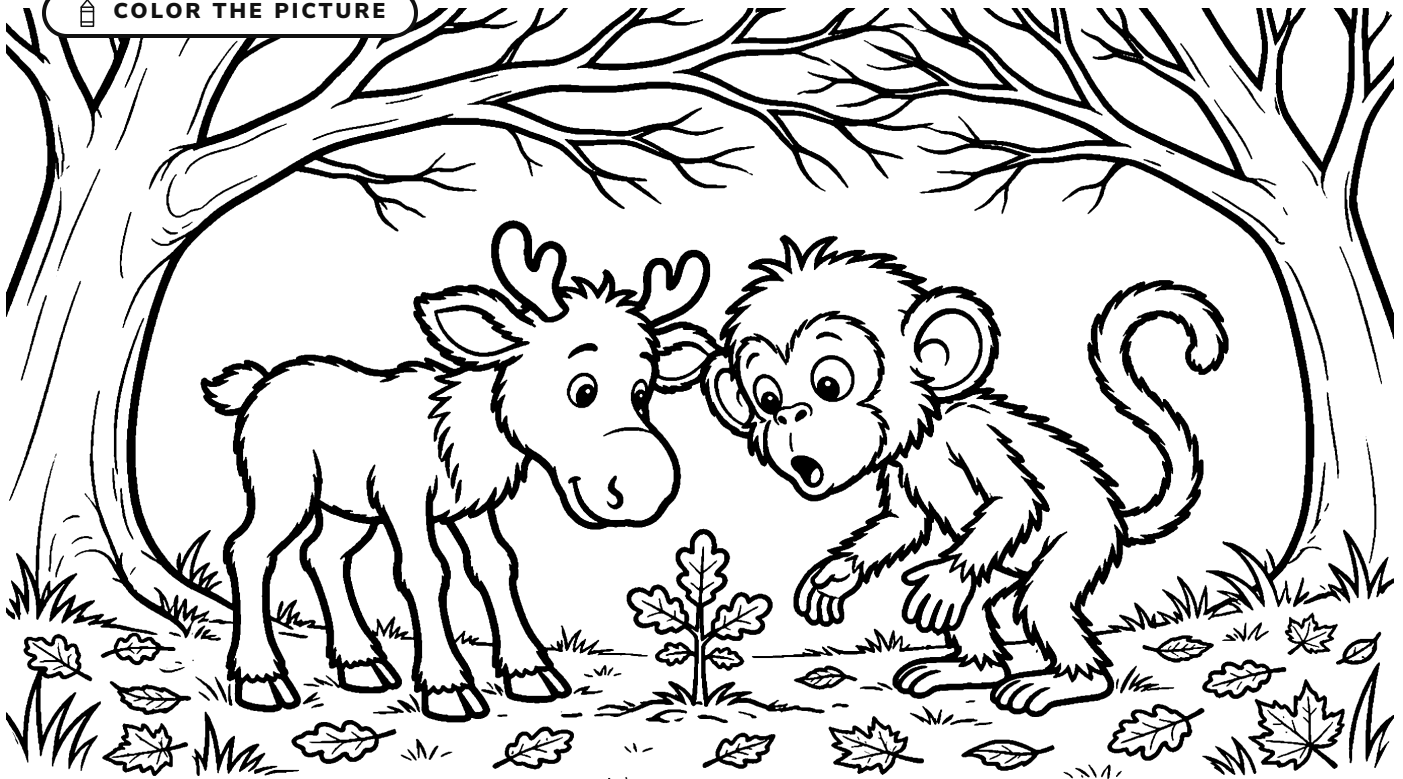


Nobody Planted It

 COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was gray and soft, and a light mist hung over Sunny Square. Everything smelled like wet leaves and cold dirt.

Mr. Monkey was swinging from the low branches of the Wishing Tree, counting the leaves in the basket. “One, two, three, four,” he said. “Four leaves! Mama Monkey, Daddy Moose, Ricky, and Bruno.”

“Mr. Monkey,” said Mr. Moose. “Come look at this.”

Mr. Moose was standing very still in the middle of the path, the one that went from the Wishing Tree to the river bend, where everybody walked. He was looking down.

Mr. Monkey dropped down beside him. There, poking up out of the dirt right in the middle of the path, was a tiny tree. It had a skinny brown stem, three little branches, and five small leaves, still green, the only green leaves in all of Sunny Square.

“It’s a baby tree!” said Mr. Monkey.

“It’s an oak,” said Mr. Moose. He bent down until his nose almost touched it. “See the leaves? They’re wiggly on the edges, like a big oak’s.”

“Who planted it?” asked Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose didn’t know. Nobody plants a tree in the middle of a path.

Just then, Ricky came bustling by with his rule list. He stopped. He stared at the tiny oak. Then he held his pinecone up beside it.

“It’s EXACTLY pinecone-size,” he gasped. “This is the perfect Swap present!”

“It’s alive,” said Mr. Moose gently. “Rule nine. No presents that are alive.”

Ricky’s ears drooped. “Rule nine,” he said sadly. “I made that one up myself.”

“Let’s find out who planted it,” said Mr. Monkey. “So we can put a leaf in the basket for them!”

So off they went, asking everybody.

“Did you plant a tree in the path?” Mr. Monkey asked Bruno.

Bruno thought about it. “I planted my bottom in a mud puddle yesterday,” he said. “Is that the same?”

“Not really,” said Mr. Moose.

Hazel hadn’t planted it. Dottie hadn’t planted it, but she sniffed it so hard she sneezed, and the tiny oak waved back and forth. Benji hadn’t planted it, but he had been watching it grow all summer, very quietly, and he hadn’t told anybody because he thought everybody knew.

Then Sammy Squirrel came zipping down the maple. “What are you looking at? Is it a nut? Is it MY nut?”

“It’s a tree,” said Mr. Monkey. “A tiny one. Did you plant it?”

Sammy looked at the tiny oak. She looked at it for a long time, which was a very long time for Sammy. “Ohhhh,” she said. “Last fall I buried an acorn right here. I was going to eat it in the winter. And then I forgot where I put it.”

"So YOU planted it!" said Mr. Monkey.

"No," said Sammy. "I just hid an acorn. I didn't make a TREE. I don't know how to make a tree."

Then she zipped around the square in a circle, very fast. "Wait. Wait. If I forgot ONE acorn... I forgot LOTS of acorns! There could be trees EVERYWHERE!"

And she started digging.

She dug by the maple. *Skritch-skritch-skritch*. No acorn. She dug by the bench. *Skritch-skritch*. No acorn. She dug by the river. She dug by the Listening Log. Dirt flew up behind her in two little fountains. Dottie thought it looked like the best game ever and started digging too, right next to her. Dottie dug so deep, so fast, that soon all anybody could see of Dottie was her wagging tail sticking up out of the hole.

"Dottie?" said Mr. Moose. "Are you okay down there?"

"I FOUND A WORM!" said the hole.

"Ha! Ha!" Dottie's laugh came up out of the ground, muffled and happy.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "It's a talking hole!"

When Sammy finally stopped, there were holes all over Sunny Square, and no acorns at all. She flopped down beside the tiny oak, all out of breath.

"Hey," she said. "What kind of tree fits in your hand?"

She zipped away before anyone could answer. Then she zipped right back. "A PALM tree!" She held out her paw, flat, right next to the tiny oak. "Or THIS one!" And she was gone again.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose. "It does fit in your hand."

Mr. Monkey sat down beside the tiny oak. He looked at it. "So Sammy didn't plant it," he said. "She just forgot it. And nobody watered it. And nobody told it to grow."

"The rain watered it," said Mr. Moose. "And the sun warmed it. And it just... grew."

"So who do we put a leaf in the basket for?" asked Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose didn't know. That was the strangest part.

Just then, *THOOM, THOOM, THOOM*. Bruno came running across Sunny Square, looking back over his shoulder. "Tag! I'm not it! Somebody else is it!"

He was running right down the middle of the path. Right toward the tiny oak. His big feet went *THOOM, THOOM*, and he wasn't looking down at all.

"BRUNO!" yelled Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Monkey jumped up and stood right in front of the tiny oak with his arms out wide. Bruno skidded. He slid. He stopped with his big nose two inches from Mr. Monkey's nose.

"Why are we stopping?" asked Bruno.

Mr. Monkey pointed down. Bruno looked. "Oh!" he said. "A tree! I almost squished a tree!"

Mr. Monkey's heart was still thumping. The tiny oak had grown all by itself, all year long, right in the middle of the path, and nobody had even noticed. And now everybody

was going to come running through Sunny Square on their way to the Thankful Feast.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Everybody walks here. It's going to get stepped on."

Mr. Moose thought. They couldn't move it. Its roots were already deep. And they couldn't ask everybody in the woods to stop walking on the path. That wasn't fair to the path.

He looked around at the river stones, round and gray, lying all along the bank.

"We can't move the tree," said Mr. Moose slowly. "But we can show everybody where it is. If we put a ring of stones around it, nobody will step there."

"A fence!" said Mr. Monkey. "A tree fence!"

Mr. Moose carried the big stones from the riverbank in his mouth, one at a time. Mr. Monkey set them down in a circle around the tiny oak, nice and close, but not too close. Bruno carried the very biggest stone of all, slowly and carefully, using both arms, and set it down where the path came in, like a front door. Benji found the smoothest stone and put it on top.

When they stepped back, the tiny oak stood in the middle of its ring of stones, safe and small and green.

"Now everybody will walk around," said Mr. Moose.

Bruno walked around. Then he walked around again, just to practice.

Late in the afternoon, Orion Owl woke up and fluffed his feathers. He looked down from Pilgrim Point at the little circle of stones. "Hoo," he said. "What have you got there?"

"A tree that grew by itself," said Mr. Monkey. "We wanted to put a leaf in the basket for whoever planted it. But nobody planted it."

Orion blinked slowly. "Then whose leaf will it be?"

Mr. Monkey thought. He didn't know. Mr. Moose didn't know. Orion didn't tell them. He just tucked his feet under his feathers and watched the sun go down.

Mr. Monkey picked up a small brown oak leaf and held it for a long time. Then he put it in the basket anyway. "This one is for whoever made the oak grow," he said. "Even if I don't know who."

"Five leaves," said Mr. Moose.

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose as they walked home.

"We found a baby oak in the path. Sammy forgot an acorn and dug up all of Sunny Square. Dottie dug so deep she turned into a talking hole. Bruno almost squished the oak, so we built it a fence. And nobody planted it at all."

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

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

And in the middle of Sunny Square, inside its ring of river stones, the tiny oak held its five green leaves up to the last of the light.

Let's Talk

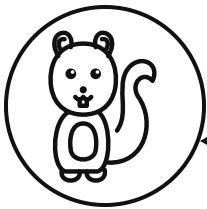
- 1 Who planted the tiny oak?
- 2 What good thing happened this year that nobody planned?

Your Turn

Draw something good that nobody made: rain, snow, a sunset, a puppy, a sunny day...

Nobody made _____.

SAMMY'S JOKE



How do you catch a squirrel?

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

Climb a tree and act like a _____!

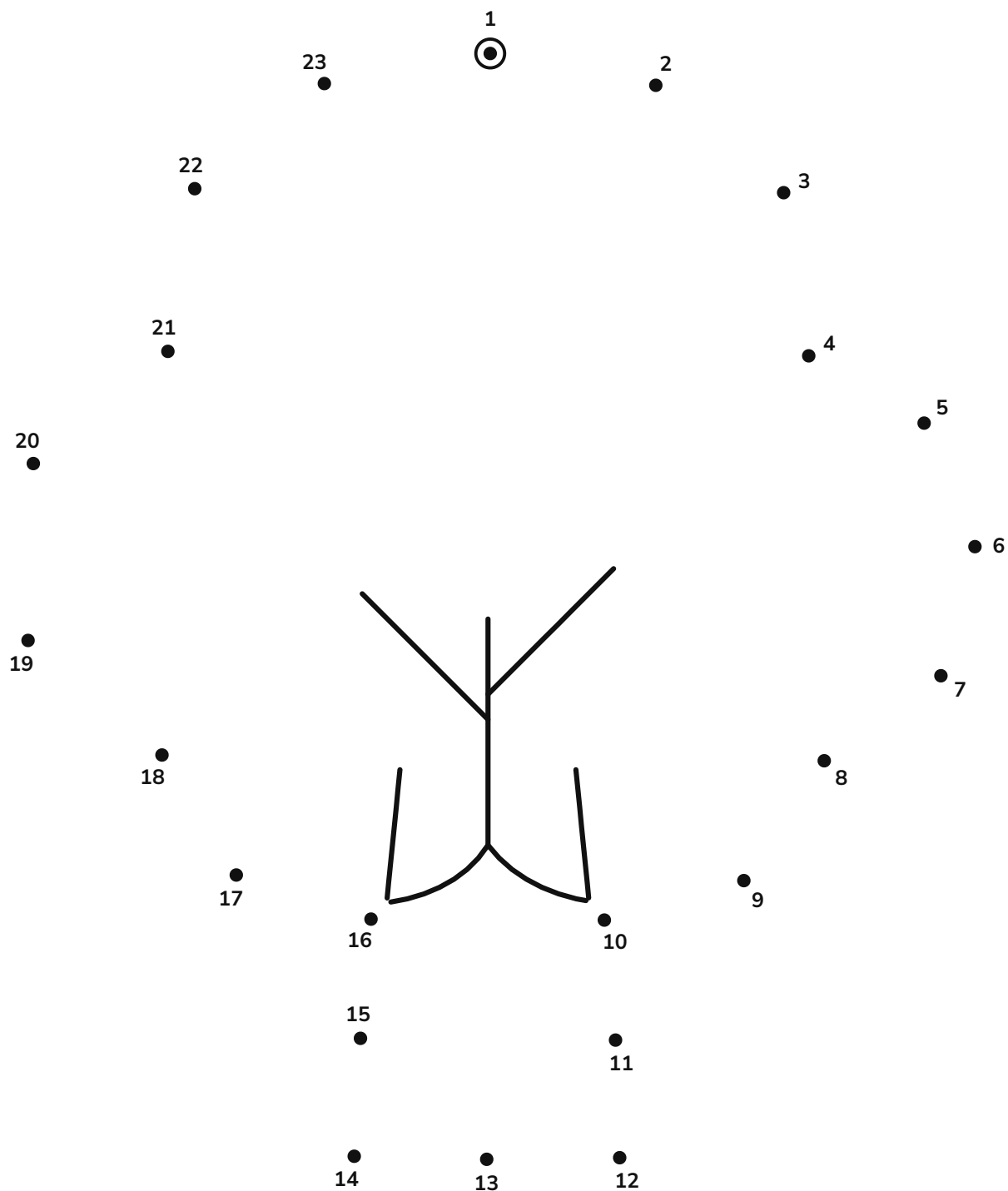


KEY



 Connect the Dots

Connect the dots to see what the tiny oak will grow up to be. Start at 1 (the circled dot) and count up to 23. Then join the last dot back to 1, and color it!



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

In a Pit

 is in a pit. is in, and in, and in! is on top. Is  on top? is not on top.Pop!  is on top!PICTURE WORDS  Dottie  Mr. Moose

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.

👁 Nobody Made It!

Find things that no person made. Check each one you find!



a leaf

☐

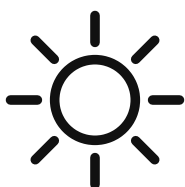
a rock or stone

☐

some water

☐

something that
grew on a plant

☐

sunshine on the
floor or wall

☐

a seed

☐