

Ten More Steps

 COLOR THE PICTURE



In the morning, the wind came. It roared over Lookout Ledge, *HWOOOOO*, and shook the snow off the treetops in long white streamers, and made the little green pine by the Moose home's door bow over and stand back up, bow over and stand back up.

Mr. Moose stood in the doorway and looked up at the cliff.

The light at the top was very small now. Just a flicker.

"The candle," he said. "It's burning down. It's been burning for two whole days. If nobody brings a new one, it'll go out."

Mr. Monkey looked at the cliff. Then he looked at the wind, pulling at every branch in the woods. "Today?"

"Today," said Mr. Moose. "Before it's gone."

So Mama Moose rolled a new candle, and Ricky brought his jar, and they set off: Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey, Ricky and Bruno and Hazel and Shiloh. Up the littlest trail, past Mama Hedgehog's snow lantern, with the new candle tucked safe in Ricky's jar in Mr. Moose's sack, and Shiloh's scarf wrapped around Mr. Moose's antlers.

The wind followed them the whole way. It pushed at their backs, and then it pushed at their faces. It flapped Bruno's cheeks, *flubba-flubba-flubba*, so hard that he looked like he was talking without saying anything.

"Bruno," said Mr. Monkey, "your face is waving."

"Flubba," said Bruno.

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Monkey held on to his yellow hat with one hand, and his tail blew straight out behind him, stiff as a stick. Whichever way the wind blew, his tail pointed. "I'm a weathervane!" he called.

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

And then they came to the bottom of the ice trail. The big, shiny, fun one. The one that was really a slide.

Hazel stopped. She looked at the slide. She looked up the littlest trail, steep and rocky and full of wind. She looked at the slide again.

"Just one slide," she said. "Just one. Then I'll catch up."

And off she went. *WHEEEEEEEEEEEEE*, all the way around the hill, faster and faster, and *FOOMF* into the snowdrift at the very bottom. Right back where they started that morning.

She popped up with snow on her nose. "Hee hee hee... *SNORT!*" Then she looked up. Everybody was way up the hill now. She had to climb the whole first part all over again.

So she did. All by herself, huffing and puffing, she climbed back up and found them. "That was fun," she panted. "But it went the wrong way."

"It always goes the wrong way," said Ricky.

They kept going. Up the gray wall, on Bruno's rope.

Out onto the long bare ridge. And up there, the wind was the strongest it had ever been. It blew so hard that the friends had to hold on to each other in a line. It blew snow in their eyes. It blew right through their fur.

Mr. Monkey stopped.

He was cold. He was so cold. His fingers hurt, and his toes hurt, and he couldn't feel the tip of his tail at all. He thought about the Moose home, and the fire, and the soup. He thought about the slide, and how easy it would be to just go back down.

"Mr. Moose," he said. "Maybe we should go home."

Mr. Moose didn't know what to say. He was cold too. His legs were tired too. And he could see the light at the top, flickering, flickering, so small.

Then a small voice spoke up behind them. It was Shiloh, who almost never spoke up about anything.

"Look up," said Shiloh softly.

Everybody looked at him.

"When I'm scared," said Shiloh, "my mama says, look up. Look at what you really want."

So Mr. Monkey looked up. Way up, at the top of the cliff, at that tiny flickering light. What did he really want? He wanted to be warm. But more than that, way more, he wanted Everest's light to keep shining. He wanted the highest place in the woods to have a light in it on the longest night of the year.

"I want the light to stay on," said Mr. Monkey.

Mr. Moose thought about the slide. They knew where the slide went. Around and around, and back to the bottom. Going home now would be warm. But it would leave the light to go out.

"Then this is the right path," said Mr. Moose slowly. "Even if it's hard. It's still the right one."

Mr. Monkey looked at the long ridge ahead. It was so far. He couldn't do the whole thing. Not all at once.

"I can't do all of it," he said. "But I can do ten more steps."

"Ten more steps," said Mr. Moose.

They said it out loud, all of them, into the wind:

"Look up! Right path! Ten more steps!"

And they took ten more steps. Then they stopped, and they said it again. "Look up! Right path! Ten more steps!" And they took ten more. Bruno said it loudest, so loud the wind carried it all the way down the ridge. Hazel said it while she walked. Ricky counted the steps out loud, "One, two, three...", until Bruno started counting too, "four, five, nine, twelve, ELEVENTY," and Ricky lost track.

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno. "That was ten!"

"I don't know what that was," said Ricky.

"It was ten and eleventy more," said Bruno.

Sammy came zipping along the ridge behind them, because Sammy could zip anywhere, even in a windstorm. "Hey! What did the tree say to the wind?" And the wind grabbed her and blew her right back down the hill before she could finish.

From far, far away came her voice: "LEAF ME ALONE!"

"Hee hee hee!" went Mr. Monkey, and that made the next ten steps go faster.

Look up. Right path. Ten more steps. Over and over and over.

And then they were at the top.

The squash lantern sat on the rock beside Everest, just where they had left it. Inside it, the old candle was so short it was almost a puddle, and the little flame was bending and shivering. Everest was sitting right beside it with one great wing held out, trying to keep the wind off the flame.

Mr. Moose took the new candle out of Ricky's jar and lit it from the very last flicker of the old one, just before it went out. He stood it inside the jar, inside the squash. And the flame stood up straight.

Everest folded his wing. He looked at the friends, and he tipped one wing toward them, slowly, just once.

"That was better than the slide," said Hazel, puffing, with snow all the way up to her ears. "Way better."

"It went the right way," said Ricky.

All the way back down, they could see it behind them, not a flicker anymore, but a steady little light, shining in the wind.

That night, by the little green pine, they painted red circles. Mr. Monkey painted Shiloh on the front, curly and small. On the back, he painted a long windy ridge, a line of friends holding on to each other, and one little sheep at the back, pointing up.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey. "The wind made Bruno's face wave and my tail into a weathervane. Hazel took the slide and had to climb all the way back up. I wanted to go home, but Shiloh said look up. So we said look up, right path, ten more steps, over and over. And the wind blew Sammy away in the middle of her joke."

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

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

And high above Wonderful Woods, the new candle burned steady inside the jar inside the squash, while a great eagle sat beside it in the dark, watching it shine.

Let's Talk

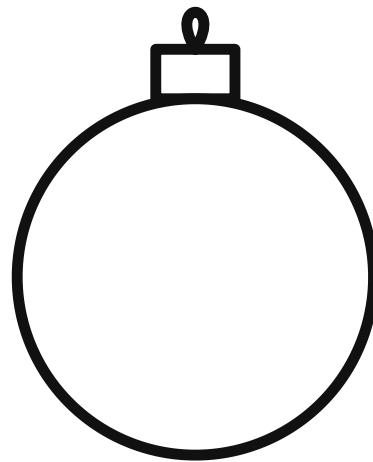
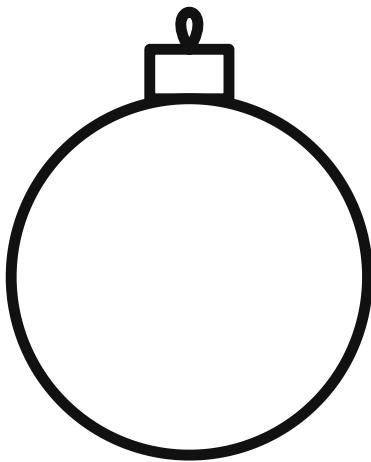
- 1 When Mr. Monkey wanted to quit, what did Shiloh tell him?
- 2 Who outside our house helped make things right for you?

Your Turn

Make a red ornament for someone outside our house who helped make things right for you. Front: their name. Back: draw what they did.

FRONT: THE NAME

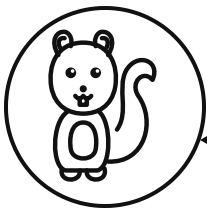
BACK: THE THANK-YOU



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



What kind of room has no doors?

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



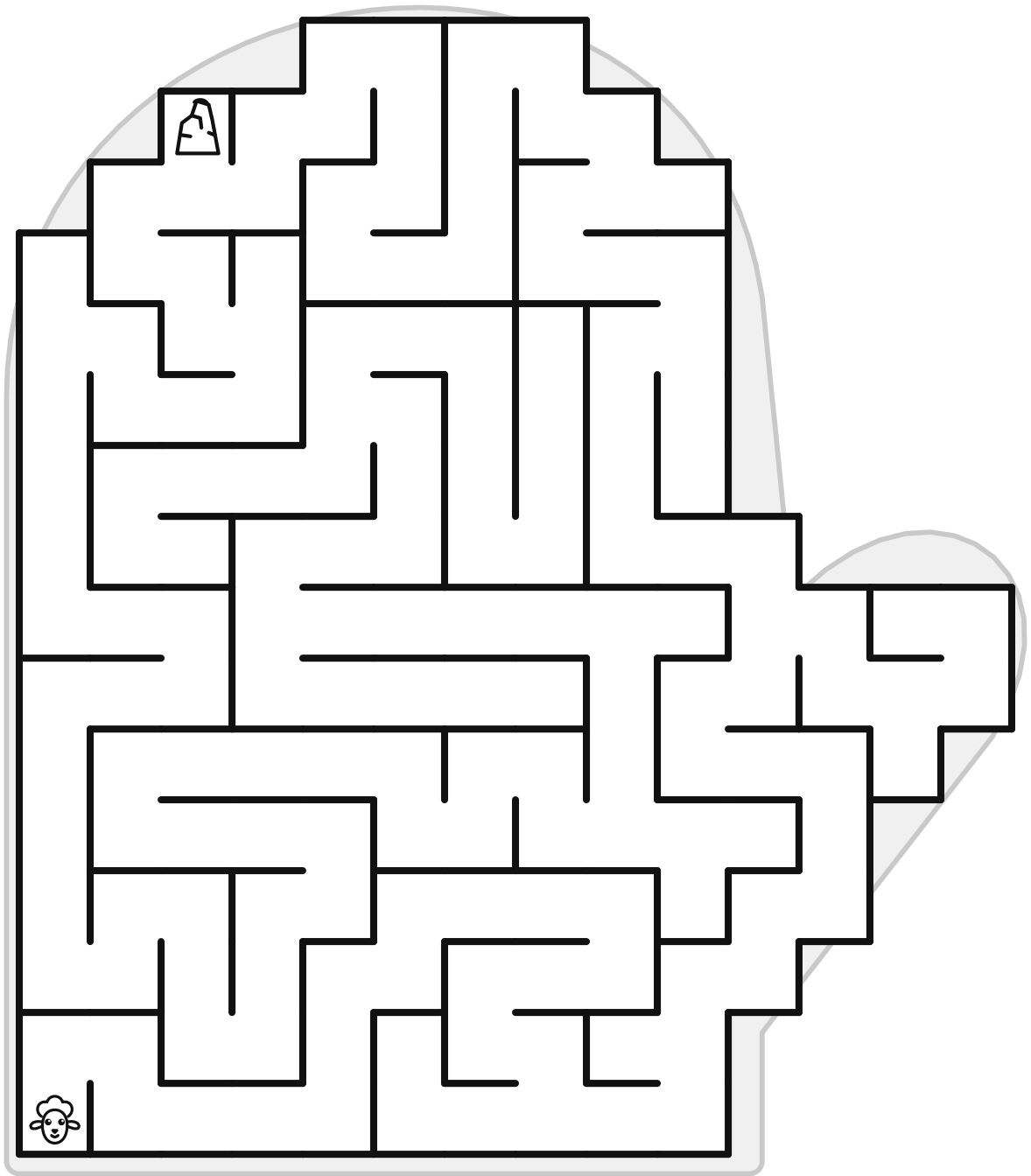
CLUE



A _____ room!

☆ Ten More Steps

Help the friends up the windy ridge to the light at the top. Start at Shiloh Sheep.



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Ten Steps!

The wind puffs and puffs.  wants to go back.

“Look up,” says .

 looks up. The lamp at the top is dim.

“Ten steps,” says . “Then ten, and then ten!”

Step, step, step... ten! Step, step, step... ten!

Then the pals are at the top.

The lamp is lit, and it is big!

PICTURE WORDS  Mr. Monkey  Shiloh



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.

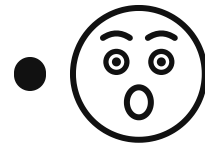
for making things right.

♥ Feelings Match

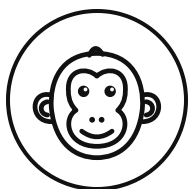
How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



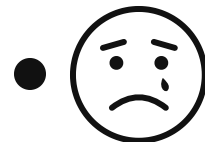
Bruno, when the wind made his face wave



surprised



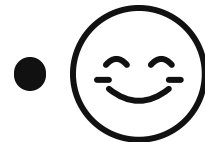
Mr. Monkey, so cold he wanted to go home



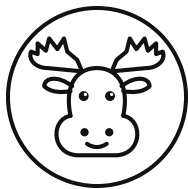
sad



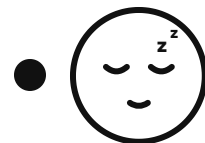
Hazel, when she saw she had to climb the whole hill again



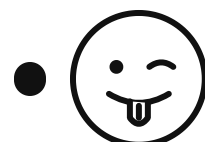
proud



Mr. Moose, lighting the new candle at the top



sleepy



silly

