, and all his friends standing together inside it.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Mr. Moose caught snowballs with his antlers. Hazel and Dottie had a big fight about who hit Benji. Bruno roared 'PEACE' and had a fight with the hill. Then Benji said it was the tree, and the tree dumped snow on Bruno, too. We made a giant snow lantern. And then the quietest snow covered up everything."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang, softly, so they wouldn't wake the snow:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And in the middle of Sunny Square, the giant snow lantern glowed through the falling snow, while far above it, on the top of the highest cliff, a smaller light shone steady back.

Let's Talk

1. Bruno made everybody be quiet. Why did it still not feel like peace?
2. The quiet snow covered everything and made it new. What else makes you feel peaceful that nobody made?

Your Turn

Make a white ornament for a gift nobody made. Front: what it is. Back: draw it.

FRONT: WHAT IT IS



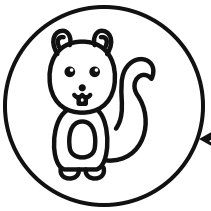
BACK: DRAW IT



This one stays white. When you are done, trace its edge with a gray crayon.

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do you call a snowman's puppy?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

h u s l s

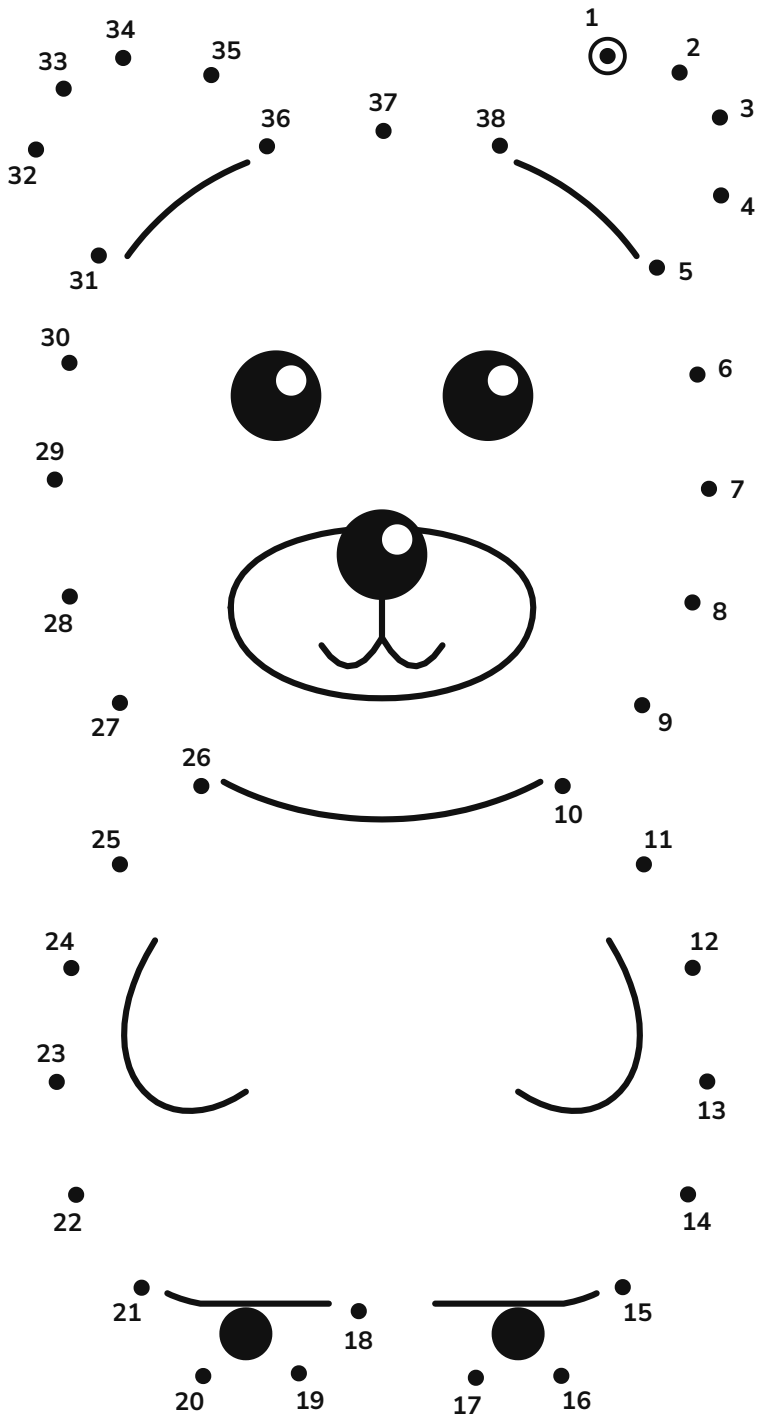
CLUE



A _____ _____ puppy!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find the friend who roared "PEACE!" Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 38. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Not  , Not 

Flump! A big lump lands on  !

"  did it!" says  . "  did it!" says  .

"STOP!" yells  . "Stop... stop..." says the hill. Ha!

 looks up. "It was not a pal," he says.

Flump! A big lump lands on  ! It fell from up top!

 and  grin. Not mad, just glad.

PICTURE WORDS  Dottie  Hazel  Benji  Bruno



Color a star each time you read it.

My Thank-You

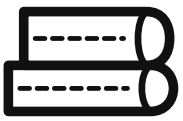
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. What good gift did nobody make? Write it or draw it on the line.

Nobody made

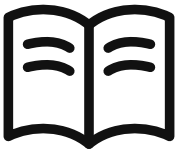
It is a gift.

Quiet Hunt

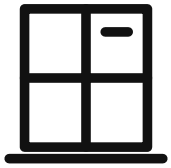
Find these quiet, peaceful things. Check each one!



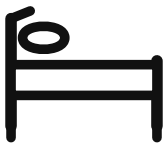
something soft and warm ☐



a book to read slowly ☐



a window to look out of ☐



a cozy spot to sit ☐



a quiet sound, like a clock or the wind ☐



someone to sit close to ☐

The Third Candle

COLOR THE PICTURE



The night was clear and very cold, and the stars over Sunny Square looked sharp, like tiny pieces of ice.

The giant snow lantern from yesterday still stood in the middle of the square, glowing through all its little gaps. And by the fire, on their flat stone, two candles were burning: the first light and the second, each in a fresh candle Mama Moose had lit from the old one before it burned down.

Next to them stood a third candle. It wasn't out in the open like the others. Ricky had found it a home: another clear jar from his river collection, round and thick, with a little ring of smooth stones around the bottom to keep it steady.

"I keep finding jars," said Ricky proudly. "The river just gives them to me."

Everybody gathered close. Hazel was so excited she couldn't stand still. She tried. She stood very still on all four legs. Then one ear twitched. Then her tail swished. Then one hoof tapped, *tik-tik-tik*, all by itself.

"Hazel," said Mr. Monkey, "your hoof is dancing."

"I'm not doing it!" said Hazel. "It's doing it by itself!"

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" she added, and all four hooves started tapping at once.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

Mama Monkey held out a twig. "The first light was for the light we got, given away," she said. "The second was for the light that keeps us walking. Tonight, the third one comes from the second. This one's for the light that holds steady."

Mr. Monkey took the twig and touched it to the second candle. Then, carefully, carefully, he carried the little flame over to the jar and reached down inside it and lit the third candle.

It caught. And it didn't flicker at all. Inside its thick glass jar, behind its ring of stones, it just stood there, straight and gold and still.

Mr. Monkey looked at the third candle, standing so straight. "I bet I can be that steady," he said. He climbed up on a log, stood on one foot, put his arms straight up over his head like a flame, and held very still.

He wobbled. He wobbled more. He fell off the log into the snow.

"Hee hee hee! Candles are hard!" he said.

So then everybody tried. Bruno stood on one foot and tipped over sideways, very slowly, like a falling tree. Sammy couldn't even get started, because Sammy had never stood still in her whole life. Hazel's hooves started dancing again. Ricky lasted the longest, until his nose itched.

But Tessie didn't move at all. Not one bit. She sat perfectly still in the snow by the fire, for so long that everybody stopped trying and turned to look at her.

"Tessie wins," said Mr. Moose. "She's the steadiest."

Tessie didn't answer. Everybody leaned closer. And from

inside her shell came a very small, very slow sound. *Zzzzz… zzzzz…*

"She's asleep," whispered Benji.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, very softly, and they let her sleep until the candles were ready.

"Now," said Mama Monkey, "the gold circles."

Everybody went to the little green pine by the Moose home's door and found the circles with their own faces on them.

Daddy Moose turned his over and saw the night the light went out on the ridge, and himself at the table relighting it, and all the little leaf-shaped lights coming back on. He didn't say anything. He just reached over and rested his big chin on top of Mr. Moose's head for a moment.

Mama Monkey found the broken bowl, glued back together. "Oh," she said. "I'd forgotten all about that bowl." And she laughed and hugged Mr. Monkey and kissed him on the ear.

Shiloh found a red circle with his own curly face on it. When he turned it over and saw the windy ridge, and the little sheep at the back pointing up, he hid his whole face in his wool.

Mr. Moose found one with a moose face on the front. The moose had a big gold nose. He turned it over, and there were two friends at a table, and one paint pot, sitting very still in the middle.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose. "My golden nose!"

"It's still a little gold," said Mr. Monkey, looking closely.

It was. Just on the very tip.

Everybody settled down around the fire. It was warm. The three candles burned side by side. The giant snow lantern glowed. And way up at the top of Everest's cliff, the little light shone steady too.

Bruno looked at all of it. Everybody he loved, all together. All the lights. All the warm. And he felt so happy and so full that it all came out at once in one great big happy sigh.

"*HAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH.*"

It was the biggest sigh in the history of Wanderful Woods. It blew across the fire. It blew across the flat stone. And *fff*, *fff*, it blew out the first candle and the second candle, just like that.

Everybody gasped.

Bruno's eyes went wide. "Oops! Are they okay?"

Mr. Monkey's heart jumped. The first two candles were just two little curls of smoke now. The first light and the second light, gone.

But the third candle didn't even notice.

Inside its jar, behind its ring of stones, the third candle was still burning. Straight and gold and still. Bruno's sigh had gone right over it.

Mr. Monkey looked at the third candle. Then at the two dark ones. He didn't have to run anywhere. He didn't have to climb anything. The light was right there.

"Mr. Moose!" he said. "The third one's still lit!"

"Then we light them again," said Mr. Moose. "From the third one."

Mr. Moose held the twig steady between his teeth, and Mr. Monkey lowered it into the jar until it caught. Then they carried the little flame back, slowly, and lit the second candle. And from the second candle, the first.

Three lights again.

Ricky stood up. "I have a joke," he said. "Why was the candle so sleepy? It was all burned… out."

Nobody laughed. The candles flickered. Ricky looked very pleased.

"Haw haw haw," went Bruno, very quietly, from behind his paws, because he was still a little embarrassed. "Sorry, candles."

"That's why we have three," said Mama Moose, and she patted Bruno's big arm.

Then Tessie woke up, and cleared her throat, very slowly.

"In three nights," she said, "comes the longest night of the whole year."

Everybody turned to look at her.

"The sun goes down early… and it comes up late. And in between… it's dark for a long… long… time." Tessie looked at the three candles. "But after the longest night… the days start getting longer again. Every day… a little more light."

Mr. Moose looked up at the cliff. At the little light, burning at the very top, beside Everest. One candle, all alone up there, in the dark. He thought about how long the longest night would be.

"Mr. Monkey," he said quietly. "Will the light at the top last all through the longest night?"

Mr. Monkey looked up too. He didn't know.

"We'll keep them lit," said Mr. Monkey. "All of them. The ones down here. The one up there. The whole woods. All night."

"All night," said Mr. Moose.

Then everybody had berry pie, and Bruno ate his very carefully, and didn't sigh even once. He held it in so long that his cheeks puffed out like two snowballs.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Ricky found another jar. Hazel's hooves danced by themselves. I lit the third candle from the second one, and Mr. Moose got his golden nose circle. Then Bruno sighed so big he blew out the first two candles. But the third one stayed lit, so we lit them all again. And the longest night is coming."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And by the fire in Sunny Square, three candles burned side by side in the cold, the newest one standing straightest of all inside its jar.

Let's Talk

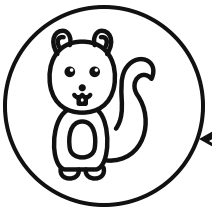
1. Bruno's big sigh blew out two candles. How did they get the light back?
2. Tonight we light the third candle. Who helped make things right for you this year?

Your Turn

Get ready to make peace! Draw someone you could make things right with this week.

I can make things right with _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



Where do fish sleep at night?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

d e b

CLUE



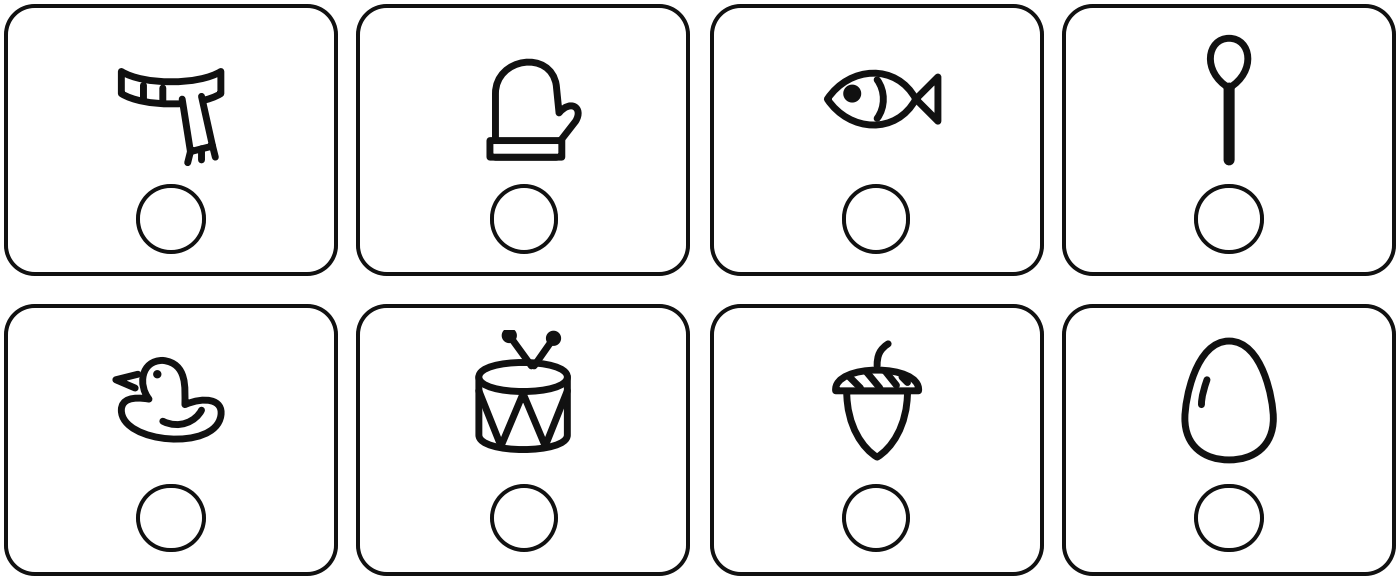
In the river ___ ___ ___!

Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Puffs

Lit, lit, and lit! The last lamp is in a jug.

 is glad. He puffs a big, big puff.

Puff! The lamps are not lit!

“Ack!” says  .

But the lamp in the jug is still lit!

 gets a stick. Lit! Lit!

The lamps are lit at last.

PICTURE WORDS  Bruno  Mr. Monkey

Color a star each time you read it.

My Thank-You

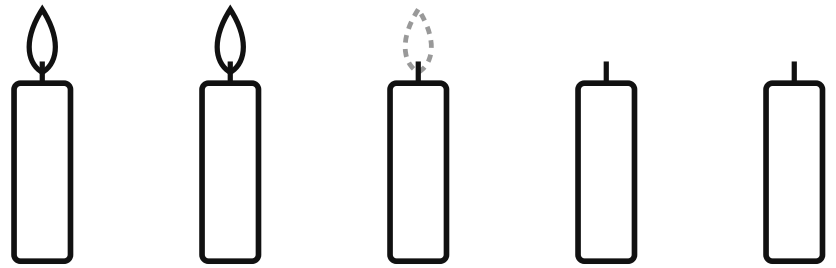
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

for making things right.

Tonight's Candle

Tonight the third candle gets its light from the second one. Three lights now!



Dec. 4 · Dec. 11 · **Dec. 18** · Dec. 25 · Jan. 1

Trace the flame on candle 3! Candles 1 and 2 are already lit.

THE CANDLE WORDS: A GROWN-UP SAYS EACH LINE, AND YOU SAY IT BACK

Grace comes in. (cup your hands)
Gratitude sees it. (point to your eyes)
And graciousness passes it on. (open your hands to the candle)

Grown-up: "What do we pass on?" You: **Generosity, hope, and peace!**
One light. Passed along.

DRAW YOUR FAMILY WITH YOUR CANDLES

☆ Celebration Night

Tonight your family celebrates. It has three parts:

1. **Remember:** The third candle
2. **Rejoice:** The Opening
3. **Ready:** Plan the giving

Remember: The Third Candle

This week is about peace. Peace means everything is the way it should be: nothing missing and nothing broken. When two friends stop fighting and make up, that's peace. When someone who was sick gets better, that's peace too.

Tonight a grown-up lights the third candle from the second one. Maybe you can choose where the Peace candle stands!

Who helped make things right for you this year? Draw their faces or write their names.

Rejoice: The Opening

Your family reads the gold ornaments by candlelight. Find the ones with **your** name on the front. When you finish one, look at the person who wrote it and say thank you!

I found ☐ gold ornaments with my name!

Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from: (Draw their face or write their name.)

WHAT DID IT SAY? DRAW OR WRITE IT.

Ready: Plan the Giving

The next three days are for giving: your time, your things, and your words. Plan them with your family. Draw or write your ideas in the boxes.



DEC. 19

Your time

Who is having a hard time? Spend time with them.



DEC. 20

Your things

Who could you give a small peace gift to?



DEC. 21

Your words

Who could you make up with, or say sorry to?

EXTRA, IF YOUR FAMILY DOES IT

Breaking Bread for Peace

In Poland, many families begin Christmas Eve dinner by sharing a thin wafer. You can do it with any bread! Everyone holds a piece. Go to each person, break off a little of their bread, and say a wish:

I hope next year you _____.

You can also say a sorry, or let one go:

I'm sorry for _____.

I forgive you for _____.

The Night on the Hill

COLOR THE PICTURE



All afternoon, the sky over Wanderful Woods was the color of an old gray rock. The wind came in gusts, *hwoo... hwoo...*, and the snow blew sideways across Sunny Square in little swirls that spun like tops and then fell down.

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey were standing by the giant snow lantern, looking up at the cliff, when it happened.

The little light at the top flickered. It flickered again. It bent over, and came back, and bent over.

And then it was gone.

The top of Everest's cliff was dark.

"NO!" said Mr. Monkey. He grabbed a candle from Mama Moose's basket. "We have to go up! Right now!"

"We can't," said Mr. Moose. "It's almost dark. The wind's too strong. The ridge is too slippery at night."

"But Everest is all by himself up there!" said Mr. Monkey. "In the dark! In the cold!"

"But we could get lost," said Mr. Moose. "Or fall. We can't even see the trail at night."

"We HAVE to!"

"We CAN'T!"

They stared at each other. Mr. Monkey's face was hot. Mr. Moose's ears were flat. They had never, ever disagreed this much about anything.

Mr. Monkey turned around and stomped off to the treehouse. He grabbed his vine to climb up in a big angry hurry. But he was so cross that he forgot to use his feet, and he slid right back down the vine, *zzzzzip*, and landed on his bottom in the snow.

He climbed again, even crosser. And slid down again. *Zzzzzip.*

Over by his door, Mr. Moose let out a big angry snort. It blew a little cloud of snow off the doorstep, right into his own face.

"Pfff," said Mr. Moose, covered in snow.

Mr. Monkey looked over from his snowy spot at the bottom of the vine. Mr. Moose looked over from his snowy doorstep. And they both kind of wanted to laugh, but they were too cross to do it yet.

So Mr. Monkey sat at the bottom of the vine, and Mr. Moose sat on his doorstep, and they didn't talk.

Mr. Monkey looked up at the dark cliff. He thought about what Shiloh's mama always said. Look up. Look at what you really want.

What did he want? He didn't really want to climb the ridge in the dark. He was scared of that, too. What he really wanted was for Everest not to be alone. Everest had come all the way down once and walked them home through a snowstorm, under his wing. Mr. Monkey couldn't stand to think of him sitting up there in the dark all night by himself.

Across Sunny Square, Mr. Moose was thinking, too.

The ridge at night was the wrong path. He was sure of that. Somebody could get hurt. But he looked at Mr. Monkey sitting all alone in the snow, and he knew Mr. Monkey wasn't wrong either. Leaving Everest alone in the dark felt wrong too.

So both of them got up at the same time, and walked to the middle of Sunny Square, and met by the snow lantern.

"I don't want to climb in the dark," said Mr. Monkey. "I just don't want him to be alone."

"I don't want him to be alone either," said Mr. Moose. "I just don't want anybody to get hurt."

Then Mr. Moose's eyes got bright. "Lookout Ledge," he said slowly. "The back way. The easy way, where we rode the Tail Train. We can't take the light all the way up to him tonight. But we could go up on Lookout Ledge and hold our lights up high, all night long. Then every time he looks down, he'll see us."

Mr. Monkey's whole face lit up. "So he'll know he's not alone."

"So he'll know."

"Then we stay up there," said Mr. Monkey. "All night. With him."

Daddy Moose and Daddy Monkey came, with big blankets. Bruno came, with an even bigger blanket. Benji came, and Shiloh, and Ricky with a lantern of his own. They went up the back way, the easy way, in the dark, holding tails, until they were standing at the very top of Lookout Ledge, as close to the cliff as they could get. By then the gusts had blown themselves out, and the night was still and cold.

They all held their lights up high. Candles and lanterns, and Mr. Monkey holding the brightest one of all, up over his head with both hands.

Way up on the dark cliff, something moved. A great shape at the edge, looking down.

"He sees us," whispered Benji.

Then they waited. They kept their lights up. It got later, and later, and colder, and darker.

Bruno wrapped himself up in his giant blanket so tight that he turned into a big furry blanket ball with just a nose sticking out the top. Then Benji crawled inside it with him. Then Shiloh. Then Ricky.

"Is everybody in here?" asked Bruno, from somewhere in the middle.

"Haw haw haw!" he went, and the whole blanket ball jiggled.

Around midnight, Daddy Moose and Daddy Monkey picked up the whole blanket ball, with Bruno and Benji and Shiloh and Ricky still inside it, fast asleep, and carried it home down the back way. It was very heavy. It snored the whole way.

Mr. Monkey stood holding his light high. He was going to stay awake all night. He was sure of it. But his eyes got heavy. And heavier. And then, still standing up, still holding his light over his head with both hands, Mr. Monkey fell asleep.

"*Hnnnk-shoo,*" snored Mr. Monkey, standing straight up like a little lamppost.

"Ha-ha-ha," whispered Mr. Moose. And very gently, he took the light out of Mr. Monkey's hands and held it up himself, so Mr. Monkey could sleep against his side.

So that's how it went, all night long. When Mr. Moose got sleepy, Mr. Monkey woke up and took the light. When Mr. Monkey got sleepy, Mr. Moose took it back. One of them was always awake. One light was always up. All night.

Every once in a while, they looked up at the dark cliff. And every once in a while, the great shape at the edge was still there, looking down at them.

And then, very slowly, the sky in the east turned gray. Then pink. Then gold.

And out of the morning sky came Everest Eagle.

He swooped down off the cliff, over the trees, and landed right beside them on Lookout Ledge, with the morning light on his feathers. In his talons, he was carrying the little squash lantern, cold and dark, with Ricky's jar still inside it.

He set it down at Mr. Moose's feet.

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey didn't even need to talk about it. Mr. Monkey put a brand-new candle inside the jar. Mr. Moose lit it from the light he'd been holding up all night. And the little squash lantern glowed again.

Everest looked at them for a long time. Then he picked the lantern up very carefully in his talons, opened his great wings, and with three slow beats, *foom, foom, foom*, he carried it back up to the top of the cliff.

A moment later, there it was again. A little gold light at the very top.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose on the way home, still wrapped in a blanket. "The light at the top went out, and Mr. Monkey and I disagreed. He slid down his vine twice, and I snorted snow in my own face. Then we figured out what we both wanted. Bruno turned into a blanket ball, and Mr. Monkey fell asleep standing up. And in the morning, Everest came and got the light."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And high above the waking woods, the little squash lantern glowed again at the top of the cliff, as the first long rays of the morning sun came over the hills to meet it.

Let's Talk

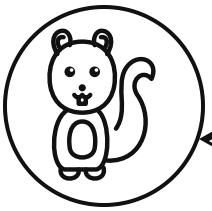
1. Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey wanted different things. How did they find a plan for both of them?
2. Who might be feeling alone? How could you spend time with them?

Your Turn

Give your time! Draw who you will spend time with and what you will do together.

I will give my time to _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do snowmen call their kids?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

h c i l l

CLUE



_____-dren!

Spot the Difference

Look closely. Can you find 5 differences?





Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

We Will Sit With Him

The lamp at the top is not lit!  has no lamp.

“Run up!” says  . “Not at dusk!” says  .

 is mad.  is mad.

Then they sit and chat.

“We can not go up,” says  . “But we can sit on the hill with lamps!”

The pals sit with lamps up, up, up.  can see them.

 naps, and  has the lamp. Then  naps, and  has it.

PICTURE WORDS  Everest  Mr. Monkey  Mr. Moose



For grown-ups: New sounds: th (thin) and ch (chop). New words to learn by heart: no, they, we.

Color a star each time you read it.

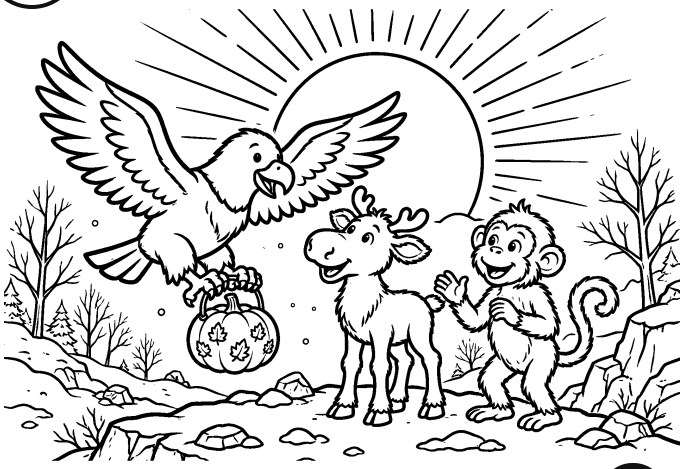
My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Who did you give your time to? Write their name on the line.

I gave my time to _____.

What Happened First?

Write 1, 2, 3, 4 in the circles to put the story in order.



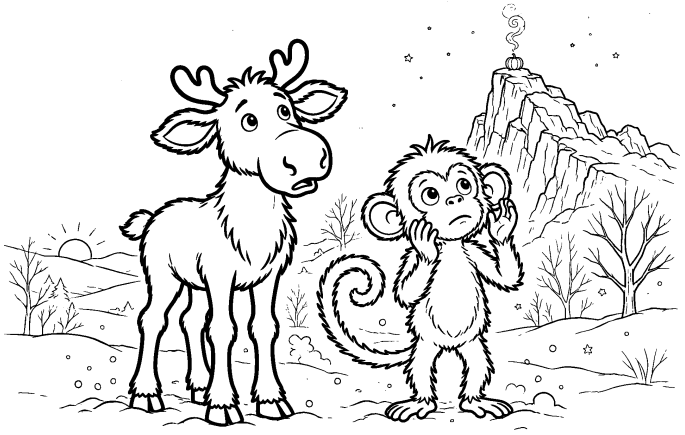
A



B



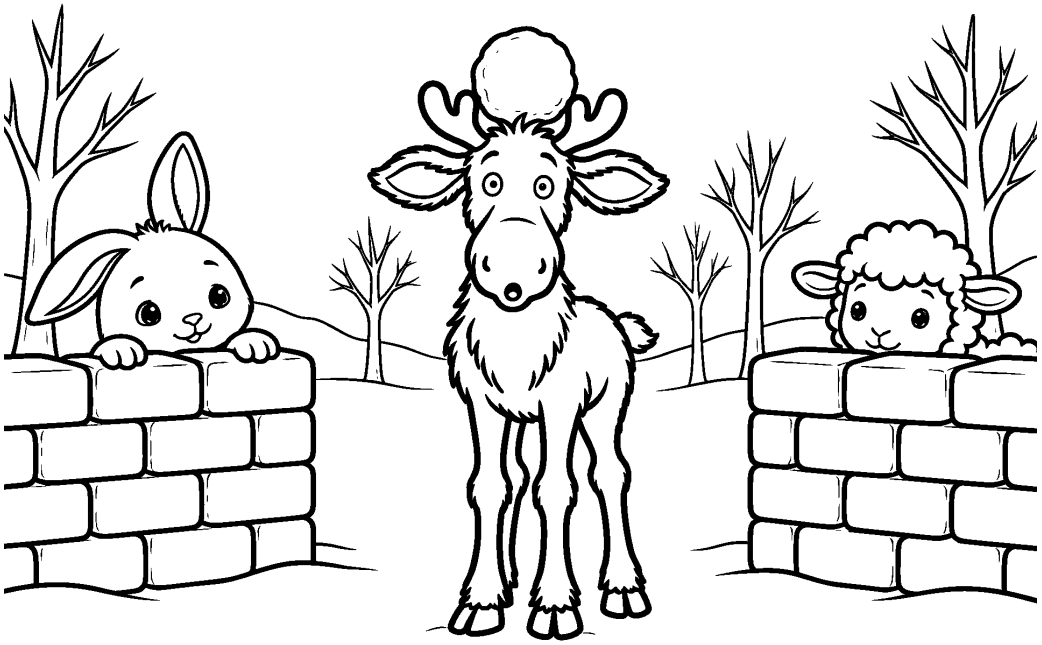
C



D

The Truce Moose

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning sun came up over Sunny Square and turned all the snow pink and gold. It should have been a happy morning. But when Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey walked back into the square, still wrapped in their blankets from the night on Lookout Ledge, they stopped.

There were two snow forts.

One was on the river side of Sunny Square, built around a big rock. Ricky and Bruno and Sammy and Shiloh were inside it. The other was on the Wishing Tree side, built around a little pine. Hazel and Dottie and Benji were inside that one.

In between them was a wide, empty stretch of snow that nobody was standing on. Well, almost nobody. Right in the very middle stood a big, lumpy snowman. It had a snowball for a nose, and a snowball for a hat, and snowballs stuck all over it every which way, like it had been in a snowball war all by itself.

"Who made that?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"Nobody," said Ricky. "It's all the snowballs that missed."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "The snowballs made a snowman!"

"What happened?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"Snowball war," said Ricky, peeking over his wall. "It's been going on since breakfast."

"Who's winning?"

Ricky thought about it. "Nobody," he said. "We're all just cold."

It was true. Everybody was cold. Everybody's paws were red. Nobody had any snowballs left, and nobody wanted to make more. But nobody wanted to be the first one to come out, either. So they just sat there in their forts, grumpy, looking at each other across the empty snow.

Then Mr. Monkey saw Benji. Benji was peeking over the top of the Wishing Tree fort. And across the empty snow, peeking over the top of the rock fort, was Shiloh. They were best friends. They always played together. And now they were on different sides, and they were just looking at each other, sadly.

Benji gave a tiny wave. Shiloh gave a tiny wave back. Neither of them came out.

Mr. Monkey felt it squeeze his chest. "Mr. Moose," he whispered. "Benji and Shiloh. They want to play. But they're on different sides."

Mr. Moose looked at the two forts, and the empty snow in between. Nobody wanted the war anymore. But somebody had to go first. And going first was scary, because what if the other side threw a snowball?

"Somebody has to go out in the middle," he said slowly. "And bring something. Something that says, we're done."

"We need a truce!" said Mr. Monkey, loudly, so both forts could hear.

Dottie's head popped up over the Wishing Tree wall. "A

MOOSE?"

"A truce," said Mr. Monkey.

"We already HAVE a moose!" said Dottie, and she pointed right at Mr. Moose.

Everybody looked at Mr. Moose.

Mr. Moose looked at the empty snow in the middle. Then he took a deep breath, and he walked out into it, slowly, all the way to the very middle, and stood there.

"I'm the truce," he said.

"He's the Truce Moose!" said Mr. Monkey.

Just then, one last snowball came flying over from somewhere, *fwoop*, and landed with a soft *plap* right on top of Mr. Moose's antlers.

"TRUCE!" said Mr. Moose. "I'm the TRUCE!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

"Ha! Ha!" went Dottie, from her fort.

"Haw haw haw! Sorry!" went Bruno from the rock fort, and he jumped up so fast to say sorry that he bumped the roof of his fort with his head, and the whole roof fell down on top of him, *FLUMPF*.

Bruno sat up out of the snow pile, with the roof on his head like a hat. "My fort fell on me."

"Haw haw haw," he added.

Then Mr. Monkey had an idea. Something that would go first, before anybody had to say anything. So he climbed up on the giant snow lantern, right next to the Truce Moose, and he started to sing. It was the only song he could think of.

He whistled. And Mr. Moose hummed. And together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

There was a quiet moment.

Then, from the Wishing Tree fort, a tiny voice started to hum along. It was Benji. And from the rock fort, another small voice joined in. It was Shiloh. Then Hazel. Then Sammy. Then Bruno, very loud, from under his fort roof. Then everybody, both forts, singing the same song across the empty snow.

When they were done, it was quiet again. But this time it was a good quiet.

"Now," said Mr. Moose from the middle. "Everybody bring one thing. Something that's yours. To give to somebody on the other side."

Benji came out of the Wishing Tree fort first, holding a carrot he'd been saving. Shiloh came out of the rock fort, holding his favorite stone, the flat gray one shaped just like a heart. They met in the middle, right next to the Truce Moose, and they traded.

"For you," said Benji. "From me."

"For you," said Shiloh. "From me."

Then they hugged, and Benji's ears went pink.

Bruno came out with his honeycomb and gave a big piece to Hazel. Hazel gave him a shiny red apple. Sammy zipped across with an acorn for Dottie. And Ricky came out last, holding something round and clear.

He handed it to Dottie. It was a jar.

Dottie looked at it. "What's it for?"

Ricky thought about it. "I don't know," he said. "I just have a lot of them."

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie, and she held it up so the sun shone through it anyway.

Sammy zipped back and forth across the middle with her acorns, giving one to everybody on both sides, so fast that she got all mixed up and stopped in the middle, right next to the lumpy snowman.

"Wait," said Sammy. "Which side am I on?"

"There's only one side now," said Shiloh softly.

Nobody had to say "You started it." Nobody had to say anything at all. The gifts said it.

And then, because everybody was out in the middle now anyway, Mr. Monkey looked at the two forts. One on one side. One on the other side.

"What if we put them together?" he said.

So they built a long tunnel of snow across the empty middle, from the rock fort all the way to the Wishing Tree fort, so the two forts turned into one big fort. Bruno patted the walls. Hazel and Dottie carved windows. Ricky put one of his jars in every window, with a candle inside, lit from the third candle by the fire. And Benji and Shiloh crawled through the tunnel back and forth, back and forth, giggling, until they were too tired to crawl anymore. Bruno tried to crawl through too, and got stuck halfway, with his front half in one fort and his back half in the other.

"I'm in both forts," said Bruno. "Haw haw haw!"

That night, the big fort glowed in the middle of Sunny Square, with little lights in every window.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "There were two forts, and everybody was cold and grumpy. Dottie thought a truce was a moose, so Mr. Moose went out in the middle and became the Truce Moose, and a snowball landed on his head. Bruno's roof fell on him. We sang, and both forts sang back. Everybody brought something from their side. And now there's only one fort."

And Mr. Monkey whistled again, and Mr. Moose hummed again, and together they sang it one more time:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And in the middle of Sunny Square, one long snow fort glowed with little lights from end to end, and two sets of small footprints, a bunny's and a sheep's, going in and out of the tunnel, side by side.

Let's Talk

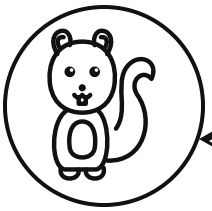
1. Benji gave a carrot, and Shiloh gave his heart stone. What were they telling each other with their gifts?
2. What could you give to say "we're okay" to someone?

Your Turn

Draw a peace gift: something you could give to make things right.

My peace gift is _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE

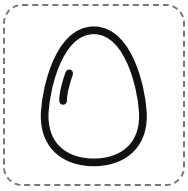


What did the egg say to the frying pan?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

c **k** **r** **c** ***a***

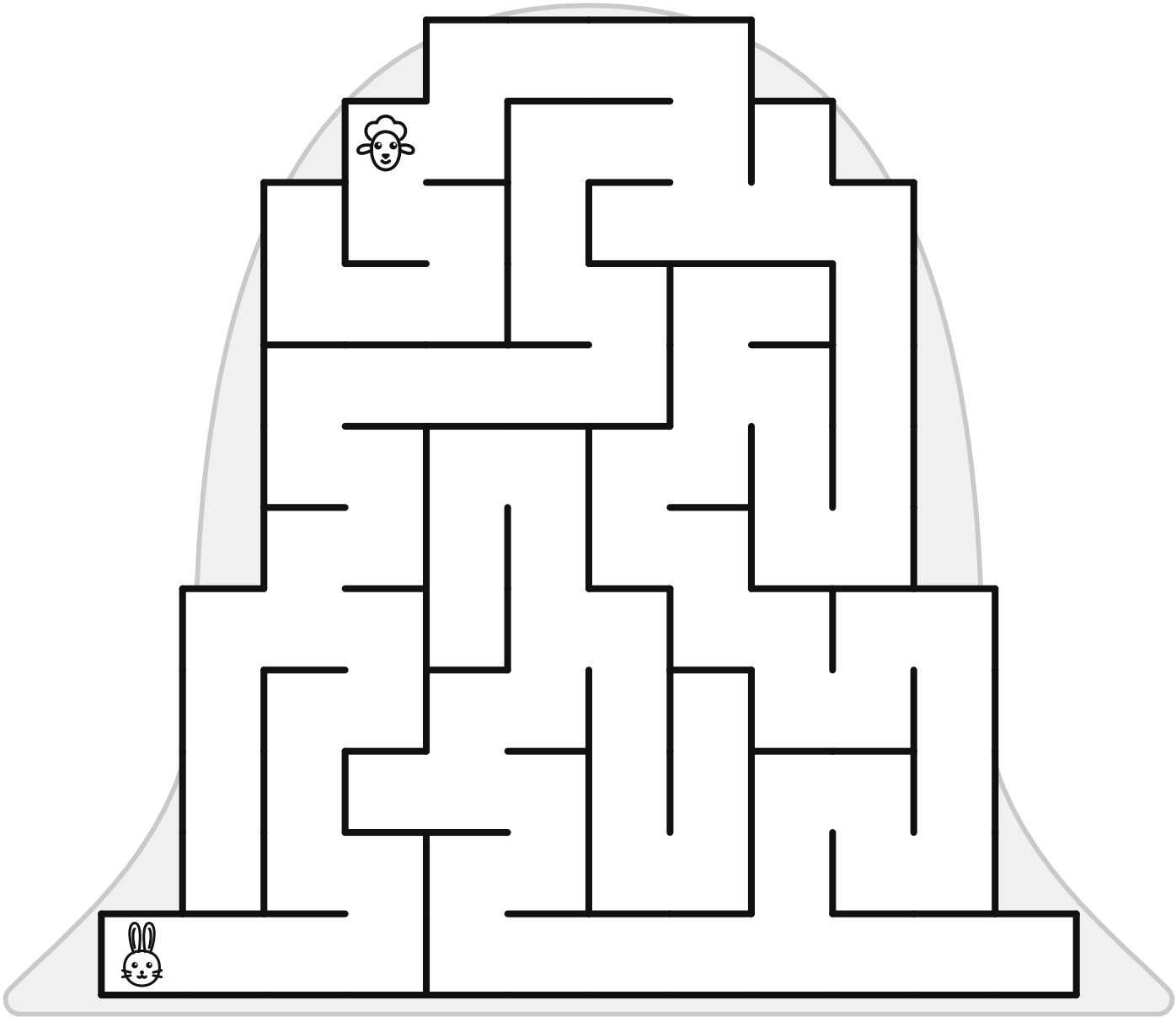
CLUE



You _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ me up!

☆ Through the Tunnel

Help Benji crawl through the snow tunnel to Shiloh. Start at Benji Bunny.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

 and 

 is in this camp.  is in that camp.

They want to be pals, but they are stuck.

 steps up and stands still.

Plop! A clump hits him on the top! Ha!

 has a gift for  .  has a gift for  .

Then  and  hug. They are pals.

PICTURE WORDS  Benji  Shiloh  Mr. Moose



Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. What did you give, and who got it? Fill in both spaces.

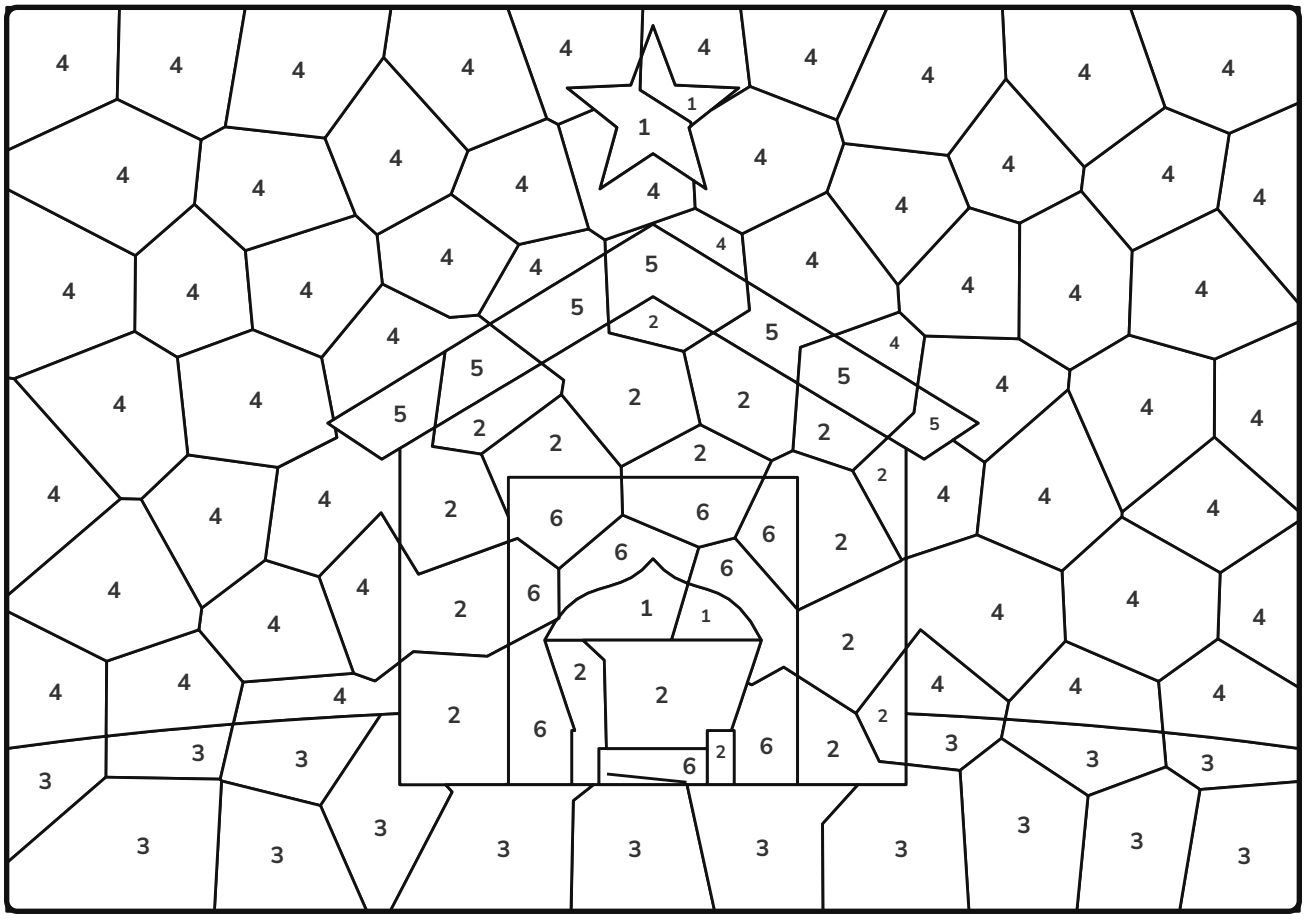
I gave

to .

Song Day: Mystery Picture

Today's song is "Silent Night." Sing or listen while you color each space by its number.

(1) yellow (2) brown (3) green (4) dark blue (5) red (6) orange



The Longest Night

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sun went down early. Very early. It slid behind the hills in the middle of the afternoon, and the sky turned purple, and then dark blue, and then black, and the stars came out one by one over the snow, even though it was still the middle of the afternoon.

"It's the longest night," said Tessie. "It will be dark... for a long... long... time."

"Then we keep every light lit," said Mr. Monkey. "All night long."

So that's what everybody did. Ricky made a list of every light in the woods, of course. It was so long that he had to roll it up and carry it under his arm, and it dragged behind him in the snow like a tail. And the friends went from home to home, all evening, checking.

The Moose home: lit, with the gold candle on the table. The treehouse: lit. The three candles by the fire in Sunny Square: lit. The long snow fort, with a light in every window: lit. Mama Hedgehog's snow lantern at the bottom of the littlest trail: lit. And way up at the very top of Everest's cliff, the little squash lantern: lit, and steady.

"Check, check, check," said Ricky, marking his list.

Then they came to the river, to the old crow's branch.

His light was lit, too. A little snow lantern sat at the bottom of his tree, glowing, the one they had left on the night of the doors. And the old crow was up on his branch, wearing the woolly mitten they'd left him like a little hat.

"Hee hee," went Benji softly. "He's still wearing it."

But the old crow wasn't happy. He was sitting very still, all hunched up, looking across the river at the dark trees on the other side.

Mr. Monkey felt it right away. Everybody else in the woods was together tonight. Families in their homes. Friends in their forts. But the old crow was all by himself on the longest night of the year.

"Mr. Crow?" called Mr. Monkey. "Are you okay?"

The old crow looked down. "It's a long night," he said, in his scratchy voice. "Long nights are lonely."

Mr. Moose was thinking. Why was the crow looking across the river? What was over there?

"Mr. Crow," he asked gently, "who lives on the other side of the river?"

The old crow was quiet for a long time. Then he said, "My son."

Everybody looked across the river.

"He's grown up now," said the old crow. "He has his own nest, over in those trees. A long time ago, when he was young, we had a fight. A silly fight, about a nest. And I said something unkind to him. I told him, 'Fine! Go build your own!' And he did. He flew across the river." The old crow tucked his head down into the mitten. "We haven't

talked since. Not one word."

Nobody said anything for a moment. Then Mr. Monkey asked the plainest question in the world.

"Why don't you just call to him?"

"What if he doesn't answer?" said the old crow quietly. "What if he's still angry?"

Mr. Monkey thought about it. "Then at least you'd know," he said. "Right now you don't know anything. You just sit here."

The old crow looked at Mr. Monkey for a long time.

"I haven't called across the river in a long time," he said. "I don't know if my voice still goes that far."

Mr. Moose had an idea. "Then we'll help you be loud," he said. "We'll all call together. And then you call, and your voice will be right at the front."

They all lined up on the riverbank, in the light of the old crow's snow lantern, facing the dark trees across the water.

"Ready?" said Mr. Monkey. "One, two, three!"

Everybody called at once. Mr. Monkey hooted. Hazel neighed. Dottie howled, "*AROOOOOO!*" Benji thumped his foot. Shiloh baaed. And Bruno, who was trying very hard to sound like a crow, took the biggest breath he could and went:

"*MOOOOOOOOOO.*"

Everybody turned and looked at Bruno.

"That was a cow," said Ricky.

"I was trying to be a crow," said Bruno. "It came out a cow."

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Bruno's a CROW-COW!"

Even the old crow made a little noise in his throat, *kuk-kuk-kuk*, which was how crows laughed.

Then it was quiet. And the old crow stood up on his branch, and took the mitten off his head, and opened his beak, and called out across the river, all by himself, as loud as he could:

"*CAAAAAW!*"

It went out over the water. Into the dark. Into the trees on the other side.

Nothing came back.

Everybody waited. The river went *gurgle-gurgle* under its ice. The stars twinkled. It was the longest night, and it felt like the longest wait.

The old crow's feathers drooped.

And then, from the dark trees on the other side of the river, small and far away, came an answer.

"*Caaaw.*"

The old crow's head shot up.

Something black came flapping across the river, low over the ice, into the light of the little snow lantern. A young crow, big and glossy, landed on the branch right next to the old crow. And for a moment, the two of them just sat there, side by side, not saying anything at all.

Then the old crow said it.

"I shouldn't have said that to you. 'Go build your own.' I'm sorry. I won't ever say anything like that to you again. How can I make it right?"

The young crow looked at his father for a long time.

"Yeah, I didn't like that," he said. "But we all make mistakes. Thank you for apologizing. I forgive you."

Then he scooted over, close, so close that their feathers touched.

"You could start by coming over for supper," said the young crow. "I have a family now. You have grandchicks. Three of them."

The old crow made a sound nobody had ever heard him make before. It was half a caw and half a laugh and half something else, and that's too many halves, but that's how it sounded.

Mr. Monkey grabbed Mr. Moose's leg and held on. He was so happy he could hardly stand still.

The two crows flew off together across the river, into the dark trees on the other side. And a minute later, a little light came on over there, in a nest nobody had ever noticed before. Then the old crow came flying back, just for a second, and picked up his snow lantern, and carried it across too. So now there were two lights in that tree.

"That one's lit now too," said Ricky softly, and he added it to his list.

All the rest of the longest night, the lights stayed on. The Moose home. The treehouse. The three candles. The long fort. Mama Hedgehog's lantern. The crows' tree across the river. And the little light at the top of the cliff, shining steady beside Everest. Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey watched them from Mr. Moose's window until their eyes closed.

And when they woke up, the sun was coming back over the hills. Starting today, every day would last a tiny bit longer.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey at breakfast. "It was the longest night. Ricky's light list dragged in the snow like a tail. The old crow was all alone, and he told us about his son. I asked why he didn't just call him. Bruno tried to caw and mooed instead, and he's a crow-cow. Then the old crow called, and his son called back, and he said sorry, and his son forgave him. And now there's a light across the river, too."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And over Wanderful Woods, after the longest night of the year, the morning came back a little bit early, and found every single light still burning.

Let's Talk

1. What did the old crow say to his son? What did his son say back?
2. Is there someone you need to say sorry to, or forgive?

Your Turn

Write or draw a sorry note. A grown-up can help you write.

Dear _____ ,

I shouldn't have _____. I'm sorry. How can I make it right?

_____

_____

_____

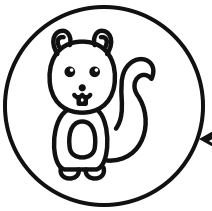
_____

_____

_____

Love, _____

SAMMY'S JOKE



What kind of shoes do sleepy feet wear?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

p l s i

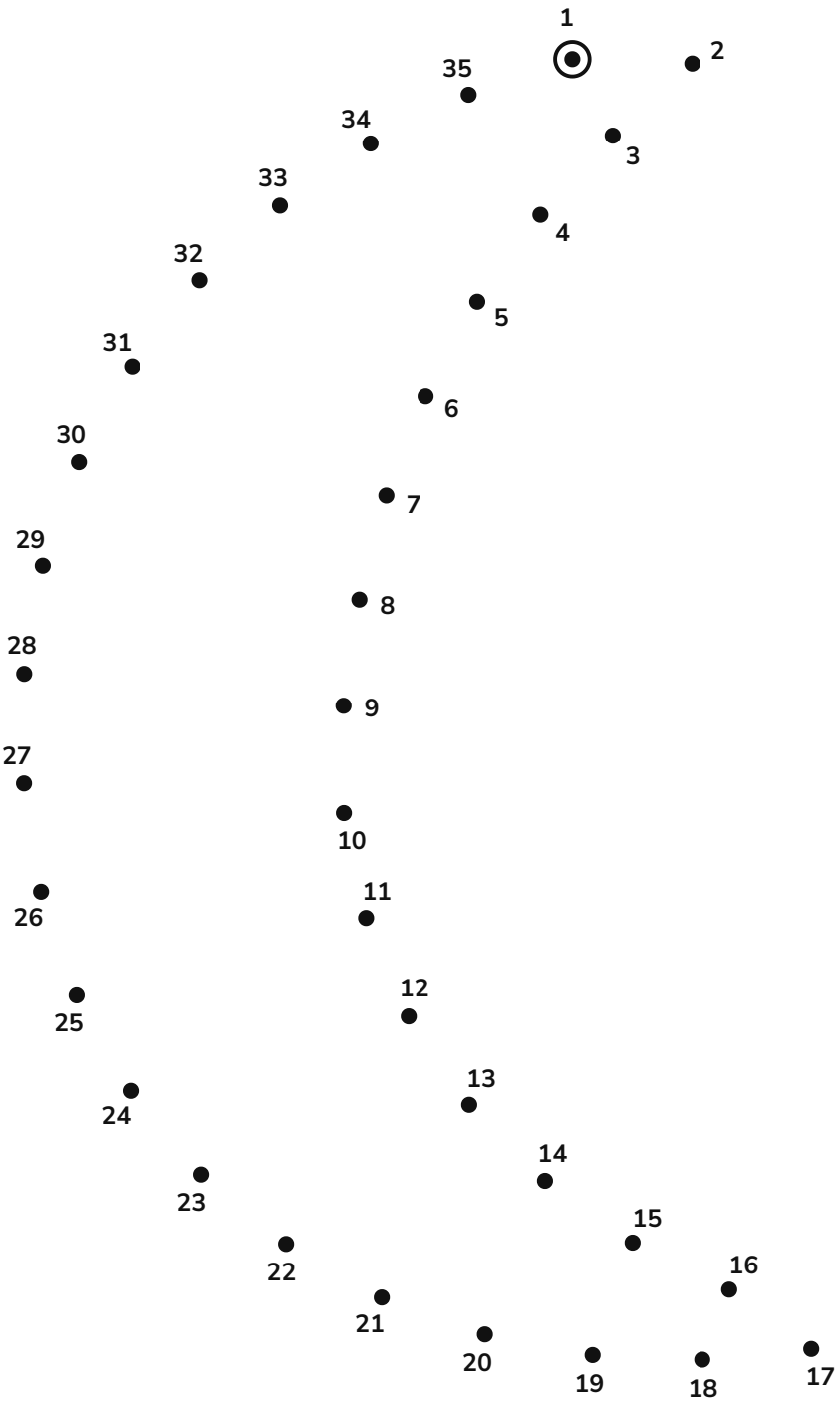
CLUE



___ ___ ___ ___pers!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find what shines on the longest night. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 35. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Call Him!

It is dim and still. The dad is sad.

His kid has a nest past the bend. They do not chat.

“Call him!” says  .

The pals call. The dad calls and calls.

Then a call gets back!

The kid lands next to his dad.

“I was bad to you. I am sad. Can I fix it?” says the dad.

“Yes. Then let us be pals,” says the kid.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey



Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Who do you need to say sorry to? Write their name on the line. Then say it to them.

I am sorry. _____

How can I make it right?

Movie Bingo: Home Alone

Watch it with a grown-up. Color a square the first time you see each thing. Three in a row is Bingo!

 snow	 a window	 a shovel
 a candle	 **Free!**	 singing
 a tree	 a hug	 a star

For grown-ups: Home Alone (1990) is rated PG for slapstick violence and some language. Watch the Christmas Eve choir scene, when Kevin meets old Marley, and the ending.

WEEK DONE!



Turn back to this week's map. Color any stones you missed.



Ladybugs I found in this week's storybook pictures: _____







COLOR THE TITLE!

Joy

Who made me so glad?

Joy is when the long wait is over. Christmas is coming!

THIS WEEK'S STORIES

1. **Tuesday, Dec. 22:** The Big Phew
2. **Wednesday, Dec. 23:** Every Story Gets a Cheer
3. **Thursday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve):** Shi-LOUD
4. **Friday, Dec. 25 (Christmas Day):** The Overflow Feast
5. **Saturday, Dec. 26:** Percy Comes Down
6. **Sunday, Dec. 27:** Tessie's Seeing Glasses
7. **Monday, Dec. 28:** You Made It, Tessie!

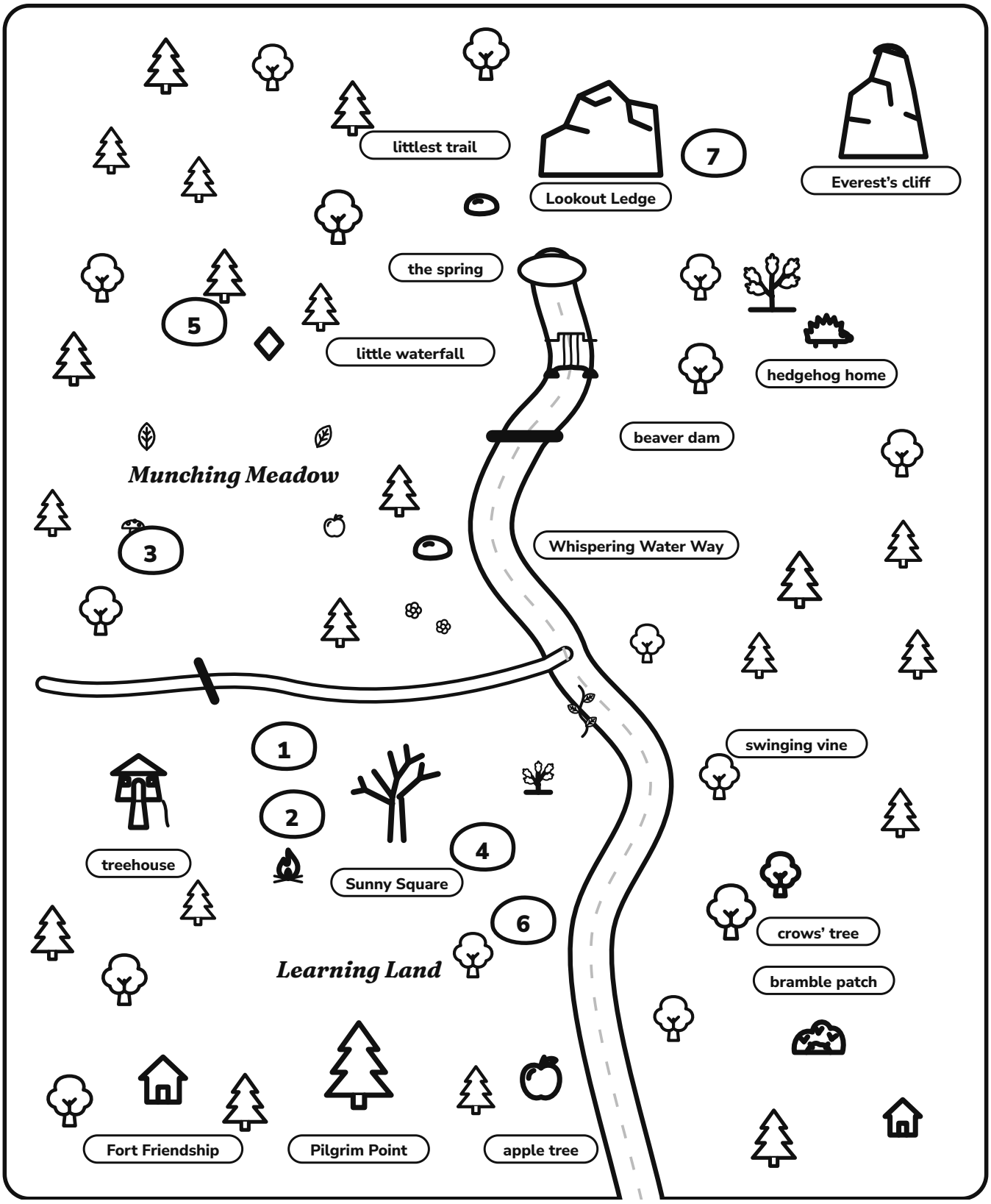
THIS WEEK'S THANK-YOU:

Thank you, _____, for making me so glad.

Then we give: time, things, and words.

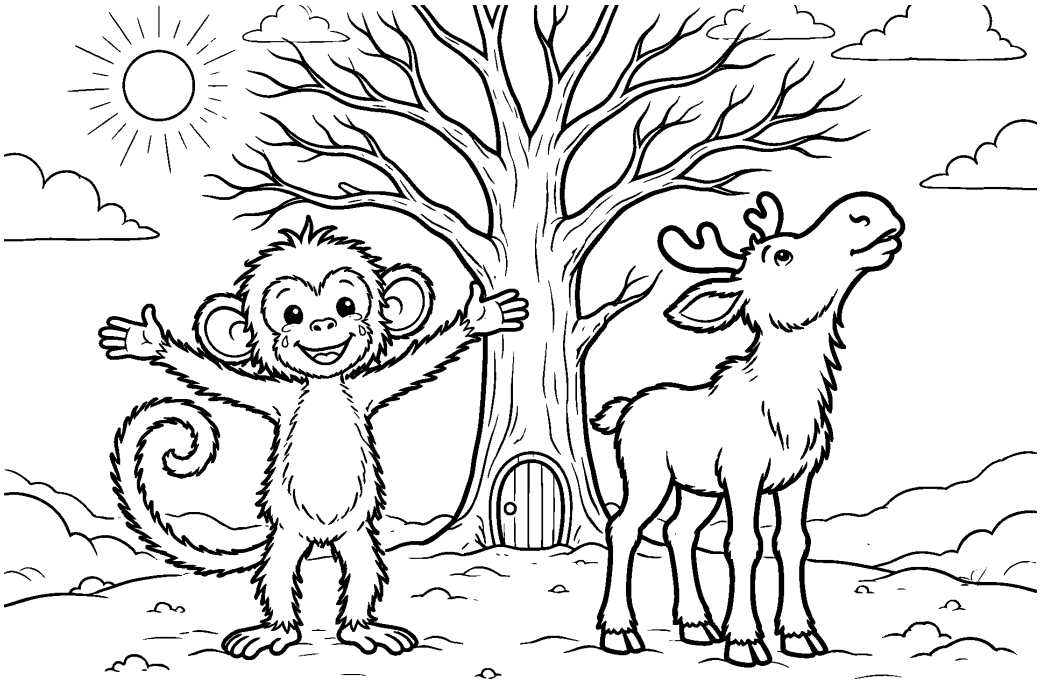
Where We'll Go This Week

Each day, find the stone with that day's number and color it. It shows where the day's story happens!



The Big Phew

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sun came up over the hills, on a day a tiny bit longer than the day before, and it poured gold light across the snow. Icicles along the Moose home's roof began to drip, *tink... tink... tink*, and every drop caught the sun on its way down.

Breakfast was over. Both families were still at the Moose home: Mama and Daddy Moose, Mama and Daddy Monkey, Mr. Moose, and Mr. Monkey. The gold candle on the table had burned all night long and was only a little stub now, but it was still lit.

Mr. Monkey ran outside into the sunshine. This was it. The longest night was over. Every light had stayed lit. The light at the top of Everest's cliff was still glowing, way up high. He had been waiting for this morning for days and days.

He was going to be SO happy. He was going to do a cartwheel, and then a backflip, and then a cartwheel AND a backflip at the same time.

He put his hands up to start the cartwheel.

And then he sat down in the snow instead, *flump*, with his legs sticking straight out in front of him.

He didn't know why. His arms felt floppy. His legs felt floppy. His tail lay in the snow like a wet noodle. And then, all by themselves, his eyes started to leak. Big round tears rolled down his cheeks and dripped off his chin, *plip, plip*, into the snow.

Mr. Moose came out the door and stopped.

"Mr. Monkey," he said softly. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing!" said Mr. Monkey, and another tear fell off his chin. "Nothing's wrong! Everything's right! That's the problem! Why am I crying when everything's right?"

Mr. Moose sat down in the snow beside him. He didn't know either. He thought about it. He thought about it very hard.

Mr. Monkey wasn't sad. He was sure of that. Sad was when something was broken. Nothing was broken. So what was this?

"Daddy," called Mr. Moose. "Why would somebody cry when everything is right?"

Daddy Moose came out and looked at Mr. Monkey sitting in the snow, all floppy, and he didn't look worried at all. He looked like he knew exactly what this was.

"Come here," he said. "I'll show you something."

He led them back to the door of the Moose home, and Mr. Monkey stood in the doorway. "Push your arms out against the sides," said Daddy Moose. "Hard. As hard as you can. And keep pushing while I count."

Mr. Monkey pushed against the sides of the doorway with both hands. He pushed so hard his face scrunched up. Daddy Moose counted, slowly, all the way to thirty.

"Now step out," said Daddy Moose. "And let your arms go."

Mr. Monkey stepped out of the doorway and let go.

And his arms floated up. All by themselves. Up, up, up,

until they were sticking out on both sides like the wings of a bird, and he wasn't doing it at ALL.

"MY ARMS ARE FLOATING!" shouted Mr. Monkey.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, with tears still on his cheeks. "Mr. Moose, I'm not doing it! They're doing it by themselves!"

Of course, then everybody had to try.

Daddy Monkey went next. He pushed and pushed, counted to thirty, and stepped out, and his arms floated straight up over his head. "Look!" he said. "I'm a tree!" And he stood there in the snow with his arms up like branches, and a little bird came down and landed right on his hand.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Daddy, you ARE a tree!"

Mama Monkey went after him. She stepped out of the doorway, and her arms floated up and out, and before she could stop them, they floated right around Mama Moose and gave her a big surprise hug.

"Oh!" said Mama Moose.

"I didn't do it!" said Mama Monkey. "My arms did!" And she didn't let go.

Then it was Mr. Moose's turn. Mr. Moose didn't have arms like a monkey. But he had antlers. So he stood in the doorway and pushed his antlers up against the top of it, hard, as hard as he could, while Daddy Moose counted to thirty.

He stepped out.

And his head floated up. Up, up, up, slowly, until his nose was pointing straight at the sky.

"I can see the clouds," said Mr. Moose, very seriously, looking straight up. "I didn't mean to look at the clouds."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Daddy Moose, which almost never happened.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Mr. Moose is looking at the clouds with his whole head!"

"Daddy Moose, now you!" said Mr. Monkey.

So Daddy Moose stood in the doorway and pushed his big antlers up against the top of it. He pushed so hard that the whole Moose home creaked, *crrrreeeak*, and all the snow on the roof slid off at once, *SHHHHHUMP*, right on top of him.

Daddy Moose stood there, all white, with only his eyes and his nose showing.

"Phew," said Daddy Moose, from somewhere inside the snow.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose. "Daddy's a snow-moose!"

When everybody's arms and Mr. Moose's head had come back down, and Daddy Moose had shaken off the snow, Mr. Moose looked at the doorway. Then at Mr. Monkey. And he figured it out.

"You pushed and pushed," he said slowly. "All week. You pushed to keep the lights lit. You pushed up the windy ridge. You pushed to stay awake on Lookout Ledge. You pushed all through the longest night. And this morning, you finally stopped pushing."

Mr. Monkey stared at him.

"So now it's floating up," said Mr. Moose. "Only it's not coming out your arms. It's coming out your eyes."

Mr. Monkey wiped his face with his tail. "My eyes are floating?"

"Kind of," said Mr. Moose.

Mr. Monkey thought about that. And then he felt it, for real this time. The tears had made room. Underneath them, the happy came. It came up from his toes and filled up his tummy and his chest, and then it came out his mouth as a whoop so loud that the icicles shook.

"WHOOOOOOP! WE DID IT!"

"We did it," said Mr. Moose, and his eyes were a little shiny too.

They ran around the Moose home three times. Mr. Monkey finally did his cartwheel, and then his backflip, and then he tried both at once and landed in a snowbank with only his tail sticking out, wagging. Mr. Moose galloped behind him, slowly, with his long legs going every which way.

Then, inside by the fire, the families painted gold circles.

"Paint somebody in your house," said Mama Moose, "who helped carry the wait with you."

Mr. Monkey knew right away. He painted Daddy Monkey on the front, with his arms up like a tree. On the back, he painted Lookout Ledge in the dark, and Daddy Monkey bringing the big blankets, and holding him up when he fell asleep standing.

Mr. Moose painted Mama Moose on the front. On the back, he painted a row of new candles, all the ones she had rolled, one after another, every time the old ones burned down.

They hung them on the little green pine by the door, painted side to the trunk, to wait.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, when the sun was going down. "The longest night was over, and I wanted to do a cartwheel, but I sat down in the snow and cried instead. Daddy Moose showed us the doorway trick. My arms floated, and Daddy turned into a tree, and Mama hugged Mama Moose by accident, and Mr. Moose looked at the clouds with his whole head. Daddy Moose turned into a snow-moose. Then the happy came, and I whooped so loud the icicles shook."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And outside the Moose home, the icicles went on dripping in the last of the sun, *tink... tink...*, as light as anything.

Let's Talk

1. Why did Mr. Monkey cry when everything was right?
2. Who in our house made you glad this year?

Your Turn

Make a gold ornament for someone in our house who made you glad. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



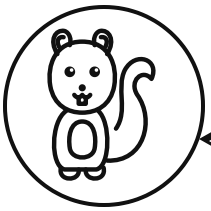
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is gold. Color it yellow or gold when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE

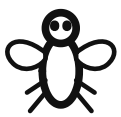


What do you call a fly with no wings?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

k l a w

CLUE



A ____ ____ ____ ____!

Draw Benji Bunny!

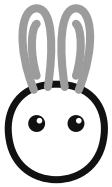
The gray parts are new. Draw them in!

1

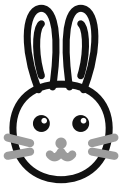
2



3



4



5



6



7



8



MY BENJI BUNNY

Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Up Went His Hands!

The lamps are still lit.  sits on the step and sobs.

Is he sad? No! He is glad!

"Stand in this gap. Press and press," says  's Dad.

"When I nod, let go!"

Up went his hands! Up, up, up!

Then  's Dad stands in the gap. Press, press, press! Thud! A big lump of slush lands on him. Ha!

"We did it!" yells  . "We did it!"

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Mr. Moose



For grown-ups: New sounds: wh and ph (when, phone).

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

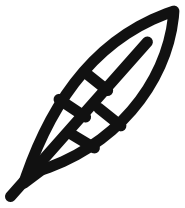
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

for making me so glad

☆ Would You Rather?

Circle your pick in each row. Tell why!



make your arms float up like wings

OR

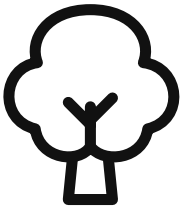


look at the clouds with your whole head

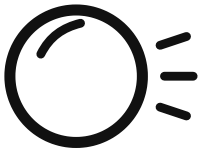


turn into a snow-moose

OR



turn into a tree with a bird on your hand



roll down a snowy hill

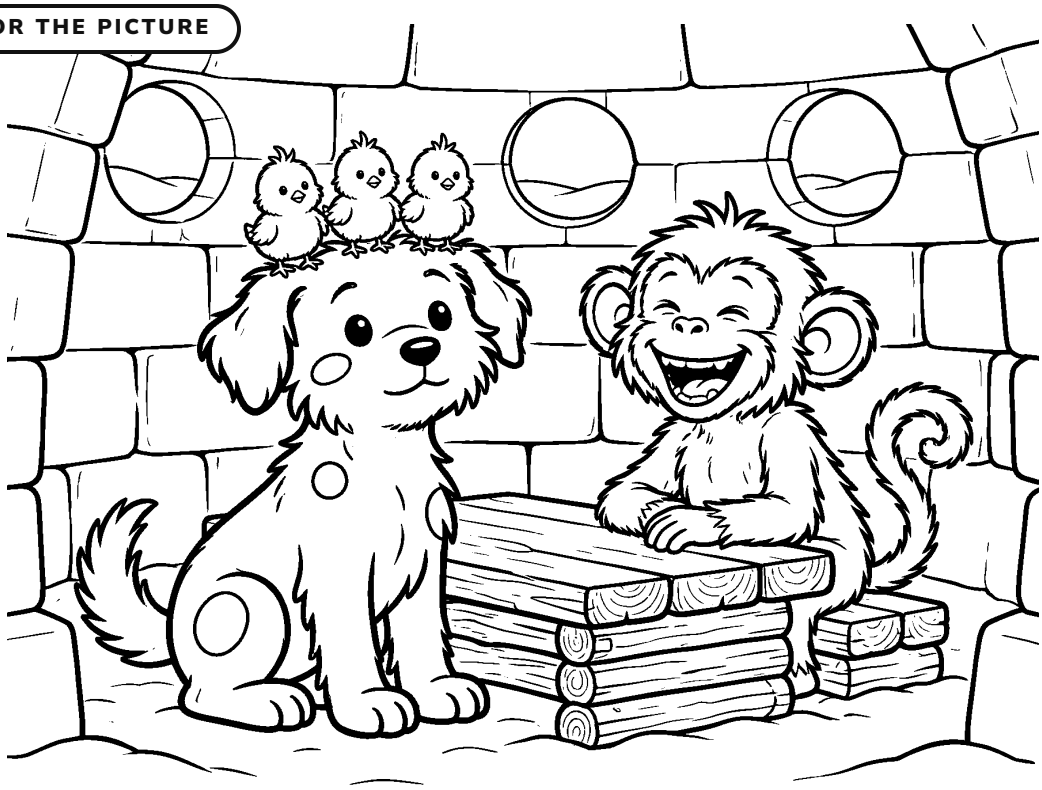
OR



do a backflip

Every Story Gets a Cheer

COLOR THE PICTURE



The long snow fort in the middle of Sunny Square glowed from end to end. There was a light in every window, and inside, it smelled like hot apples and honey and warm bread. Snow sparkled on the roof like sugar.

Everybody was there. Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey. Bruno and Hazel and Dottie and Benji. Ricky and Shiloh. Sammy, upside down on a snow shelf near the ceiling. And all the grown-ups, crowded in along the walls.

It was a supper for everybody who had helped keep the lights lit through the longest night. Bruno had made the table himself, out of a long flat log, and he was very proud of it. It had only one wobble.

Mr. Monkey was so happy he couldn't sit still. He bounced in his seat. He bounced so much that the whole log table bounced with him, and every bowl on it went *clink-clink-clink*.

"Mr. Monkey," said Hazel, holding on to her bowl. "You're bouncing the soup."

"Hee hee hee! Sorry, soup!"

Then Dottie's ears went up. Her nose went up. "Somebody's outside!"

Mr. Monkey looked out the fort door. There, standing in the snow just outside, were the old crow and his son. And lined up behind them, in a row, were three little round fluffy grandchicks, so fluffy they looked like three gray dandelion puffs with beaks.

But they didn't come in. They just stood there at the door.

"Come in!" called Mr. Monkey.

The old crow shook his head. "This supper is for the friends who kept the lights," he said in his scratchy voice. "We didn't keep any lights. We'll just watch from out here."

And the three little chicks peeked around his legs, looking in at the warm glowing fort, at the food, at everybody inside.

Mr. Monkey felt it pull at his chest. He didn't want the crows to watch from the door. He wanted them inside, in the warm, with everybody.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "They think they have to have done something to come in."

Mr. Moose looked at the crows in the snow. He thought about the night on Lookout Ledge, and the longest night, and the light on the crow's tree. Had anybody kept the lights so they could have a supper? No. They kept the lights so nobody would be in the dark. So the lights were for the crows, too. For everybody.

Then he looked around the fort. Every seat was full. Every bit of the long log table was taken.

"They don't have to do anything," said Mr. Moose. "But they do need a place to sit."

Mr. Monkey stood up on the table. "EVERYBODY SCOOT!" he called.

And everybody scooted. Hazel scooted, and Dottie scooted, and Ricky scooted. Bruno scooted too, so hard that he scooted right through the side wall of the fort, *FWUMP*, and ended up sitting outside in the snow with his bowl still in his paws.

He looked down at his bowl. Then he looked back in through the big Bruno-shaped hole.

"Now there's room," said Bruno. "Haw haw haw!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Bruno made a door!"

Mr. Moose pulled out a seat at the table, right in the middle, and Mr. Monkey patted it. "For you," he said.

The old crow came in slowly. His son came in after him. And the three grandchicks came hopping in last, *hop, hop, hop*, and then, instead of sitting on the seats, they hopped right up onto Dottie's head and sat there in a row like three fluffy hats.

Dottie held very, very still. Her tail wanted to wag so badly. She didn't let it. "Are they on me?" she whispered.

"They're on you," said Ricky.

"Ha! Ha!" whispered Dottie, very carefully, so her head wouldn't shake.

Then the stories started.

Daddy Moose stood up first, which he almost never did. "On the longest night," he said, "I checked the light at the top of the cliff eleven times." And everybody cheered, "HOORAY!", even though it wasn't a very exciting story, because it was Daddy Moose's.

Hazel stood up. "When we climbed the windy ridge, I took the slide," she said. "And it went the wrong way. And I climbed all the way back up by myself!" And everybody cheered, "HOORAY!", and Hazel went, "Hee hee hee... *SNORT*!"

Shiloh stood up, very small. "I said 'look up,'" he said softly. And everybody cheered the loudest yet, "HOORAY!", and Shiloh turned pink under his wool.

Ricky stood up last, with his light list. "My story is my list," he said. And he read the whole thing. Every light in the woods, one at a time. "The Moose home. The treehouse. The three candles. The long fort..." It took a very long time. Benji fell asleep. Then Benji woke up again. Ricky was still reading.

"...and the crows' tree," said Ricky at last. "The end."

And everybody cheered, "HOORAY!", and Benji cheered the loudest, because he'd had a nap.

Every story got a cheer. And every time, the cheer got a little bigger, the way a snowball gets bigger when it rolls down a hill. Mr. Monkey felt it growing. The happy wasn't getting used up. Every time somebody told their good part, there was more of it.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "It keeps getting bigger."

"It does," whispered Mr. Moose.

Then Sammy zipped down off her snow shelf, landed in the middle of the table, and said, "What do snowmen eat for lunch?"

Nobody knew.

"ICE-BURGERS!" And she zipped right back up to the ceiling.

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie.

"Hee hee," went Benji.

Then it was the old crow's turn. He didn't stand up. He just looked around the table, at all the faces in the candlelight, and he started to tell it, slowly. About the long night. About being alone on his branch. About calling across the river, and nothing coming back. And then, small and far away, an answer.

"My son called back," said the old crow.

The friends had all been there. They all knew this story already. But when the old crow said it, everybody cheered anyway, louder than for anybody, "HOORAY!" And the three little grandchicks on Dottie's head cheered loudest of all, "PEEP! PEEP! PEEP!", and bounced up and down so much that Dottie's head bounced too, and this time her tail wagged anyway.

The old crow looked around at everybody cheering for him. And he made that sound again, half a caw and half a laugh. It was the happiest sound in the fort.

Then Bruno tried to tell his story. "And then I tried to sound like a crow—" he started, and he took a big breath, and he did it again. "*MOOOOOOO.*"

"Haw haw haw!"

"Hee hee hee!"

"PEEP! PEEP! PEEP!"

The grandchicks liked that one so much that they spent the rest of supper trying to moo, and all that came out was "*Mee-oo. Mee-oo,*" like three very small, very confused cows.

When supper was over, nobody wanted to leave. The fort was warm, and the lights were glowing in every window, and Bruno's new door let the stars in.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, walking home with Mr. Moose through the snow. "We had supper in the long fort. The crows didn't think they could come in, so everybody scooted, and Bruno scooted right through the wall. The grandchicks sat on Dottie's head like three hats, and she held still. Everybody told their story, and every story got a cheer, and Sammy said snowmen eat ice-burgers. And the old crow got the biggest cheer of all."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And behind them in Sunny Square, the long fort glowed in the dark, and from somewhere inside it came three tiny voices, still trying their very hardest to moo.

Let's Talk

1. The crows thought they couldn't come in. What did everybody do to make room?
2. Who outside our house makes you glad? Give them a cheer!

Your Turn

Make a red ornament for someone outside our house who makes you glad. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



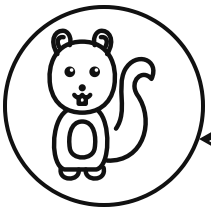
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is red. Color it red when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



Why did the boy run around his bed?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

c t a c h

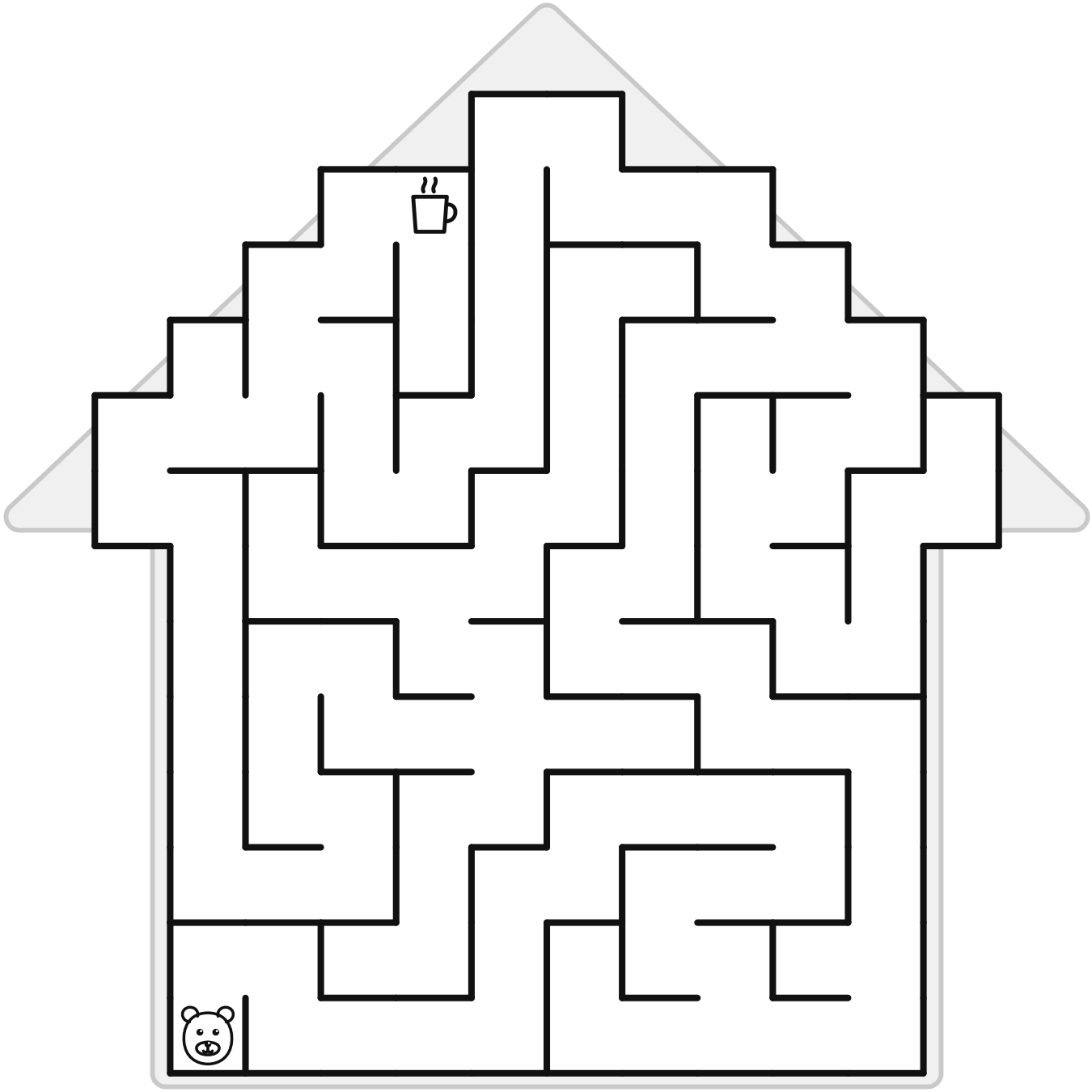
CLUE



To ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ up on his sleep!

☆ Supper in the Long Fort

Help Bruno find his way to the supper. Start at Bruno Bear.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Shift!

The pals sit at a big log. It is fun!

The dad and his kid and the chicks stand on the step.

"Get in!" says  . But the log has no gap.

"Shift!" yells  . The pals shift.

 shifts. Thud!  is past the wall! Ha!

The chicks hop on  .  sits still, still, still.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Bruno  Dottie



Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

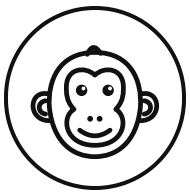
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

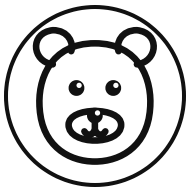
for making me so glad

♡ Feelings Match

How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



Mr. Monkey, when the crows stayed outside



Bruno, after he scooted right through the wall



Dottie, with three chicks on her head



Shiloh, when everybody cheered for him



surprised



silly



happy



angry



sad

Shi-LOUD

COLOR THE PICTURE



The night was very cold and very clear, and the snow in Munching Meadow lay smooth and blue under the stars. It was so quiet that Shiloh could hear the snow squeak under his hooves, *creek, creek*, when he walked.

Everybody else in the woods was asleep. Tomorrow was the Overflow Feast, the biggest feast Wanderful Woods had ever had, with the whole woods at one long table. Shiloh had been waiting for it for days and days. And he was so excited that he couldn't close his eyes.

So he wrapped up in his blanket and went out to stand in the meadow, the way his mama did when she couldn't sleep. And he looked up.

The sky was moving.

At first it was just a little green glow, low over the hills, like somebody far away had lit a lantern. Then the glow grew. It stretched up across the sky in a long, wavy ribbon of green, and the ribbon rippled, like a curtain when the wind blows through it. Then pink came, and purple, and a little bit of gold, and all of it danced together, slowly, across the whole sky over Wanderful Woods.

Shiloh's mouth fell open. His blanket fell off. He didn't even notice.

And then he saw that he wasn't alone.

At the far edge of the meadow, where the pines began, stood the Silent Stag. He looked as if he were made of morning mist and river light, soft and silver-blue, with antlers like branches of light. He was looking up at the dancing sky too. He stood in the deep snow, and there were no tracks behind him at all.

Then, slowly, the Silent Stag turned his head and looked at Shiloh.

Just looked. And Shiloh knew, all at once, that this was too big for just one little sheep in a meadow. Everybody had to see it. Everybody.

When Shiloh looked back at the pines, the Silent Stag was gone.

Shiloh ran.

He ran across the meadow and through the trees, and the first place he came to was the Moose home. He banged on the door with his hoof, *bam bam bam*, and he opened his mouth to shout, and what came out was:

"...baa."

It was a very small baa. Shiloh had never shouted anything in his whole life.

But the door opened anyway. Mr. Moose stood there in his blanket, with a sleepy nightcap hanging off one antler. Behind him, a vine shook, and Mr. Monkey came sliding down from the treehouse next door in his pajamas, half asleep, and landed in the snow with a soft *whumpf*.

"Shiloh?" said Mr. Monkey, yawning. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong," whispered Shiloh. "The sky. The sky is dancing. Everybody has to see it. But I can't make my voice big."

Mr. Monkey looked up. And his eyes went wide, and his yawn turned into a gasp. He wanted to see it forever. But even more than that, he wanted everybody to see it. Right now. Before it was gone.

"WAKE UP, EVERYBODY!" he started to shout.

But Mr. Moose stopped him. He was thinking. Shiloh had seen it first. Shiloh had run all this way. This was Shiloh's news to tell.

"Shiloh," said Mr. Moose. "You tell it. We'll run with you. At every house, say it a little bit louder."

Shiloh swallowed. "Okay," he whispered.

The three of them ran through the snow, Mr. Monkey on one side of Shiloh and Mr. Moose on the other, to Benji's burrow by the clover.

"Benji," said Shiloh, a little louder. "The sky is dancing."

Benji poked his head out, and his ears went straight up.

Next they ran to Bruno's den. Bruno was snoring so loud the icicles over his door were shaking. *SNRRRK... whoooo. SNRRRK... whoooo.*

"Bruno!" said Shiloh, louder. "The sky is DANCING!"

Bruno came out of his den. But he didn't wake up. He walked right out into the snow with his eyes closed, still snoring, with his blanket dragging behind him like a cape.

"He's sleepwalking!" whispered Mr. Monkey. "Hee hee hee!"

Shiloh took the deepest breath he'd ever taken. "BRUNO! LOOK UP!"

Bruno's eyes popped open. He looked up. And he sat right down in the snow. "Ohhhhh," said Bruno.

Then they ran on, and Shiloh got louder at every home. Hazel's. Dottie's. Ricky's. "THE SKY IS DANCING!" Ricky came out with a piece of bark to write down every color. Dottie came out spinning in circles, trying to see all of it at once, until she got dizzy and fell over in the snow, and lay there on her back with her legs up, looking at the sky.

"This is the best way to see it," said Dottie from the snow. "Ha! Ha!"

So everybody lay down on their backs in the snow.

Sammy was already up, because Sammy was always up. She zipped down from her treetop nook and landed right on Mr. Moose's tummy. "Why is everybody lying on the ground?"

"LOOK UP!" said Shiloh.

And Sammy looked up, and for the first time in her whole life, Sammy Squirrel held still.

By the time they got to the Wishing Tree in Sunny Square, Shiloh wasn't whispering anymore at all. He climbed right up on the Listening Log, stood up as tall as one little sheep can stand, and he shouted so loud it rang out over the whole woods:

"EVERYBODY! WAKE UP! LOOK UP! THE SKY IS DANCING!"

And all over Wanderful Woods, doors opened. Windows opened. Mamas and daddies came out in their blankets. The old crow and his grandchicks came flying over from across the river. Mama Hedgehog came up the littlest trail. And everybody stood in the snow and looked up, and everybody said the same thing: "Ohhhhh."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Shiloh! You were so loud! You're not Shiloh anymore. You're Shi-LOUD!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose. "Shi-LOUD!"

Shiloh's wool went pink all the way to his ears. But he was smiling the biggest smile anybody had ever seen on him.

Last of all, very slowly, came Tessie. She looked up at the sky for a long, long time.

"I saw the sky dance once," said Tessie softly. "When I was very small. I've waited my whole long life... to see it again."

She squinted. "It's a little blurry... these days," she said. "But it's still... the most beautiful blur... I ever saw."

After a while, the colors faded, slowly, until there were only stars again.

Before anybody went back to bed, Mama Monkey handed out white circles right there in Sunny Square, and everybody painted by starlight. Shiloh's had nothing on the front. On the back, he painted the sky, green and pink and purple, dancing.

And the next morning, Shiloh would tell the whole story to everybody he saw, all over again, just the way it happened. But for now, everybody went back to their homes, and Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey walked Shiloh to his door, one on each side of him.

"What a day!" said Shiloh, in his own little voice again. "The sky danced, and the Silent Stag was there, and I ran and told everybody. Bruno sleepwalked, and Dottie fell over, and Sammy held still. I got louder and louder. Mr. Monkey called me Shi-LOUD. And Tessie got to see it again."

Then Shiloh went inside, and the two friends walked home under the stars. Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And over Munching Meadow, under the quiet stars, a little blanket lay in the snow right where Shiloh had dropped it, and not a single hoofprint was anywhere near the pines.

Let's Talk

1. Shiloh's voice was tiny. How did it get so big?
2. The dancing sky was a gift nobody made. What gift like that would you run and tell everybody about?

Your Turn

Make a white ornament for a gift nobody made. Front: what it is. Back: draw it.

FRONT: WHAT IT IS



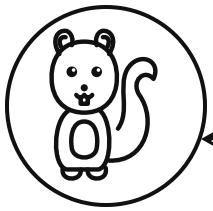
BACK: DRAW IT



This one stays white. When you are done, trace its edge with a gray crayon.

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both ornaments. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's ornaments.

SAMMY'S JOKE



Which is faster, hot or cold?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

o h t

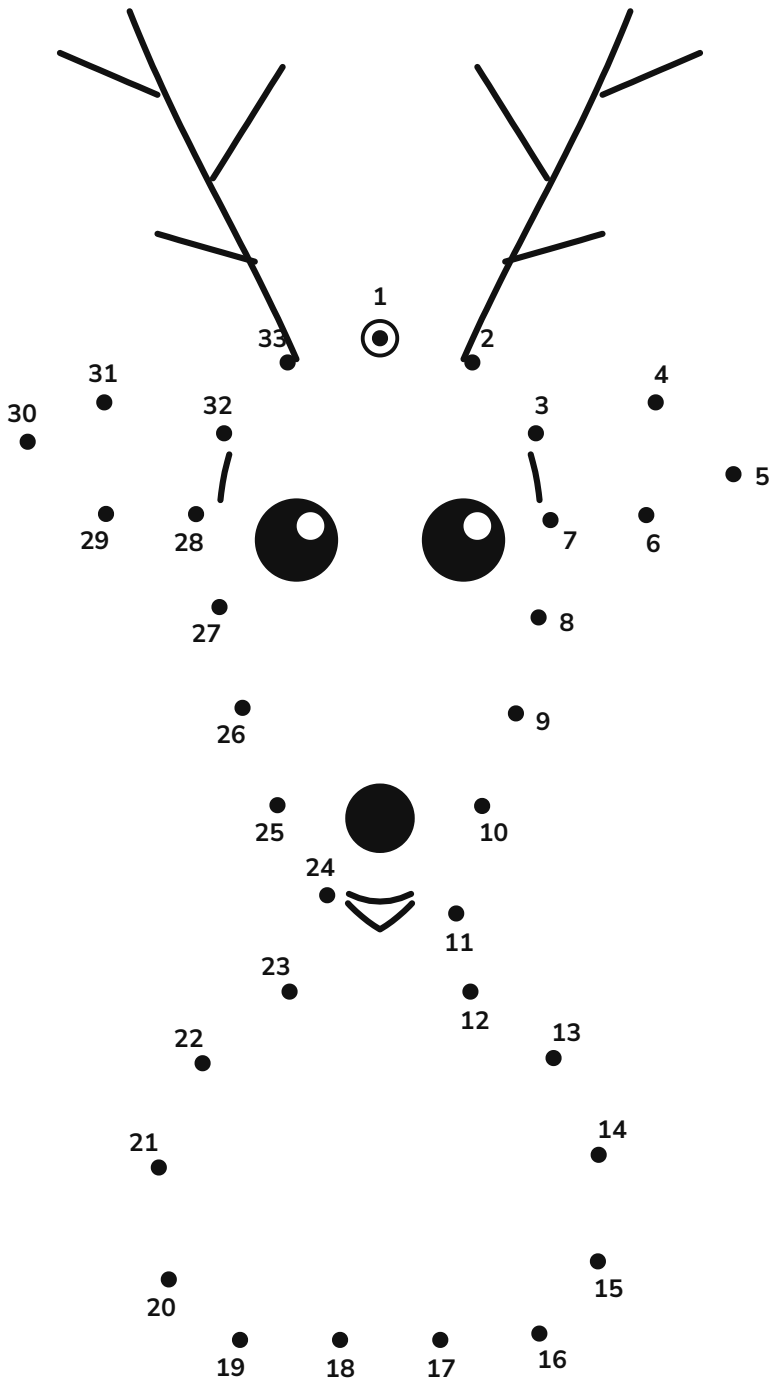
CLUE



___ ___ ___. You can catch a cold!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find who stood at the edge of the meadow. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 33. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Yells!

looks up. It is lit up, *a*nd it shifts!

stands still. Then swish! is not on the hill.

“Up,” s*a*ys , *a*s soft *a*s c*a*n be.

At ’s den: “Up!” At ’s den: “UP! UP!”

Then yells, “UP! UP! LOOK UP!”

The p*a*ls look up. “Ah!”

PICTURE WORDS Shiloh the Silent St*a*g Benji Bruno

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

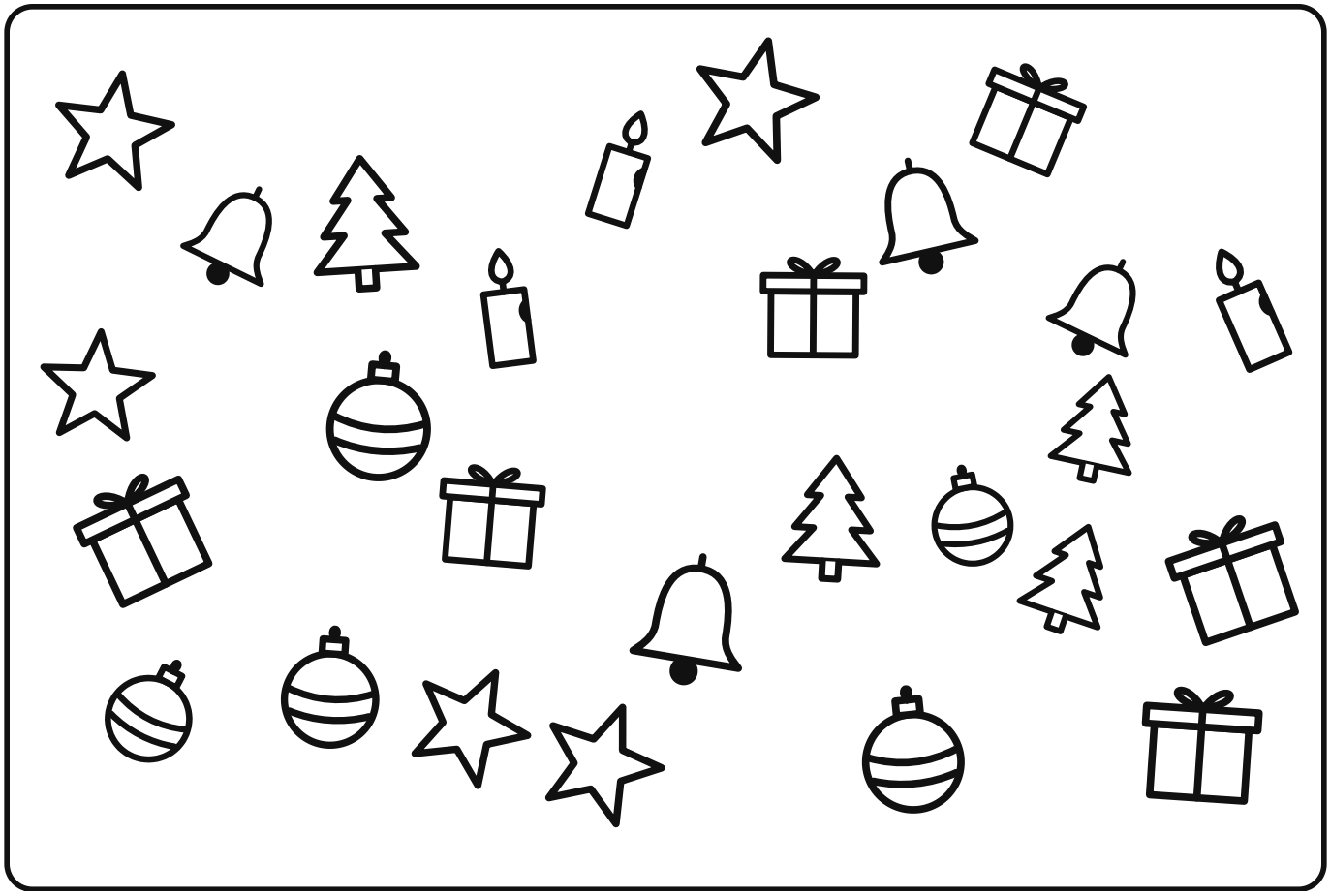
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. What good gift did nobody make? Write it or draw it on the line.

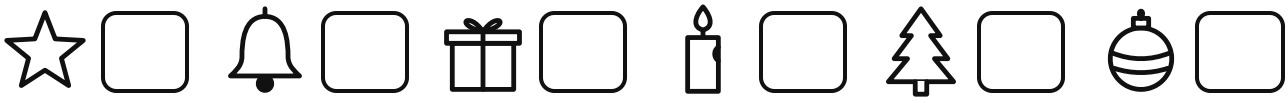
Nobody made .

It is a gift.

Christmas Eve I Spy

Find and count each one. Write how many in the box.





The Overflow Feast

COLOR THE PICTURE



Sunny Square had never looked like this. A long, long table stretched all the way across it, made of every log and plank and flat stone in Wanderful Woods, pushed end to end. There were bowls of berries and baskets of bread, honeycomb and apple pies, roasted nuts and a giant pot of Mama Moose's cocoa, steaming in the cold air. And all around Sunny Square, as far as anybody could see, every single home in the woods had a light in its window.

By the fire, on their flat stone, the three candles were burning. Next to them stood a fourth candle, waiting.

Everybody was there. Well, almost everybody.

"Where's Tessie?" asked Benji.

Everybody looked around. Then Dottie's nose went up. "There!"

Way, way across Sunny Square, at the very edge, was a small round shape in the snow. It was Tessie, on her way. Slowly.

"We can't light the candle until everybody's here," said Mama Monkey.

Mr. Monkey looked at the fourth candle. He looked at the cocoa pot. He looked at the pies. And then he looked at Tessie, way over at the edge of the square.

"Okay," he said. "I can wait."

He waited. He wiggled. He climbed up on the table and looked. "Is she here yet?"

"Not yet," said Mr. Moose.

He climbed up the Wishing Tree and looked. Tessie had moved. A little. "She moved one snowflake!" he called down.

He waited some more. He hung upside down from a branch by his tail and looked at her upside down, just in case that helped. It didn't. "Now she's moved TWO snowflakes!"

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" went Hazel. "Upside down doesn't make her faster!"

Mr. Monkey dropped down out of the tree. He couldn't stand it anymore. Everybody was waiting. The cocoa was waiting. The candle was waiting. And Tessie was all the way over there, all by herself, walking and walking.

That was the part that bothered him most. She was all by herself.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "She's walking all alone."

Mr. Moose looked at the long table full of everybody, and the long snowy square, and Tessie at the other end of it. He thought about it. They couldn't make Tessie go faster. Nobody could. But they didn't have to wait for her over here.

"Then let's go wait with her," said Mr. Moose. "Over there."

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey walked across Sunny Square to Tessie. Benji came too. And then Hazel, who usually galloped everywhere, came walking over very slowly, one hoof at a time, so she could walk at Tessie

speed.

"Hello, dears," said Tessie. "Am I late?"

"You're right on time," said Mr. Moose. "We came to walk with you."

Then Dottie came running over. Then Shiloh, and Ricky, and Bruno, carrying the whole cocoa pot so it wouldn't get lonely. Then the mamas and the daddies. Then the old crow and his son and the three grandchicks, hopping. Until the whole Overflow Feast was walking across Sunny Square at Tessie speed, all together, and the long, long table sat there in the snow all by itself.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "The table's waiting for US now!"

Ricky counted Tessie's steps out loud. He got to forty-two, and then he lost count, because Tessie took a step so slow that he wasn't sure if it was a step or not.

So they walked. Very, very slowly. Mr. Monkey tried to walk at Tessie speed too, but it was so slow that he kept tipping over in the middle of a step. He tipped over three times.

"Hee hee hee! Tessie, how do you walk so SLOW without falling down?"

"Heh... heh... heh," laughed Tessie. "Practice... dear. Lots... of... practice."

And somehow, walking with Tessie, the waiting didn't feel like waiting anymore. It just felt like walking with Tessie.

When they finally reached the table, everybody cheered.

Mama Monkey held out the twig. "The first light was for the light we got, given away," she said. "The second was for the light that keeps us walking. The third was for the light that holds steady. And this one is for the light at the end of the wait."

Mr. Monkey took the twig. He touched it to the third candle, inside its thick glass jar. And then he carried the little flame over and lit the fourth candle.

Four lights, side by side, glowing in the middle of the Overflow Feast.

Then the feast began.

Daddy Monkey picked up the giant cocoa pot to pour. He started with Mr. Monkey's mug. But right then, Daddy Moose said something funny across the table, and Daddy Monkey turned to laugh, and he kept pouring. And pouring.

The cocoa filled Mr. Monkey's mug right up to the top. Then it went over the top. It ran down the side and across the table, *gluggle-gluggle*, right into Benji's mug next to it. It filled up Benji's mug. Then it ran over into Shiloh's mug. Then Hazel's. Then Dottie's. Then Bruno's.

"Daddy!" said Mr. Monkey. "The cocoa!"

Daddy Monkey turned around. All the way down the long, long table, the cocoa was running from one mug into the next, filling up every single one.

"Oh!" said Daddy Monkey, still pouring. "Well, look at that."

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, holding up his full mug. "Daddy Monkey filled up the whole table!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "The cocoa is overflowing everybody!"

Then Sammy popped up on the end of the table. "Why was the snowman looking through the bag of carrots?" she asked. "He was PICKING HIS NOSE!" And she was gone before anybody could answer.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, so loud that his cocoa sloshed.

Then came the gold circles. Everybody went to the little green pine by the Moose home's door, found the ones with their own faces on them, and turned them over.

Daddy Monkey found the one with himself on the front, arms up like a tree. On the back was Lookout Ledge in the dark, and the big blankets, and a little monkey asleep standing up. Daddy Monkey didn't say anything. He just picked Mr. Monkey up and held him for a long time.

Mama Moose found the row of candles. "I didn't know you noticed," she said softly to Mr. Moose. "All those candles."

"I noticed every one," said Mr. Moose.

Tessie lived by herself, so she didn't have a gold circle. But on the little pine was a red circle with her face on it. She held it very close to her face. Then very far away. Then close again. She squinted. "Is this a turtle... or a rock?"

"It's you, Tessie," said Benji. "I painted it."

"Ah," said Tessie. "It's a lovely... rock."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

"Heh... heh... heh," laughed Tessie, so slowly that by the time she finished, everybody was laughing with her.

Mr. Monkey looked out over it all: the long table, the four candles, everybody's cocoa, all the lights in all the windows of all the homes in the woods. Every home. He had never seen anything so full.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "We waited for Tessie, and I hung upside down, and she only moved two snowflakes. So we went and walked with her, and I tipped over three times. I lit the fourth candle. Daddy poured the cocoa and didn't stop, so it filled up everybody's mug down the whole table. And Tessie called her own picture a lovely rock."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And in Sunny Square, four candles glowed side by side over the long, long table, while a little warm cocoa still dripped, *drip... drip...*, from the very last mug at the very end.

Let's Talk

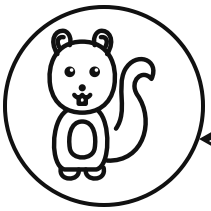
1. Why did everybody walk across Sunny Square to Tessie instead of waiting for her?
2. Merry Christmas! What made you the gladdest today?

Your Turn

Draw your Christmas, with everybody together. Write each name, too!

Today I was glad because _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do you call a deer with no eyes?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

e **a** **d** **i**

CLUE



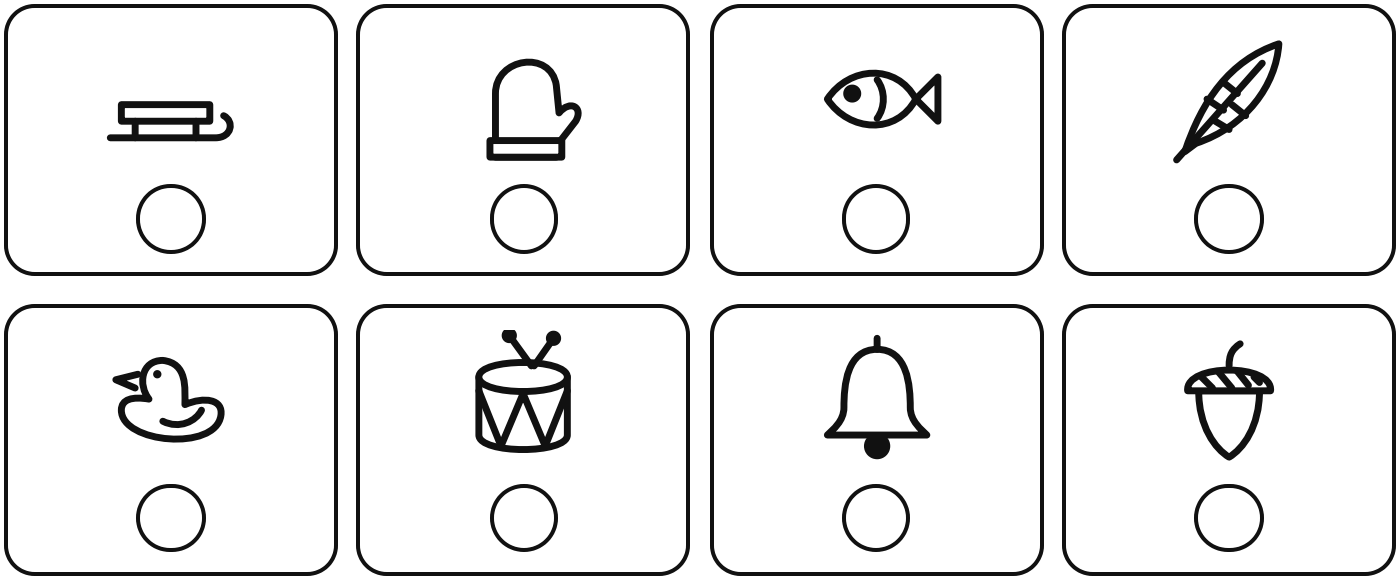
No _____ _____ _____ _____ !

Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

We Will Go With 

The pals want to dig in. But  is not with them yet.

Step... step... step...  is not fast.

“Let us go with  !” says  .

The pals step with  .  tips. Flop! Ha!

At last, the pals sit. Dad fills the cups. Glug, glug!

It spills into a cup, and a cup, and a cup!

PICTURE WORDS  Tessie  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey



For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: into.

Color a star each time you read it.

My Thank-You

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

for making me so glad

Today's Candle

It's Christmas! This morning the fourth candle gets its light from the third one.



Dec. 4 · Dec. 11 · Dec. 18 · **Dec. 25** · Jan. 1

Trace the flame on candle 4! Candles 1, 2 and 3 are already lit.

THE CANDLE WORDS: A GROWN-UP SAYS EACH LINE, AND YOU SAY IT BACK

Grace comes in. (cup your hands)
Gratitude sees it. (point to your eyes)
And graciousness passes it on. (open your hands to the candle)

Grown-up: "What do we pass on?" You: **Generosity, hope, peace, and joy!**
One light. Passed along.

DRAW YOUR FAMILY WITH YOUR CANDLES

☆ Christmas Morning

Merry Christmas! This morning your family celebrates in three parts:

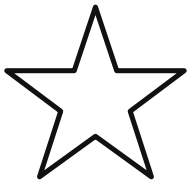
1. **Remember:** The Christmas story
2. **Rejoice:** The Christmas Opening
3. **Ready:** Plan the giving

☆ Remember: The Light That Came

A grown-up reads how Jesus was born. Mary wrapped baby Jesus in cloths and laid him in a manger. (A manger is a box that holds food for animals.) Then your family sings "Silent Night."

Next, a grown-up says, "Today we remember the light that came into the world." Everyone answers together:

Jesus is born!



Then the fourth candle is lit. Color the words and the star. A star led wise men to find baby Jesus.

Rejoice: The Christmas Opening

Find the gold ornaments with **your** name on the front, and read them by the candles. A grown-up can read them with you.

I found ☐ gold ornaments with my name!

Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from: (Draw their face or write their name.)

WHAT DID IT SAY? DRAW OR WRITE IT.

Ready: Plan the Giving

Christmas is a full day! Make this plan whenever it fits, maybe at bedtime. Pick one box to fill in, or do all three.

DEC. 26
Your time

Who might feel left out this Christmas?

DEC. 27
Your things

Who is waiting for something you could give?

DEC. 28
Your words

Who did something hard? Tell them, "You made it!"

EXTRA, IF YOUR FAMILY DOES IT

My Christmas Gift

Did your family agree to give each person in the house one gift that makes their day better? Draw a gift you are giving. Before they open it, tell them why you picked it!

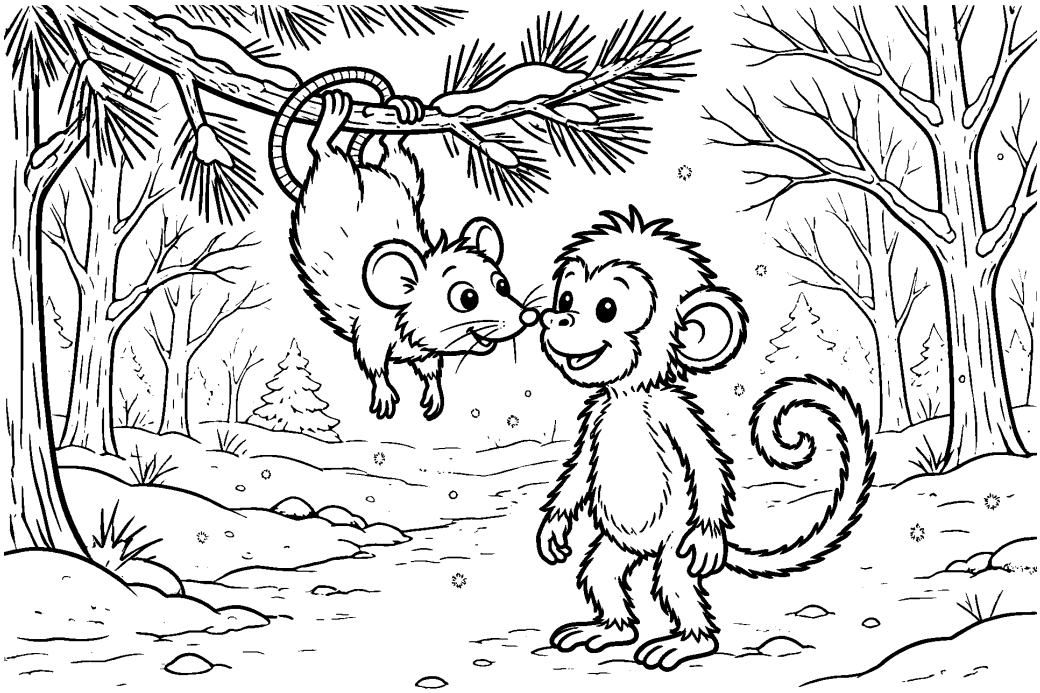
DRAW THE GIFT

It's for: (Draw their face or write their name.)

I picked this because _____

Percy Comes Down

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning after the Overflow Feast was soft and bright, and the snow was so sparkly it looked like somebody had sprinkled sugar over the whole woods. The air still smelled a little bit like cocoa.

There was a LOT left over from the feast. Pies and bread and honeycomb and nuts. So the friends had a plan: the Leftover Parade. They loaded everything into baskets and carried them through the woods, home to home, giving leftovers to everybody.

Bruno carried the biggest basket on his head. Hazel carried two, one on each side. Dottie carried a pie in her mouth, very, very carefully, and didn't eat it, even though her tail was wagging so fast it made a little breeze. And everybody they passed came out to see the parade and get some pie, until the path was crowded with friends and neighbors from one end to the other.

Mr. Monkey was at the front, of course, leading the way. And that's when he saw him.

Up in a pine tree by the path, peeking out between the branches, was a very small, very thin pack rat with a long tail and big shiny eyes. His name was Percy. He lived by himself in a nest at the bottom of the hill, and he was too small to see over the crowd, so he had climbed the tree to watch.

He was trying to stay hidden. But the branch he was on was very thin, and Percy was holding on very tight, and slowly, slowly, the branch began to bend. It bent lower. And lower. And lower. Until Percy was hanging right in front of Mr. Monkey's face, upside down, nose to nose.

"Hello," said Mr. Monkey.

"...Hello," said Percy, upside down.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Percy, your tree is bowing!"

And then he heard the grumbling behind him.

"That's Percy," whispered Hazel. "He took my blue ribbon last summer."

"He took my good spoon," grumbled Bruno.

"He took my ball," said Dottie, through the pie.

"He takes shiny things," said Ricky. "All the time." Then he said, a little quieter, "I used to grab things too. Before I learned to ask."

Percy heard all of it. He looked down at the ground, which, since he was upside down, was really looking up. He didn't say anything. He started to climb back up his branch, to go.

Mr. Monkey felt it in his chest, all at once. Nobody ever invited Percy anywhere. He was always on the outside, up in a tree, watching. And the Leftover Parade was going right past him.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "He was watching us. He wanted to be in the parade."

Mr. Moose looked at Percy, climbing away. He thought about it. Percy did take things. Everybody knew that. But Percy was also all alone. If nobody ever came to Percy's house, Percy would always be up in a tree, watching.

"Then the parade should go to Percy's house," said Mr. Moose slowly. "And stay a while."

"Percy!" called Mr. Monkey. "Come down! The parade is coming to YOUR house today!"

Percy stopped climbing. He looked down at Mr. Monkey. "My house?"

"Your house," said Mr. Moose. "All day, if that's okay."

Percy came down so fast he slid the last part of the tree on his tummy. "Okay!" he said. "Yes! Okay!"

Some of the friends were still grumbling a little. But they all followed anyway, down the hill, to Percy's nest.

Percy's nest wasn't a nest at all. It was a mountain. A giant, glittering mountain of shiny things: buttons and bottle caps, spoons and keys, beads and a little bell and a whole lot of shiny paper. It sparkled in the sun so much that everybody had to squint.

"Whoa," said Ricky.

Bruno walked over to look, and he put one paw on the bottom of the pile, and the whole thing slid down on top of him, *KA-SHHHHHHH-CLINK-CLINK-CLINK*.

Bruno sat up out of the pile with a pot on his head and three spoons in his fur.

"I found my spoon," said Bruno. He held up one of them. "Haw haw haw!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Bruno, you're wearing the whole pile!"

Then Percy showed them his very best treasure, right at the top. It was a little round piece of mirror. "This is my friend," said Percy. "He's always here. When I smile, he smiles too."

Dottie looked into the mirror. Another dog looked back at her. "HELLO!" barked Dottie, wagging. "Who are YOU?" She licked the mirror. The other dog licked it back.

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie. "He's friendly!"

"Hee hee hee! Dottie, that's YOU!" said Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose looked at the little mirror, and then at Percy. "Now you have lots more friends," he said. "Not just one."

They didn't go home. They stayed, just like Mr. Moose had said. They ate leftover pie on top of the shiny mountain. They played hide-and-seek in it, and Benji hid so well under the shiny paper that it took everybody an hour to find him, because every time somebody got close, he just looked like more shiny paper. Ricky showed Percy his jars, and Percy showed Ricky his bottle caps, and they lined them all up in rows. Hazel taught Percy to gallop, and Percy galloped exactly one step and fell over, and then got up and did it again.

All afternoon, Percy didn't stop smiling.

And then, when the sun was getting low, Percy climbed right up to the very top of his shiny mountain, and stood there, and his whiskers were shaking.

"I took things," he said. "Lots of things. I took them because they were shiny, and nobody ever came over, and the shiny things kept me company. I shouldn't have taken them. I'm sorry. I won't take things anymore. And I want to give them all back."

Everybody looked at Percy.

"Not just give them back," said Percy. "Give back MORE."

And he did. He dug through the mountain. He gave Hazel back her blue ribbon, and three more ribbons besides. He gave Dottie back her ball, and three more balls. He gave Bruno back his spoon, and three more spoons, so now Bruno had four, and Bruno held them all up in his paw at once like a big shiny flower.

Bruno looked at Percy for a long moment. Then he said it.

"Yeah, I didn't like that. But we all make mistakes. Thank you for apologizing. I forgive you."

"Me too," said Hazel.

"Me too," said Dottie, wagging her whole back half.

Percy's eyes went shiny, shinier than anything in his whole pile.

Then Hazel tied one of her four ribbons onto the very end of Percy's tail, in a bow. Percy looked at it in his little mirror for a long time.

"Will you come back?" asked Percy. "Tomorrow, maybe?"

"Tomorrow," said Mr. Monkey. "And the day after that. And the day after THAT."

"Okay!" said Percy, and he tried to gallop in a circle and fell over again, with his ribbon waving.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, walking home in the pink sunset with Mr. Moose. "We had the Leftover Parade. Percy's branch bowed down till he was upside down in my face. We went to his house and stayed all day. Bruno knocked down the shiny mountain and wore a pot. Benji turned into shiny paper. And Percy said sorry and gave everything back, and three more of everything."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And at the bottom of the hill, Percy's nest sparkled in the last light of the day, with a little bit less shine in it than before, and a lot more footprints all around it in the snow.

Let's Talk

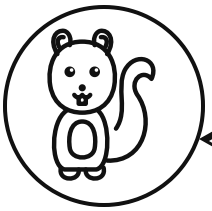
1. Percy always watched from up in a tree. What did the friends do for him?
2. Who could you spend time with who doesn't get invited very much?

Your Turn

Give your time! Draw who you will spend time with and what you will do together.

I will give my time to _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE

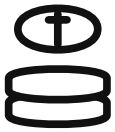


Where does a snowman keep his money?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

n b a k

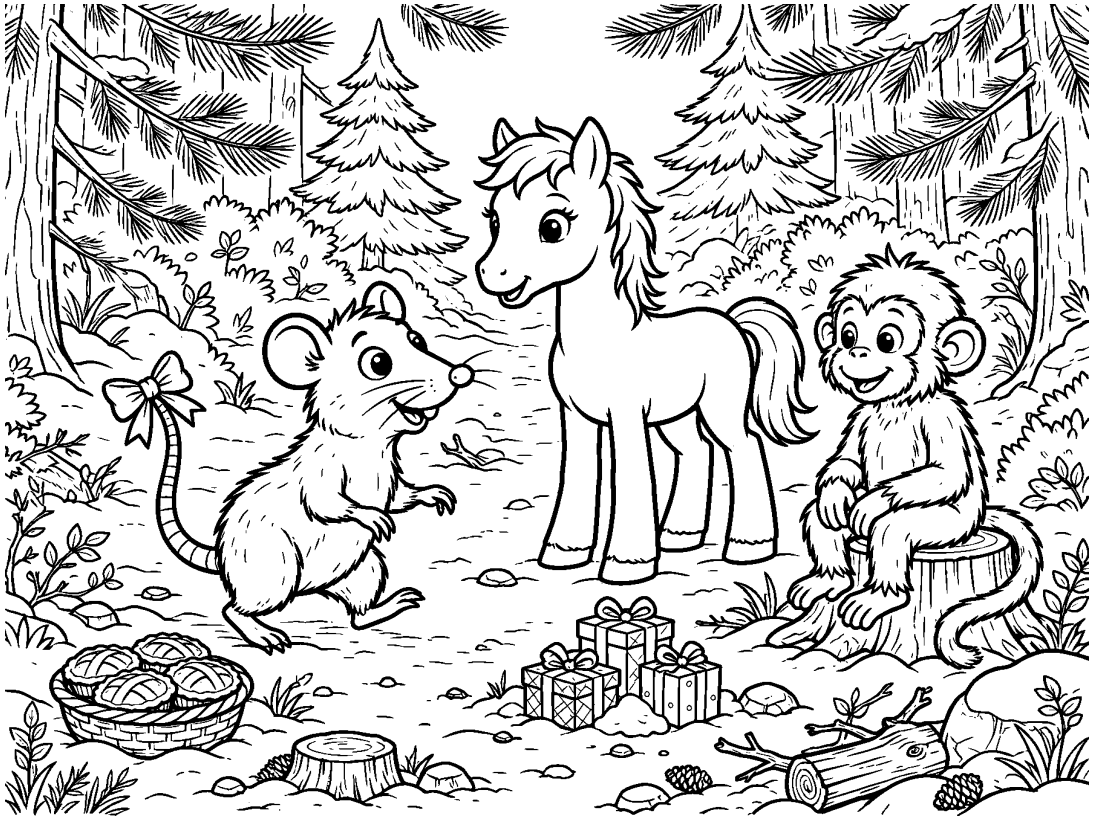
CLUE



In a snow ____ ____ ____ ____ !

Spot the Difference

Look closely. Can you find 5 differences?





Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

The Pack Rat

A pack rat hangs from a tree.

"He has my sash!" says  . "He has my cup!" says  .

"Let us go to his nest," says  .

His nest is a big stack of things that glint and wink!

 bumps it. Clink! Clank!  has a pot on top of him!

The rat says, "I am sad I did that. I will send it back.

And I will send back a lot!"

PICTURE WORDS  Hazel  Bruno  Mr. Monkey

For grown-ups: New sounds: ng and nk (sing, pink). New words to learn by heart: my, tree.



Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Who did you give your time to? Write their name on the line.

I gave my time to _____.

What Happened First?

Write 1, 2, 3, 4 in the circles to put the story in order.



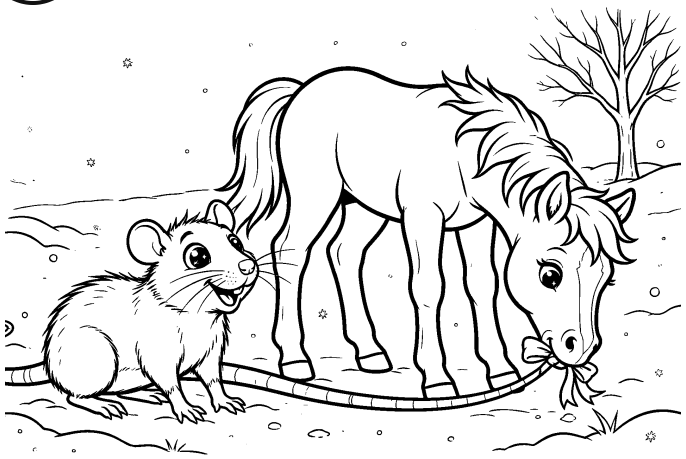
A



B



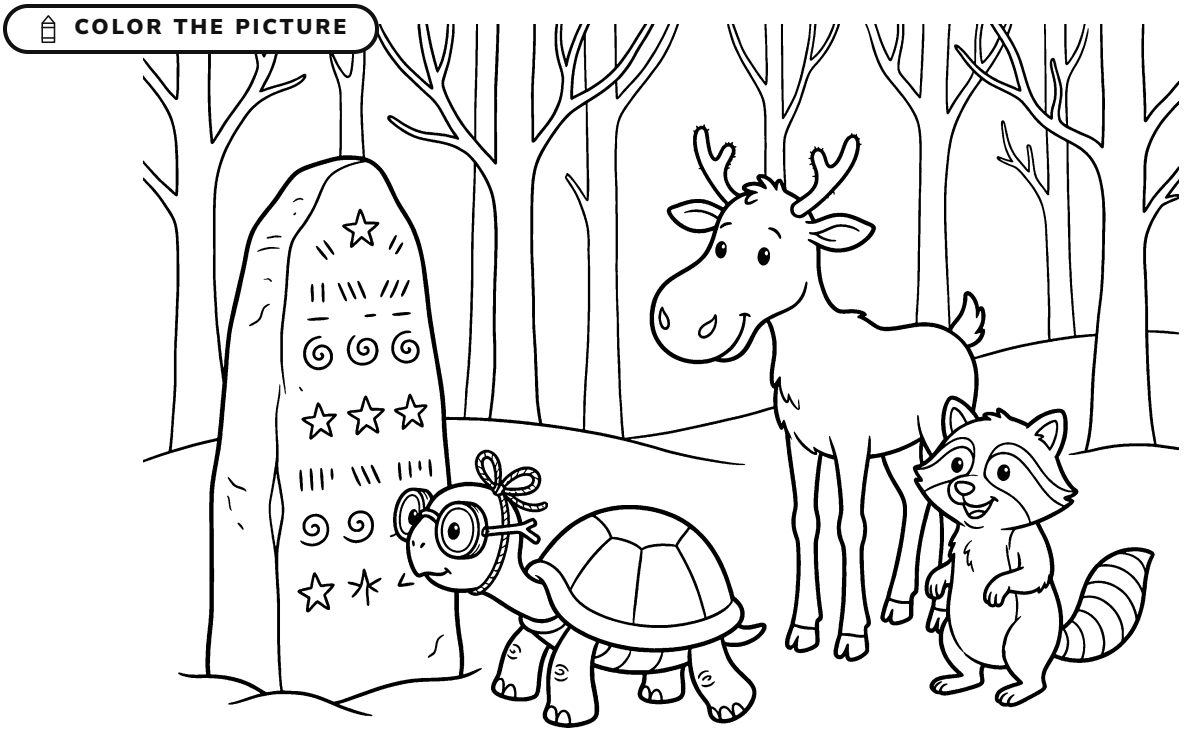
C



D

Tessie's Seeing Glasses

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was bright and still, and frost covered every twig in Wanderful Woods, so that the trees looked like they were made of white lace. When the sun touched them, they sparkled.

Ricky was sitting on a rock by the river, holding up one of his jars and looking at a little bug through the thick, round glass bottom.

"Whoa," he said. "It's GIANT."

Mr. Monkey came over to look. Through the bottom of the jar, the little bug looked as big as a berry. Every tiny leg was easy to see.

Then Ricky turned the jar around and looked at Mr. Monkey through it. Ricky's eye, on the other side of the glass, was enormous. It blinked.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Ricky, you have a GIANT eye!"

Ricky walked around looking at everything through his jar. Everything was huge. He walked right into Bruno's tummy, *boing*, and looked up through the jar, and Bruno's nose was the size of a pinecone.

"Bruno," said Ricky. "Your nose is ENORMOUS."

"Haw haw haw! It's a regular nose!" said Bruno.

Mr. Monkey was still giggling when he remembered something. Tessie, at the Overflow Feast, holding her circle close, and then far, and then close. *Is this a turtle... or a rock?* And Tessie, on the night the sky danced: *It's a little blurry these days.*

Tessie couldn't see things anymore. Not clearly. Not her circle. Not the sky. Not her friends' faces.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Tessie can't see the pictures. She can't see anything clearly at all. And she can't read the Story Stone anymore, either. She told me once. She hasn't read it in years and years."

The Story Stone was the big old rock by the Listening Log, with words carved into it, a long time ago, by somebody nobody remembered. Tessie used to read it every day. Now she just sat beside it.

Mr. Moose was thinking. He looked at Ricky's jar. He looked at the bug. He looked at Bruno's giant nose.

"Ricky's jar makes little things look big," he said slowly. "And blurry things look clear. What if Tessie had two jar bottoms? One for each eye?"

"Seeing glasses!" said Mr. Monkey.

But to make seeing glasses, they would need two jar bottoms, and something to hold them together, and something to hold them on. And Ricky only had one jar that was thick enough. It was his favorite. The best one in his whole collection.

Ricky held his favorite jar tight against his chest. He had found it in the river all by himself. It was the clearest, roundest, best jar he had ever found. He

looked at it for a long time.

"You can have it," he said finally, and he held it out. Then he looked at it again. "But it's only one. And Tessie has two eyes."

First they went to Tessie, to see if a jar would work at all. Tessie took Ricky's jar in both front feet, and instead of looking through the bottom, she put her whole head inside it, like a fishbowl.

"Everything is very... big," said Tessie, from inside the jar, "and very... round."

"Hee hee hee! Tessie, it goes on your EYES, not your whole head!"

"Heh... heh... heh," laughed Tessie, and her laugh went *bwoh... bwoh... bwoh* inside the glass.

Everybody brought something.

Daddy Monkey carefully took the bottom off Ricky's jar, *pop*, because he was the best fixer in the woods. Bruno brought honey to stick things together. He held the honey pot while Mr. Monkey dipped the twigs in it. But every time Mr. Monkey looked away, Bruno took one tiny lick. And then another tiny lick. When Mr. Monkey reached in for more, the pot was empty, and Bruno had honey all over his chin.

"Bruno," said Mr. Monkey. "Where did the honey go?"

Bruno thought about it. "In me," he said. "Haw haw haw! I'll get more."

And he did, a whole new pot. Benji brought two thin, bendy twigs from his clover patch. Shiloh pulled a long piece of soft wool from his own coat for the strings. Percy came running up the hill with the thick, round bottom of an old bottle, the shiniest thing left in his whole pile. "For the other eye," he said, all out of breath. It was one of his favorites too. Mr. Moose held everything steady, and Mr. Monkey tied the knots.

They made the first pair of seeing glasses, and they were too big. Tessie put them on, and they slid right down her nose, and down her chin, and onto the snow.

"Heh... heh... heh," laughed Tessie.

They made the second pair, and they were too small. They pinched Tessie's nose so tight that she sounded like a duck when she talked. "Thank you, dears," she said, like a duck.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Tessie's a duck!"

They made the third pair. Mr. Monkey tied the wool string very carefully behind Tessie's head. And Tessie opened her eyes.

She didn't say anything for a long, long time.

She looked at Mr. Monkey. She looked at Mr. Moose. She looked at Benji and Shiloh and Ricky and Percy, one face at a time, slowly, the way you look at something you haven't seen in a very long time.

"Oh," said Tessie. "There you all are." And then she looked up at Bruno.

"Bruno!" said Tessie. "When did you get so BIG?"

"Haw haw haw! I've been this big for a long time!"

Tessie looked at the red circle Benji had painted, up close. "It's not a rock," she said softly. "It's me."

Then, very slowly, Tessie turned toward the Story Stone. She walked over to it, one slow step at a time, and she put her face right up close to the old carved words. And for the first time in years and years, Tessie read them out loud.

It wasn't a story. It was a song. And Tessie sang it, slow and crinkly and warm:

"Sing, little river, sing, tall tree,
Sing, every rock and hill with me.
The long wait's over, the light is here.
Sing it again, so the whole woods hears."

When she finished, it was quiet.

Then Mr. Monkey sang it back. Then Mr. Moose. Then everybody, all together. And the song went out across Sunny Square, and into the trees.

And the woods sang it back. The river went bubbling under its ice. The wind went whistling through the frosty pines. The birds started up in every tree. Down the hill, all of Percy's shiny things jingled in the breeze. And across the river, the old crow and his son and the three grandchicks sang it too, though the grandchicks were still mostly mooing.

The song went farther and farther, from home to home, until the whole woods was singing it, all at once, every rock and hill and tree.

Tessie stood beside the Story Stone, with her seeing glasses on, and sang it one more time, very slowly.

"I waited... a long time... to read that again," she said.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose, on the way home. "Ricky looked at a bug through his jar, and he had a giant eye, and Bruno had a giant nose. Ricky gave his favorite jar, Percy gave his shiniest bottle, and everybody gave something, and we made Tessie seeing glasses. The first ones fell off, and the second ones made her sound like a duck. Then she could see, and she read the Story Stone, and the whole woods sang."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And all through the frosty woods, long after the sun went down, a little bit of the old song kept going, in the river and the wind, as if the woods didn't want it to stop.

Let's Talk

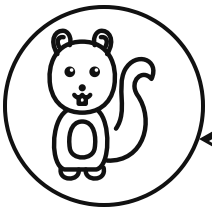
1. Ricky gave his favorite jar, and Percy gave his shiniest bottle. What did their gifts let Tessie do?
2. What could you give that would make someone really glad?

Your Turn

Draw something you could give that would make someone glad.

I will give _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What did one bell say to the other bell?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

r g i n

CLUE



Give me a _____ _____ _____ _____ !

Draw Shiloh Sheep!

The gray parts are new. Draw them in!

1



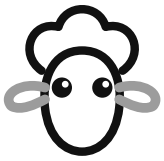
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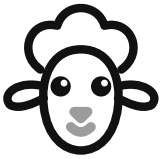
3



4



5



6



7



8



MY SHILOH SHEEP

Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Can See!

looks at a bug in the jug. The bug is big, big, big!

can not see well.

The pals fix up for .

The are big. Flop! Off they fall.

The next are snug.

They fit! “I can see you!” says .

Then sings a song, and the pals sing it back!

PICTURE WORDS Tessie Ricky glasses

Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. What did you give, and who got it? Fill in both spaces.

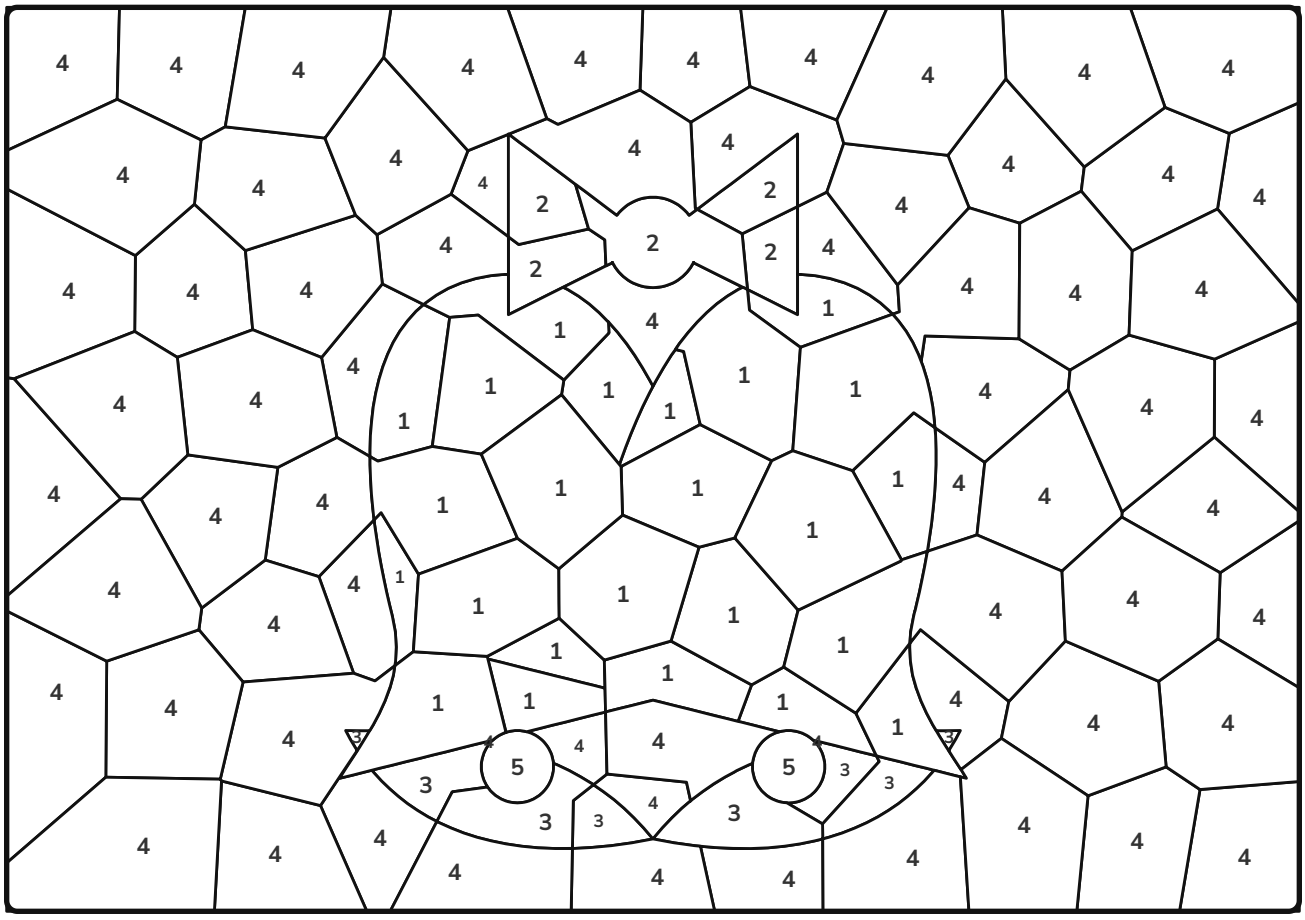
I gave

to .

Song Day: Mystery Picture

Today's song is "Joy to the World." Sing or listen while you color each space by its number.

1 yellow 2 red 3 green 4 light blue 5 brown



You Made It, Tessie!

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sky over Wanderful Woods was clear and blue, and the snow was crunchy on top, *crunch, crunch*, the kind you can walk on without sinking in. Up on the hilltop, Lookout Ledge shone white in the morning sun.

Tessie stood at the bottom of the back way, the easy way, with her seeing glasses on, looking up.

"When I was very small," she said, "I climbed to the top of Lookout Ledge. Just once. You can see the whole woods from up there." She pushed her glasses up her nose. "I'd like to see it again. With every light lit."

Everybody looked up at the hill. For a moose, or a monkey, it was a short walk. For Tessie, it was very, very far.

"It will take me… all day," said Tessie.

"Then we'll walk with you all day," said Mr. Moose.

So they all started up the back way together. Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey, Bruno and Hazel and Dottie, Benji and Shiloh and Ricky, and Percy, who brought along one shiny button for luck.

Tessie walked. And walked. Very, very slowly.

By the time the sun was over the treetops, they had gone as far as the first big rock.

Percy kept dropping his lucky button. It fell off the trail and into the snow, and everybody had to stop and dig for it. Bruno dug. Dottie sniffed. Hazel kicked snow everywhere, and most of it landed on Ricky. Nobody could find it.

"There it is," said Tessie, looking down through her seeing glasses. "Right by your foot… Percy."

It happened four more times. Every single time, Tessie found it first.

"Hee hee hee! Tessie has the best eyes in the whole woods now!" said Mr. Monkey.

By lunchtime, they had gone as far as the second big rock. Bruno ate his lunch, and then he ate his snack, and then he ate Ricky's snack, after asking first, and Ricky said yes.

"Are we halfway?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Ricky checked. "We're one-tenth of the way."

"Hee hee hee! Only one-tenth!"

Sammy zipped by, all the way to the top of the hill and back down again, three times, just while Tessie took one step.

"Sammy, how can you be so fast?" called Mr. Monkey.

"I don't know how to be slow!" Sammy called back, already halfway up the hill again. "I tried it once and fell asleep! Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

"Heh… heh… heh," laughed Tessie.

All afternoon, they kept going. Tessie never stopped. Step, and step, and step. To keep everybody going, they sang the old song from the Story Stone, *Sing, little river, sing, tall tree*, over and over, slow enough that Tessie could take one step for every word. It was the slowest song anybody had ever sung, and by the end of it, Bruno

was asleep on his feet, until Dottie licked his nose and he woke up with a snort.

But by the time the sky started to turn pink, Tessie was very tired. They were almost at the top. Just one last steep part left. Tessie looked up at it, and she stopped. She closed her eyes. Her legs were shaking.

"I don't know… if I can," she said quietly.

Mr. Monkey felt it in his tummy, all at once. Tessie had walked all day. All the way. And she was so close. He couldn't stand it if she stopped now, right before the top.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "She's almost there. But she's so tired."

Mr. Moose looked at the last steep part. He thought about the windy ridge, when they'd said "Ten more steps" over and over. He thought about the old crow calling across the river. He thought about Shiloh, louder and louder at every house. Words, said out loud, had helped every time.

"Tessie needs to hear it," he said. "What we see. Out loud. Loud enough that she can't miss it."

But before they could say anything, a tiny voice spoke up from behind them. It was Benji. Benji, who almost never spoke up.

"You can do it, Tessie," said Benji. Very small.

Tessie opened her eyes.

Then Mr. Monkey said it, louder. "You can do it, Tessie! We watched you walk ALL DAY!"

Then Mr. Moose. "You didn't stop once, Tessie. Not one time!"

Then Shiloh, very loud, because Shiloh knew how to be loud now. "TEN MORE STEPS, TESSIE!"

And then everybody, all at once, cheering, as loud as they could: "GO, TESSIE! GO, TESSIE! GO, TESSIE!"

And Tessie went.

She went faster than anybody had ever seen Tessie go. Her little legs went *pat-pat-pat-pat* up the steep part. It was the fastest she had ever gone in her whole life. It was still very slow. But it was the fastest slow anybody had ever seen.

"Hee hee hee! Look at her GO!" shouted Mr. Monkey. "She's Turbo Tessie!"

"TURBO TESSIE! TURBO TESSIE!"

And Turbo Tessie took one last step, and she was standing at the very top of Lookout Ledge.

"YOU MADE IT!" shouted Mr. Monkey.

"YOU MADE IT!" shouted everybody, jumping up and down in the snow, so hard that Bruno jumped himself right into a snowdrift. "Haw haw haw!" came Bruno's voice, from somewhere inside the drift.

Benji ran over and hugged Tessie's shell. "I watched you the whole way," he said. "You made it."

Tessie looked around at all of them, through her seeing glasses, with her eyes very shiny. "Thank you… dears," she said. "I couldn't have… done that last part… without hearing you."

Just then, a great shadow swept over the top of the hill. Everest Eagle came gliding past, so low that the wind from his wings ruffled everybody's fur. He tipped one wing down toward Tessie, slowly, as he went by, and then he soared away toward his cliff.

Then everybody turned around, and looked out.

The sun was going down, and below them, the whole of Wanderful Woods was starting to light up. The Moose home. The treehouse. The long fort. Percy's shiny nest. The crows' tree across the river. Mama Hedgehog's lantern at the bottom of the littlest trail. And high on Everest's cliff, the little squash lantern, shining steady. Hundreds and hundreds of little lights, all through the trees.

"I'll remember this winter," said Tessie softly, "for the rest of my life."

Mr. Moose was looking too. He was looking at all the lights, one at a time, the way he looked at everything. And then he saw it.

Way out past the edge of the woods, past the bramble patch where nobody ever went, there was one more little home. They had never been able to see it from down below. Now they could.

And it was dark.

"Mr. Monkey," said Mr. Moose quietly. "Whose home is that?"

Mr. Monkey looked. Everybody looked. Nobody knew. Not even Tessie.

"It's the only one," said Mr. Monkey softly. "The only dark one."

They stood together at the top of the hill and looked at it for a long time.

They went back down the easy way in the starlight, with Tessie riding on Bruno's back, fast asleep.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, at the bottom. "Tessie climbed Lookout Ledge, all day long, and Bruno ate Ricky's snack, after asking. Sammy went up and down three times in one Tessie step. Tessie almost stopped, but Benji said 'You can do it,' and then we all cheered, and she turned into Turbo Tessie and made it! Bruno jumped into a snowdrift. And from the top, we saw one more home. A dark one."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And from the window of the Moose home that night, Mr. Moose looked out past all the glowing homes of Wanderful Woods, toward the far, dark place he couldn't see from down here, and thought about it until he fell asleep.

Let's Talk

1. Tessie almost stopped. What helped her get to the top?
2. Who did something hard this year? Tell them, "You made it!"

Your Turn

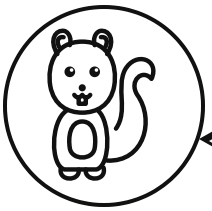
Write or draw a note. A grown-up can help you write.

Dear _____ ,

You made it! I saw you _____, and I'm so glad for you because _____.

Love, _____

SAMMY'S JOKE



What did the scarf say to the hat?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

g a h n

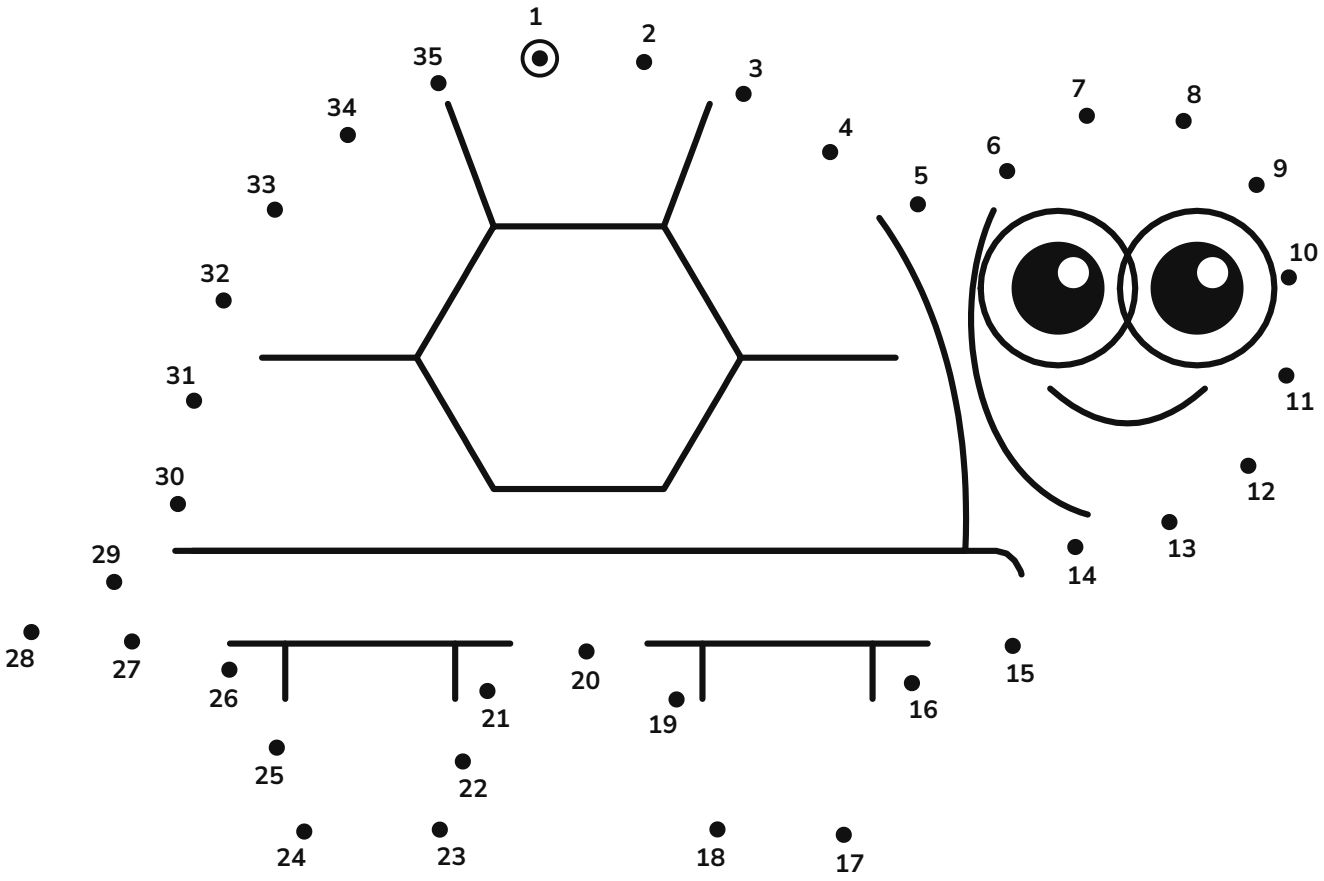
CLUE



You go on ahead. I'll ___ ___ ___ ___ around!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find Turbo Tessie! Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 35. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

You Did It,  !

 wants to get to the top of the hill. It is a long trip!

Step... step... step.

 zips up and back, up and back.

At the end,  stops. “I can not,” she says.

“You can,  !” says  .

Then the pals yell, “GO,  ! GO!”

 steps fast! She is at the top!

From the top, the pals see a hut. It is not lit.

PICTURE WORDS  Tessie  Sammy  Benji

For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: she.



Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Who finished something hard? Write their name on the line. Then say it to them!

You made it.

Movie Bingo: Elf

Watch it with a grown-up. Color a square the first time you see each thing. Three in a row is Bingo!

a sleigh	snow	singing
an elf hat	**Free!**	a star
a gift	a tree	a hug

For grown-ups: Elf (2003) is rated PG for mild rude humor and language. Watch the last part, from the sleigh crash in Central Park to the singing. Santa is a story character here; talk about him the way your family does.

WEEK DONE!

Turn back to this week's map.
Color any stones you missed.

Ladybugs I found in this week's storybook pictures: _____







COLOR THE TITLE!

Love

Who did *a* hard thing for me?

Love chooses to give, even when it is hard. This week our ornaments *are* stars!

THIS WEEK'S STORIES

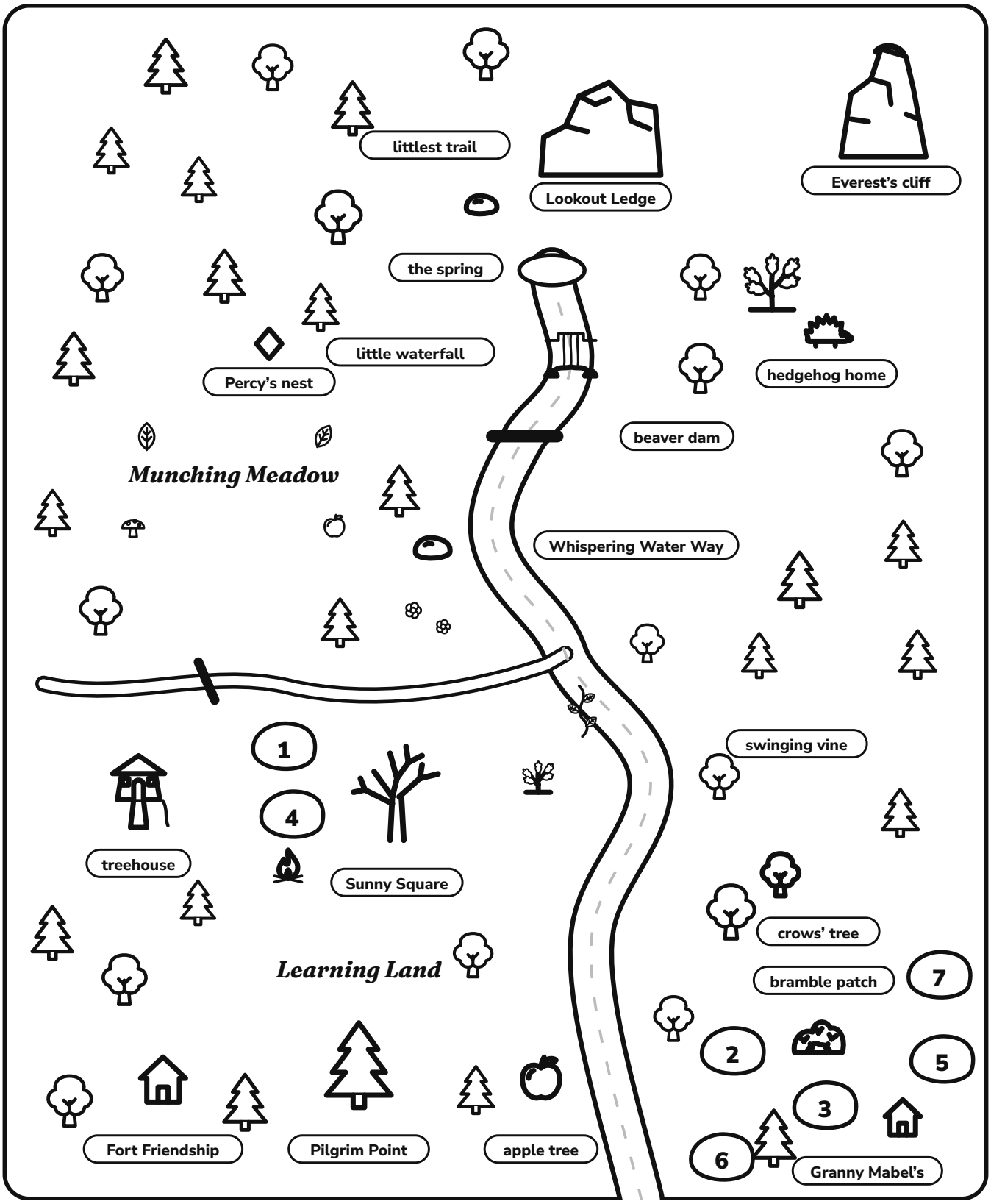
1. **Tuesday, Dec. 29:** The Storm Night
2. **Wednesday, Dec. 30:** Pulling *as* One
3. **Thursday, Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve):** The Last Night of the Year
4. **Friday, Jan. 1 (New Year's Day):** The Last Light
5. **Saturday, Jan. 2:** Bruno's Washing Day
6. **Sunday, Jan. 3:** The Best Things
7. **Monday, Jan. 4 (Love Letter Day):** The Lantern for Whoever Comes Next

THIS WEEK'S THANK-YOU:

Thank you, _____, for doing *a* hard thing for me.
Then we give: time, things, *and* words.

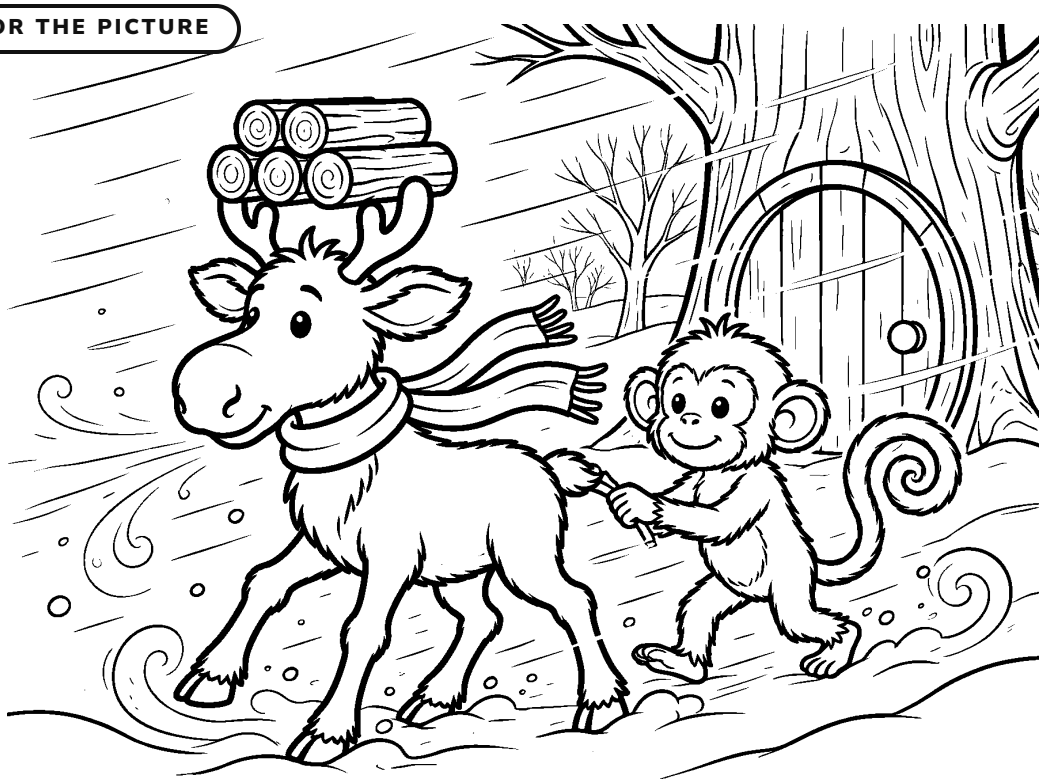
Where We'll Go This Week

Each day, find the stone with that day's number and color it. It shows where the day's story happens!



The Storm Night

COLOR THE PICTURE



The sky turned gray in the afternoon, then darker gray, then almost purple. The wind started to howl around the Moose home, *ooo-WOOO, ooo-WOOO*, and the snow came down so thick and fast that you couldn't see the Wishing Tree from the front door.

Both families were inside the Moose home, because the treehouse swayed too much in a storm like this. The fire was crackling. And on the little green pine by the door, Mama Moose had just put something new at the very top: a big gold star, cut from bark and painted bright, shining above all the circles.

"There," said Mama Moose. "Now the tree has its crown."

Mr. Moose looked out the window, toward the far edge of the woods. He couldn't see anything but snow. But he knew it was out there. The little dark home, past the bramble patch.

"It's out there in the storm," he said quietly.

"Tomorrow," said Mr. Monkey. "When the storm stops. We'll find out whose it is."

Then the fire made a small, sad sound, *fssss*, and got smaller.

Daddy Moose looked at it. He looked at the wood box. It was empty. "The woodpile's out back," he said. "We need more, or the fire won't last the night."

Everybody looked at the window. The wind howled. The snow went sideways.

"I'll go," said Daddy Moose. "But I could use a helper. Somebody to hold the door and carry a few logs."

Mr. Monkey jumped up. "Me! I'll go!"

Mr. Moose didn't jump up. He looked at the dark, howling window, and his tummy squeezed up tight. It was so cold out there. So loud. So dark. He did not want to go out in that. Not one bit.

Mr. Monkey was already at the door, bouncing. "Come ON, Mr. Moose! Hurry up! Don't be such a scaredy-moose!"

Mr. Moose's ears went down flat. He didn't say anything. He just looked at the floor.

And Mr. Monkey saw his face, and his bouncing stopped. His tummy dropped down to his toes. He had said something unkind. And Mr. Moose's ears were all the way down because of it.

He came back from the door.

"I shouldn't have called you that," said Mr. Monkey. "It wasn't kind. I'm sorry. I won't say it again. How can I make it right?"

Mr. Moose looked up. "Yeah, I didn't like that," he said. "But we all make mistakes. Thank you for apologizing. I forgive you."

Then Mr. Moose thought about it. He thought about the fire going out, and everybody getting cold, and everybody waking up shivering. He thought about Daddy Moose, going out there with only one small helper.

He didn't want to go. But that didn't change anything.

He stood up. "I don't want to," said Mr. Moose. "But I will."

First, Mama Moose bundled them up. She pulled Mr. Monkey's yellow hat down over his ears. She wrapped Mr. Moose's scarf around his neck once, twice, three times, four times, five times, until all you could see of Mr. Moose was two eyes and two antlers poking out of a big round ball of scarf.

"I can't turn my head," said Mr. Moose, from inside the scarf.

"Hee hee hee! You're a scarf with antlers!" said Mr. Monkey.

Then Daddy Moose opened the door, and the storm came in like a big cold hug that nobody asked for, *FWOOOSH*. Mr. Moose opened his mouth to say something, and a whole mouthful of snow blew right into it.

"Bleh," said Mr. Moose, with snow on his tongue.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Mr. Moose ate the storm!"

Out back, the woodpile was covered in snow. Daddy Moose dug out the logs. Mr. Monkey grabbed one, and the wind grabbed Mr. Monkey, and the log and Mr. Monkey went tumbling into a snowdrift together, *POOMF*. All that was left showing was two monkey feet sticking straight up out of the snow.

"Mr. Monkey!" called Mr. Moose. "Are you okay?"

The two feet wiggled. "I'm okay!" came a muffled voice from inside the drift. "I'm upside down! Hee hee hee!"

Mr. Moose pulled him out by the feet.

But Mr. Monkey was too small to carry many logs. He could only carry one at a time, and every time the wind blew, it tried to take him and the log away together. Mr. Moose thought about it. He had something Mr. Monkey didn't.

"Put them on my antlers," he said.

So Mr. Monkey climbed up and stacked the logs across Mr. Moose's antlers, one, two, three, four, five, until Mr. Moose was wearing a whole woodpile on his head.

"Mr. Moose!" said Mr. Monkey. "You're a walking woodpile!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, very carefully, so the logs wouldn't fall off.

And they walked back through the storm together, slowly, Mr. Monkey holding on to Mr. Moose's tail so he wouldn't blow away, and Mr. Moose carrying his woodpile, with Daddy Moose behind them with his arms full.

The fire roared up big and warm again. Everybody cheered.

Mr. Moose sat down by the fire, still covered in snow, and shivered. Mama Moose wrapped him in a blanket.

Then Mama Monkey brought out a plate. On it was one honey cake. Just one. The very last one.

"For whoever went out in the storm," said Mama Monkey.

Mr. Monkey looked at the honey cake. He had gone out in the storm. He had been tumbled into a snowdrift. He was SO hungry. His tummy made a big loud noise, *GRRRRRRUMBLE*, so loud that Daddy Monkey looked around to see if it was the wind.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "That was my tummy!"

He wanted that honey cake so much.

But then he looked at Mr. Moose, shivering in his blanket. Mr. Moose, who hadn't wanted to go out at all. Who went anyway. Who carried the whole woodpile on his head.

Mr. Monkey wanted to. But he wouldn't.

He picked up the honey cake and gave it to Mr. Moose. "You carried the woodpile," he said.

His tummy growled again. *GRRRUMBLE.*

"Your tummy doesn't agree," said Mr. Moose.

"My tummy can wait," said Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose looked at the honey cake. Then he broke it right in half and gave the bigger half back.

That night, by the fire, the families painted little gold stars and hung them up near the top of the pine, under the big star.

"Paint somebody in your house," said Mama Moose, "who did something hard for you this year, even when they didn't want to."

Mr. Moose painted Daddy Moose on the front, with a log on each shoulder. On the back, he painted Daddy Moose going out into the storm first, every time, before anybody else had to.

Mr. Monkey painted Mama Monkey, who had stayed up three whole nights when he had a sore throat in the fall, singing to him even though she was tired. He gave her ears that were extra big, so she could hear him.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose, all tucked in. "A big storm came, and the fire got small. Mr. Monkey called me a scaredy-moose, and he said sorry, and I forgave him. I didn't want to go out, but I did. Mama made me into a scarf with antlers. I ate a mouthful of storm. Mr. Monkey got stuck upside down in a snowdrift, and I was a walking woodpile. Mr. Monkey gave me the last honey cake, even though his tummy said no."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And all night long, the storm howled around the Moose home, while inside, the fire burned big and warm, and the gold star at the top of the little pine caught every flicker of it.

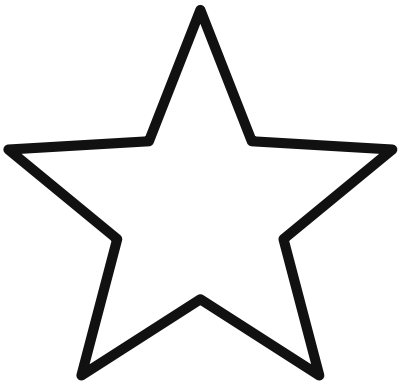
Let's Talk

1. Mr. Moose didn't want to go out in the storm. Why did he go anyway?
2. Who in our house did something hard for you, even when they didn't want to?

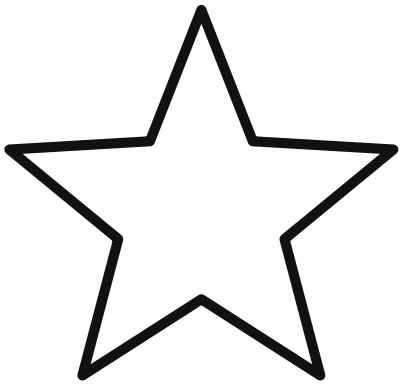
Your Turn

Make a gold star for someone in our house who did something hard for you. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



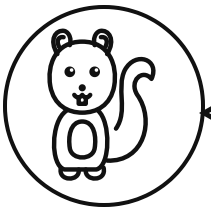
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is gold. Color it yellow or gold when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both stars. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's stars.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do you get when you cross an apple and a pine tree?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

e **n** **i** **p**

CLUE



A ____ ____ ____ ____apple!

Draw Orion Owl!

The gray parts are new. Draw them in!

1



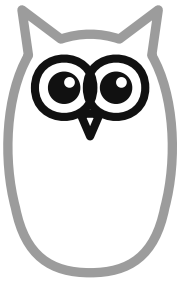
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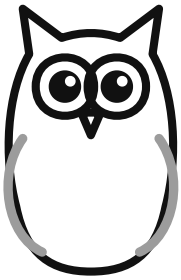
3



4



5



6



7



8



MY ORION OWL

Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Will Go

The wind is big, and the flames are small. Dad must get logs.

jumps up. "Ha! is not brave!"

is sad. sees it.

"I said a bad thing," says . "I am sad I said it. Can I fix it?"

"Yes," says . "I will go, and you will help."

stacks logs on . is a pile of logs!

Then Mom has a cake. It is the last cake.

hands it to .

PICTURE WORDS Mr. Moose Mr. Monkey

For grown-ups: New sounds: silent e with a and i (cake, bike).

Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

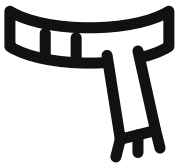
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you,

for doing a hard thing for me.

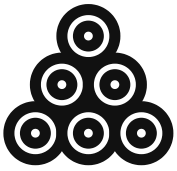
☆ Would You Rather?

Circle your pick in each row. Tell why!



be a scarf with antlers

OR

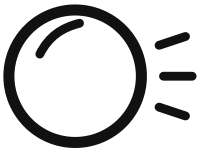


be a walking woodpile



eat a mouthful of snow

OR



land upside down in a snowdrift



share the last honey cake

OR



carry five logs on your head

Pulling as One

COLOR THE PICTURE



The storm had blown itself out in the night. In the morning, the whole woods was buried in deep, soft, brand-new snow, so deep that Benji could jump in and disappear completely, with only his ears poking out.

"Hee hee," went Benji, from somewhere under the snow.

The friends had a plan. They would take the little dark home everything it needed. A lantern with a candle inside, lit from the fire at the Moose home. A bundle of firewood. A pot of soup. Two warm blankets. They put it all on Daddy Monkey's big wooden sled.

The sled was very heavy.

"I'll pull it!" said Mr. Monkey. He grabbed the rope and pulled with all his might. The sled didn't move. Mr. Monkey's feet slid out from under him, and he ended up lying flat on his tummy in the snow, still holding the rope.

"Hee hee hee! It's too heavy for one!"

"Then two," said Mr. Moose.

Daddy Monkey had been watching. He went into his workshop, and there was a lot of sawing and tapping, *zzt-zzt, tok-tok-tok*, and when he came out, he was carrying a wooden harness. It had two loops, side by side, one for each of them, so they could pull the sled together.

But the first harness didn't fit. Mr. Moose's loop was too low, and Mr. Monkey's loop was too high. When they put it on, Mr. Moose was bent over with his nose in the snow, and Mr. Monkey was lifted right off the ground, dangling with his feet kicking.

"I'm flying!" said Mr. Monkey. "But I'm not pulling!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, from down in the snow.

So Daddy Monkey took it back to his workshop. More sawing. More tapping. And this time, he made it just for them. One side high, for a tall moose. One side low, for a small monkey. He shaped the wood to fit Mr. Moose's shoulders, and he shaped the other side to fit Mr. Monkey's.

They put it on. It fit.

"It's heavy," said Mr. Monkey.

"But it fits," said Mr. Moose.

And off they went, pulling the sled out of Sunny Square toward the far edge of the woods. The other friends came too: Bruno and Hazel and Dottie, Benji and Shiloh and Ricky and Percy.

But very soon, there was a problem.

Mr. Monkey was so excited to get there that he pulled fast. Mr. Moose pulled slow and steady, the way he did everything. And when one side of a sled goes fast and the other side goes slow, it doesn't go straight. It goes around.

They went around in a circle. Then another circle. Then another one.

"Why are we back at the Wishing Tree?" asked Hazel.

"We're making a snow donut!" said Mr. Monkey, looking at the big round track in the snow. "Hee hee hee!"

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "A snow donut!"

Sammy came zipping around the donut track the other way. "What falls down all winter and never gets hurt?" she called. "SNOW!" And she zipped off before anybody could answer.

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie, and flopped down in the snow on purpose, to see if it was true. It was.

Mr. Monkey stopped. He looked at the far edge of the woods. They had to get there. The little dark home was waiting. He wanted to pull harder, faster, right now.

But Mr. Moose was thinking. It wasn't about pulling harder. They were both pulling hard. It was about pulling the same.

"Mr. Monkey," he said. "When you step, I'll step. Every time. Let's say it."

"Step," said Mr. Monkey.

"Step," said Mr. Moose, at the same time.

Step. Step. Step. Step. Mr. Monkey took small fast steps, and Mr. Moose took big slow steps, but they stepped at the very same time, every time. And the sled went straight. Straight out of Sunny Square, straight across the meadow, straight through the deep snow.

The friends walked alongside, saying it with them. "Step! Step! Step!" Even Percy said it, and Percy had never pulled anything in his life.

By the afternoon, they had come all the way to the bramble patch.

It was a big tangle of prickly bushes, all covered in snow, and nobody ever went through it. The far side of it was where the dark home was. But the brambles were thick, and the sled couldn't get through.

The friends looked at each other.

"I can help with this part," said Bruno. And he did. He held the prickly branches back with his big paws, very carefully, one at a time, so nobody got scratched. Hazel stamped the snow down flat behind him to make a path. Dottie went ahead with her nose down, sniffing out the way. Ricky walked in front, pointing out the safest way.

And Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey pulled the sled through, step, step, step, along the path their friends made.

Then, right in the middle of the brambles, the sled went over a big snowy bump. It bounced up. And the lantern on top bounced right off and landed in the snow, *fffft*. The little light went out.

Everybody stared at it.

"Oh no," said Ricky softly.

The lantern was dark. The fire from the Moose home was all the way back on the other side of the woods. It was getting late. There was no way to go back for more light before dark.

Mr. Monkey felt it in his chest, heavy. They had pulled all this way to bring a light. And now they didn't have one.

"We can't light anything now," he said.

Mr. Moose looked through the last of the brambles. And there it was, just ahead. A tiny little home, tucked under a fallen log, with a tiny round door and a tiny round window. It was dark.

"We can't bring the light," said Mr. Moose slowly. "Not today. But we can still bring everything else."

So they pulled the sled the last few steps, and Mr. Monkey knocked on the tiny door. *Tap, tap, tap.*

For a long moment, nothing happened. Then the tiny door opened, just a crack.

Inside was a very small, very old mouse with soft gray fur and tiny round seeing glasses, a lot like Tessie's, leaning on a little stick. She looked up at all of them: a moose, a monkey, a bear, a horse, a dog, a bunny, a sheep, a raccoon, and a pack rat, standing in the snow outside her door.

"Oh, my," she said. "Nobody has knocked on my door in a long, long time."

"Hello," said Mr. Monkey. "We saw your home from the top of Lookout Ledge. It was the only dark one. We came to bring you a light. But our light went out."

The old mouse looked at the lantern. Then at the sled, with the firewood and the soup and the blankets. Then at all of their faces.

"Well," she said softly, and her whiskers trembled, "you've brought me plenty. More than plenty. My name is Granny Mabel. Won't you come in?"

That night, back home, the friends painted red stars and hung them near the top of the pine. Mr. Moose painted Bruno on the front. On the back, he painted big paws holding back the brambles, so nobody got scratched.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "Daddy made a harness, and the first one made me fly. We made a snow donut, and then we said 'step, step,' and went straight. Bruno held the brambles. The lantern fell off and went out. But we found the little home, and it's Granny Mabel's."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And by the Moose home door, the wooden harness hung on a peg, one loop high and one loop low, still a little bit warm from pulling.

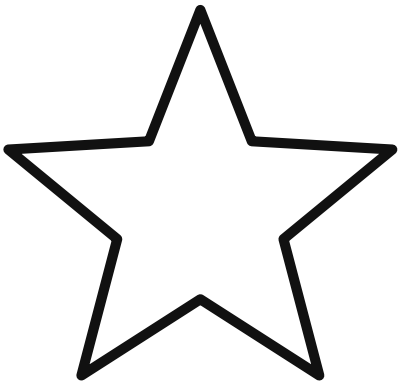
Let's Talk

1. Mr. Monkey was fast and Mr. Moose was slow. How did they get the sled to go straight?
2. Who outside our house did something hard for you, or for somebody else?

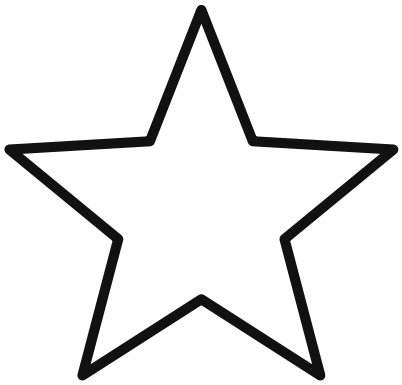
Your Turn

Make a red star for someone outside our house who did something hard for you. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



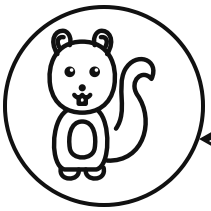
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is red. Color it red when you are done!

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both stars. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's stars.

SAMMY'S JOKE

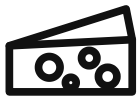


What is a mouse's favorite game?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

h d i e

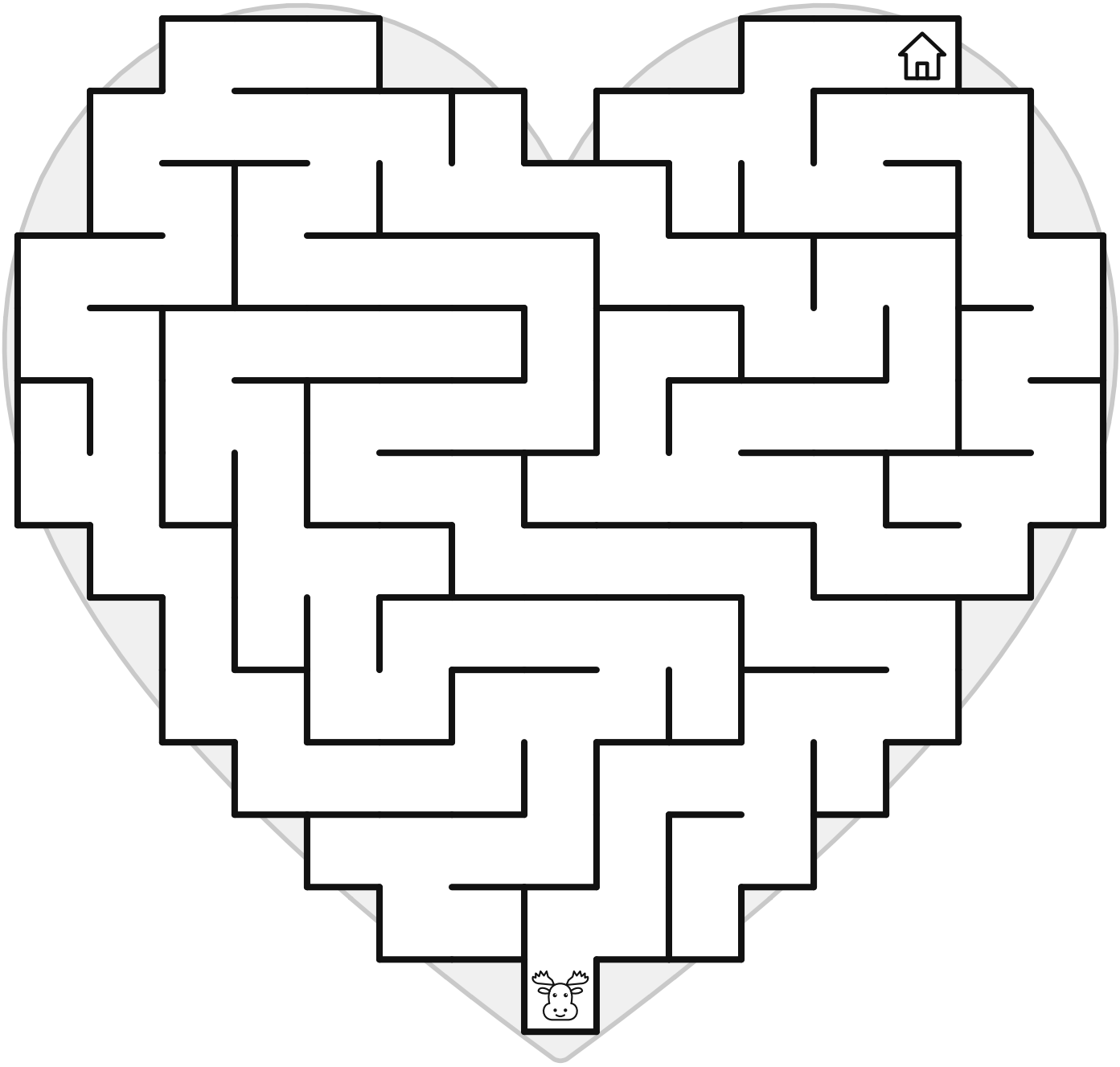
CLUE



____ ____ ____ and squeak!

☆ Step, Step, Step

Pull the sled through the brambles to Granny Mabel's little home. Start at Mr. Moose.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Step, Step!

 and  tug *a* sled. It is *a* big, big sled.

 is quick.  is not quick.

The sled spins in *a* ring, *a*nd spins, *a*nd spins!

“Step when I step,” s*a*ys  .

Step. Step. Step. The sled glides!

At the thick brush,  lifts the brush up.

P*a*st the brush is *a* sm*a*ll hut in *a* log.

“Get in!” s*a*ys Gr*a*n.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey  Bruno



Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

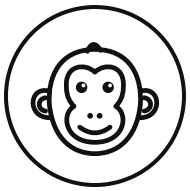
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you

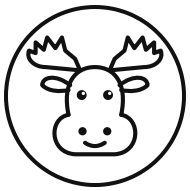
for doing a hard thing for me.

♡ Feelings Match

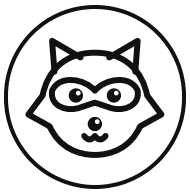
How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



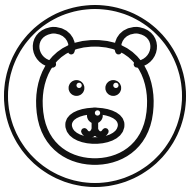
Mr. Monkey, dangling from the first harness



Mr. Moose, when the sled went around in a circle



Ricky, when the lantern went out



Bruno, holding back the prickly brambles



sad



surprised



proud



sleepy



silly

The Last Night of the Year

COLOR THE PICTURE



The last day of the year was cold and bright, and the snow sparkled so hard in the sun that it looked like the whole woods was covered in tiny stars. Icicles hung from every branch, and when the wind blew, they tinkled together, *ting-a-ling-ting*.

In Sunny Square, everybody was getting ready for the Last Night Party. There would be games, and music, and hot apple cider, and at midnight, the whole woods would shout goodbye to the old year and hello to the new one. Mr. Monkey had been waiting for it all week.

But in the morning, Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey had gone back through the brambles to Granny Mabel's, with Mama Moose, to see how she was doing.

Granny Mabel was sitting in her tiny chair by her tiny cold fireplace, wrapped in one of the blankets they had brought. Her tiny home was very neat and very clean, with a tiny teapot and tiny teacups and a tiny bed. And it was very, very dark.

"My leg doesn't work so well anymore," said Granny Mabel. "I can't walk far. I can't carry wood. So when my last candle burned out, a long time ago, I just… sat in the dark." She smiled at them. "But I'm used to it. You two run along to your party. I'll be just fine."

Mr. Monkey looked at her, so small in her big blanket, in her dark little home, on the last night of the year.

And he couldn't go. He just couldn't. Not to the party. Not with Granny Mabel sitting here by herself.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "She's going to be all alone tonight. On the last night of the whole year."

Mr. Moose thought about it. "Granny Mabel," he said, "we could bring you a candle from home tonight." Granny Mabel shook her head, very gently. "Not tonight, dear. I've had the dark a long time. Tonight I'd just like some company."

"Then we won't go to the party," said Mr. Moose. "We'll stay here. With her."

Mr. Monkey's mouth fell open. Then it closed. Then he nodded, hard. "We'll stay."

Granny Mabel blinked behind her spectacles. "But your party, dears," she said. "All your friends. The games, and the cider, and midnight…"

"We want to stay with you," said Mr. Monkey.

So Mama Moose went home and told everybody, and then she and Daddy Moose came back with more blankets and a basket of food, and lay down in the snow right outside the tiny door to wait.

So Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey stayed.

Mr. Monkey fit inside Granny Mabel's home just fine, if he scrunched up a little. But Mr. Moose was much, much too big. He tried to go through the door anyway, and only his nose fit. So he lay down in the snow outside,

and pushed his nose in through the tiny round door, as far as it would go.

His big moose nose took up almost the whole room.

"Hello," said Mr. Moose. His nose was inside. The rest of him was outside.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Mr. Moose is a nose!"

"Eek-eek," went Granny Mabel, in a tiny squeaky laugh, holding on to her spectacles. "I've never had a nose for a guest before."

Granny Mabel made tea in her tiny teapot. She poured a cup for Mr. Monkey, and a cup for Mr. Moose. But a mouse teacup was very, very small, and when Mr. Moose took a sip, his tongue went in, and the whole cup was gone, cup and all, *SHLUP*.

"Oops," said Mr. Moose, and very carefully, he gave the cup back. It was a little bit wet.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

Granny Mabel told them stories, in the dark. Stories from when she was a tiny young mouse, and the woods were young too. She told them about the time she rode down Rainbow River on a leaf. About the year it snowed so much that her front door was on the roof. About a winter long, long ago, when the sky danced, and she saw it.

"I saw it too!" said Mr. Monkey. "Last week! The sky danced again!"

"Did it?" said Granny Mabel softly. "I didn't know. I was in here."

And that made Mr. Monkey even more glad they stayed.

It got later and later. Far away, through the trees, they could hear the party in Sunny Square: music and laughing and a big cheer every now and then. Mr. Monkey listened. He thought about the games. He thought about the apple cider. Then he looked at Granny Mabel, wrapped up in her blanket, telling stories in the dark, happier than she'd been in a long time. And he scooted closer to her.

Mr. Moose's nose fell asleep first. Then the rest of him. He snored, and because his nose was inside the tiny home, every snore rattled all the tiny teacups on the tiny shelf. *Hrrrrrnk... rattle-rattle-rattle. Hrrrrrnk... rattle-rattle-rattle.*

Just then, Sammy came zipping through the brambles from the party, with a little cup of apple cider for Mr. Monkey. She heard the snoring and stopped. "Is that a moose," she whispered, "or a THUNDERSTORM?" And she zipped right back to the party, so fast she forgot to leave the cider.

"Hee hee hee!" whispered Mr. Monkey. "It's not a thunderstorm. It's a snore-nose!"

"A snore... nose," whispered Granny Mabel. "Eek-eek-eek!" Her spectacles slid right down to the end of her own tiny nose.

And then, right before midnight, they heard it. A great *whoosh* of wings, outside the door. Something very big landed in the snow, so softly that hardly a flake moved.

Mr. Monkey peeked out the tiny window.

It was Everest Eagle.

Everest had come all the way down from the top of his cliff, the highest place in the whole woods, to the very smallest home in the whole woods. He looked through the tiny window at Granny Mabel. Then he stepped close to her little home, and spread his great wings out wide, all the way around it, like a roof over a roof. And the cold wind stopped. Right away, everything was warmer.

He didn't go back to his cliff. He stayed.

Far away in Sunny Square, the whole woods shouted, "HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

Granny Mabel looked up at the great wings around her home. She looked at Mr. Monkey, curled up next to her, and at Mr. Moose's sleeping nose, and through the door at Mama and Daddy Moose, waiting in the snow.

"I'm not used to this," she said softly. "I'm used to the dark. I'm not used to company."

"You can get used to it," said Mr. Monkey sleepily.

When the sky turned pink, Mama Moose took out the white stars she had brought in her basket, and Mr. Monkey painted one by the first light of the new year. He left the front of it empty. On the back, he painted a tiny home under a log, and a great eagle with his wings around it.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, yawning, on the walk home through the brambles. "We didn't go to the party. We stayed with Granny Mabel. Mr. Moose was too big, so only his nose came in, and he drank his teacup, cup and all. Granny Mabel told stories in the dark. Mr. Moose's snore rattled all the teacups, and he was a snore-nose. And Everest came all the way down and put his wings around her home, and stayed all night."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And behind them, past the bramble patch, in the very first morning of the new year, a great eagle still sat in the snow with his wings folded around the smallest home in the woods, while the sun came up and found him there.

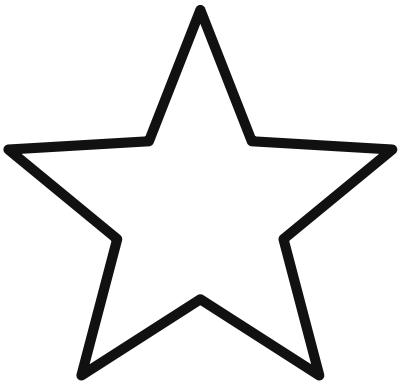
Let's Talk

1. Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey missed the big party. Why?
2. Everest came down from the highest place to the smallest home. Why do you think he came?

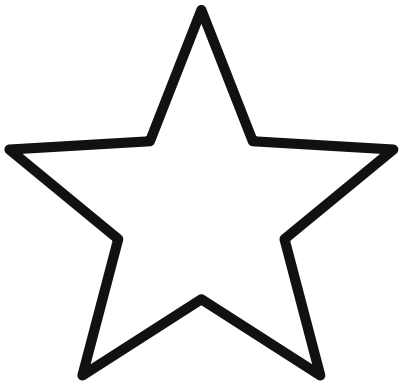
Your Turn

Make a white star for a good gift nobody made, like snow, the stars or a new morning. Front: what it is. Back: draw it.

FRONT: WHAT IT IS



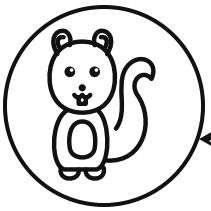
BACK: DRAW IT



This one stays white. When you are done, trace its edge with a gray crayon.

Make a real one: with a grown-up, hold plain paper over this page against a sunny window and trace both stars. Cut them out, glue them back to back, and hang it with your family's stars.

SAMMY'S JOKE



Why did the boy sit on his clock?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

i t m e

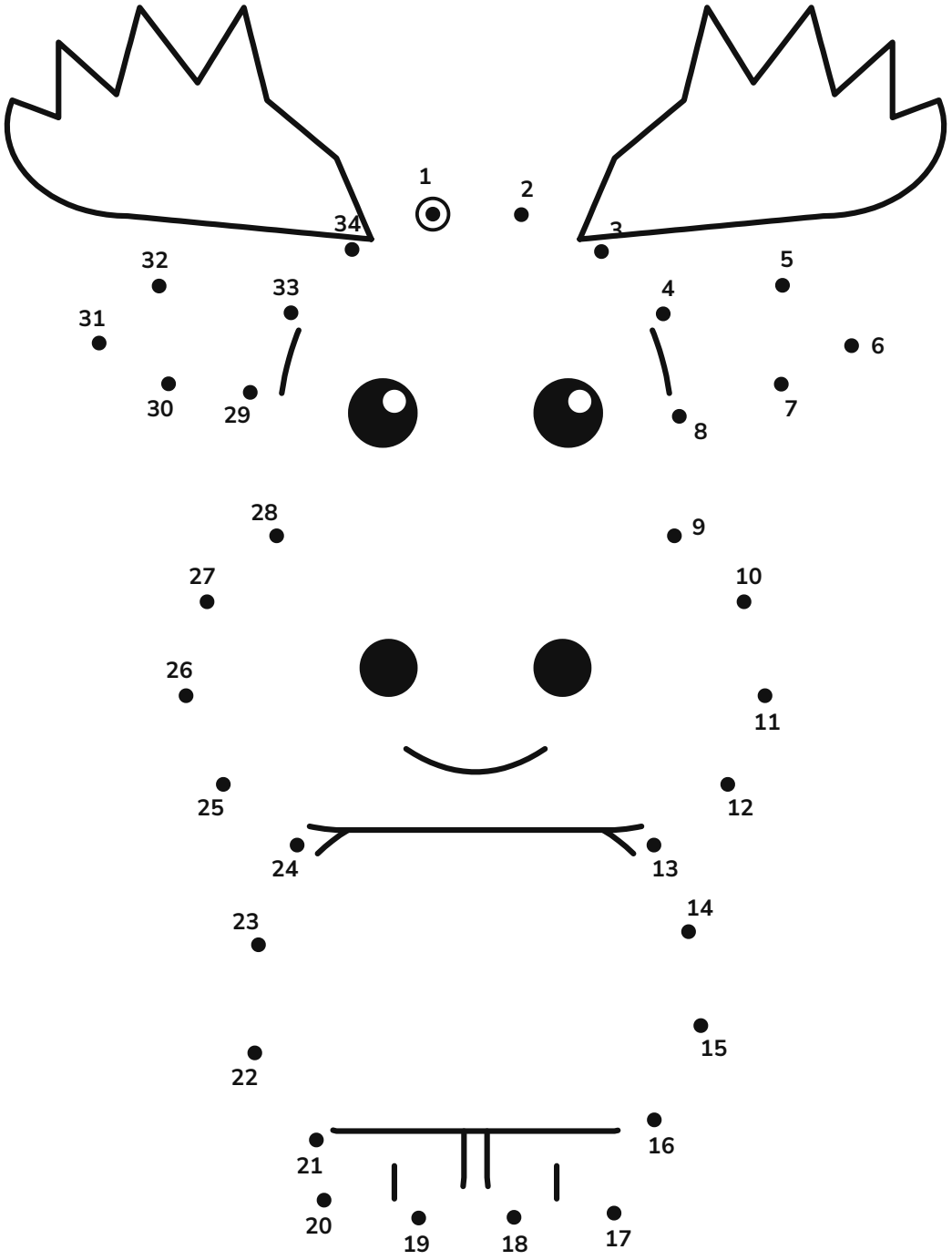
CLUE



He wanted to be on ____ ____ ____ ____!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find whose nose came in the door. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 34. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Not at the Bash

The pals have fun. But Gran has no lamp.

“We will sit with Gran,” says  .

 is big. Just the tip of him fits in!

Gran has a cup for him. Gulp! The cup is in  !

 naps, and the cups clink and clink.

Then  lands. He sets his wings on the hut.

It is snug!

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Mr. Moose  Everest



Color a star each time you read it.

My Thank-You

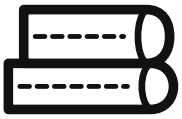
Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. What good gift did nobody make? Write it or draw it on the line.

Nobody made

It is a gift.

Warm Hunt

Find things that keep someone warm. Check each one!



a warm blanket ☐



a warm drink ☐



mittens or gloves ☐



a scarf or a hat ☐



something that makes heat ☐



a warm hug ☐

The Last Light

COLOR THE PICTURE



The first morning of the new year was so still and clear that you could hear a pinecone drop all the way across Sunny Square, *tup*. The sky was pale gold. The snow was pink where the sun touched it. And the air smelled like woodsmoke and pine.

Everybody gathered at the little green pine by the Moose home's door, under the big gold star at the very top. All around the star hung the little stars, gold and red and white, with their painted sides turned to the trunk.

"It's time," said Mama Moose. "Find the gold ones with your own face on them."

Daddy Moose found his. On the front, he was carrying a log on each shoulder. He turned it over, and there he was again, going out into the storm, first, before anybody else had to. He read it for a long time. Then his ears turned pink, all the way to the tips.

"Daddy," said Mr. Moose. "Your ears are pink."

"It's cold," said Daddy Moose. But it wasn't that cold.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, and Daddy Moose's ears went even pinker.

Mama Monkey found hers. On the back were three long nights, and a mama monkey singing, with very, very big ears. She held it up next to her own head.

"Do my ears really look like THAT?" she asked.

"Only when you're listening," said Mr. Monkey. "Hee hee hee!"

And Bruno found a red star with his own big face on it. When he turned it over and saw two big paws holding back the brambles, he held it so gently, with just two claws, that it hardly moved.

Then everybody went to the fire in Sunny Square. On the flat stone, the four candles were burning in a row. Next to them stood a fifth one, the last one, waiting.

Mama Monkey held out the twig. "The first light was for the light we got, given away," she said. "The second was for the light that keeps us walking. The third was for the light that holds steady. The fourth was for the light at the end of the wait." She smiled. "And this one is for the light that overflows."

Mr. Moose took the twig and touched it to the fourth candle, and Mr. Monkey helped him carry the little flame over. Together they lit the fifth candle.

Five lights, in a row. It was the brightest the flat stone had ever been, so bright that the snow all around it glowed.

But Mr. Monkey looked past the candles, past the trees, toward the far edge of the woods. And he felt it, all at once.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Granny Mabel's home is still dark. It's the only one. It's the last one."

Mr. Moose looked at the fifth candle. Granny Mabel couldn't come to the light. Her leg didn't work well enough to walk that far. So the light would have to go to her. But last time, their lantern had bounced off the sled and gone out. They needed a way that wouldn't let the light go out, all the way through the woods and the brambles.

He looked at all the friends standing around the fire. Bruno and Hazel and Dottie. Benji and Shiloh and Ricky and Percy. All the mamas and daddies. The old crow and his son and the three grandchicks. Tessie. Orion, blinking, who had stayed up past his bedtime to come. Everybody.

"What if everybody carries one?" said Mr. Moose slowly. "And everybody lights theirs from the one before. Then if one goes out, there's always another one right there."

Everybody got a candle. Mr. Moose lit his from the fifth candle. Mr. Monkey lit his from Mr. Moose's. Benji lit his from Mr. Monkey's. Shiloh lit his from Benji's. And on and on, candle to candle, friend to friend, until everybody in Sunny Square was holding a little light.

Then Bruno sneezed. *HAAA… HAAA… HAAA-SHNOOOOF!* And his candle went out, *pfft*.

Bruno looked at his candle. "Oops."

Hazel held hers out, and Bruno lit his again from it.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "That's why everybody has one!"

Then, with Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey at the front, the whole woods walked out of Sunny Square in one long line. Past the Wishing Tree. Across the meadow. Through the deep snow. One little light after another, all in a row, like a string of stars that somebody had laid down across the woods.

Sammy zipped up and down the whole line, over and over, because the line was so long and Sammy was so fast.

Every time she zipped past, every little flame in the line leaned over after her, *whoosh*, one after another, as if they were all trying to see where she went.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "The candles are waving at Sammy!"

The line was so long that when Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey reached the meadow, Tessie, at the very back, was still leaving Sunny Square. Benji ran all the way back to walk with her, and then all the way to the front to tell Mr. Monkey she was coming, and then all the way back again, and by the end of it, Benji had walked the whole line three times.

"Hee hee," went Benji, all out of breath. "Tessie says… she's coming… slowly."

They came to the bramble patch. The path Bruno had made was still there, and Hazel's stamped-down snow. And one by one, the whole woods walked through it, in a long line of lights.

Granny Mabel's home was dark, just like before. Mr. Monkey knocked on the tiny door. *Tap, tap, tap.*

The door opened, and Granny Mabel looked out. And there, in front of her, stretching all the way back through the brambles and across the snow and as far as she could see, was the whole woods, every single one of them, holding a little light.

Granny Mabel put her tiny paw over her mouth. She didn't say anything at all. She tried to count the lights, and she lost count at a hundred and three.

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey held out their two candles, and Granny Mabel held out a tiny old candle stub of her own. She had kept it a long, long time, with no way to light it. They touched their flames to it together.

It caught. And Granny Mabel carried it inside, slowly, leaning on her little stick, and set it in her tiny window.

For the first time in a long, long time, Granny Mabel's home glowed.

"It's the last one," whispered Mr. Monkey. "Every home in the whole woods is lit now."

Granny Mabel looked at all of them through her tiny window. And her face, in the candlelight, was the happiest face in the woods.

Everest Eagle came gliding down from his cliff and landed on the log right over her roof. He looked at the little light in the window. He looked at the long line of lights in the snow. And slowly, he tipped one great wing toward her, the way an eagle bows.

That night, from the top of the hill, you could see the whole of Wanderful Woods, and every home in it was glowing. Not one dark home was left. The whole woods glowed.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose, walking home with Mr. Monkey in the long line of lights. "We read the gold stars, and Daddy's ears turned pink. Mama Monkey asked if her ears were really that big. We lit the fifth candle. Then everybody lit a candle from somebody else's. Bruno sneezed his out, so he lit it again from Hazel's. The candles waved at Sammy. And we lit Granny Mabel's candle, and now every home in the woods is lit."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And far past the bramble patch, in the smallest home in Wanderful Woods, a tiny candle burned in a tiny window, the last light of all, glowing out into the snow.

Let's Talk

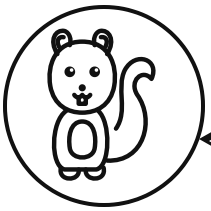
1. How did the light get all the way to Granny Mabel's home without going out?
2. Happy New Year! Today we light the last candle. Who could we bring a light to this year?

Your Turn

Draw the long line of lights going to Granny Mabel's home. Put yourself in it!

This year I want to bring light to _____ .

SAMMY'S JOKE



What did the candle say to the match?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

f e i l

CLUE



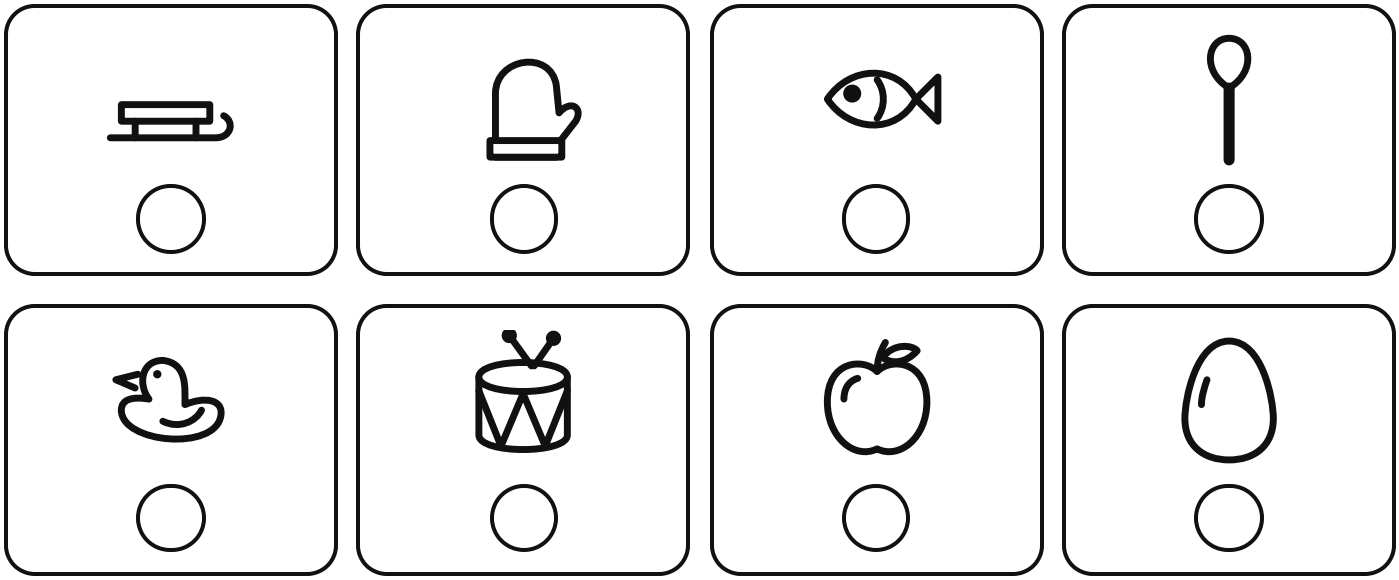
You light up my _____ _____ _____ _____ !

Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

A Line of Lamps

 lit his lamp.  lit his lamp from  .

 lit his from  . And on and on!

 huffs. Puff! His lamp is not lit.

 lit it. Ha!

It is a long line of lamps, up to Gran's hut.

Gran's lamp is lit! It is the last lamp, and it is lit.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey  Benji  Bruno  Hazel



Color a star each time you read it.

♡ My Thank-You

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you,

for doing a hard thing for me.

Today's Candle

Today the fifth and last candle gets its light from the fourth one. All five are shining!



Dec. 4 Dec. 11 Dec. 18 Dec. 25 **Jan. 1**

Trace the flame on candle 5! Candles 1, 2, 3 and 4 are already lit.

THE CANDLE WORDS: A GROWN-UP SAYS EACH LINE, AND YOU SAY IT BACK

Grace comes in. (cup your hands)
Gratitude sees it. (point to your eyes)
And graciousness passes it on. (open your hands to the candle)

Then the grown-up says: "Love from our house, love from our friends, love from beyond us." You say: **Three As, one star!**
One light. Passed along.

Grown-up: "What do we pass on?" You: **Generosity, hope, peace, joy, and agape!** (Your family may say "love.")

DRAW YOUR FAMILY WITH YOUR CANDLES

☆ New Year's Day

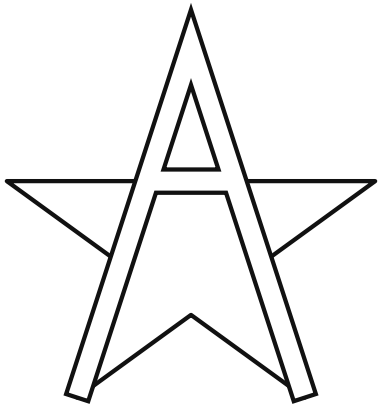
Happy New Year! Today your family celebrates in three parts:

1. **Remember:** The Star of Agape
2. **Rejoice:** The last Opening
3. **Ready:** Plan the giving

☆ Remember: The Star of Agape

Today all five candles shine together! **Agape** (ah-GAH-pay) is a very old Greek word for love that does something hard to help someone else. The Star of Agape on top of your tree is made from three As, laid one over another.

A grown-up says, "Love from our house, love from our friends, love from beyond us." Point up at the star and say, "Three As, one star!"



Here is a star with one big A on it, for agape. Color the star gold. Color the A green.

☆ Rejoice: The Last Opening

Gather under the Star of Agape. Find the gold stars with **your** name on the front, and read them. A grown-up can read them with you.

I found ☐ gold stars with my name!

Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from: (Draw their face or write their name.)

WHAT DID IT SAY? DRAW OR WRITE IT.

Ready: Plan the Giving

The last three days are an Agape Adventure: doing something hard to help someone else. Plan them with your family. Draw or write your ideas in the boxes.

JAN. 2
Your time

What job that nobody wants could you do for someone?

JAN. 3
Your things

Who could get your best, not your leftovers?

JAN. 4
Your words

Who will get a Love Letter from you?

EXTRA, IF YOUR FAMILY DOES IT

The Name Draw

Write everyone's name on a slip of paper. Fold the slips and put them in a bowl. Everyone draws one and keeps it secret. (If you get your own name, put it back and draw again.) From January 2 to 4, show that person love in secret. At dinner on January 4, everyone guesses who had them. (Keep your book hidden!)

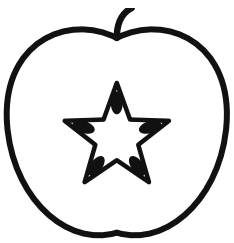
I picked _____

I will show them love by _____

I think my name was drawn by _____

EXTRA, JUST FOR FUN

The Hidden Star



Ask a grown-up to cut an apple across its middle, not from the stem down. Look! A star was hiding inside. Count its points: five, just like your five candles!

Bruno's Washing Day

COLOR THE PICTURE



Overnight, the weather turned warm. By morning, the snow was melting everywhere, dripping off the branches, *plip-plop, plip-plop*, and the paths through the woods had turned into slush and mud. Squishy, gloppy, wonderful mud.

Mr. Monkey took one look at the mud and jumped right in. *SPLUTCH.* Hazel jumped in after him. *SPLATCH.* They stomped and splashed and slid, until both of them were brown from their toes to their ears.

"Hee hee hee! I'm a mud monkey!"

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*! I'm a mud horse!"

Then the friends went back through the brambles to Granny Mabel's. They were going to spend the whole day helping her. Her little home needed a lot.

So everybody got to work. Bruno stacked firewood beside her door, enough for the whole rest of the winter. Hazel and Dottie dug a path from her door to the bramble patch, so it would be easy to find. Ricky fixed her wobbly table leg. Then it wobbled the other way, so he fixed that one too. Then it was perfect. Percy polished her tiny teacups until they shone so bright he could see his own whiskers in every one of them. Shiloh patched her roof with a big piece of his wool. It was so fluffy that when he was done, Granny Mabel's little home looked like it was wearing a big white curly wig.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "Granny Mabel's house has hair!" Benji fetched water. And Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey fixed her tiny window so the wind couldn't get in.

It took all day. And all day, everybody was going in and out of Granny Mabel's tiny home. In and out. In and out.

With muddy feet.

By the afternoon, Granny Mabel's clean little floor was covered in footprints. Hoofprints and pawprints and Bruno-prints and monkey-prints, all made of mud. And Granny Mabel was trying to sweep it up with her tiny broom, slowly, leaning on her stick.

Mr. Monkey saw her, sweeping and sweeping, and her leg was tired, and the mud kept coming in faster than she could sweep it out.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "We're making Granny Mabel's floor muddy. She can't keep up."

Mr. Moose looked at the floor. Then at the door. Then at everybody's feet. Every single foot was covered in mud.

"If everybody's feet got washed at the door," he said slowly, "then nobody would bring mud in."

Everybody looked at their feet. Then at each other's feet.

Then they all made the same face.

Because everybody's feet had been in the mud all day. Wet and cold and gloppy. And everybody's feet were stinky. Hazel's hooves smelled like a swamp. Dottie's paws smelled like wet dog, because they were. And Bruno's big paws smelled worst of all, like a whole wheel of cheese.

"Mine smell like cheese too!" said Percy, wiggling his toes, and he laughed first, a squeaky little giggle.

"Haw haw haw! Mine smell like MORE cheese!" went Bruno.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, holding his nose.

Nobody wanted to wash feet. Nobody at all.

Then Bruno stood up. He was the biggest one there. He had the biggest paws. He had stacked the most wood all day, and he was the most tired.

"I'll do it," said Bruno.

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey heated a big bowl of water by the fire, nice and warm. Benji brought a soft cloth. Shiloh brought a little more wool to dry with. And Bruno sat down on a stump by Granny Mabel's door, with the warm water in front of him.

"Next," said Bruno.

Hazel went first. Bruno washed all four of her hooves, one after the other, and dried them, and Hazel trotted in with clean feet.

Dottie went next. Bruno washed her paws. But Dottie was ticklish, and every time the cloth touched her foot, her back leg kicked, *thump-thump-thump-thump*, all by itself.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! It TICKLES!" barked Dottie.

"Haw haw haw! Hold still!" went Bruno.

She couldn't. He washed them anyway.

Then it was Percy's turn. Percy stood in front of the bowl and looked down at his stinky toes. Then he looked up at Bruno.

"Even mine?" said Percy quietly. "I took your spoon."

"Even yours," said Bruno. And he washed Percy's toes, every one, very gently, until they didn't smell like cheese anymore at all. Percy didn't say anything. But his ribbon wagged.

Then it was Mr. Monkey's turn. And Mr. Monkey put both hands up.

"No, no, no!" said Mr. Monkey. "You can't wash MY feet, Bruno! You're the BIGGEST! The biggest one doesn't wash feet! I should wash YOUR feet!"

Bruno looked at him. "If I don't wash your feet," said Bruno, "you can't go in."

Mr. Monkey thought about that. He thought about Granny Mabel's floor. He thought about how much he wanted to go in.

"Then wash ALL of me!" said Mr. Monkey. "My feet AND my hands AND my tail AND my head!"

So Bruno picked him up and dunked him, *SPLOOSH*, right into the warm water, all the way, and he came up dripping from his ears to his toes.

"Hee hee hee! Now I'm the cleanest!" said Mr. Monkey, shaking himself off like a wet dog, so that everybody nearby got sprinkled.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

Bruno washed Mr. Moose's long legs, all four of them, which took a long time, because there was a lot of leg. Halfway up the second leg, the water ran out, and Benji had to run and fetch a whole new bowl. Bruno washed Ricky's paws and Benji's feet and Shiloh's hooves. He did every single one, all afternoon. And not once did he ask anybody to say thank you.

And last of all, Granny Mabel came to the door.

"Oh, no, dear," she said. "I'm the host. You don't wash the host's feet."

"Everybody's feet," said Bruno.

So Granny Mabel sat down on a little twig, and Bruno, the biggest friend in the woods, took a tiny thimble of warm water, and washed the smallest feet in the woods, very, very carefully, with the very tip of one big claw.

Granny Mabel's whiskers were shaking. "Nobody's ever done that for me," she said.

Then she dipped the corner of the cloth in her thimble, and looked up at Mr. Moose. "There's one part of you," she said, "that always comes in my door." And very gently, she washed the very tip of Mr. Moose's big nose.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose. "It tickles!"

Then Mr. Moose looked down at Bruno's feet. Bruno's big paws were the muddiest of all. He had washed everybody else's, and nobody had washed his.

Mr. Moose looked at Mr. Monkey. Mr. Monkey looked at Mr. Moose. And without saying anything, Mr. Monkey picked up the cloth, and Mr. Moose carried over the warm water.

"You don't have to," said Bruno.

"We want to," said Mr. Monkey. And together, they washed Bruno's big muddy paws, every single claw.

Then they all went in, with clean feet, and sat close together in Granny Mabel's tiny warm home, as many as could fit, while Mr. Moose's nose came in through the door, and Granny Mabel made tea.

And the floor stayed clean.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, walking home with Mr. Moose, still a little bit wet. "We fixed up Granny Mabel's home all day. Everybody's feet got stinky, and Bruno's smelled like a whole wheel of cheese. Nobody wanted to wash feet. But Bruno did. Dottie's leg kicked because it tickled. I told Bruno he was too big to wash my feet, so he washed all of me. And he washed Granny Mabel's feet with a thimble. Then we washed Bruno's."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And outside Granny Mabel's door, as the evening came, the big bowl of washing water sat cooling on its stump, with one tiny thimble floating in it like a little boat.

Let's Talk

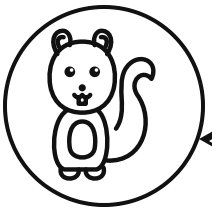
1. Nobody wanted to wash stinky feet. Why did Bruno do it?
2. What is a job nobody wants that you could do for someone?

Your Turn

Give your time! Draw a job nobody wants that you will do for someone.

I will _____ for someone.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What did the bee say when it flew home?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

m h o e

CLUE

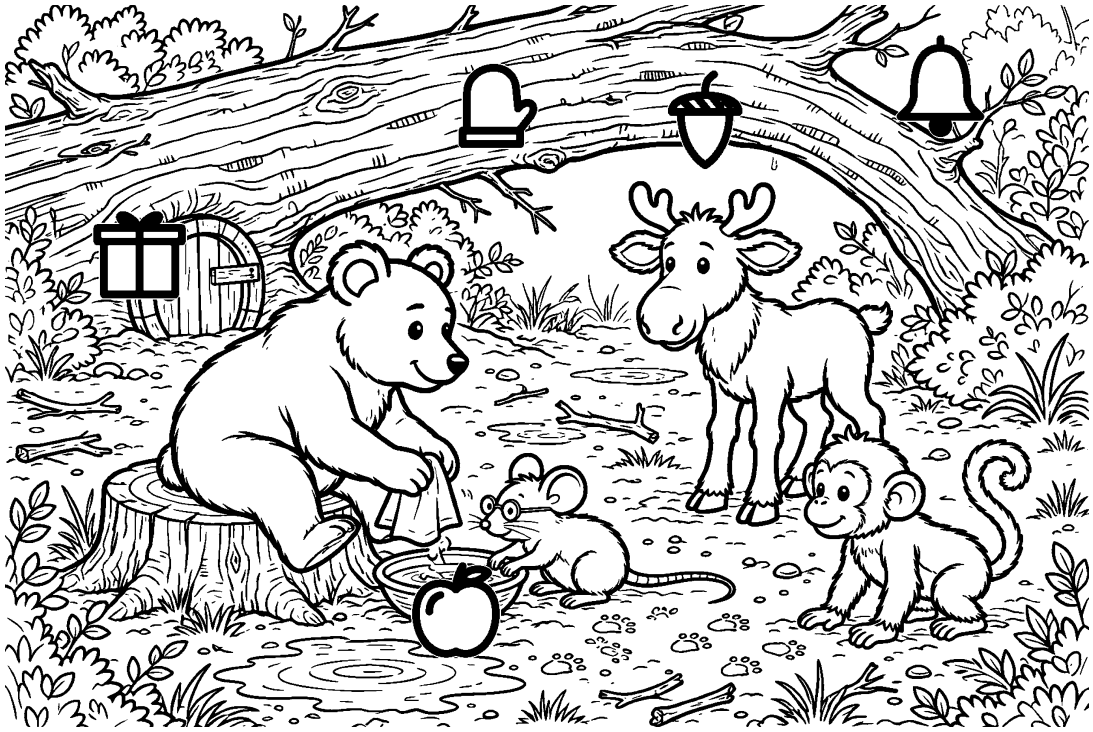


Honey, I'm _____!

Spot the Difference

Look closely. Can you find 5 differences?





Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Will Wash

Mud, mud, mud! The pals help fix up Gran's home.

But the pals are all mud. Gran's rug is a mess!

"I will wash," says  .

 can wash  . He can wash  .

"Wash all of me!" says  . Splash!

At the end,  and  wash  .

Gran's rug is just fine.

PICTURE WORDS  Bruno  Hazel  Dottie  Mr. Monkey  Mr. Moose

For grown-ups: New sounds: silent e with o, e, and u (home, these, cute). New words to learn by heart: wash.



Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Who did you give your time to? Write their name on the line.

I gave my time to _____.

What Happened First?

Write 1, 2, 3, 4 in the circles to put the story in order.



A



B



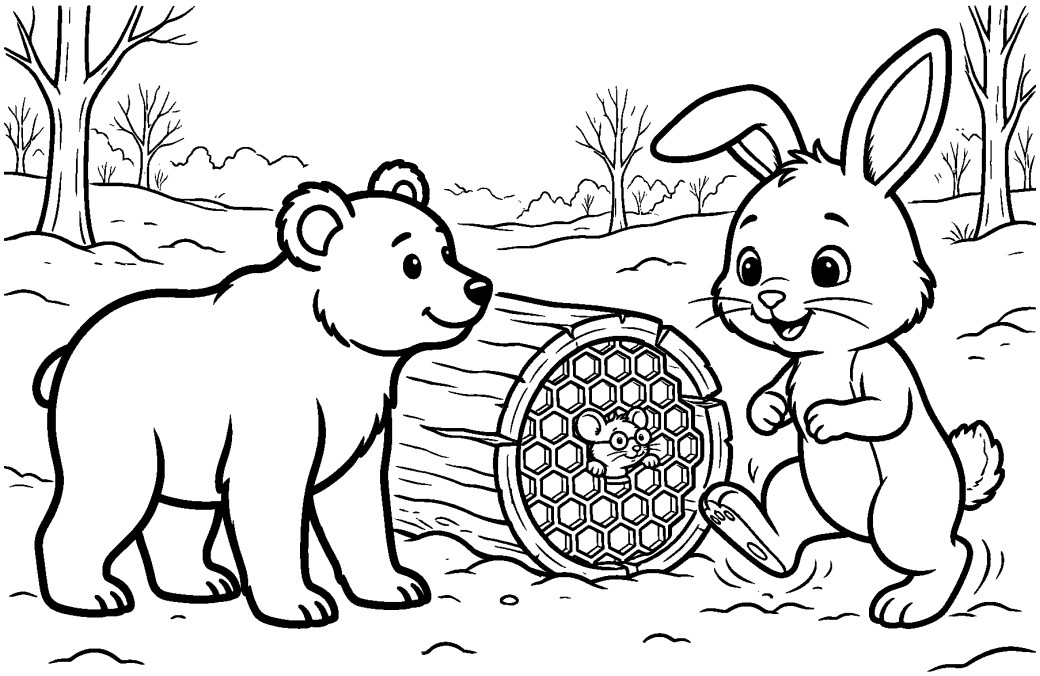
C



D

The Best Things

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was cold again, and everything that had melted yesterday had frozen back up in the night. The puddles were ice. The mud was hard. And every twig had a tiny clear icicle hanging from it, like the whole woods had put on its jewelry.

The friends had decided to bring Granny Mabel presents. Not spare things. Not leftovers. Everybody's very best thing. So everybody went home to find it, and they all met back in Sunny Square.

Mr. Monkey came with his yellow hat. It was the warmest, softest hat he had ever had. Mama Monkey had made it for him, and he wore it every single day. His ears felt cold already, just thinking about giving it away.

Mr. Moose came with his tall candle, the one Mama Moose had made for him, the best one, which he had been saving all winter for something special.

Hazel brought her very best ribbon, the shiniest blue one. Dottie brought her favorite ball. Ricky brought his very first jar, the one he found before any of the others. Shiloh brought a soft new piece of wool from his very best curl. Percy brought the little round mirror, his old friend.

And Bruno came carrying something enormous. It was his honeycomb. Not a piece. The whole thing. The biggest, goldest, drippiest honeycomb in the woods. He had been saving it since summer.

Ricky stared at it.

"Bruno," said Ricky. "That's your BEST honeycomb. That's your WHOLE honeycomb. Granny Mabel is tiny. She can't eat all that. You should keep most of it. Giving her all of it is a waste!"

Bruno looked at his honeycomb. Then he looked at Ricky.

"It's my best," said Bruno. "That's why."

Hazel looked down at her shiny blue ribbon. It was the one Percy gave back to her, the one she loved most of all. She held it in her teeth for a long time. Then she trotted over and laid it right on top of Bruno's honeycomb, very carefully, so it wouldn't get sticky.

It got sticky anyway.

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" went Hazel. "Now it's a honey ribbon!"

Dottie squeezed her favorite ball one last time, *squeak, squeak*, just to say goodbye. Then she dropped it on the pile and sat on her own paws, so they couldn't sneak it back.

They took everything through the brambles to Granny Mabel's on the sled. Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey pulled it in the harness. *Step. Step. Step.*

Granny Mabel opened her tiny door.

Mr. Monkey gave her his yellow hat. Granny Mabel was so small that when she put it on, it covered her completely, all the way down to her toes. Only her tail stuck out the bottom.

"Oh my," said Granny Mabel, from somewhere inside the hat. "It's very warm in here."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Granny Mabel, it's not a hat for you! It's a whole sleeping bag!"

Granny Mabel wiggled out of the bottom of it, her spectacles all crooked. "Then I'll sleep in it," she said. "Every night. Eek-eek-eek."

Mr. Moose gave her his tall candle. It was taller than Granny Mabel. She stood it in her window, next to her little one.

Then Bruno tried to give her the honeycomb. He pushed it toward her tiny door. It didn't fit. He turned it sideways. It still didn't fit. He pushed a little harder, and it got stuck, right in the doorway, so the whole door was filled with honeycomb. Granny Mabel peeked out at them through one of the little honeycomb holes.

"Hello," she said, from inside the honeycomb.

"Haw haw haw! Granny Mabel has a honey door!" went Bruno.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose.

And Granny Mabel, behind the honeycomb, put her tiny paw out and touched it, and her eyes went soft. "Oh, Bruno," she said. "That's beautiful. That's the most beautiful thing anybody has ever brought me."

Then everybody gave their best things, one by one. Percy gave her his little round mirror. "He was my friend when I didn't have any," said Percy. "Now you can have him." Granny Mabel looked into it and said, "Oh! Hello, dear," to herself, very politely.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Granny Mabel, that's YOU!"

Sammy zipped up to the door with her best acorn and dropped it on the pile. "Why do bees have sticky hair?" she asked. "Because they use HONEYCOMBS!" And she was gone.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, looking at his honeycomb.

And Granny Mabel held each gift and said thank you, softly, every time.

But Benji was standing at the back. He had his paws behind his back. And his ears were drooping all the way down.

Mr. Monkey went over. "Benji, what's wrong?"

"I don't have a best thing," whispered Benji. "My family's burrow is small. We don't have a lot. Everything I had, I already gave away this winter." His nose twitched. "I don't have anything to give her."

Mr. Monkey looked at him, and his chest hurt. Benji wanted to give so much. And he didn't have anything to give.

Mr. Moose was thinking. What did Benji have? Benji had sharp ears. Benji was fast. And Benji had the best thumping foot in the whole woods. On the longest night, when everybody called across the river, Benji's thump had been the loudest thing there.

"Benji," said Mr. Moose. "You have your thump."

Benji looked down at his foot.

Then he stepped up to Granny Mabel's door, right in front of the honeycomb. He took a deep breath. And he started to thump.

Thump. Thump. Thump-a-thump. Thump. Thump. Thump-a-thump-a-thump.

It was a song. A drum song, played on the frozen ground with one small bunny foot, the very best he could. It went fast and then slow and then fast again. Bruno started patting his big round tummy along with it, *bom, bom, bom-bom*, like a big bass drum. Hazel's hooves started tapping along. Dottie howled along, "Arooo!", right on the beat. Even Granny Mabel tapped her little stick on the floor, *tik-tik, tik-tik*, behind the honeycomb.

And when Benji finished with one last great big *THUMP*, Granny Mabel, behind the honeycomb, was smiling the biggest smile her little face could hold.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Benji Boom-Boom!"

"Benji Boom-Boom!" shouted everybody.

"Hee hee," went Benji, with his ears all the way up. He had given his best thing after all.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, walking home with no hat on, and his ears a little bit cold. "Everybody brought their very best thing. My hat was Granny Mabel's sleeping bag. Bruno's honeycomb got stuck in the door, and Granny Mabel talked through the holes. Ricky said it was a waste, but Bruno said that's why. And Benji didn't have anything, so he played his foot, and he's Benji Boom-Boom."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

And in the smallest home in Wanderful Woods, a tiny old mouse curled up that night inside a big yellow monkey hat, in the glow of a tall candle, with the sweet smell of honey drifting through the whole house.

Let's Talk

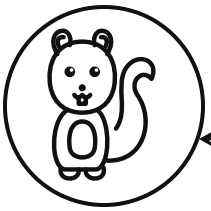
1. Ricky said giving the whole honeycomb was a waste. What did Bruno say?
2. What is your best thing? Who could you give it to?

Your Turn

Draw your best thing, and who you could give it to.

I will give it to _____.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What runs but has no legs?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is a clue!

n **e** **o** **s**

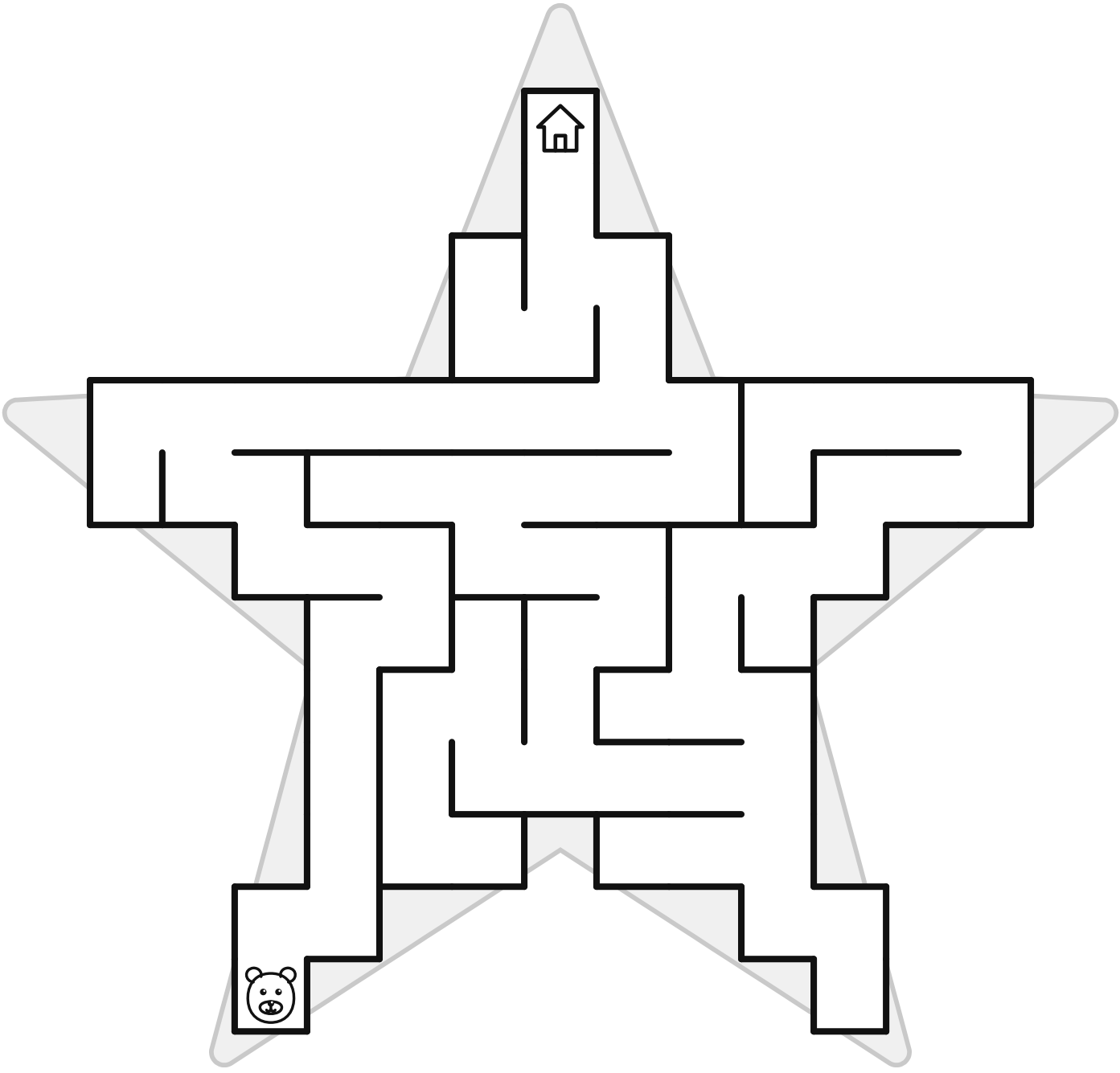
CLUE



Your ____ ____ ____ ____!

☆ The Honey Door

Help Bruno carry his whole honeycomb to Granny Mabel. Start at Bruno Bear.



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

The Best Gifts

The pals bring gifts to Gran. Not junk. The best!

 hands Gran his hat. It is so big, Gran is in it!

 has his big hive. It is stuck in the gap!

"That is a lot!" says  . "It is my best," says  .

 has no gift. Then he thumps.

Thump, thump, thump-a-thump!

It is a song! It is the best gift of all.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Bruno  Ricky  Benji



For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: so.

Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. What did you give, and who got it? Fill in both spaces.

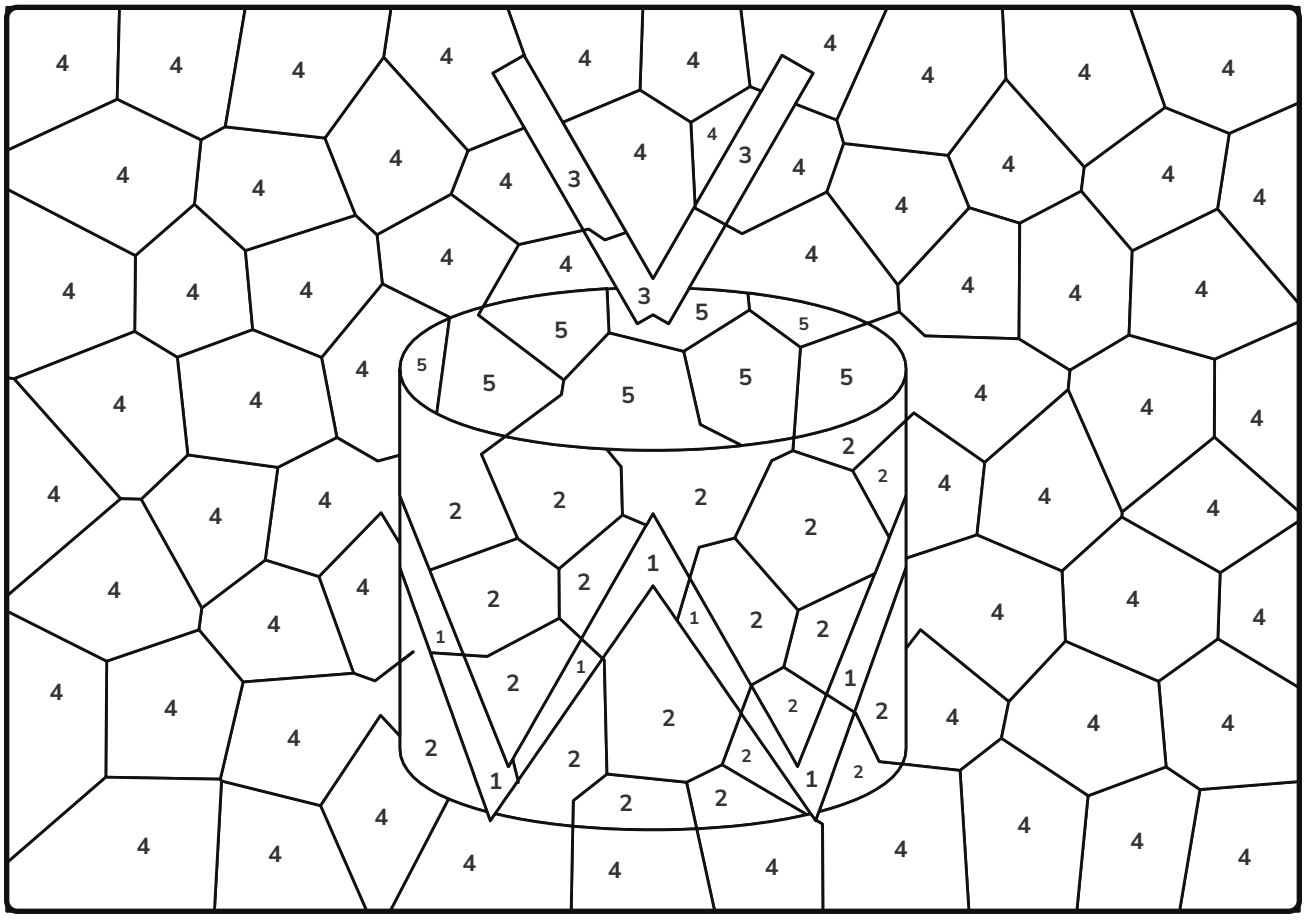
I gave

to .

Song Day: Mystery Picture

Today's song is "The Little Drummer Boy." Sing or listen while you color each space by its number.

1 yellow **2** red **3** brown **4** green **5** light blue



The Lantern for Whoever Comes Next

COLOR THE PICTURE



The last morning was soft and quiet, and a light snow was falling, the kind with flakes so big and slow you could catch one on your tongue if you tried. Mr. Monkey tried. He caught four. Mr. Moose tried too, and caught one on his nose instead, and went cross-eyed looking at it.

In Sunny Square, everybody gathered around the Listening Log with bark and paint and brushes.

"Today," said Mama Monkey, "everybody writes a love letter. To somebody who loved you this winter, even when it was hard. Tell them what they did. Tell them exactly."

So everybody wrote, or painted, or said the words out loud to a grown-up who wrote them down.

Bruno's letter was so big it took a whole piece of bark the size of a door. Ricky's letter to Percy was a list, of course: "Things I like about Percy. Number one: his bottle caps." It had forty-seven things on it. Dottie couldn't hold a brush, so she dipped her paws in the paint and walked across her letter, and that was the whole letter, a trail of paw prints.

"What does it say?" asked Hazel.

"It says I LOVE YOU!" said Dottie, wagging. "With my feet!"

"Ha! Ha!" she added.

Sammy painted hers in two seconds flat. It said "I LOVE YOU ALL" in big wobbly letters, and she stuck it on the Wishing Tree and was gone before anybody could read it. Benji painted his for Bruno: a big bear holding back the brambles, and a little bunny, safe behind him. Shiloh painted his for Granny Mabel, and it was just a tiny door with a big crowd of friends outside it, knocking.

Hazel tried to paint with her tail, and swished it, and splattered blue paint right across Mr. Moose's face.

Mr. Moose blinked. He had blue spots all over his nose.

"Oops! Are you okay?" said Hazel.

"I'm okay," said Mr. Moose. "I'm just spotty."

"Hee hee hee… *SNORT*!" went Hazel.

Tessie wrote one too, very slowly, all morning long, to Benji. It said, "Thank you… for walking with me… all the way up."

One letter was from everybody, to Daddy Monkey. It was tied around a brand-new vine, long and thick and green, that all the friends had braided together, one strand each. The letter said, "You gave your new vine away. So we made you one." Daddy Monkey grabbed it and swung right out over Sunny Square, smooth as anything, not one single bump. "Hoo-hoo-hoo!" he laughed, all the way across.

Mr. Moose wrote his letter to Mr. Monkey. Slowly, carefully, the way he did everything. And Mr. Monkey

wrote his letter to Mr. Moose, quickly, with his tongue sticking out the side of his mouth. Then they traded.

Mr. Monkey read his out loud. "Dear Mr. Monkey. You gave me the last honey cake, even though your tummy said no. You told me sorry when you called me a scaredy-moose. You stayed with Granny Mabel and missed the whole party. You are my best friend forever. Love, Mr. Moose."

Mr. Monkey's eyes went shiny.

Mr. Moose read his. "Dear Mr. Moose. You went out in the storm even though you didn't want to. You carried the whole woodpile on your head. You thought of the candle line. I love you the most of anybody. Except Mama. And Daddy. But almost the most. Love, Mr. Monkey."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, with blue spots on his nose, and his eyes were shiny too.

That evening, there was one last supper in Sunny Square. And this time, Granny Mabel came.

She couldn't walk that far, so Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey went and got her, in the harness, with the sled. She rode all the way through the brambles and across the snow, tucked inside the yellow hat, with only her face and her spectacles poking out, and every friend they passed waved. When the sled went over a bump, the hat rolled right off with Granny Mabel inside it, like a big yellow ball, *rolla-rolla-rolla*, until Mr. Monkey caught it.

"Eek-eek-eek! Again!" said Granny Mabel, from inside.

At the long table, Granny Mabel climbed up onto an upside-down teacup, so everybody could see her. Then she cleared her tiny throat.

"For a long, long time," said Granny Mabel, "I thought nobody knew I was there. And I told myself I didn't mind the dark. But that wasn't true. What I minded was being in the dark by myself." She looked around the table, at all of them. "Then one day, somebody knocked."

She held up her tiny cup. "To all of you," she said. "For knocking."

"TO GRANNY MABEL!" shouted everybody, and held up their cups, and Bruno held his up so high that his cider splashed onto his own head.

"Haw haw haw!"

After supper, Mr. Moose sat by the fire, very quiet. Mr. Monkey sat down next to him.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"Granny Mabel was out there all that time," said Mr. Moose, "and nobody knew. What if somebody else is out there? Somebody we haven't found yet? Somebody who comes along next winter, or the winter after that?"

Mr. Monkey thought about that, and his heart squeezed. Somebody out there in the dark, by themselves, not knowing the way.

"Then they need a light," said Mr. Monkey. "Right at the start of the path. So they can find their way in."

Daddy Monkey helped them make a lantern. Ricky found one more jar in the river, because the river always gives Ricky jars, and Percy gave a shiny bottle cap for the top. Mr. Moose lit the candle inside it from the fifth candle by the fire. And Mr. Monkey wrote one more letter, with Mr. Moose telling him every word, slowly, and they rolled it up and tucked it inside the lantern, beside the candle.

They carried it out to the edge of the woods, to the very start of the path through the brambles, and hung it on a branch where anybody could see it.

They didn't put their names on it. They didn't need to. Whoever found it would know everything they needed to know.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, walking home through the falling snow, holding Mr. Moose's tail. "We wrote love letters. Dottie wrote hers with her feet, and Hazel's tail made Mr. Moose spotty. Mr. Moose's letter made my eyes shiny. Granny Mabel came to supper in my hat, and she stood on a teacup and said thank you for knocking, and Bruno splashed cider on his head. And we left a lantern on the path, for whoever comes next."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.

Many, many winters later, on a snowy evening, a little group of young ones came running into Sunny Square. A little moose calf, and a little monkey, and a few others, all out of breath.

"Tessie! Tessie! Look what we found!" they shouted. "At the start of the bramble path! An old lantern! And there's a letter inside!"

Old Tessie was older than ever now. She sat by the Story Stone with her seeing glasses on her nose. She took the letter in her slow old feet, and unrolled it, and read it out loud, very slowly.

"To whoever comes next," read Tessie. "We don't know your name yet. We don't know what you look like. But we already love you. Follow the light. It will take you home."

The young ones looked at each other.

"That's US!" said the little monkey. "We're whoever came next!"

"Yes," said Tessie softly. "You are." She looked up at the sky, and the snow, and all the lights glowing in all the homes of Wanderful Woods, the way they had glowed every winter since.

"That was the winter," said Tessie, "the Overflow began."

And out at the edge of the woods, at the start of the bramble path, a little lantern hung on its branch in the falling snow, lit again by somebody who never left a name, the way somebody always did, waiting for whoever would come next.

Let's Talk

1. The friends left *a* lantern for somebody they didn't even know yet. Why?
2. It's Love Letter Day! Who will you write your love letter to?

Your Turn

Write or draw your love letter. A grown-up can help you write.

Dear _____ ,

Thank you for loving me this winter. You _____.

_____

_____

_____

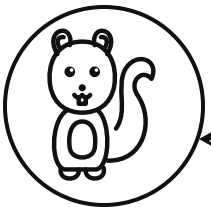
_____

_____

_____

Love, _____

SAMMY'S JOKE



What is *a* snowman's favorite breakfast?

Unscramble the letters to finish the joke. The picture is *a* clue!

e **s** **l** **k** **f** ***a***

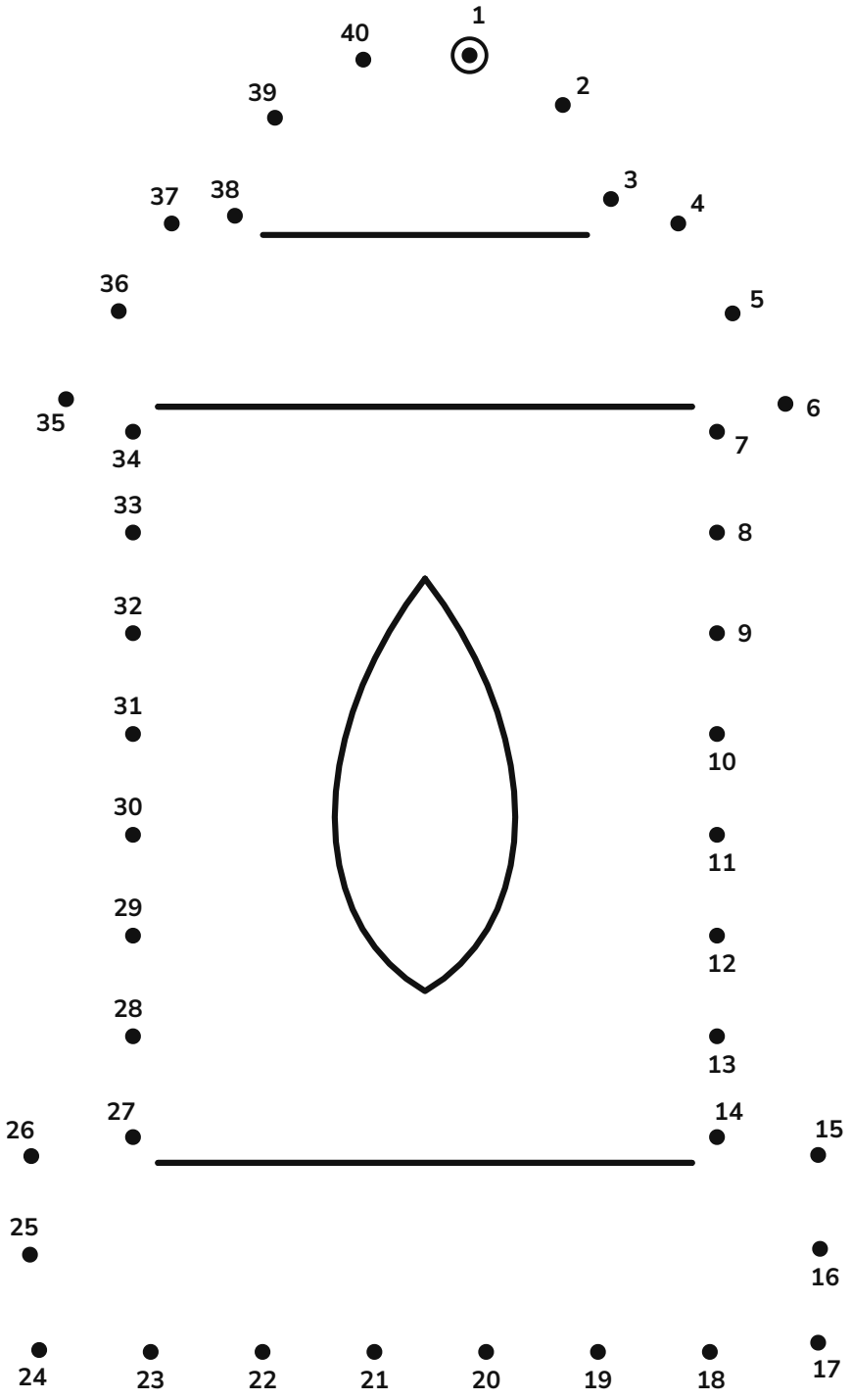
CLUE



Frosted _____!

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find the lantern for whoever comes next. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 40. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

A Lamp for the Next Pal

The pals make notes to pals.

 makes a note with no pen!

 and  trade notes. They smile.

Then  and  make a last lamp.

They hang it next to the path.

In the lamp is a note: “We hope you see this lamp.

Then you can get home.”

PICTURE WORDS  Dottie  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey



Color a star each time you read it.

My Gift

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write a name on the first line and the reason on the second. Then say it to them!

I love you,

because

Movie Bingo: The Grinch

Watch it with a grown-up. Color a square the first time you see each thing. Three in a row is Bingo!

a big heart	a dog	a sled
snow	**Free!**	a tree
a gift	a bell	a mountain

For grown-ups: The Grinch (2018) is rated PG for brief rude humor. Watch the last part, from Christmas morning to the Whos' dinner. The 1966 cartoon, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!, is a gentle 26-minute choice for little ones.

WEEK DONE!

Turn back to this week's map.
Color any stones you missed.

Ladybugs I found in this week's storybook pictures: _____

☆ Answers

SAMMY'S JOKES

Generosity Day 1. What do you call a frozen puppy? *A pup-sicle!*

Generosity Day 2. What is a squirrel's favorite ballet? *The nutcracker!*

Generosity Day 3. What is a bunny's favorite kind of music? *Hip-hop!*

Generosity Day 4. What does a snowman put on his cake? *Frosting!*

Generosity Day 5. What do you call a hippo at the North Pole? *Lost!*

Generosity Day 6. What has a neck but no head? *A jug!*

Generosity Day 7. Why did the turkey join the band? *It had drumsticks!*

Hope Day 1. What did the dog say when he sat on sandpaper? *Ruff!*

Hope Day 2. Where do bees wait for a ride? *At the buzz stop!*

Hope Day 3. What did the mountain say to the little hill? *Hill-o there!*

Hope Day 4. What do cows make on a hot day? *Milkshakes!*

Hope Day 5. What do ducks eat with their cheese? *Quackers!*

Hope Day 6. What kind of ball can't you bounce? *A snowball!*

Hope Day 7. Why was the little train never late? *It stayed on track!*

Peace Day 1. Why did the turtle cross the road? *To get to the shell station!*

Peace Day 2. What kind of room has no doors? *A mushroom!*

Peace Day 3. What do you call a snowman's puppy? *A slush puppy!*

Peace Day 4. Where do fish sleep at night? *In the river bed!*

Peace Day 5. What do snowmen call their kids? *Chill-dren!*

Peace Day 6. What did the egg say to the frying pan? *You crack me up!*

Peace Day 7. What kind of shoes do sleepy feet wear? *Slippers!*

Joy Day 1. What do you call a fly with no wings? *A walk!*

Joy Day 2. Why did the boy run around his bed? *To catch up on his sleep!*

Joy Day 3. Which is faster, hot or cold? *Hot. You can catch a cold!*

Joy Day 4. What do you call a deer with no eyes? *No idea!*

Joy Day 5. Where does a snowman keep his money? *In a snow bank!*

Joy Day 6. What did one bell say to the other bell? *Give me a ring!*

Joy Day 7. What did the scarf say to the hat? *You go on ahead. I'll hang around!*

Love Day 1. What do you get when you cross an apple and a pine tree? *A pineapple!*

Love Day 2. What is a mouse's favorite game? *Hide and squeak!*

Love Day 3. Why did the boy sit on his clock? *He wanted to be on time!*

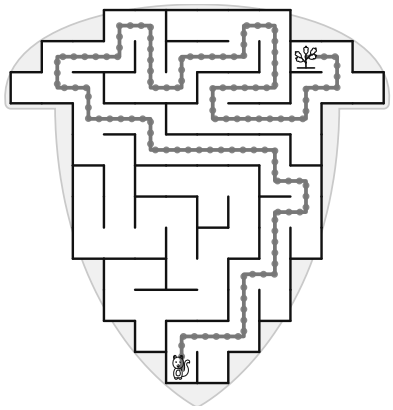
Love Day 4. What did the candle say to the match? *You light up my life!*

Love Day 5. What did the bee say when it flew home? *Honey, I'm home!*

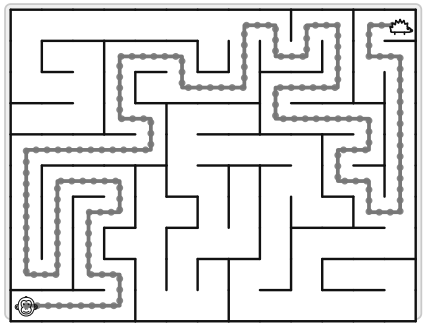
Love Day 6. What runs but has no legs? *Your nose!*

Love Day 7. What is a snowman's favorite breakfast? *Frosted flakes!*

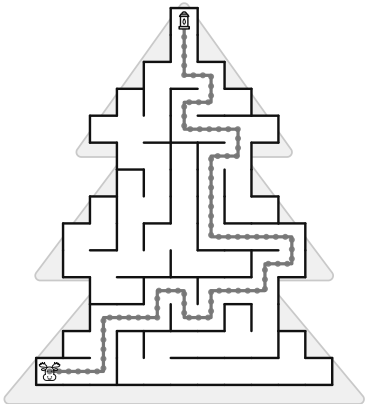
MAZES



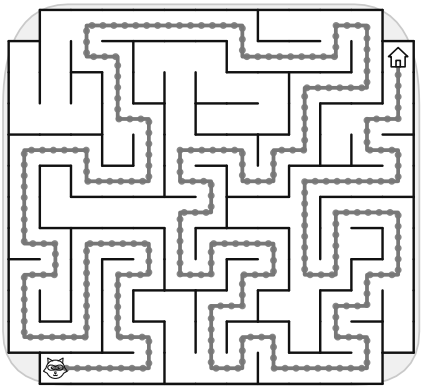
Generosity Day 2



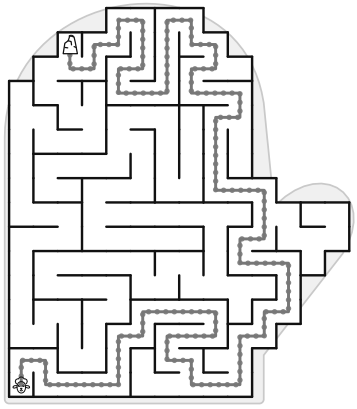
Generosity Day 6



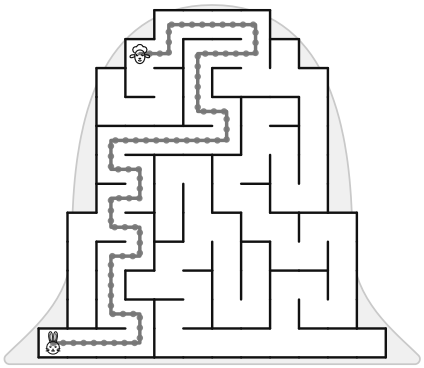
Hope Day 2



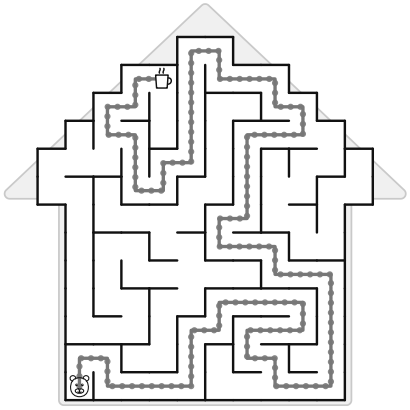
Hope Day 6



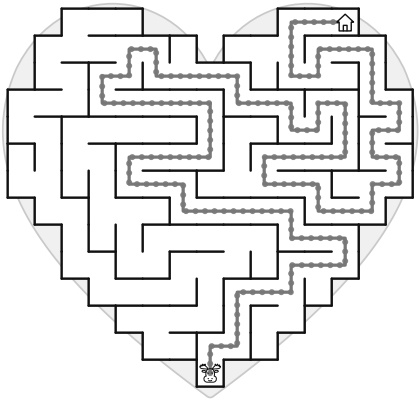
Peace Day 2



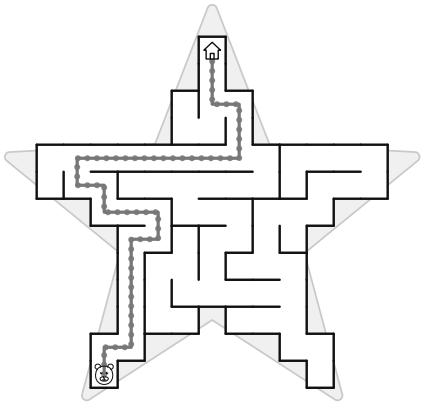
Peace Day 6



Joy Day 2



Love Day 2



Love Day 6

FEELINGS MATCH

Generosity Day 2: Sammy, when her saved acorns were all fuzzy → sad; Bruno, waking up as a snowy bump → sleepy; Dottie, finding the bone she buried in the summer → excited; Benji, finding out who to thank for his oak → happy

Hope Day 2: Hazel, zooming down the ice slide → excited; Bruno, squished between two rocks like a sandwich → silly; Mr. Moose, looking at four trails that all went back down → worried; Mr. Monkey, when he saw Mama Hedgehog kept the light lit → happy

Peace Day 2: Bruno, when the wind made his face wave → silly; Mr. Monkey, so cold he wanted to go home → sad; Hazel, when she saw she had to climb the whole hill again → surprised; Mr. Moose, lighting the new candle at the top → proud

Joy Day 2: Mr. Monkey, when the crows stayed outside → sad; Bruno, after he scooted right through the wall → silly; Dottie, with three chicks on her head → surprised; Shiloh, when everybody cheered for him → happy

Love Day 2: Mr. Monkey, dangling from the first harness → silly; Mr. Moose, when the sled went around in a circle → surprised; Ricky, when the lantern went out → sad; Bruno, holding back the prickly brambles → proud

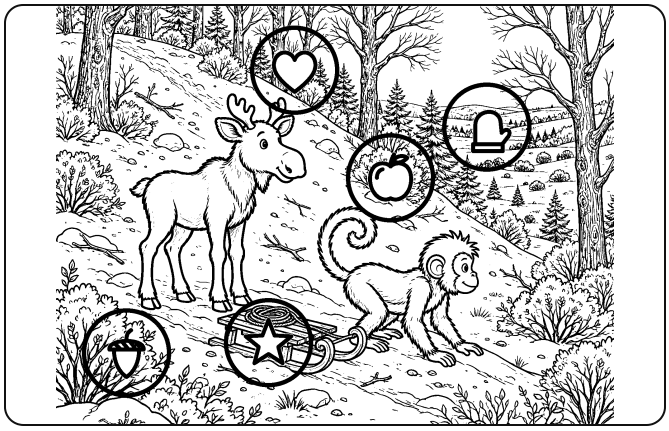
I SPY

Hope Day 3: snowflake 6, mitten 4, mug 5, candle 3, star 5, sled 4
Joy Day 3: star 5, bell 4, gift 6, candle 3, tree 4, ornament 5

WHAT HAPPENED FIRST?

Generosity Day 5: 1 = frame D, 2 = frame B, 3 = frame C, 4 = frame A
Hope Day 5: 1 = frame B, 2 = frame C, 3 = frame A, 4 = frame D
Peace Day 5: 1 = frame D, 2 = frame B, 3 = frame C, 4 = frame A
Joy Day 5: 1 = frame B, 2 = frame C, 3 = frame A, 4 = frame D
Love Day 5: 1 = frame B, 2 = frame C, 3 = frame A, 4 = frame D

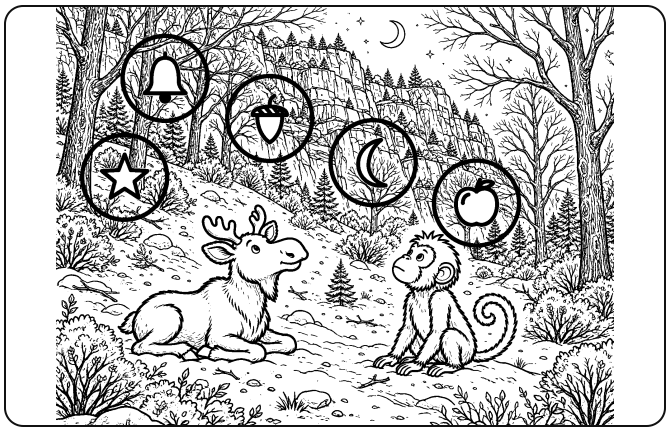
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE (THE 5 CHANGES ARE CIRCLED)



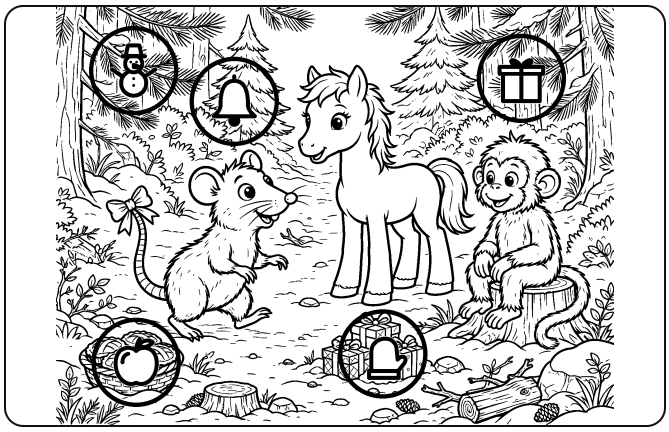
Generosity Day 5



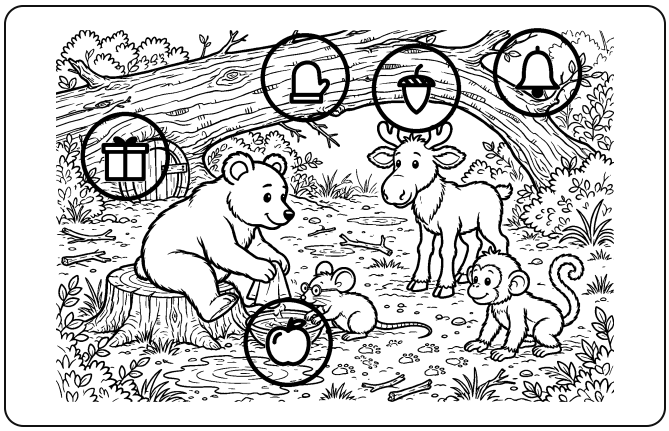
Hope Day 5



Peace Day 5



Joy Day 5

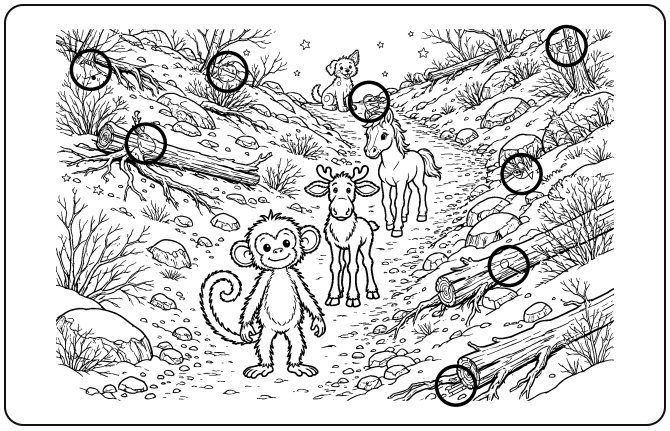


Love Day 5

HIDDEN PICTURES (CIRCLED)



Generosity Day 4 (hidden pictures)



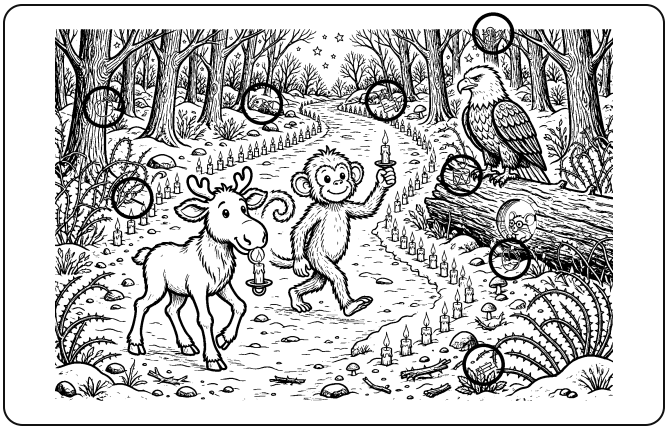
Hope Day 4 (hidden pictures)



Peace Day 4 (hidden pictures)



Joy Day 4 (hidden pictures)



Love Day 4 (hidden pictures)