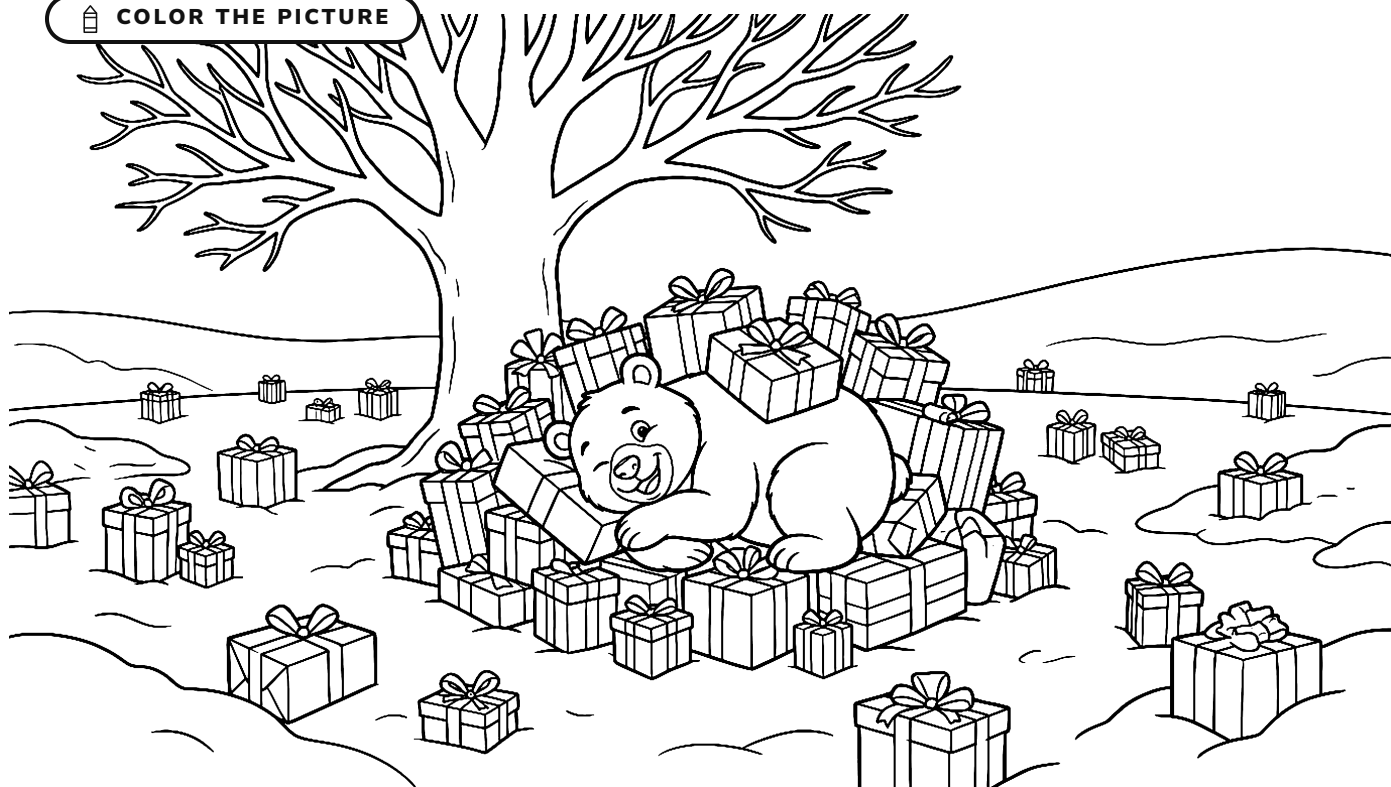


One True Thing

COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning after the Thankful Feast, Sunny Square looked like it had snowed presents.

There were presents on the roof of the Moose home. There were presents in the branches of the Wishing Tree. There was a present out on the ice of Rainbow River, and an otter came sliding across on her belly, *whiiiiish*, picked it up, and slid it back again, just for fun. And in the middle of everything, in a great big heap of presents, lay Bruno, fast asleep, with one present for a pillow and two more for a blanket.

He opened one eye. "I got my wish," he said happily. "A nap."

"Haw haw haw," he added, and went back to sleep.

On the lowest branch of the Wishing Tree, the little squash lantern was still glowing. Its leaf-shaped lights flickered gold across the snow.

Mr. Monkey was eating leftover stew for breakfast, cold, straight out of the big pot, when Sammy zipped by with a slice of leftover pie.

"Hey! What's the best thing to put in a pie?" And she was gone.

Mr. Monkey looked at his spoon. He looked at the pie crumbs she'd left behind. He thought about it all through his stew.

Then from the top of a tree came her voice: "YOUR TEETH!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, and he put his teeth right into the last bite of pie.

That's when he noticed Ricky. Ricky was sitting all by himself under the Wishing Tree, looking up.

Most of the painted leaves were gone now. Everybody had taken theirs down that morning. But a few were still left: the leaves for the things nobody notices, the treehouse and the woodpile and the cellar. The maple leaf, for the maple. The birch leaf, for the spring. And way up at the very top, the leaf with no name.

"Ricky?" said Mr. Monkey. "What are you looking at?"

"There aren't any from me," said Ricky quietly.

Mr. Moose came over and looked up, too.

"Everybody made me leaves," said Ricky. "Two leaves. One with me in the presents, and one with everybody in a row. I looked at them all night." He hugged his knees. "And I didn't make one single leaf for anybody. Not one. I was too busy with the Swap."

Then he jumped up. "So I'll make them now! For everybody! Right now! And they'll be the best leaves in the whole history of leaves!"

He ran and got the paint and a big pile of leaves, and he started making rules. "Rule one. Every leaf has to say EVERYTHING."

He picked up a leaf for Mr. Moose and started painting. He painted Mr. Moose catching the rules on his antlers.

He painted Mr. Moose measuring forty-seven pinecones tall. He painted the willow, and the river, and the bark slide, and Bruno, and all the presents, and the frog, and the Feast fire, and the snow. He painted so much that when he was done, the whole leaf was one big brown smudge.

Ricky held it up. "That's you," he said. "And everything."

"Which part is me?" asked Mr. Moose.

Ricky looked at it. "All of it."

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

So Ricky tried another one. This time, he decided to say it all in words. "Thank you, Mr. Moose, for catching my rules, and for being my Sign-Up Helper, and for holding the cards up, and for..." He painted the words as fast as he could. They went across the leaf. They went off the end of the leaf. They went across the snow and down the hill and halfway to the river, a long, wiggly line of berry paint, with Ricky crawling along at the end of it, still painting.

He looked up from the bottom of the hill. "I'm not done yet."

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey from the top.

Ricky sat down in the snow at the end of his long line of words. There was paint on his paws. There was paint on his tail. There was a big purple stripe right across his little black mask.

"It's too much," he said. His whiskers drooped. "I can't say everything. There's too much everything."

Mr. Monkey felt it in his chest. Ricky wanted so badly to say thank you, and every time he tried, it got bigger and harder. Mr. Monkey slid down the hill and sat right next to him in the snow.

Mr. Moose came down slowly, thinking. He thought about Ricky's two leaves, the ones Ricky had looked at all night. What was on them? Shiloh had painted just one thing: a row of friends, with nobody left out. Mr. Monkey had painted just one thing: Ricky making presents instead of swinging.

"Ricky," said Mr. Moose. "Your leaves only had one thing on them each. And you looked at them all night."

Ricky thought about that. "One thing," he said.

"One true thing," said Mr. Moose. "That's enough."

They walked back up the hill, past the long wiggly line of words. Mr. Moose found a fresh leaf, a big smooth one. Mr. Monkey held it flat on the stump. And Ricky dipped his paw in the berry juice and thought, very hard, about just one thing.

For Mr. Moose, he painted a moose standing in the river with a long, wet roll of bark hanging off his antlers. Just that.

For Mr. Monkey, he painted two friends swinging out over Rainbow River on the same vine. Just that.

Then he picked up a third leaf, and stopped. "The hedgehogs," he said. "They walked all the way from past the waterfall to bring their present. In the dark. They had to start home before the Feast was even over, because it's such a long way. They came the farthest of anybody."

He painted a little hedgehog family walking along a long, long path, with a present on top of their spines. Just that.

When the leaves were dry, Ricky stood up. He didn't tie the first two on the tree. He walked right over and held them out.

"For you," he said. "And for you."

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey turned the leaves over and looked.

Mr. Monkey's whole face lit up. "That's us! On your vine!"

Mr. Moose didn't say anything. He just looked at the bark roll on the antlers and smiled, slowly, all the way.

And Ricky watched their faces. He watched them for a long time. Something warm went all through him, from his ears down to his painty paws.

"That felt better," he said slowly, "than the whole Swap."

Then he turned around and looked at Sunny Square, all covered in presents. Presents on the roof. Presents in the tree. Presents under Bruno.

"What if we did it the other way?" said Ricky.

"What other way?" asked Mr. Monkey.

"The Swap was, everybody gives one and everybody gets one back," said Ricky. "But the leaves aren't like that. You just give them. You don't get one back." He looked at all the presents. "What if the presents were like the leaves?"

Mr. Moose looked at the presents, too. "Then who would get them?" he asked.

Ricky scratched his painty head. "I don't know yet," he said.

He tied the hedgehog leaf onto the Wishing Tree, right next to the squash lantern, so it would be ready.

"What a day!" said Ricky as the sun went down.

"Bruno slept on the presents. Sammy said the best thing in a pie is your teeth. I painted everything on one leaf and it turned brown, and I painted so many words they went halfway to the river. Then I painted one true thing. And I gave my first leaves ever."

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

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

And all through Sunny Square, the snow fell softly on the scattered presents, while the little lantern glowed beside the one leaf still waiting to go.

Let's Talk

- 1 Ricky tried to paint everything on one leaf. What worked better?
- 2 Who should get a thank-you that hasn't gotten one yet?

Your Turn

Draw one true thing for them: just one thing they did.

Thank you, _____ !

SAMMY'S JOKE

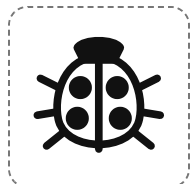


Why are frogs so happy?

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

g b u s

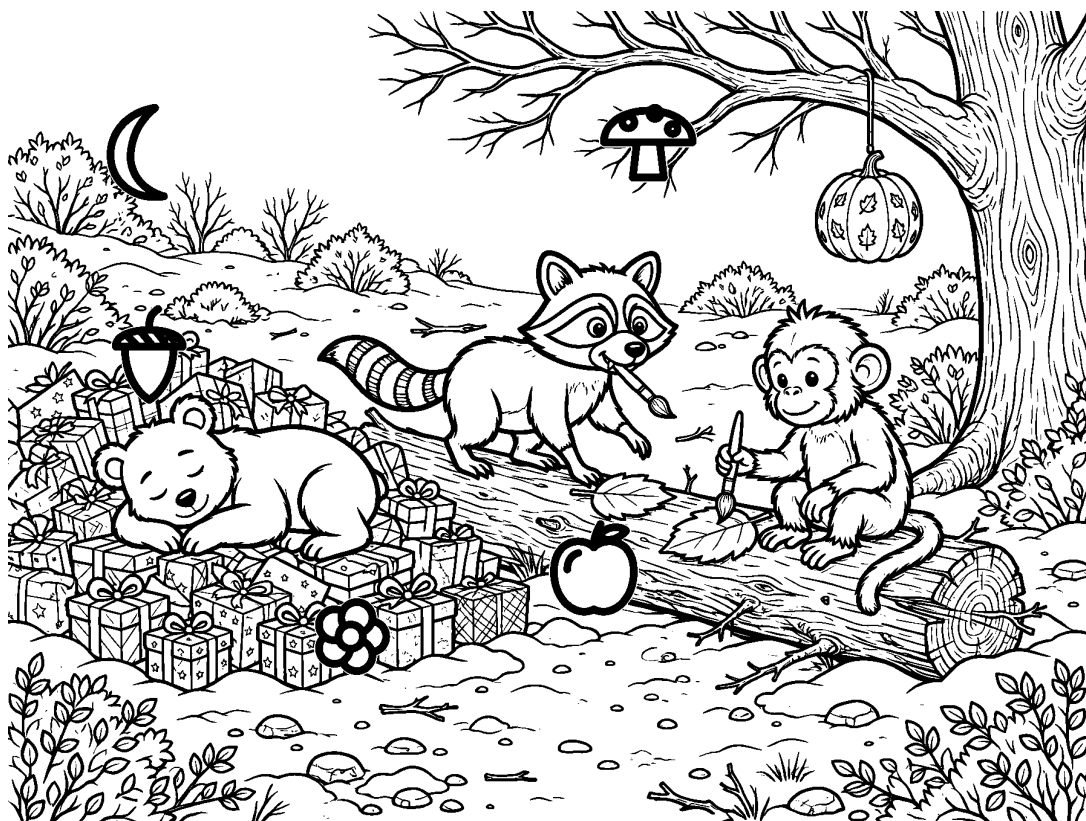
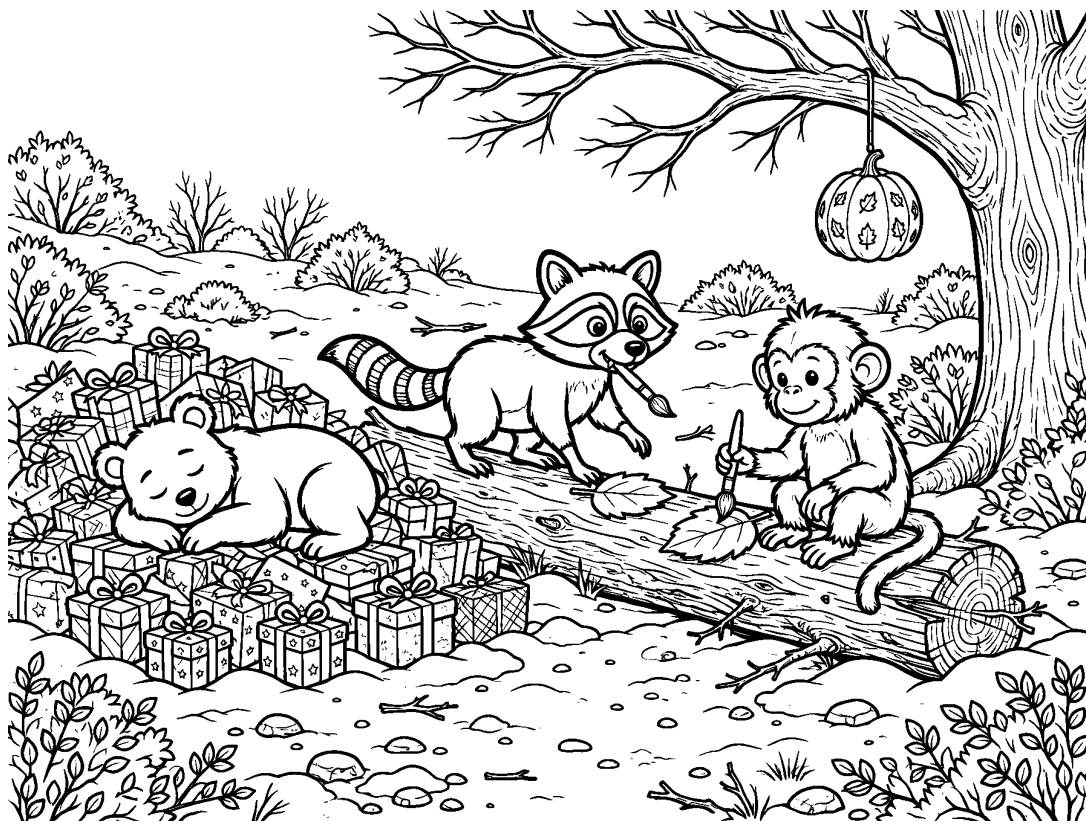
CLUE



They eat whatever _____ them!

👁 Spot the Difference

Look closely. Can you find 5 differences?



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

The Best Bit

 dabs a lot on it. Drip, drip, drip!

It is a big mud spot!

“Not a lot,” said . “The best bit.”

 sets the best bit on it.

 grins.  grins.

It felt grand!

PICTURE WORDS  Ricky  Mr. Moose

For grown-ups: New sounds: l, w.



Color a star each time you read it.

♥ My Thank-You

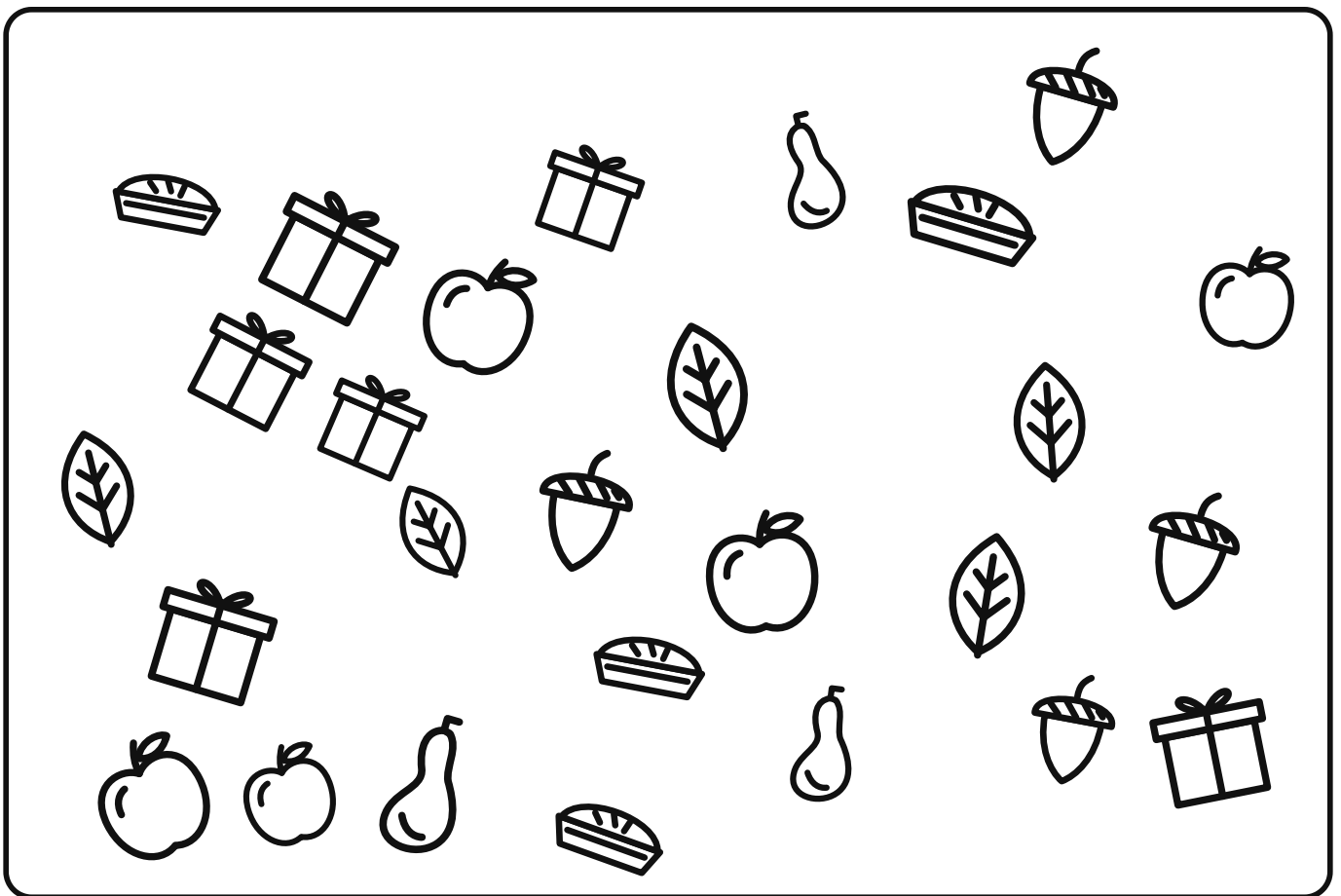
Trace the dark word, then the light words. On the first line, write their name. On the second, write or draw what they did. Then read it to them!

Thank you,

for

👁️ Feast I Spy

Find and count each one. Write how many in the box.



											
---	----------------------	---	----------------------	---	----------------------	---	----------------------	---	----------------------	---	----------------------