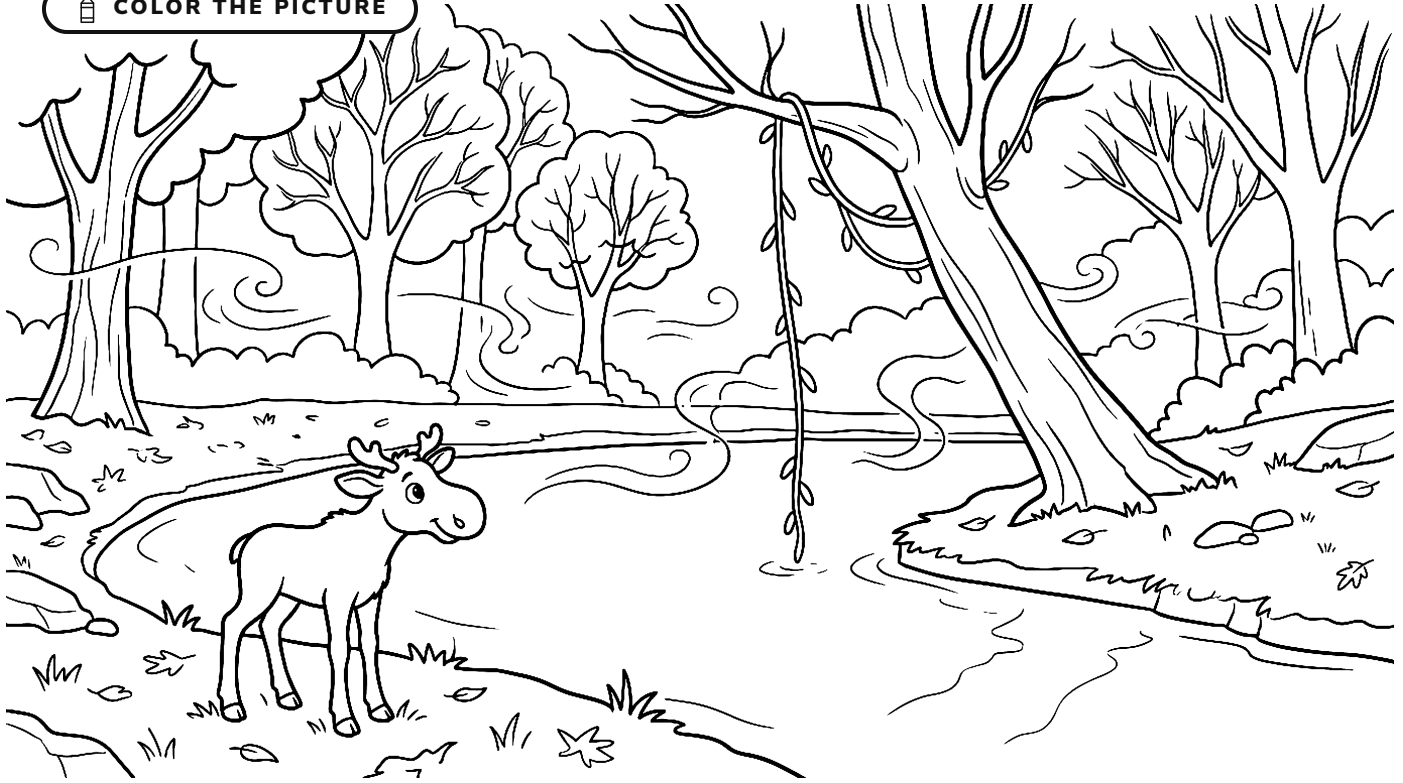


Where the River Comes From

 COLOR THE PICTURE



It was a still, cold Sunday morning, and Rainbow River was steaming. Little clouds of mist floated up off the water and drifted between the trees, and the river went *gloop-gloop-gloop* along the bank, the way it always did.

Mr. Moose was standing at the river bend, watching it go by.

"Mr. Monkey," he said. "The river is always here."

"Yep," said Mr. Monkey, hanging upside down from the cottonwood.

"Every day. Every night. It never runs out. It never stops." Mr. Moose watched a leaf float past. "Where does it all come from?"

Mr. Monkey flipped right side up. He had never thought about that. The river was just the river. It was always there, like the ground.

"Maybe it runs out at night," said Mr. Monkey, "and comes back in the morning."

"It doesn't," said Mr. Moose. "I heard it last night."

"Then let's see if it runs out," said Mr. Monkey. "I'll stop it."

He hopped down into the shallow water at the bend, put both hands flat in front of him, and pushed against the river. "STOP!"

The river went around his hands.

He stuck out his feet too. The river went around his feet. He lay down sideways across the whole stream, from one rock to another, like a little furry wall. The river went over

him, under him, and right through the gap between his ears.

"Mr. Moose," he said, with water running past his nose. "It's not stopping."

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

Bruno came over to see. "I can help," he said. And he sat down, *KER-SPLUSH*, right in the middle of the river, beside Mr. Monkey. He was much bigger than a monkey. The water piled up behind him, higher and higher, until it was up to his chin, and then it went around both sides of him and kept on going.

"I'm a rock now," said Bruno happily.

"Haw haw haw!" he laughed, and the water rippled out in circles all around him.

Sammy zipped by on a branch overhead. "Hey! What did the river say to the ocean?" And she was gone before anybody answered. A moment later her voice came floating back through the trees: "NOTHING! It just *WAVED!*"

Mr. Monkey waved at the river. The river didn't wave back. It just kept going.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Bye, river. Hi, river. Bye, river."

They climbed out, wet and cold and shaking themselves off.

"It never runs out," said Mr. Moose, still wondering. "So it has to start somewhere."

Mr. Monkey's eyes lit up. "Then let's go find it! Let's follow it all the way to the beginning!"

So they did. Mr. Moose led, because he was good at following things slowly and carefully. Mr. Monkey went ahead, because he was good at finding the way. Bruno came along, because he was still wet anyway.

They followed the river past the willow. Past the line of pinecones, still lying along the bank from Tuesday. Past Whispering Water Way, *rusha-rusha-rusha*, where Tessie was sunning herself on her rock.

"Where are you going?" asked Tessie, slowly.

"To where the river starts!" said Mr. Monkey.

Tessie thought about it for a long, long time. "Keep going," she said.

And everywhere they went, they saw something they had never seen before. Tied to a pine near the riverbank, there was a painted leaf. Tied to a birch beyond it, another one. On a stump, on a fence post, on the door of a burrow. Painted leaves, everywhere, faces out and secrets in.

"Mr. Moose," said Mr. Monkey. "Somebody else is making thank-you leaves."

"Everybody's making them," said Mr. Moose.

On one of the leaves, near a big beaver dam, somebody had painted two beavers holding hands. And underneath, a little twig was tied to the stem.

Then they saw Ricky, hurrying along the path the other way with his list.

"Ricky! Where are you going?"

"Signing up the beavers!" said Ricky. "And the otters! And the family of hedgehogs that lives past the waterfall!" He unrolled his list. It was very, very long. It hung all the way down to his feet and curled up on the ground. "The Swap is getting bigger and BIGGER! I'm going to need more extras!" And he hurried off.

Mr. Monkey looked after him. "That's a long list."

They kept climbing, past a little waterfall tumbling down over the rocks. The river got smaller. And smaller. Now it was just a brook. Now it was just a trickle, running down between the rocks at the very bottom of Lookout Ledge. And then they came around a big mossy boulder, and there it was.

A little pool, clear as glass, tucked between the roots of an old pine. And right in the middle of the pool, the water was bubbling up out of the ground. *Bloop. Bloop. Bloop.* All by itself. Cold and clean and new.

They stood there and stared.

"That's it," whispered Mr. Monkey. "That's where the river starts."

Mr. Moose bent down and looked into the pool, so close his nose almost touched the water. He could see the bottom. He could see little sand grains dancing where the water came up.

"Who fills it?" he asked.

Nobody knew. The water bubbled up all day and all night, every single day, and it ran all the way down

through Wonderful Woods, past every home, past Sunny Square, giving everybody water to drink and a place to splash and a river to swing over.

Bruno took a long, slow drink. "Mmm," he said. "It tastes new."

Mr. Monkey dipped his hand in. It was so cold it made his fingers tingle. He didn't jump this time. He just held his hand there and felt the water coming up, and up, and up, and going away down the hill, and up again.

"It gives away everything," he said quietly. "And then there's more."

That's when Bruno said, very softly, "Look."

On the far side of the little pool, between two old pines, stood the Silent Stag. He was tall and still in the misty morning light, as if he were made of morning mist and river light. He was standing right where the path went on, up the hill toward the high cliffs, toward the place where Everest Eagle lived.

He looked at them across the water. Then he lowered his great head, slowly, just once.

A puff of mist drifted up off the spring, through him, soft as a breath. When it cleared, the path was there, and he wasn't.

Mr. Moose looked at the path for a long time. It went up, and up, and up, toward the top of Everest's cliff. The highest place in the whole woods. His wish.

"Not today," he said quietly. "But someday."

Mr. Monkey picked a leaf off the ground by the spring, a small yellow birch leaf, and put it in the basket. He tied a twig to it.

"For the spring," he said. "For giving away all its water, every day."

Then he looked at the empty front of the leaf.

"I still don't know whose name goes on it," he said. "Same as the sunrise."

"Me neither," said Mr. Moose.

They walked home slowly, down the hill, following the river back the way it went. By the time they got to Sunny Square, the sun was going down, and the Wishing Tree was so full of painted leaves that you could hardly see the wishes anymore.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose. "Mr. Monkey tried to stop the river with his hands, and Bruno sat in it and turned into a rock. Sammy said the river just waved. We followed the river all the way to the beginning, and it comes right up out of the ground, and nobody fills it. And the Silent Stag was standing by the path to Everest's cliff."

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

*We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.*

And far up the hill, at the foot of Lookout Ledge, the little spring kept bubbling up in the dark, all night long, sending its water down to everyone.

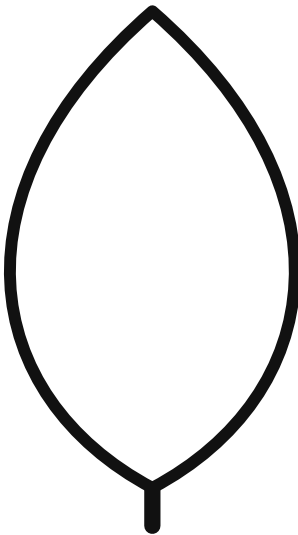
☁ Let's Talk

- 1 Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey found where the river starts. Who do you think keeps it full?
- 2 What keeps coming every single day that you didn't make?

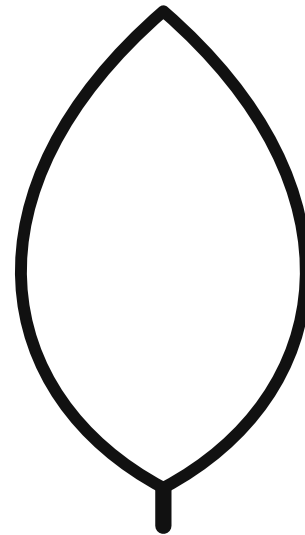
✎ Your Turn

Plan a leaf for a gift nobody made. Front: what it is. Back: draw why you're glad for it.

FRONT: WHAT IT IS

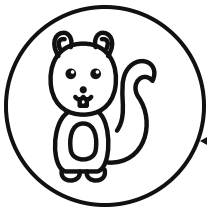


BACK: THE THANK-YOU



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

SAMMY'S JOKE



Why are fish so smart?

Crack Sammy's code! Find each picture in the key and write its letter on the line.

They live in _____ !

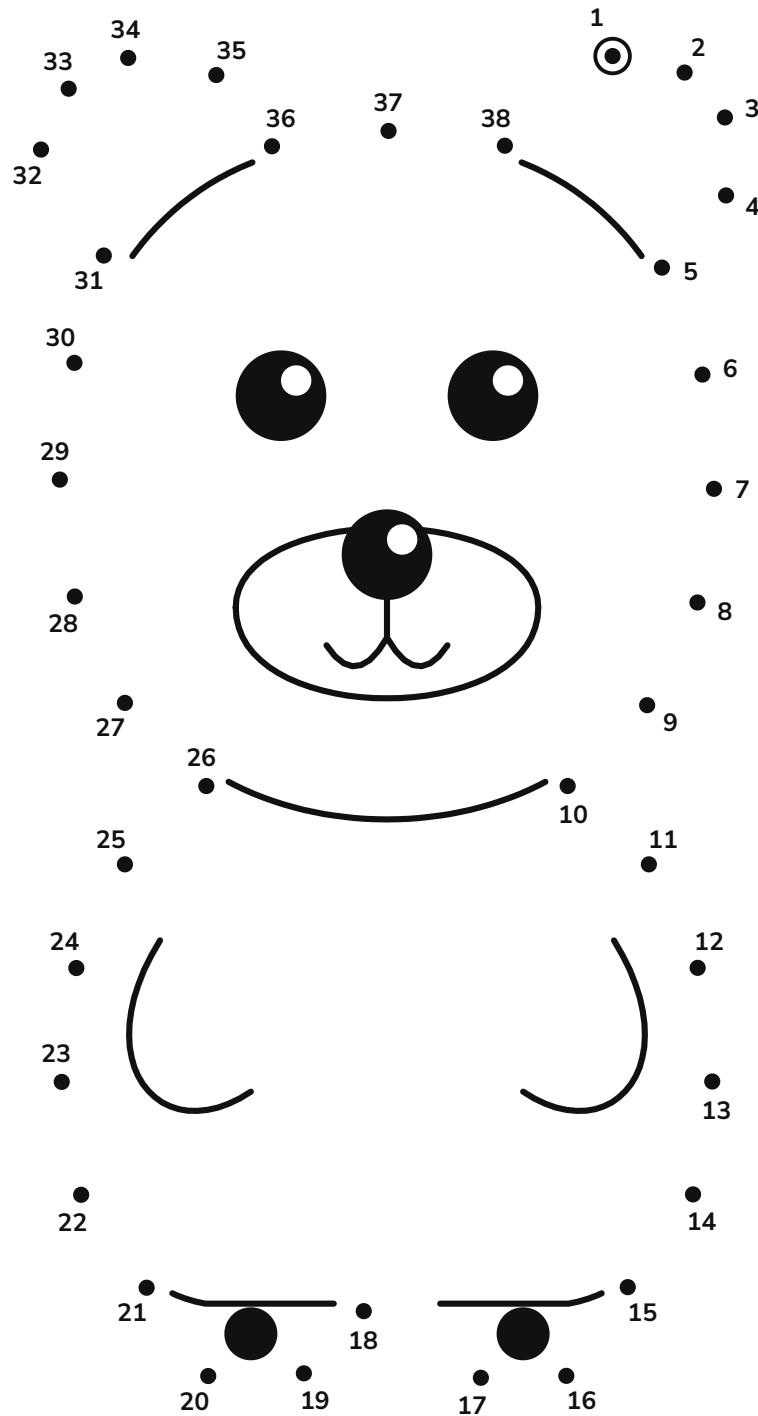


KEY



Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to find the friend who turned into a rock. 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

It Did Not Stop

 sits in it. “Stop!” said .

It did not stop.

 sits in it. It did not stop!

Up, up, up, and up.

At the top is a pond. It pops and pops!

 sees .  nods.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Bruno  the Silent Stag  Mr. Moose



Color a star each time you read it.

♥ My Thank-You

Trace the dotted words. On the line, write or draw a good gift that nobody made. Then read it out loud!

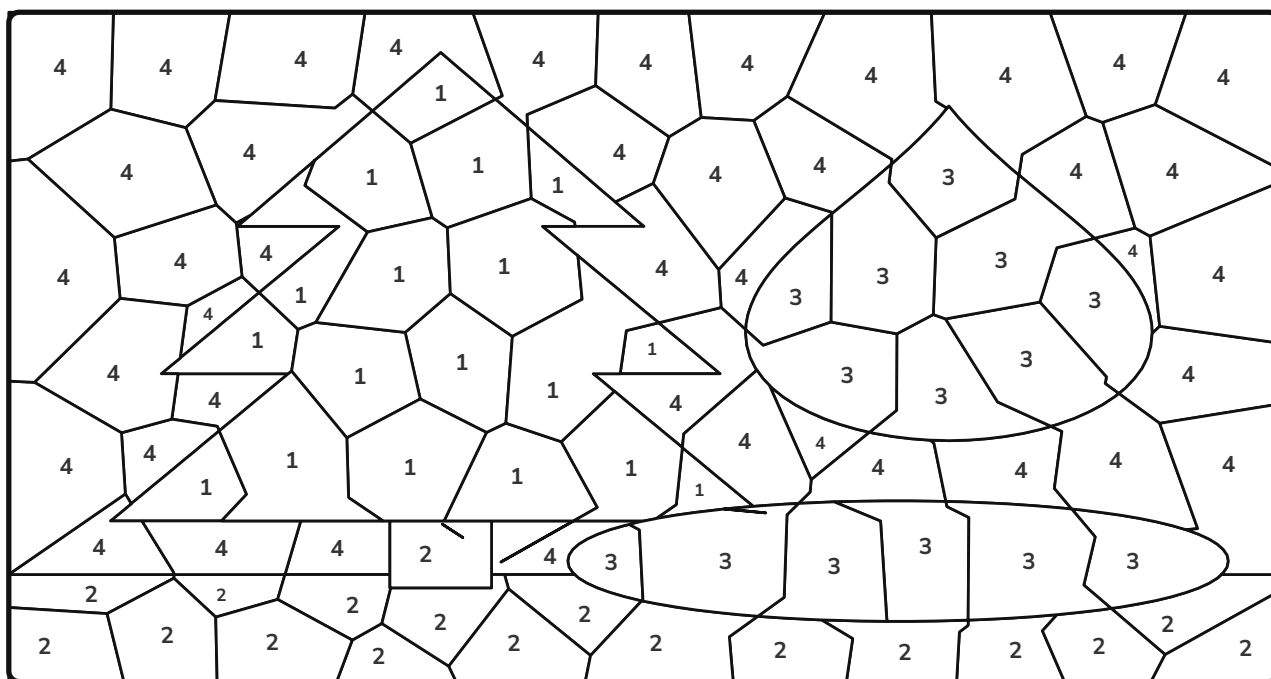
Instead of nothing

there was

🏠 Mystery Picture

Color each space by its number to find the hidden picture.

① green ② brown ③ blue ④ yellow



WEEK DONE!



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



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