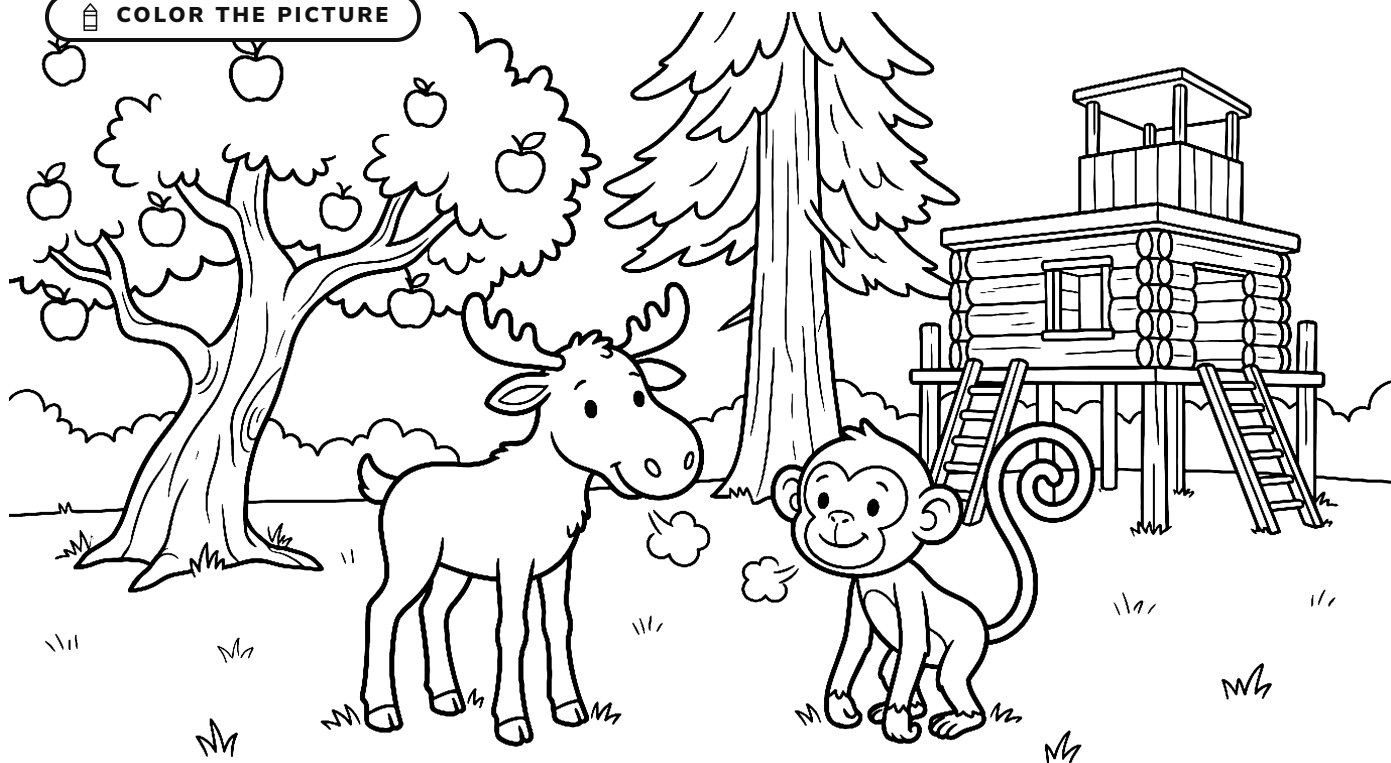


Who Are the Apples For?

 COLOR THE PICTURE



The morning was cold and bright. A thin white frost covered the grass, and every blade sparkled. When Mr. Moose breathed out, a little cloud puffed from his nose. "Look," said Mr. Monkey, puffing too. "We're making clouds."

They met Ricky at the edge of Sunny Square and walked next door to Learning Land, crunching across the frosty grass. At the entrance stood the giant old pine called Pilgrim Point. Past it was Fort Friendship, with its logs and vines and its lookout on top. Beside the fort lay Discovery Den, all mossy logs and crinkly leaves. In front of the big flat Story Stone sat the Listening Log. And right next to Discovery Den grew an old, crooked apple tree, its branches hanging low with shiny red apples.

"Signing up!" called Ricky, waving his bark roll. "Everybody's signing up for the Great Big Present Swap!"

The first somebody was Bruno Bear, sitting at the bottom of Fort Friendship with an apple in each paw.

"What do you wish for, Bruno?" asked Ricky.

Bruno thought. "Honey," he said. "And a nap. And honey."

Ricky handed him a fat purple berry. "Write it down. Gently."

Bruno held the berry very gently, in his very big paw. Then he pressed it to the bark. *SQUISH*. Purple juice went everywhere. When he lifted his paw, there was a giant purple paw print covering half the list.

Ricky stared at it. "That's a big wish."

"It's a big paw," said Bruno.

Just then, a fluffy tail whipped down the trunk of Pilgrim Point. It was Sammy Squirrel. "Sign me up! Sign me up! My wish is a joke nobody's ever heard! Here's one! What do you get when you cross a pig and a pine tree?"

And she zipped right back up the tree before anybody could answer. From way up at the top came her voice: "A PORKY-PINE!" Then she was gone.

Bruno stopped chewing. "A pig..." he said slowly. "With pine needles..." He looked up at the pine. "Porky... PINE! Haw haw haw!"

Mr. Monkey grabbed a pawful of pine needles and stuck them all over his back. He wiggled his nose. "OINK," he said. "I'm a porky-pine."

"Hee hee hee," he added, because the needles tickled.

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

Then something came bounding out of Discovery Den. It was Dottie Dog, ears flapping, tail wagging, with a leaf stuck on her nose.

"Hi! Hi! Hi! What are you doing? Can I do it too?"

"You can sign up for the Swap," said Ricky. "What do you wish for?"

"A stick that throws itself!" said Dottie. "So I can play fetch all day, even when everybody's tired!"

Ricky started to write it down. Dottie's eyes followed the bark roll. It was long. It was round. It was very, very stick-shaped.

Dottie's tail stopped wagging. Then it started again, twice as fast.

"Is that..." she whispered. "A STICK?"

"No, it's the..." said Ricky.

"FETCH!" Dottie grabbed the end of the bark roll in her teeth and took off.

The bark unrolled behind her like a long white tail. She ran over the mossy logs of Discovery Den. She ran around the Story Stone. She ran across the Listening Log and back again. Then she ran around Bruno. Once. Twice. Three times. When she stopped, Bruno was wrapped from his toes to his chin in birch bark, with only his ears poking out of the top.

Bruno looked down at himself. "Am I a present?"

"Rule fifteen!" cried Ricky. "No presents that are Bruno!"

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno, and the bark wiggled when he laughed.

Dottie had the end of the list in her mouth, and her whole back half was wagging. Ricky reached for it. Dottie danced backward. He reached again. She danced away again, faster. It was the best game she had ever played.

"Dottie, please," said Ricky. His whiskers drooped. "It might tear."

Mr. Monkey felt it right in his chest. Ricky looked so worried about his list. And Dottie looked so happy. She wasn't trying to be naughty at all. She just loved fetch more than almost anything. Mr. Monkey didn't want either one of them to be sad.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "What do we do?"

Mr. Moose thought it through. Chasing Dottie only made her run more, because chasing was part of fetch. "Dottie doesn't want the list," he said slowly. "She wants something to chase. So what does Dottie love even more than a stick?"

Mr. Monkey's eyes lit up. "A BETTER stick!"

"And she wished for one that throws itself," said Mr. Moose.

Mr. Monkey found the longest, knobby stick at the bottom of Fort Friendship. He scrambled up the vines to the lookout, held it over his head, and called out, "Dottie! Look up here! It's a stick that throws ITSELF!"

He flung it as far as he could. It sailed over Discovery Den, spinning end over end.

Dottie dropped the list. "IT THREW ITSELF!" And she was gone, galloping after it.

Mr. Moose put one hoof gently on the end of the bark, so it wouldn't blow away. Then he rolled it up with his nose, around and around, slowly and carefully, all the way to Bruno. Mr. Monkey slid down the vines and helped unwind Bruno, who turned in circles like a spinning top until he was free.

Ricky hugged his list. "Not one rip," he said.

Dottie came trotting back with the stick in her mouth and her tail going in happy circles. She dropped it at Mr. Monkey's feet. "Again?"

"Again," said Mr. Monkey, and he threw it again, just for her.

Then they climbed the roots of Pilgrim Point. Orion Owl was sitting on his branch, fluffing his feathers before his midday sleep.

"Orion," said Ricky, "what do you wish for? For the Swap."

Orion blinked his round golden eyes, slowly. "Hoo," he said. "Before I wish for anything, look down at that apple tree."

They looked. Bruno had wandered over and was munching an apple. Two little birds were pecking at one on a branch. Sammy zipped up the trunk and zipped back down with an apple almost as big as she was. Dottie was lying in the grass with her stick, chewing the stick and sniffing an apple, as if she couldn't decide.

"That tree has made more apples than anyone in the woods," said Orion. "Who do you suppose they're for?"

Then he tucked his head under his wing and went to sleep.

"For the tree," said Ricky. "It made them. They're its apples."

Mr. Moose didn't say anything. He watched the apple tree for a long time. Bruno ate an apple. A bird ate a little bit of an apple. One apple fell off a branch, *thup*, and rolled down the hill to the river, where a duck nibbled it.

"Mr. Monkey," said Mr. Moose. "The tree never eats one."

"It can't," said Mr. Monkey. "It doesn't have a mouth."

"Every single apple goes to somebody else," said Mr. Moose.

Mr. Monkey looked at the tree. "And it didn't even make a wish list."

Ricky looked at his list. He looked at the tree. He started to say something, and then he didn't. Under Orion's name, he drew a great big question mark. "I'll ask him later," he said.

"I want to be an apple tree," said Mr. Monkey.

He climbed onto a low branch, wrapped his tail around it, and hung upside down with his arms stretched out like branches. Mr. Moose put an apple in each of his hands.

"Who wants an apple from the Monkey Tree?" called Mr. Monkey.

Bruno took one. Dottie took one. Ricky took one. Mr. Moose put two more in Mr. Monkey's hands, and those got taken too. Soon there was only one apple left, in Mr. Monkey's right hand. He looked at it. His tummy rumbled.

"Can a Monkey Tree eat one?" he asked.

"A Monkey Tree gets one," said Mr. Moose.

"Hee hee hee!" Mr. Monkey took a big, crunchy bite, still hanging upside down.

When the sun was high and warm, they headed back to Sunny Square. Ricky counted. "Eleven names! And one question mark."

"What a day!" said Mr. Moose. "Bruno made a giant paw print. Sammy told a joke about a porky-pine and ran away. Dottie played fetch with Ricky's list and turned Bruno into a present. Mr. Monkey threw a stick that threw itself. And the apple tree gave away every apple it had."

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

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

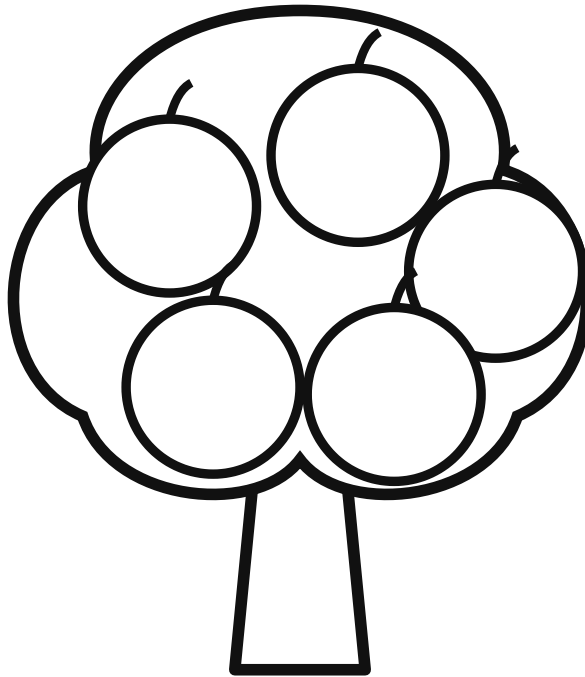
And in Learning Land, the old apple tree stood in the sunshine with its branches a little lighter, waiting for whoever came next.

Let's Talk

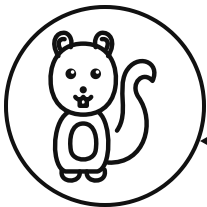
- 1 The old apple tree never eats one apple. Who are the apples for?
- 2 Who has given something good to you?

Your Turn

You are an apple tree! In each apple, draw someone you would like to give something to, or write their name.



SAMMY'S JOKE



Why did the dog sit in the shade?

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

He didn't want to be a !

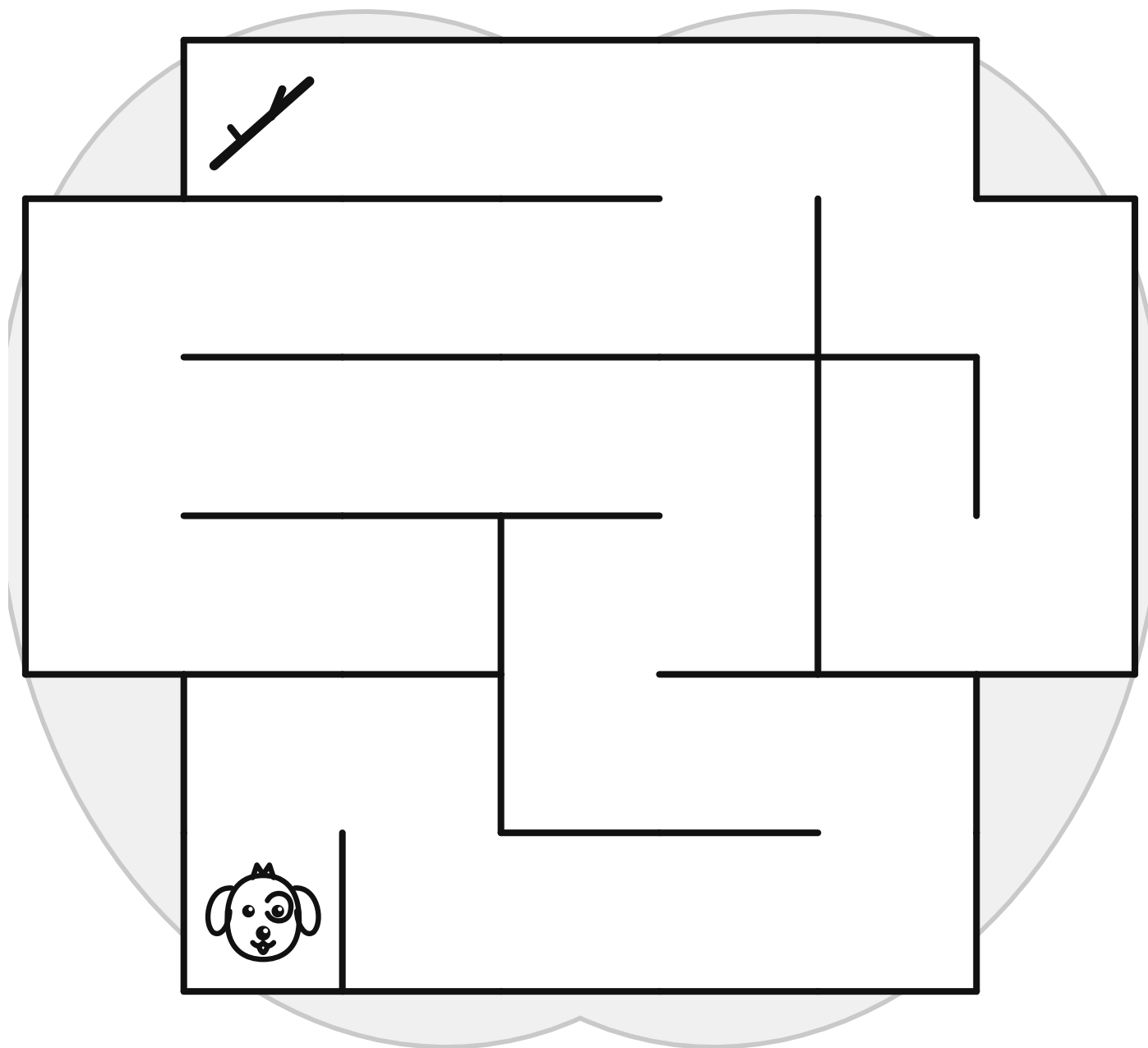


KEY



☆ Fetch!

Help Dottie get to the stick that throws itself. Start at Dottie Dog.



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Pit-Pat!

Pit-pat, pit-pat!

Is it ?

Is it ?

It is !

 sat.

 is in!

PICTURE WORDS



Bruno



Dottie



Sammy



Color a star each time you read it.

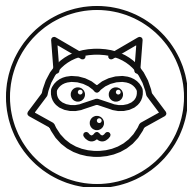
♥ My Thank-You

Trace the dotted words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

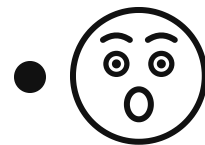
Thank you.

♥ Feelings Match

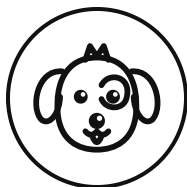
How did they feel? Draw a line from each friend to the face that matches. One face will be left over.



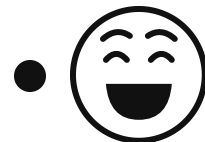
Ricky, when Dottie ran off with his list



surprised



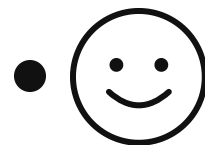
Dottie, playing fetch with the list



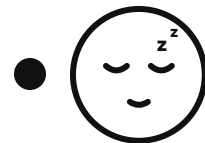
excited



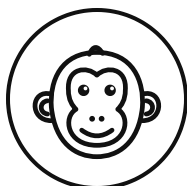
Bruno, wrapped up like a present



happy



sleepy



Mr. Monkey, giving away apples



worried

