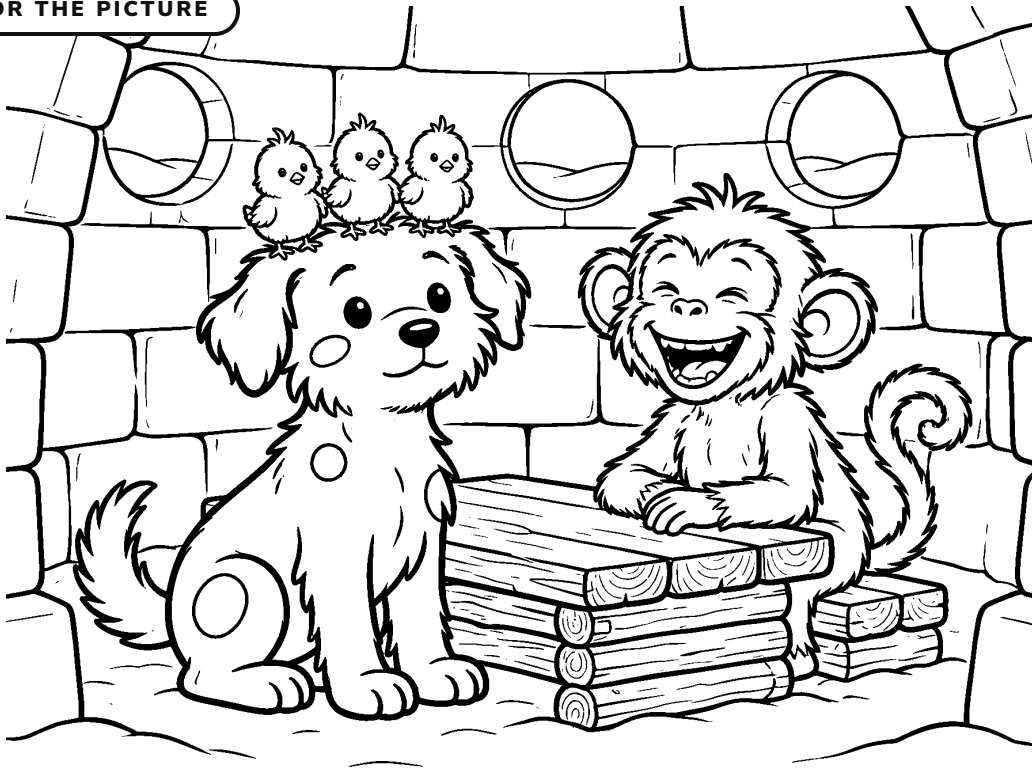


Every Story Gets a Cheer

 COLOR THE PICTURE



The long snow fort in the middle of Sunny Square glowed from end to end. There was a light in every window, and inside, it smelled like hot apples and honey and warm bread. Snow sparkled on the roof like sugar.

Everybody was there. Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey. Bruno and Hazel and Dottie and Benji. Ricky and Shiloh. Sammy, upside down on a snow shelf near the ceiling. And all the grown-ups, crowded in along the walls.

It was a supper for everybody who had helped keep the lights lit through the longest night. Bruno had made the table himself, out of a long flat log, and he was very proud of it. It had only one wobble.

Mr. Monkey was so happy he couldn't sit still. He bounced in his seat. He bounced so much that the whole log table bounced with him, and every bowl on it went *clink-clink-clink*.

"Mr. Monkey," said Hazel, holding on to her bowl. "You're bouncing the soup."

"Hee hee hee! Sorry, soup!"

Then Dottie's ears went up. Her nose went up. "Somebody's outside!"

Mr. Monkey looked out the fort door. There, standing in the snow just outside, were the old crow and his son. And lined up behind them, in a row, were three little round fluffy grandchicks, so fluffy they looked like three gray dandelion puffs with beaks.

But they didn't come in. They just stood there at the door.

"Come in!" called Mr. Monkey.

The old crow shook his head. "This supper is for the friends who kept the lights," he said in his scratchy voice. "We didn't keep any lights. We'll just watch from out here."

And the three little chicks peeked around his legs, looking in at the warm glowing fort, at the food, at everybody inside.

Mr. Monkey felt it pull at his chest. He didn't want the crows to watch from the door. He wanted them inside, in the warm, with everybody.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "They think they have to have done something to come in."

Mr. Moose looked at the crows in the snow. He thought about the night on Lookout Ledge, and the longest night, and the light on the crow's tree. Had anybody kept the lights so they could have a supper? No. They kept the lights so nobody would be in the dark. So the lights were for the crows, too. For everybody.

Then he looked around the fort. Every seat was full. Every bit of the long log table was taken.

"They don't have to do anything," said Mr. Moose. "But they do need a place to sit."

Mr. Monkey stood up on the table. "EVERYBODY SCOOT!" he called.

And everybody scooted. Hazel scooted, and Dottie scooted, and Ricky scooted. Bruno scooted too, so hard that he scooted right through the side wall of the fort, *FWUMP*, and ended up sitting outside in the snow with his bowl still in his paws.

He looked down at his bowl. Then he looked back in through the big Bruno-shaped hole.

"Now there's room," said Bruno. "Haw haw haw!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "Bruno made a door!"

Mr. Moose pulled out a seat at the table, right in the middle, and Mr. Monkey patted it. "For you," he said.

The old crow came in slowly. His son came in after him. And the three grandchicks came hopping in last, *hop, hop, hop*, and then, instead of sitting on the seats, they hopped right up onto Dottie's head and sat there in a row like three fluffy hats.

Dottie held very, very still. Her tail wanted to wag so badly. She didn't let it. "Are they on me?" she whispered.

"They're on you," said Ricky.

"Ha! Ha!" whispered Dottie, very carefully, so her head wouldn't shake.

Then the stories started.

Daddy Moose stood up first, which he almost never did. "On the longest night," he said, "I checked the light at the top of the cliff eleven times." And everybody cheered, "HOORAY!", even though it wasn't a very exciting story, because it was Daddy Moose's.

Hazel stood up. "When we climbed the windy ridge, I took the slide," she said. "And it went the wrong way. And I climbed all the way back up by myself!" And everybody cheered, "HOORAY!", and Hazel went, "Hee hee hee... *SNORT!*"

Shiloh stood up, very small. "I said 'look up,'" he said softly. And everybody cheered the loudest yet, "HOORAY!", and Shiloh turned pink under his wool.

Ricky stood up last, with his light list. "My story is my list," he said. And he read the whole thing. Every light in the woods, one at a time. "The Moose home. The treehouse. The three candles. The long fort..." It took a very long time. Benji fell asleep. Then Benji woke up again. Ricky was still reading.

"...and the crows' tree," said Ricky at last. "The end."

And everybody cheered, "HOORAY!", and Benji cheered the loudest, because he'd had a nap.

Every story got a cheer. And every time, the cheer got a little bigger, the way a snowball gets bigger when it rolls down a hill. Mr. Monkey felt it growing. The happy wasn't getting used up. Every time somebody told their good part, there was more of it.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "It keeps getting bigger."

"It does," whispered Mr. Moose.

Then Sammy zipped down off her snow shelf, landed in the middle of the table, and said, "What do snowmen eat for lunch?"

Nobody knew.

"ICE-BURGERS!" And she zipped right back up to the ceiling.

"Ha! Ha!" barked Dottie.

"Hee hee," went Benji.

Then it was the old crow's turn. He didn't stand up. He just looked around the table, at all the faces in the candlelight, and he started to tell it, slowly. About the long night. About being alone on his branch. About calling across the river, and nothing coming back. And then, small and far away, an answer.

"My son called back," said the old crow.

The friends had all been there. They all knew this story already. But when the old crow said it, everybody cheered anyway, louder than for anybody, "HOORAY!" And the three little grandchicks on Dottie's head cheered loudest of all, "PEEP! PEEP! PEEP!", and bounced up and down so much that Dottie's head bounced too, and this time her tail wagged anyway.

The old crow looked around at everybody cheering for him. And he made that sound again, half a caw and half a laugh. It was the happiest sound in the fort.

Then Bruno tried to tell his story. "And then I tried to sound like a crow—" he started, and he took a big breath, and he did it again. "MOOOOOOOO."

"Haw haw haw!"

"Hee hee hee!"

"PEEP! PEEP! PEEP!"

The grandchicks liked that one so much that they spent the rest of supper trying to moo, and all that came out was "Mee-oo. Mee-oo," like three very small, very confused cows.

When supper was over, nobody wanted to leave. The fort was warm, and the lights were glowing in every window, and Bruno's new door let the stars in.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, walking home with Mr. Moose through the snow. "We had supper in the long fort. The crows didn't think they could come in, so everybody scooted, and Bruno scooted right through the wall. The grandchicks sat on Dottie's head like three hats, and she held still. Everybody told their story, and every story got a cheer, and Sammy said snowmen eat ice-burgers. And the old crow got the biggest cheer of all."

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

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

And behind them in Sunny Square, the long fort glowed in the dark, and from somewhere inside it came three tiny voices, still trying their very hardest to moo.

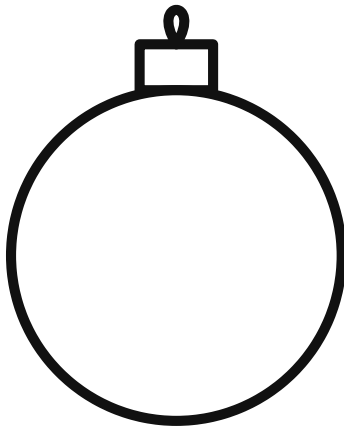
Let's Talk

- 1 The crows thought they couldn't come in. What did everybody do to make room?
- 2 Who outside our house makes you glad? Give them a cheer!

Your Turn

Make a red ornament for someone outside our house who makes you glad. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME



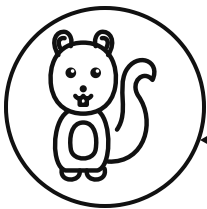
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



This one is red. Color it red when you are done!

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

SAMMY'S JOKE



Why did the boy run around his bed?

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



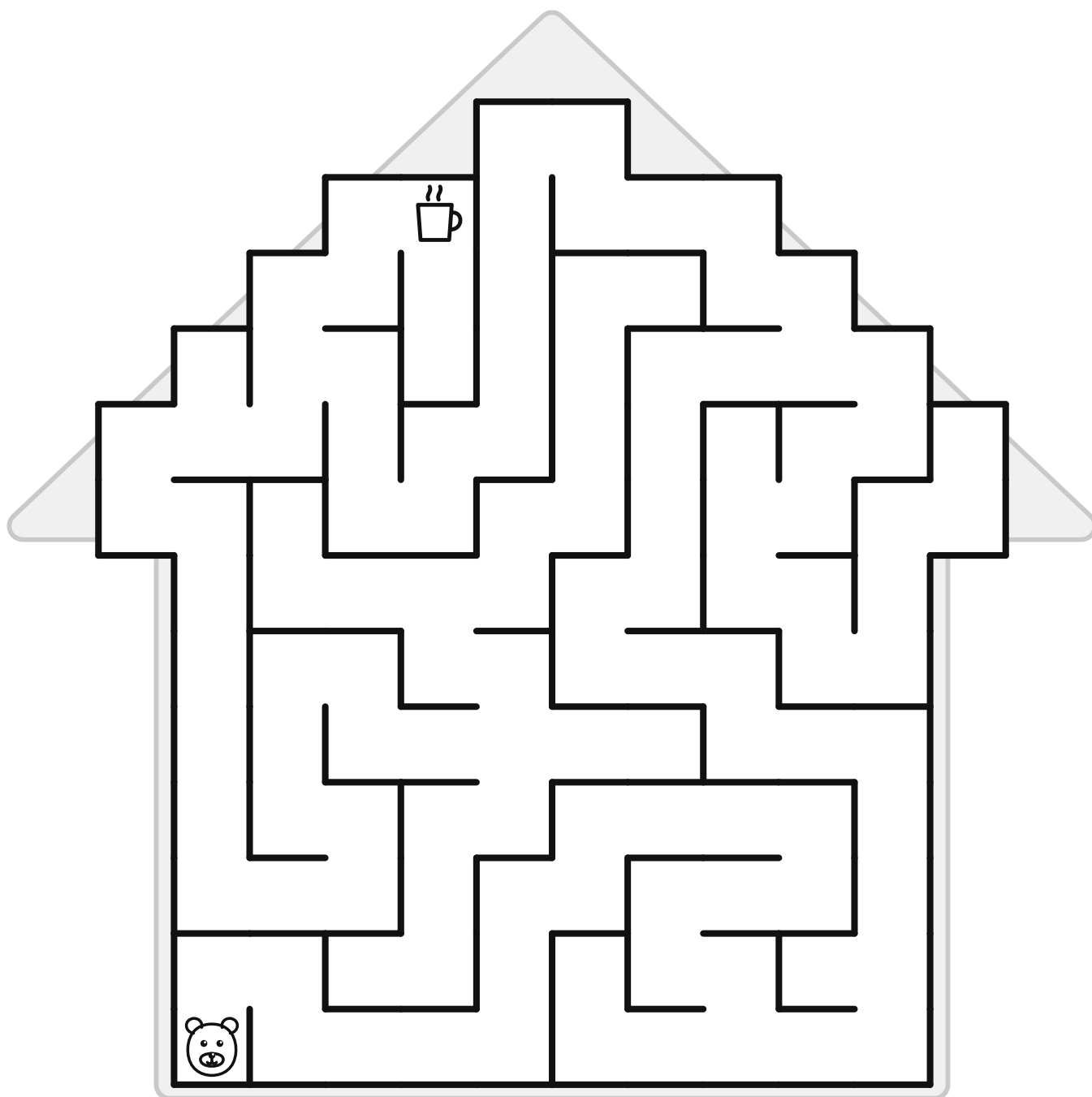
CLUE



To _____ up on his sleep!

☆ Supper in the Long Fort

Help Bruno find his way to the supper. Start at Bruno Bear.



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Shift!

The pals sit at a big log. It is fun!

The dad and his kid and the chicks stand on the step.

“Get in!” says . But the log has no gap.

“Shift!” yells . The pals shift.

 shifts. Thud!  is past the wall! Ha!

The chicks hop on .  sits still, still, still.

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Bruno  Dottie

Color a star each time you read it.

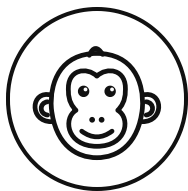
♥ My Thank-You

Trace the dark word. Then trace or write the light words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

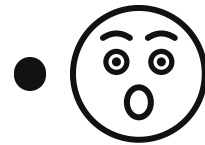
Thank you,
for making me so glad.

♥ Feelings Match

How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



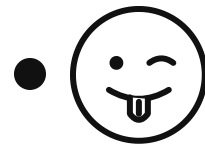
Mr. Monkey, when the crows
stayed outside



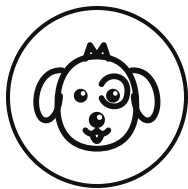
surprised



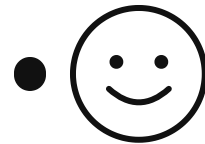
Bruno, after he scooted right
through the wall



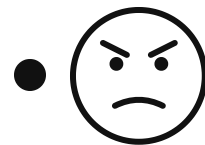
silly



Dottie, with three chicks on
her head



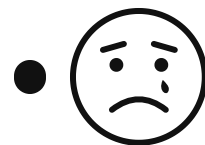
happy



angry



Shiloh, when everybody
cheered for him



sad

