



COLOR THE TITLE!

Improvement

Who made my life better?

Look back one year. Who helped you grow?

THIS WEEK'S STORIES

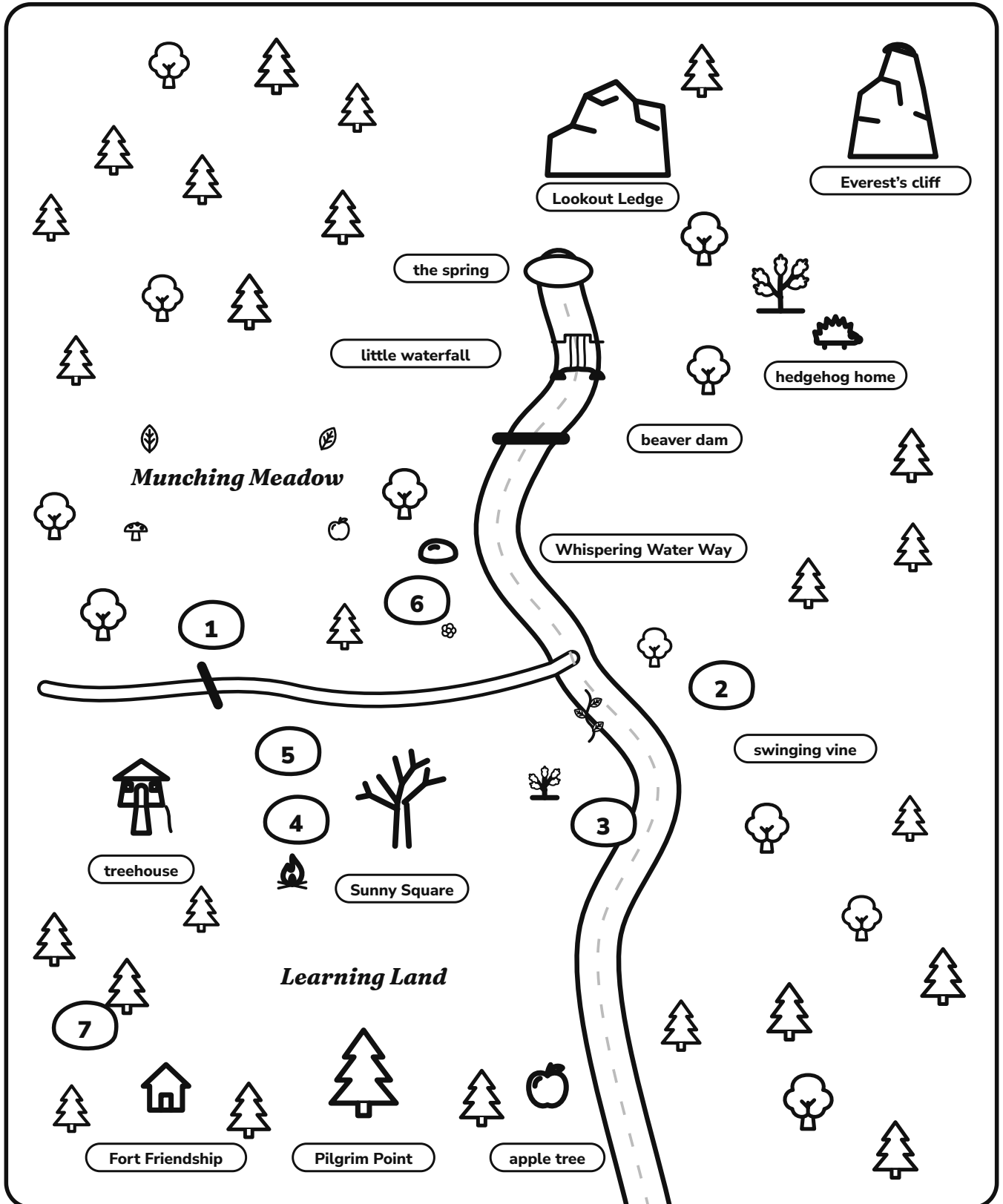
- 1 **Monday:** Then and Now
- 2 **Tuesday:** The Knot That Never Slips
- 3 **Wednesday:** Nobody Planted It
- 4 **Thursday:** The Backward Feast
- 5 **Friday:** Thanks for Being Nice
- 6 **Saturday:** A Secret for Benji
- 7 **Sunday:** The Leaf With No Name

THIS WEEK'S THANK-YOU:

Thank you, _____, for making my life better.

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!



Then and Now

 COLOR THE PICTURE



It was a crisp, crunchy morning. Every puddle in Sunny Square had a thin lid of ice on top, and when Mr. Monkey stomped on one, it went *krinkle-krak*.

"Mr. Moose!" he called. "The puddles have ceilings!"

Mr. Moose didn't answer. He was standing very straight with his back against the big maple, right under the Wishing Tree, with his chin up and his ears up and his tummy sucked in.

Mama Moose was standing in front of him with a piece of charcoal from the fire. "Hold still," she said. "Still... still..."

She drew a line on the bark, right at the top of Mr. Moose's head. Then she stepped back. Just below the new line was an old line. And below that, an older one. And below that, a tiny one, way down low by the roots.

"Every fall," said Mama Moose, "I mark how tall you are. Look how much you grew this year."

Mr. Moose turned around and looked. The new line was a whole hoof higher than last year's.

"Whoa," said Mr. Monkey. He hopped up on a root and squinted at the lines. "Mr. Moose, last year you were a little moose. Now you're a medium moose."

"How did I get taller?" asked Mr. Moose.

"Well," said Mama Moose, smiling, "that's a good question to think about." And she went inside to make breakfast.

Mr. Monkey hopped down. "I want to know if I grew too! Let's do Then and Now!"

"What's Then and Now?" asked Mr. Moose.

"I just made it up," said Mr. Monkey. "You show something you can do NOW that you couldn't do THEN. A year ago. I'll go first!"

He ran to the treehouse, where Mama Monkey was shaking out blankets on the porch. "Mama! Watch! Then and Now!"

Mr. Monkey grabbed the highest vine, the long one that went all the way from the treehouse to the tall pine across the path. A year ago, he could only swing on the low vines. Now he swung way out, way up, all by himself.

"WHEEEEE!" He sailed through the air, let go, and reached for the next vine.

He missed.

He fell straight down, *fwoop*, and landed... right in Mama Monkey's arms. She had already dropped the blanket and stepped underneath him. She hadn't even looked worried.

"Hee hee hee!" Mr. Monkey looked up at her. "How did you know?"

"Because I've caught you about a hundred times," said Mama Monkey. "That makes a hundred and one."

Mr. Monkey stopped laughing. He thought about it. All last spring, every time he tried the high vines, every single time he fell, Mama Monkey was there. Underneath him.

Every time.

"Mama," he said slowly. "Is that why I can swing on the high vines now? Because you caught me?"

"I think you did the swinging," said Mama Monkey. "I just did the catching."

"A hundred times," said Mr. Monkey. "That's a lot of catching."

Mama Monkey laughed and set him down. "It was my favorite thing to do."

Mr. Monkey stood there with a funny feeling in his chest. It was warm and big, and it had nowhere to go.

"Your turn," he told Mr. Moose. "Then and Now."

Mr. Moose thought hard. Then he walked down to the brook that ran behind the big maple, where a long, skinny log lay across the water from one side to the other.

"A year ago," said Mr. Moose, "I couldn't walk across that log. My legs got all tangled up and I fell in."

"Every time?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Daddy Moose had come out to stack firewood, and he looked up. "Twenty-two times," he said. "I counted."

"Twenty-two?" said Mr. Monkey.

"I stood in the brook beside the log every single time," said Daddy Moose. "Every morning. So when you fell, you landed on me instead of in the cold water."

Mr. Moose blinked. He didn't remember that part. He remembered falling, and he remembered being wet. He did not remember who was underneath him.

"Watch," said Mr. Moose. "Now."

He put one hoof on the log. Then the next. His long legs went slow and careful, one, two, three, four. The log wobbled. Mr. Moose didn't. He walked all the way across to the other side and turned around.

"YOU DID IT!" shouted Mr. Monkey, and he jumped up and down so hard that he jumped right onto the end of the log.

The log bounced. Mr. Moose bounced. And *SPLOOSH*, Mr. Moose fell into the brook.

He sat in the cold water with a lily pad on one antler.

"Twenty-three," said Daddy Moose.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, sitting in the brook.

"Hee hee hee! Oops! Are you okay?" Mr. Monkey reached out his hand to help him up.

"I'm okay," said Mr. Moose. "That one doesn't count. That was a bounce."

"Mr. Splash Moose," said Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose shook his head to get the water out of his ears. The lily pad flew off his antler, sailed through the air, and landed, *flap*, right on top of Mr. Monkey's head.

"Hee hee! Now I have a hat," said Mr. Monkey, and he wore it for the rest of the morning.

Mr. Moose climbed out, dripping. And then he did something he hadn't done twenty-two times. He walked over and leaned his wet head against Daddy Moose's big side.

Daddy Moose didn't say anything. He just leaned back.

Mr. Monkey watched them. That warm, big feeling in his chest came back. "Mr. Moose," he said, "my tummy feels full, and I didn't even eat anything."

Mr. Moose looked at Daddy Moose. "I didn't know it was Daddy," he said. "I thought I just got better."

"I thought I just got better too," said Mr. Monkey. "But it was Mama. Catching."

They sat on the bank, thinking. Leaves were everywhere on the ground, brown and red and yellow, piled up under every tree.

"Mr. Moose," said Mr. Monkey. "I don't want to forget. Last year I forgot. I forgot a hundred catches!"

Mr. Moose thought it through. How do you remember something so you don't forget it again? You keep it somewhere. You put it where you can see it.

He picked up a big red leaf off the ground. "What if every time we notice somebody who made us better," he said, "we pick up a leaf? One leaf for every somebody. And we keep them. Then we can't forget."

Mr. Monkey grabbed an empty basket from the porch. He picked up a yellow leaf. "This one is for Mama Monkey. For catching me."

He put it in the basket.

Mr. Moose dropped in his red leaf. "This one is for Daddy Moose. For standing in the cold water."

They looked at the two leaves in the bottom of the basket.

"It looks a little empty," said Mr. Monkey.

"It's only Monday," said Mr. Moose.

Just then, Ricky came hurrying across Sunny Square with his rule list tucked under his arm, measuring every pinecone he passed. "Can't stop!" he called. "New rules! Big rules!" And he was gone.

Mr. Monkey looked up at the Wishing Tree, at his big banana wish turning on its vine. Then he looked down at the basket. He picked it up with both hands.

"I'll carry this," he said.

That evening, they walked back across Sunny Square together, Mr. Moose still a little damp, Mr. Monkey holding the basket like it was full of eggs.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose. "Mama marked how tall I am. Mr. Monkey fell off the high vine and Mama Monkey caught him, a hundred and one. I walked across the log, and then I fell in anyway, twenty-three. And now we have a basket."

"With two leaves in it," said Mr. Monkey.

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

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

And on the big maple, the charcoal line sat a whole hoof higher than last year's, quiet in the moonlight.

Let's Talk

- 1 Mama Monkey caught Mr. Monkey a hundred and one times. What did all that catching help him learn?
- 2 What can you do now that you couldn't do a year ago? Who helped you?

Your Turn

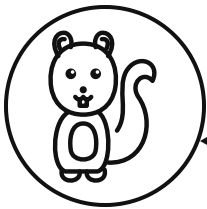
Then and Now! Think of something you couldn't do a year ago. Draw yourself before you could do it, then doing it now!

A YEAR AGO: BEFORE YOU COULD DO IT

NOW: DOING IT!

_____ helped me.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What goes up but never comes down?

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

Your _____ !

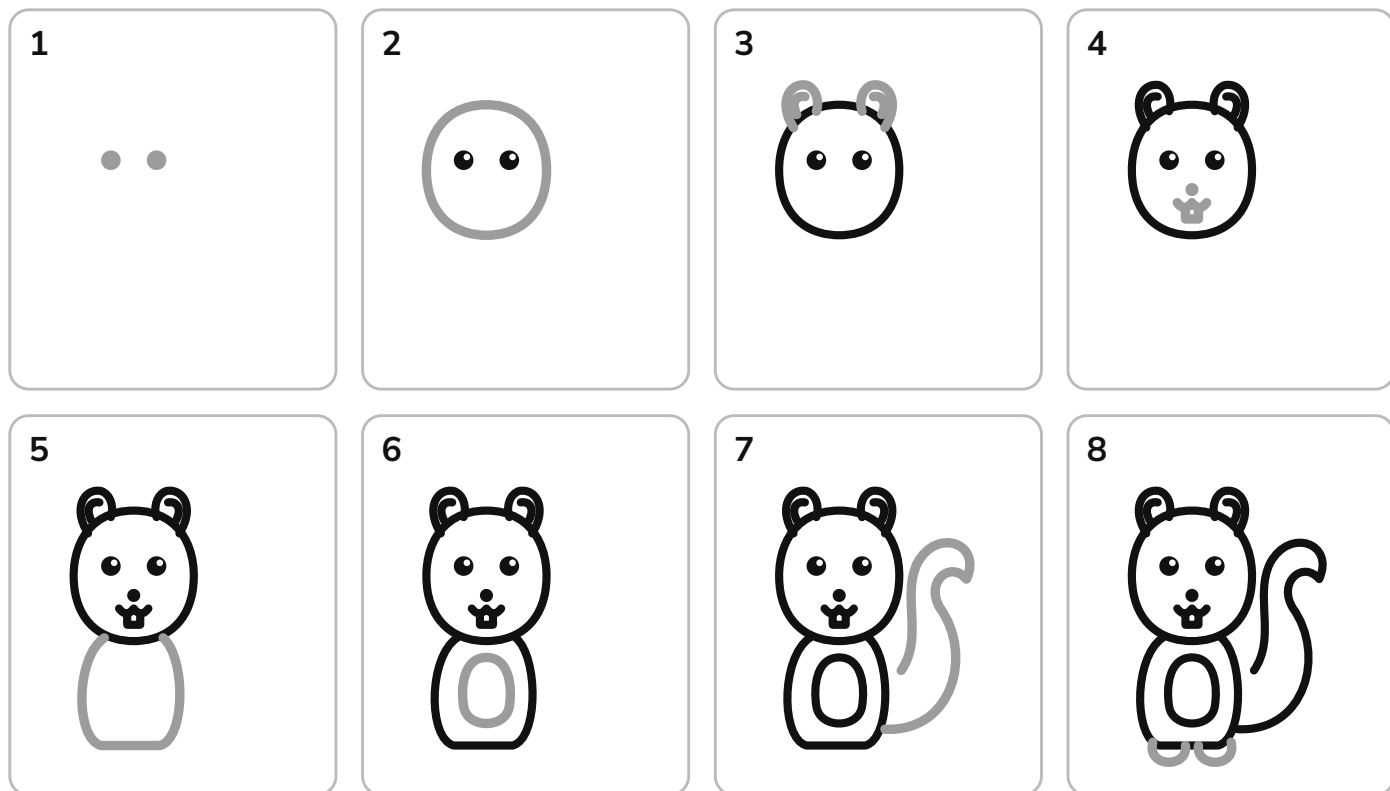


KEY



Draw Sammy Squirrel!

The gray parts are new. Draw them in!



MY SAMMY SQUIRREL

 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Tip! Dip! is on top.Tip! Dip!  is in!

Dad is in. Is Dad mad? Dad is not mad.

 is on top. Tip! Dip!Dad is in, and  is in. is on top, on top, on top... did it!PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Moose

For grown-ups: New sounds: o, d.



Color a star each time you read it.

♥ My Thank-You

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

Thank you.

for making my life better.

☆ Would You Rather?

Circle your pick in each row. Tell why!



swing on the
highest vine

OR



walk across a log
over a brook



have a lily pad
hat

OR



have a leaf stuck
on your face



stomp on
puddles with ice
on top

OR



ride on Daddy
Moose's back