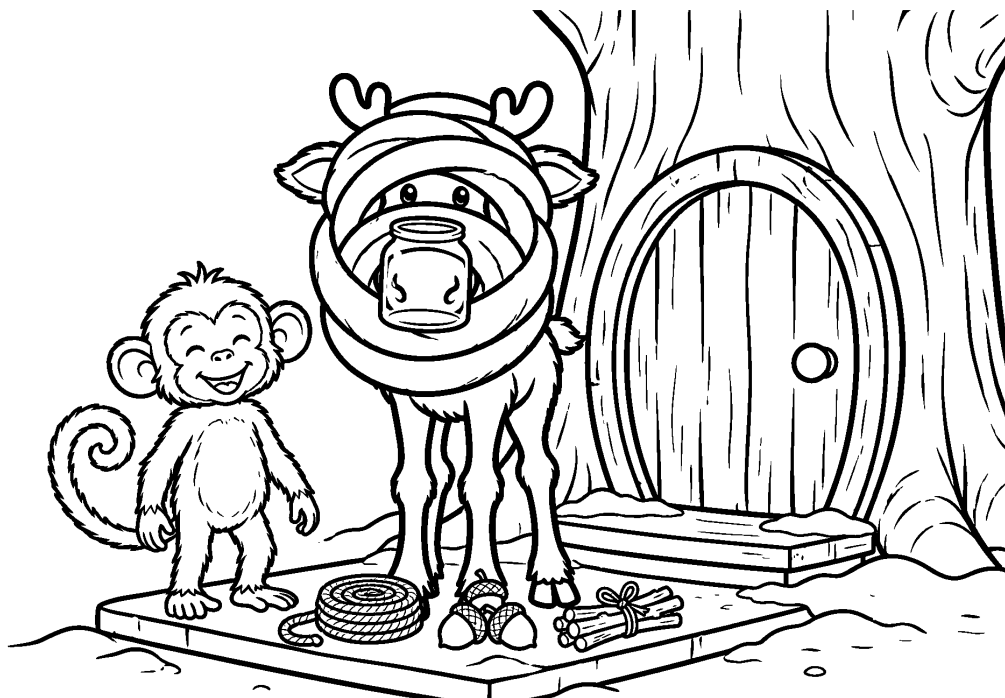


Who Left These?

 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.

FWOOOOOOOOOSH.

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

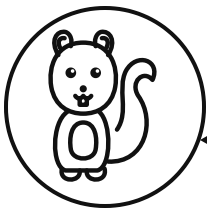
- 1 Everybody left their best things on Mr. Moose's step. How will each gift help him get to the top?
- 2 What could you give that would help someone keep going?

Your Turn

Draw something you could give to help someone reach their wish.

I will give _____.

SAMMY'S JOKE

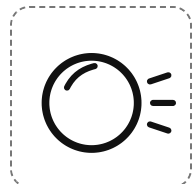


What kind of ball can't you bounce?

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



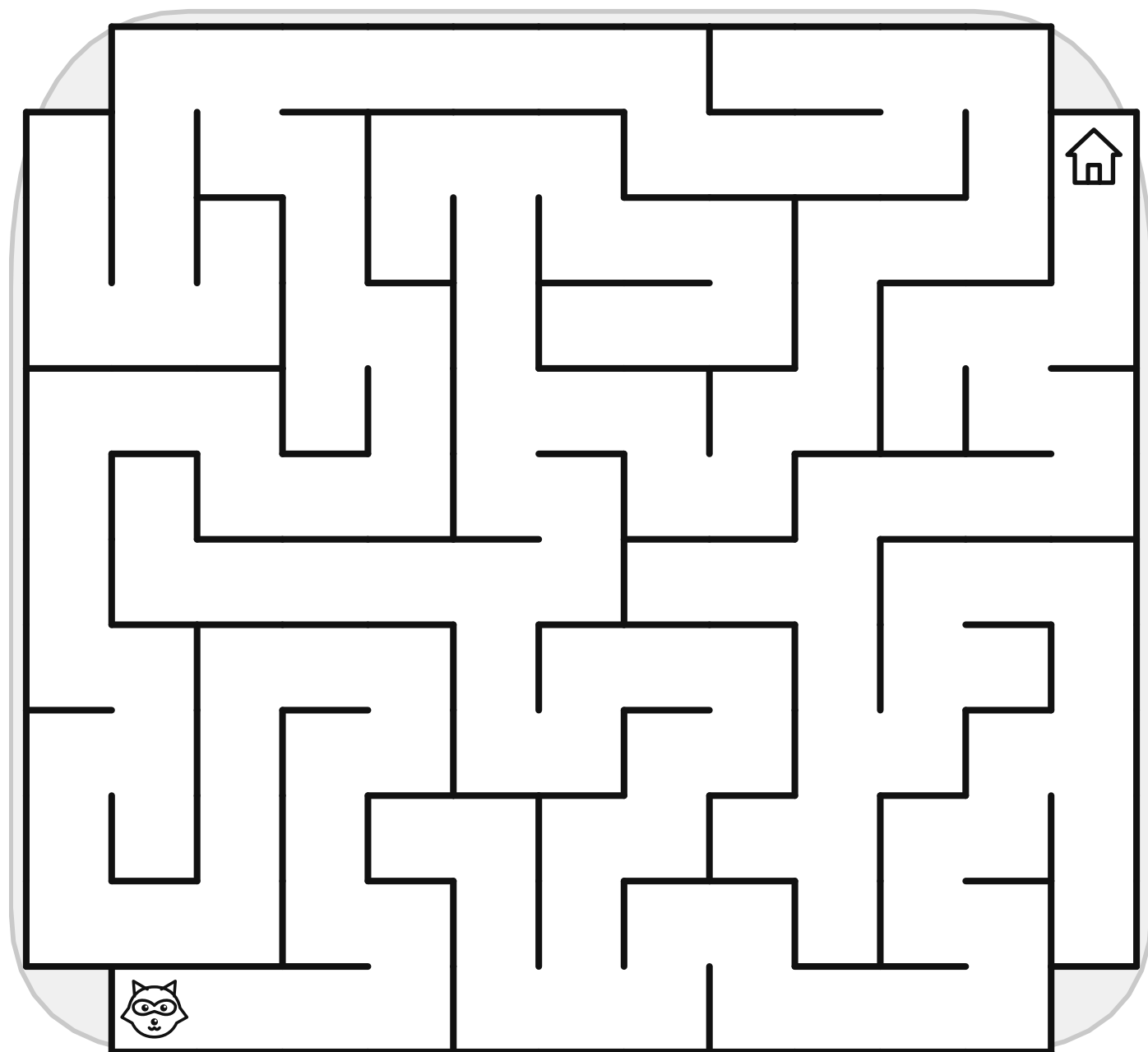
CLUE



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

