

The Wishing Tree

COLOR THE PICTURE



The wind came whooshing through Sunny Square, *whoo-shhhh, whoo-shhhh*, and pulled the very last leaves off the big maple tree. They tumbled across the grass like they were racing each other to the river. By the time the wind calmed down, the maple was bare, just a tall brown trunk and lots of empty branches reaching up to the gray sky.

"It looks cold," said Mr. Monkey, looking up at it.

"It looks like it's waiting for something," said Mr. Moose.

Ricky came hurrying across Sunny Square with his list and an armful of little bark cards. "Sign-Up Helpers! I have the best idea since my last best idea!"

On every card, Ricky had copied one wish. Bruno's big purple paw print. Dottie's stick that throws itself. A whisper wish for Benji. Shiloh's "nobody left out." Hazel's card just said *SWAMP*. And Mr. Monkey's card was the biggest of all: the Mr. Monkey-shaped banana, cut out of a whole piece of bark.

"We'll hang every wish on the big maple," said Ricky.

"Then everybody can come and see what everybody wants. It'll be a WISHING TREE!"

"Ooh," said Mr. Monkey.

Soon all of Sunny Square was busy getting ready. Daddy Monkey swung in with a big coil of vines over his shoulder, new ones and fuzzy old ones. Mama Moose brought baskets of berries for paint. Sammy brought

pinecones, so everybody could measure their presents. Dottie brought her stick, just in case.

Bruno picked up a pinecone and started measuring things. He measured a rock. "One pinecone." He measured Benji. "One pinecone and a little bit of ears." Then he measured Mr. Moose, all the way up from his hooves to his antlers, pinecone over pinecone over pinecone, until he had to stand on a stump to reach the top.

"Forty-seven pinecones," said Bruno. He shook his head sadly. "Mr. Moose, you're too big for the Swap."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose. "I'll try to shrink."

"Haw haw haw!" went Bruno.

Then it was time to hang the wishes. Mr. Monkey climbed up into the bare maple with the cards tucked under his arm, and Ricky handed them up one at a time. Mr. Monkey hung Bruno's card on a branch. He hung Dottie's card on a twig. He hung Hazel's *SWAMP* right at the top.

Then the wind came back.

WHOOOOSH.

Every card on the maple lifted off its branch at once and went flying. They flew over Sunny Square like a flock of little brown birds. Dottie leaped and caught one in her mouth. Hazel galloped after two more. Sammy zipped up a tree after one that got stuck. Benji chased the whisper wish across the grass and pounced on it with both front paws.

And Mr. Monkey's big banana card caught the wind like a sail.

Mr. Monkey was still holding it. "Whoa! WHOA!" It pulled him right out of the tree. He landed on his bottom in the grass, still holding on, and the wind dragged him across Sunny Square, *shhhhhhhhhh*, skiing through the leaves on his bottom, around the maple once, around the maple twice...

"Mr. Moose! My wish is taking me somewhere!"

Bruno stepped right in front of him and sat down on the banana card. *FWUMP*. It stopped. Mr. Monkey stopped. He was covered in leaves from his ears to his toes.

"Thanks, Bruno," he said from inside the leaves.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!" went Sammy from the top of a tree.

"Mr. Monkey went SKIING!"

Everybody brought back the cards they had caught. Some were bent. Dottie's was a little slobbery. Ricky sat down on a root with the whole pile in his lap, and his ears went flat.

"It's not going to work," he said. "The wind will just blow them off again. And today is the last day."

Mr. Monkey felt it in his own tummy. Ricky had worked so hard, for days and days, and he wanted the Wishing Tree to work for him. "We'll help," said Mr. Monkey. "Right, Mr. Moose?"

Mr. Moose looked at the cards. He looked at the bare branches swaying in the wind. "We were only hanging them," he said slowly. "Hanging doesn't hold on. We need to tie them on. Tight."

He looked over at Daddy Monkey's big coil of vines. "And Ricky has the best knots in the woods."

Ricky's ears came back up.

Mr. Monkey climbed back up into the maple with an armful of vines. Mr. Moose stood underneath and held each card up high, steady between his antlers, right where Mr. Monkey could reach it. And Ricky climbed up beside Mr. Monkey and tied every single card on, with his very best knot, the one that never slips. Bruno held the bottom of the ladder, even though there wasn't a ladder.

When the wind came back, *whoo-shhhh*, the cards swung and clacked and spun on their vines. But not one flew away.

"It's a Wishing Tree," said Ricky softly.

Then Ricky counted the cards, and his face fell. "Wait. There's one more. I still haven't signed up the Silent Stag."

Mama Moose smiled. "Oh, Ricky. The Silent Stag doesn't sign up for things."

Some of the youngest friends had never heard of him, so Mama Moose told them. He was the oldest friend in all of Wanderful Woods, she said. He shone a soft silver-blue, as if he were made of morning mist and river light. He never said a word. And he never, ever came when you called him. "Most of the grown-ups in the woods have

seen him once or twice," she said. "Usually when they weren't looking for him at all."

Ricky thought about it. Then he made one more card. It said *SILENT STAG* and nothing else, with a big empty space underneath. He tied that one on too, right in the middle.

By the time the sky turned orange, everybody had gone home to supper, everybody except Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey. They stood under the Wishing Tree, looking up. Dozens of wishes turned slowly on their vines.

Mr. Monkey found his own card. The big banana. It was the biggest wish on the whole tree.

He looked at it for a long time.

"Mr. Moose," he said quietly. "When I look at my wish, my tummy feels heavy. Like I swallowed a rock." He rubbed his tummy. "Isn't wanting supposed to feel good?"

Mr. Moose looked up at the tree, too. Every card was something somebody didn't have yet. Almost every card. There was Daddy Moose's NOTHING. There was Tessie's THIS. There was Orion's big question mark. And there was the empty space under *SILENT STAG*.

"I don't know," said Mr. Moose. "I'm still thinking about it."

The wind went quiet.

At the edge of Sunny Square, down by the river bend, stood the Silent Stag.

He was tall and still in the orange light, as if he were made of morning mist and river light, with antlers like branches made of light. He wasn't looking at the Wishing Tree at all. He was looking at the two friends standing underneath it.

Mr. Monkey's heavy tummy went quiet, too. For a moment, he didn't want anything at all.

Then a puff of mist drifted off the river, right through the Stag, and when it was gone, so was he.

"He was here," whispered Mr. Monkey.

"He was," said Mr. Moose. He looked up at the empty space on the *SILENT STAG* card. "And he still didn't sign up."

They walked home slowly, side by side.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey at Mr. Moose's door. "Bruno measured you, and you were forty-seven pinecones. My wish pulled me all over Sunny Square. We tied every wish on the Wishing Tree so the wind couldn't take them. And the Silent Stag came, but he didn't look at the wishes. He looked at us."

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

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

And in the dark, the bare old maple stood in the middle of Sunny Square, its branches full of wishes, swaying softly, waiting.

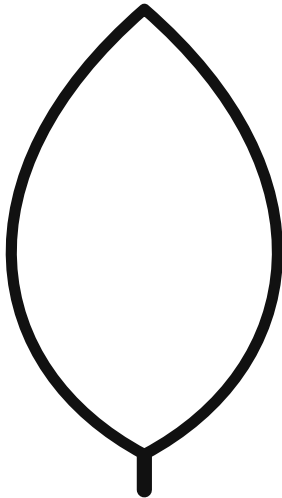
Let's Talk

- 1 When Mr. Monkey looked at his big banana wish, his tummy felt heavy. Why do you think it felt that way?
- 2 Our family is putting up a Thanks Giving Tree, a paper trunk for our thank-you leaves! What do you think it will look like by Thanksgiving?

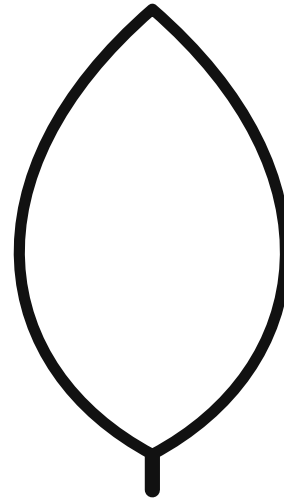
Your Turn

Practice a thank-you leaf! Write a name on the front. On the back, draw the kind thing they did for you.

FRONT: THE NAME

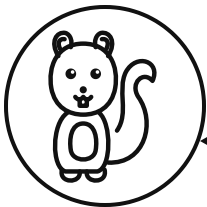


BACK: THE THANK-YOU



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

SAMMY'S JOKE



What's orange and sounds like a parrot?

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

A _ _ _ _ _ !



KEY



👁 Spot the Difference

Look closely. Can you find 5 differences?



 Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

Is It a Fit?

 sat.

A tin. Is it a fit? It is a fit!

A pan. Is it a fit? It is a fit!

A mat. Is it a fit? It is a fit!



♥ My Thank-You

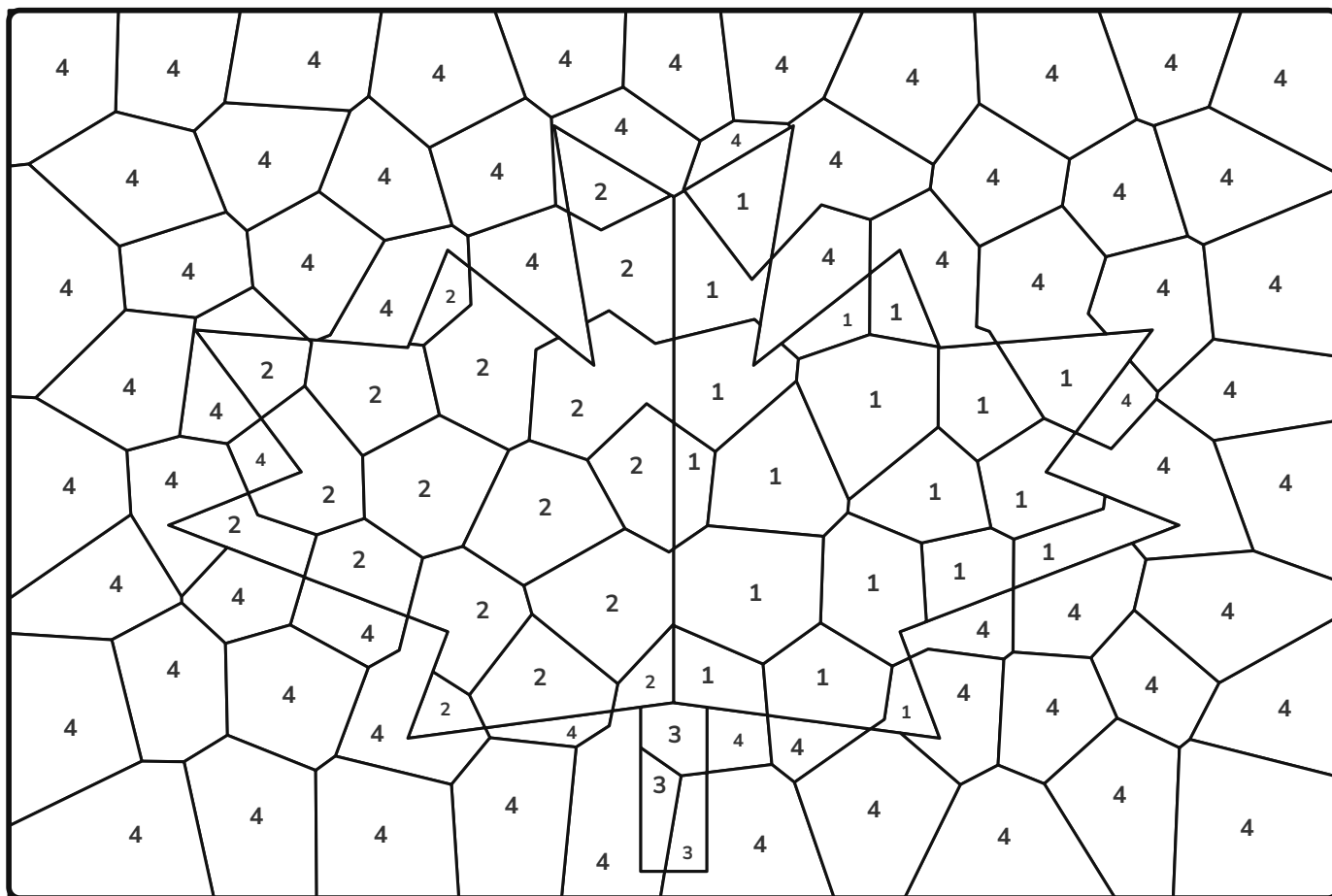
Trace the dotted words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you.

🏠 Mystery Picture

Color each space by its number to find the hidden picture.

① red ② orange ③ brown ④ light blue



WEEK DONE!



Turn back to this week's map.
Color any stones you missed.



Ladybugs I found in this week's storybook pictures: _____