

Sammy's Forgotten Acorns

 COLOR THE PICTURE



The sun came out over Wonderful 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 Wonderful 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

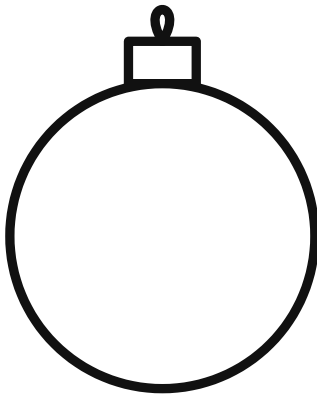
- 1 The acorns Sammy kept went fuzzy. What happened to the acorns she forgot?
- 2 Who outside our house gave you something good, maybe without even knowing it?

✎ 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

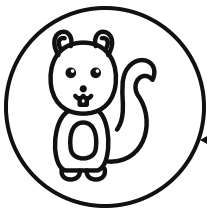
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



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!



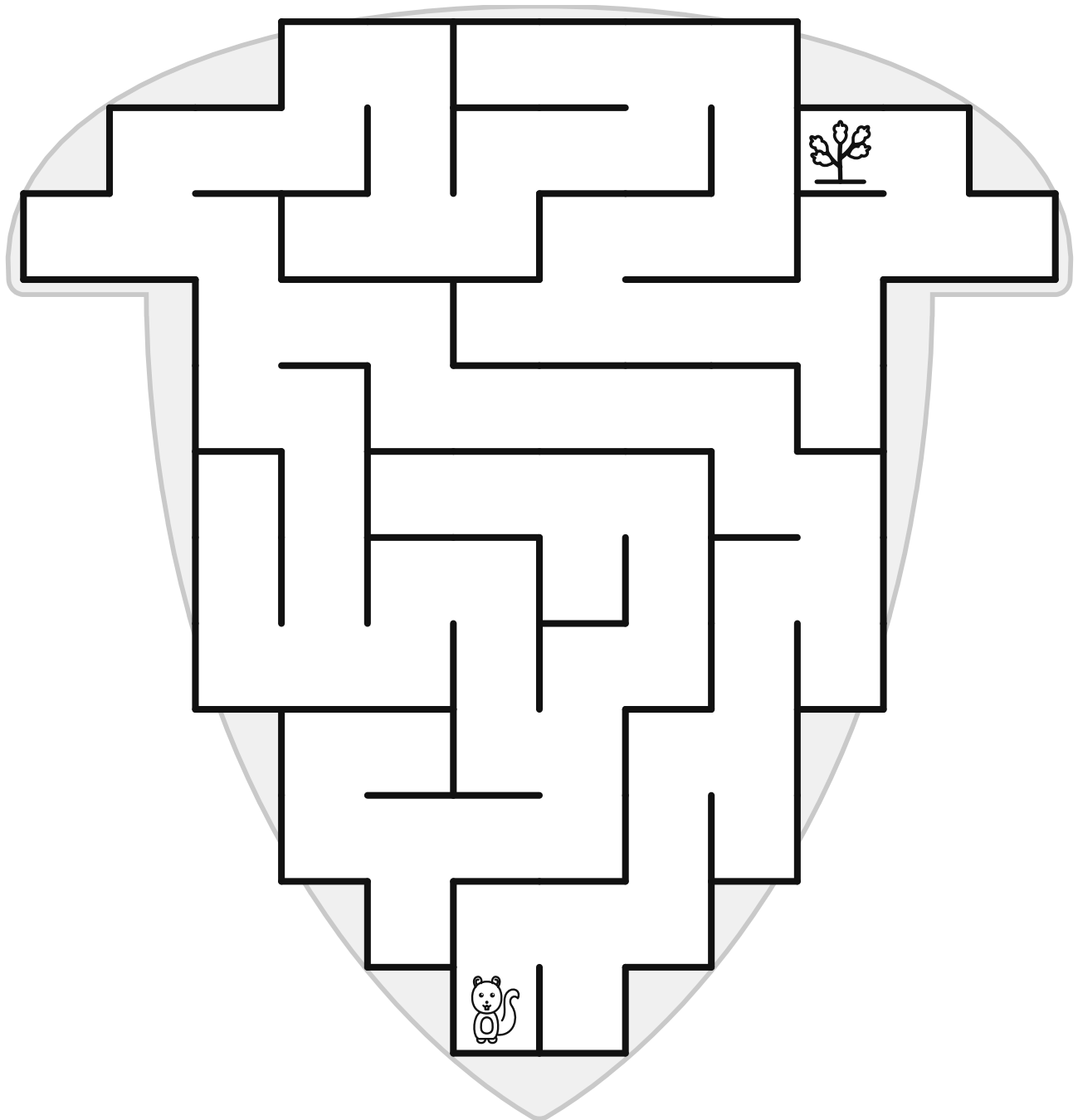
CLUE



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.

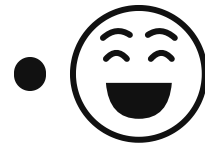
for giving to me.

♥ Feelings Match

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



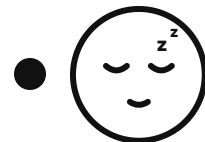
Sammy, when her saved acorns were all fuzzy



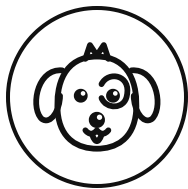
excited



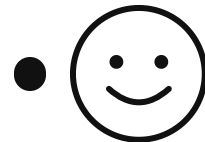
Bruno, waking up as a snowy bump



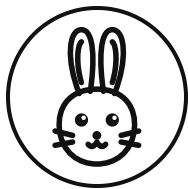
sleepy



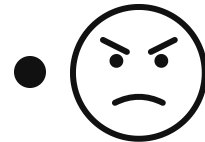
Dottie, finding the bone she buried in the summer



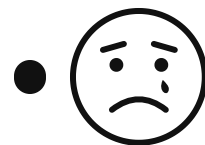
happy



Benji, finding out who to thank for his oak



angry



sad

