

The Overflow Feast

 COLOR THE PICTURE



Sunny Square had never looked like this. A long, long table stretched all the way across it, made of every log and plank and flat stone in Wonderful Woods, pushed end to end. There were bowls of berries and baskets of bread, honeycomb and apple pies, roasted nuts and a giant pot of Mama Moose's cocoa, steaming in the cold air. And all around Sunny Square, as far as anybody could see, every single home in the woods had a light in its window.

By the fire, on their flat stone, the three candles were burning. Next to them stood a fourth candle, waiting.

Everybody was there. Well, almost everybody.

"Where's Tessie?" asked Benji.

Everybody looked around. Then Dottie's nose went up. "There!"

Way, way across Sunny Square, at the very edge, was a small round shape in the snow. It was Tessie, on her way. Slowly.

"We can't light the candle until everybody's here," said Mama Monkey.

Mr. Monkey looked at the fourth candle. He looked at the cocoa pot. He looked at the pies. And then he looked at Tessie, way over at the edge of the square.

"Okay," he said. "I can wait."

He waited. He wiggled. He climbed up on the table and looked. "Is she here yet?"

"Not yet," said Mr. Moose.

He climbed up the Wishing Tree and looked. Tessie had moved. A little. "She moved one snowflake!" he called down.

He waited some more. He hung upside down from a branch by his tail and looked at her upside down, just in case that helped. It didn't. "Now she's moved TWO snowflakes!"

"Hee hee hee... *SNORT!*" went Hazel. "Upside down doesn't make her faster!"

Mr. Monkey dropped down out of the tree. He couldn't stand it anymore. Everybody was waiting. The cocoa was waiting. The candle was waiting. And Tessie was all the way over there, all by herself, walking and walking.

That was the part that bothered him most. She was all by herself.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "She's walking all alone."

Mr. Moose looked at the long table full of everybody, and the long snowy square, and Tessie at the other end of it. He thought about it. They couldn't make Tessie go faster. Nobody could. But they didn't have to wait for her over here.

"Then let's go wait with her," said Mr. Moose. "Over there."

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey walked across Sunny Square to Tessie. Benji came too. And then Hazel, who usually galloped everywhere, came walking over very slowly, one hoof at a time, so she could walk at Tessie

speed.

"Hello, dears," said Tessie. "Am I late?"

"You're right on time," said Mr. Moose. "We came to walk with you."

Then Dottie came running over. Then Shiloh, and Ricky, and Bruno, carrying the whole cocoa pot so it wouldn't get lonely. Then the mamas and the daddies. Then the old crow and his son and the three grandchicks, hopping. Until the whole Overflow Feast was walking across Sunny Square at Tessie speed, all together, and the long, long table sat there in the snow all by itself.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "The table's waiting for US now!"

Ricky counted Tessie's steps out loud. He got to forty-two, and then he lost count, because Tessie took a step so slow that he wasn't sure if it was a step or not.

So they walked. Very, very slowly. Mr. Monkey tried to walk at Tessie speed too, but it was so slow that he kept tipping over in the middle of a step. He tipped over three times.

"Hee hee hee! Tessie, how do you walk so SLOW without falling down?"

"Heh... heh... heh," laughed Tessie. "Practice... dear. Lots... of... practice."

And somehow, walking with Tessie, the waiting didn't feel like waiting anymore. It just felt like walking with Tessie.

When they finally reached the table, everybody cheered.

Mama Monkey held out the twig. "The first light was for the light we got, given away," she said. "The second was for the light that keeps us walking. The third was for the light that holds steady. And this one is for the light at the end of the wait."

Mr. Monkey took the twig. He touched it to the third candle, inside its thick glass jar. And then he carried the little flame over and lit the fourth candle.

Four lights, side by side, glowing in the middle of the Overflow Feast.

Then the feast began.

Daddy Monkey picked up the giant cocoa pot to pour. He started with Mr. Monkey's mug. But right then, Daddy Moose said something funny across the table, and Daddy Monkey turned to laugh, and he kept pouring. And pouring.

The cocoa filled Mr. Monkey's mug right up to the top. Then it went over the top. It ran down the side and across the table, *gluggle-gluggle*, right into Benji's mug next to it. It filled up Benji's mug. Then it ran over into Shiloh's mug. Then Hazel's. Then Dottie's. Then Bruno's.

"Daddy!" said Mr. Monkey. "The cocoa!"

Daddy Monkey turned around. All the way down the long, long table, the cocoa was running from one mug into the next, filling up every single one.

"Oh!" said Daddy Monkey, still pouring. "Well, look at that."

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, holding up his full mug. "Daddy Monkey filled up the whole table!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey. "The cocoa is overflowing everybody!"

Then Sammy popped up on the end of the table. "Why was the snowman looking through the bag of carrots?" she asked. "He was PICKING HIS NOSE!" And she was gone before anybody could answer.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, so loud that his cocoa sloshed.

Then came the gold circles. Everybody went to the little green pine by the Moose home's door, found the ones with their own faces on them, and turned them over.

Daddy Monkey found the one with himself on the front, arms up like a tree. On the back was Lookout Ledge in the dark, and the big blankets, and a little monkey asleep standing up. Daddy Monkey didn't say anything. He just picked Mr. Monkey up and held him for a long time.

Mama Moose found the row of candles. "I didn't know you noticed," she said softly to Mr. Moose. "All those candles."

"I noticed every one," said Mr. Moose.

Tessie lived by herself, so she didn't have a gold circle. But on the little pine was a red circle with her face on it. She held it very close to her face. Then very far away. Then close again. She squinted. "Is this a turtle... or a rock?"

"It's you, Tessie," said Benji. "I painted it."

"Ah," said Tessie. "It's a lovely... rock."

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

"Heh... heh... heh," laughed Tessie, so slowly that by the time she finished, everybody was laughing with her.

Mr. Monkey looked out over it all: the long table, the four candles, everybody's cocoa, all the lights in all the windows of all the homes in the woods. Every home. He had never seen anything so full.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "We waited for Tessie, and I hung upside down, and she only moved two snowflakes. So we went and walked with her, and I tipped over three times. I lit the fourth candle. Daddy poured the cocoa and didn't stop, so it filled up everybody's mug down the whole table. And Tessie called her own picture a lovely rock."

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

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

And in Sunny Square, four candles glowed side by side over the long, long table, while a little warm cocoa still dripped, *drip... drip...*, from the very last mug at the very end.

☁ Let's Talk

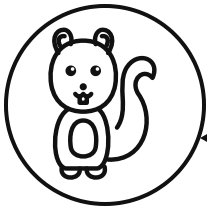
- 1 Why did everybody walk across Sunny Square to Tessie instead of waiting for her?
- 2 Merry Christmas! What made you the gladdest today?

✎ Your Turn

Draw your Christmas, with everybody together. Write each name, too!

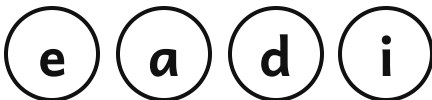
Today I was glad because _____.

SAMMY'S JOKE



What do you call a deer with no eyes?

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



CLUE



No _____!

👁 Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

We Will Go With

The pals want to dig in. But  is not with them yet.

Step... step... step...  is not fast.

“Let us go with !” says .

The pals step with .  tips. Flop! Ha!

At last, the pals sit. Dad fills the cups. Glug, glug!

It spills into a cup, and a cup, and a cup!

PICTURE WORDS  Tessie  Mr. Moose  Mr. Monkey

For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: into.



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.

🕯 Today's Candle

It's Christmas! This morning the fourth candle gets its light from the third one.



Dec. 4

Dec. 11

Dec. 18

Dec. 25

Jan. 1

Trace the flame on candle 4! Candles 1, 2 and 3 are already lit.

THE CANDLE WORDS: A GROWN-UP SAYS EACH LINE, AND YOU SAY IT BACK

Grace comes in.

(cup your hands)

Gratitude sees it.

(point to your eyes)

And graciousness passes it on.

(open your hands to the candle)

Grown-up: "What do we pass on?" You: **Generosity, hope, peace, and joy!**

One light. Passed along.

DRAW YOUR FAMILY WITH YOUR CANDLES

★ Christmas Morning

Merry Christmas! This morning your family celebrates in three parts:

1 Remember: The Christmas story

2 Rejoice: The Christmas Opening

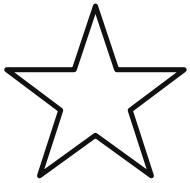
3 Ready: Plan the giving

★ Remember: The Light That Came

A grown-up reads how Jesus was born. Mary wrapped baby Jesus in cloths and laid him in a manger. (A manger is a box that holds food for animals.) Then your family sings “Silent Night.”

Next, a grown-up says, “Today we remember the light that came into the world.” Everyone answers together:

Jesus is born!



Then the fourth candle is lit. Color the words and the star. A star led wise men to find baby Jesus.



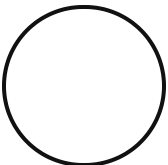
Rejoice: The Christmas Opening

Find the gold ornaments with **your** name on the front, and read them by the candles. A grown-up can read them with you.

I found gold ornaments with my name!

Write the number, or draw a dot for each one.

My favorite one is from:
(Draw their face or write their name.)



WHAT DID IT SAY? DRAW OR WRITE IT.

Ready: Plan the Giving

Christmas is a full day! Make this plan whenever it fits, maybe at bedtime. Pick one box to fill in, or do all three.



DEC. 26

Your time

Who might feel left out this Christmas?



DEC. 27

Your things

Who is waiting for something you could give?



DEC. 28

Your words

Who did something hard? Tell them, "You made it!"

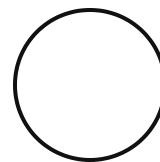
EXTRA, IF YOUR FAMILY DOES IT

My Christmas Gift

Did your family agree to give each person in the house one gift that makes their day better? Draw a gift you are giving. Before they open it, tell them why you picked it!

DRAW THE GIFT

It's for: (Draw their face or write their name.)



I picked this because _____