

*tales from*  
**McCurdy's Woods**  
**"Hide & Seek"**



"What kind of uniform is this Gramp?" Billy and Sarah had been playing in the attic and here was Billy standing on the stairway wearing a jacket that was 3 sizes too big and covered with large green splotches. "How come you wore this funny looking outfit?"

"That's called camouflage, Billy, and it saved my life quite a few times when I was in the war" Gramp answered. "Camo what?" asked Billy as he tried to navigate the stairs trailing the sleeves of the jacket behind him.

"Is it bulletproof or something, is that why it saved your life?". "No" said Gramps, "its not bulletproof but when I was wearing camouflage it was very hard for anyone to see me. As long as I didn't make any sudden moves, I was able to hide from the enemy and move around without being detected.

Have you ever noticed how hard it is to see animals like deer or hare in the woods? Its often because the color of their coats is so much like the trees and bushes that we don't even notice them, especially if they aren't moving".

"Gramp, these splotches don't look much like trees and bushes", Billy responded, "How did they help you hide"?

Gramp paused for a minute and looked out the window "How about we take a walk son"? he asked, "It's evening, just about the time of day we might see a deer if we're quiet. Grab your coat and I'll tell Gramma we're going".

The walk up the hill to the woods gave Gramp time to explain to Billy some of the things that make a person a good observer of nature. "Often, its not what's there that catches our eye, but what isn't there that causes us to take a second look" he said.

As they entered the forest Gramp paused and looked about, "Let's have a seat on this stump and sit quiet for a few minutes, you never know what might turn up".



Sure enough, within moments Gramps eye caught the swift movement of a squirrel. As it paused on a tree branch he pointed to the tree and whispered to Billy "See that big spruce over there? Look at the first big branch, right where it joins the tree." "Wow" hollered Billy "I see a squirrel!" In a flash the small animal disappeared down the trunk of the tree and into a hole. "Lesson number one Billy" Gramps said, "All the camouflage in the world wont help you if you aren't quiet and still".

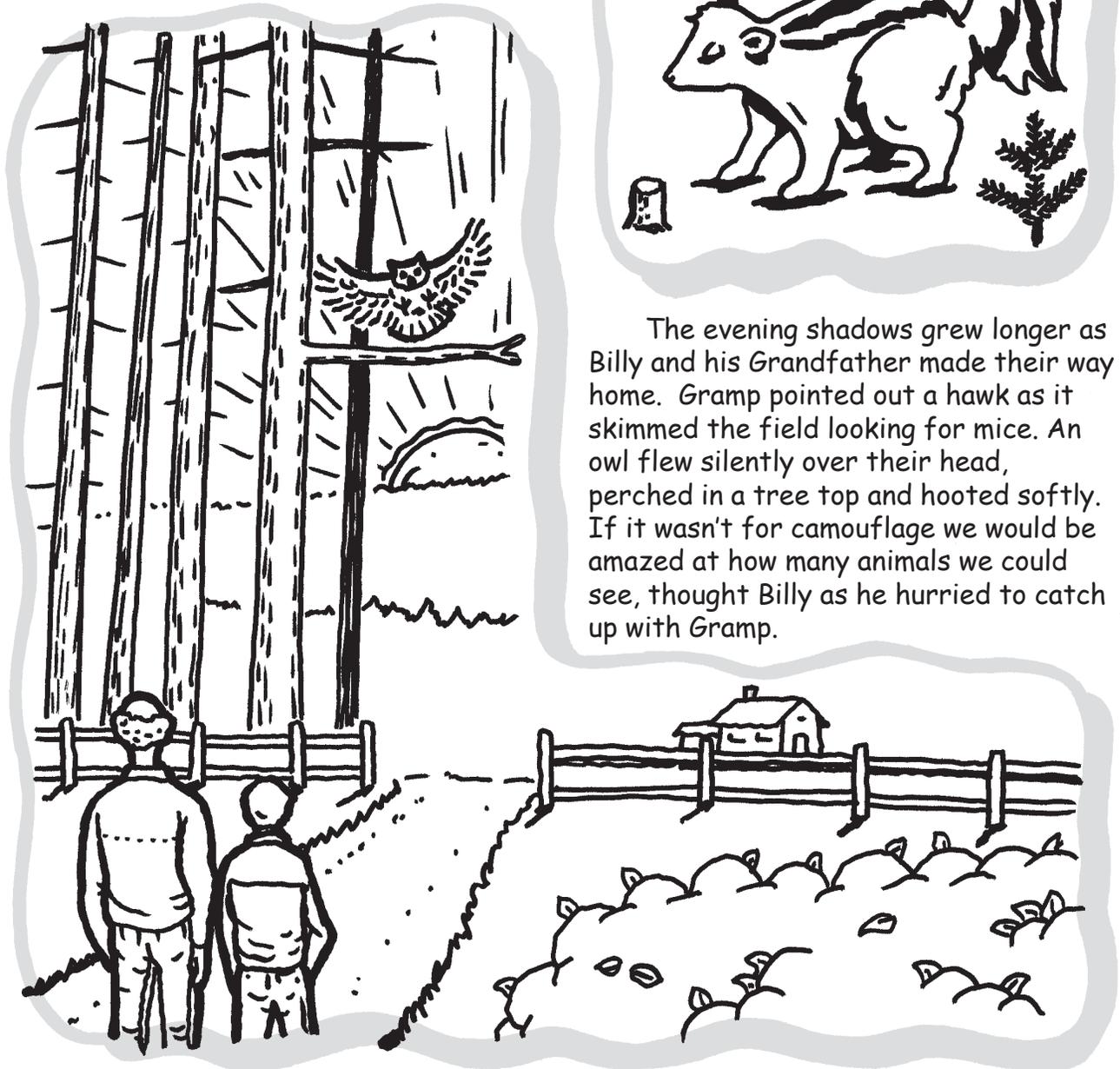
They sat for awhile and in a few minutes the squirrel poked his head out of its hiding place. This time the movement caught Billy's eye and he had to hold back a yell. It was so close he thought he might reach out and touch it! His attention however was quickly diverted by the buzzing of a bee to close to his head for comfort. Despite his Grandfathers instructions to remain still he began to dance wildly about and slap his hands in the air! Fortunately the bee had better things to do and flew away.



"That bee sure wasn't camouflaged, I could see it and hear it!, Billy exclaimed. " Lesson number two Billy" Gramp said. " Animals, insects and even some plants make a special effort to be seen. Skunks for example and Monarch butterflies have warning colors that make them stand out so nothing will bother them. The Monarch butterfly is poisonous to its predators, skunks have a bad smell and there is a whole family of beetles called blister beetles that are bright and shiny and raise blisters in the mouths of anything that tries to eat them."

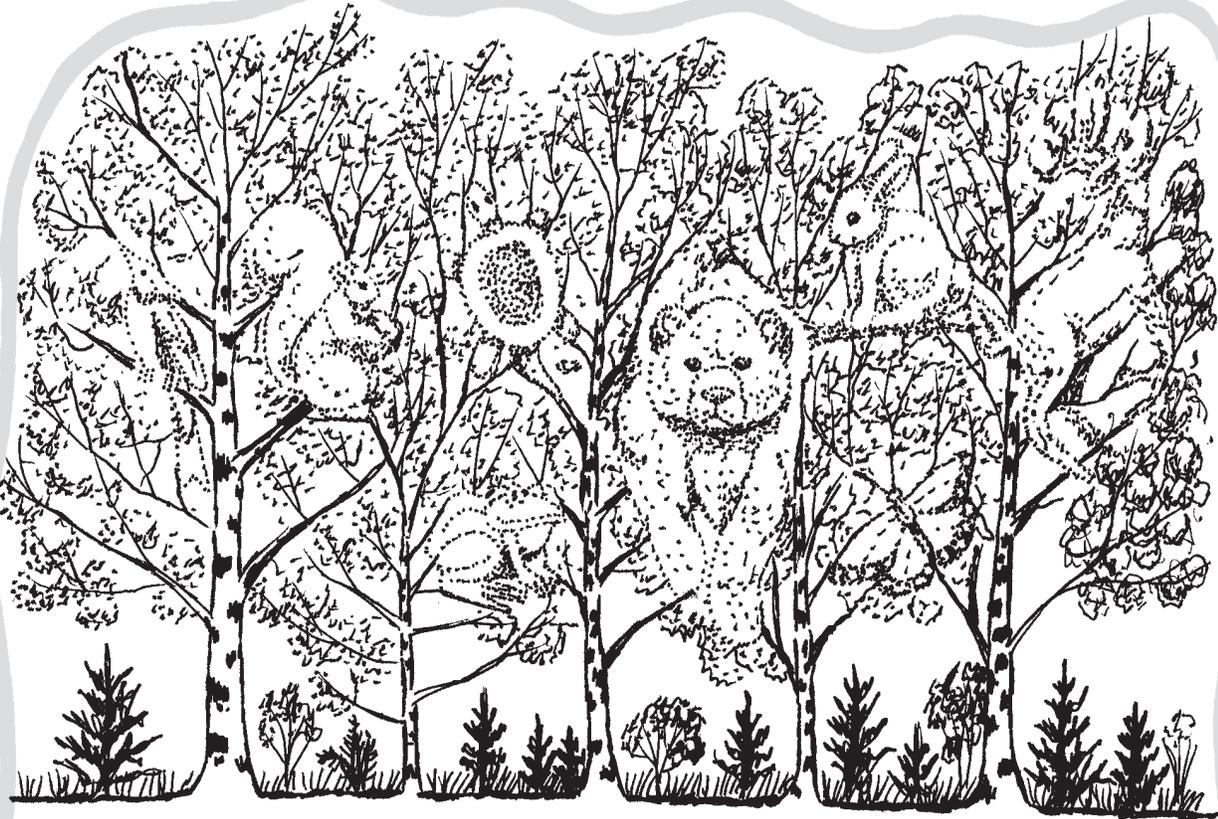


The evening shadows grew longer as Billy and his Grandfather made their way home. Gramp pointed out a hawk as it skimmed the field looking for mice. An owl flew silently over their head, perched in a tree top and hooted softly. If it wasn't for camouflage we would be amazed at how many animals we could see, thought Billy as he hurried to catch up with Gramp.



# Can you find all the Camouflage Animals in this little patch of trees.

*( Did you know that the Red Spruce is Nova Scotia's provincial Tree. )*



Deer



Turtle



Jay



Butterfly



Frog



Hare



Squirrel



Bear



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