

One Word Each

 COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was gray and still, and the snow clouds sat low over Wonderful 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 Wonderful 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 Wonderful 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 Wonderful 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?

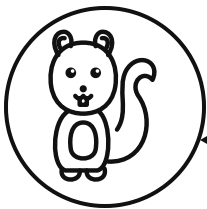
 Your Turn

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!



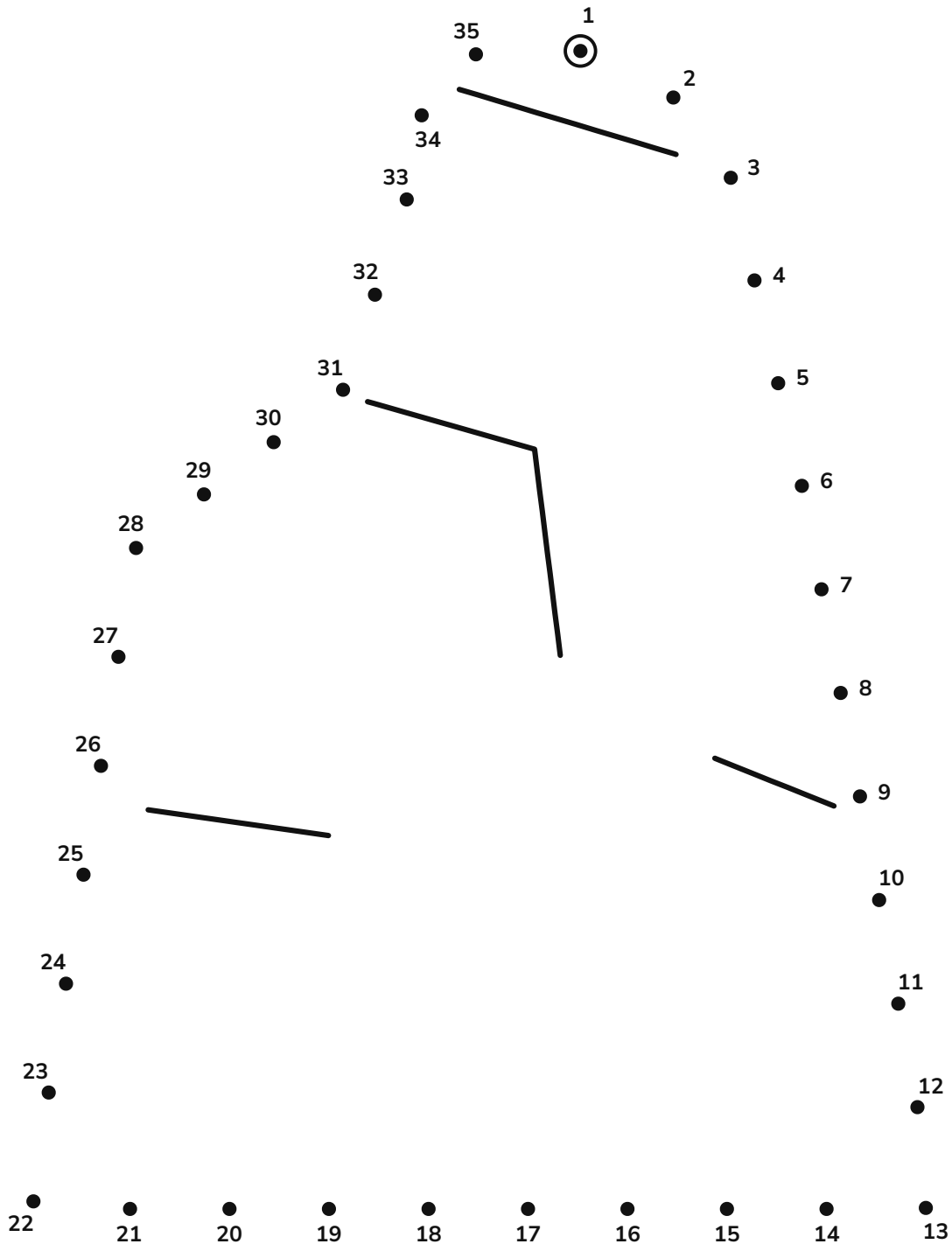
CLUE



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: _____