

Opossum The Modern Tail

A COLORING BOOK

About Traditional Tobacco Use Among Native Americans

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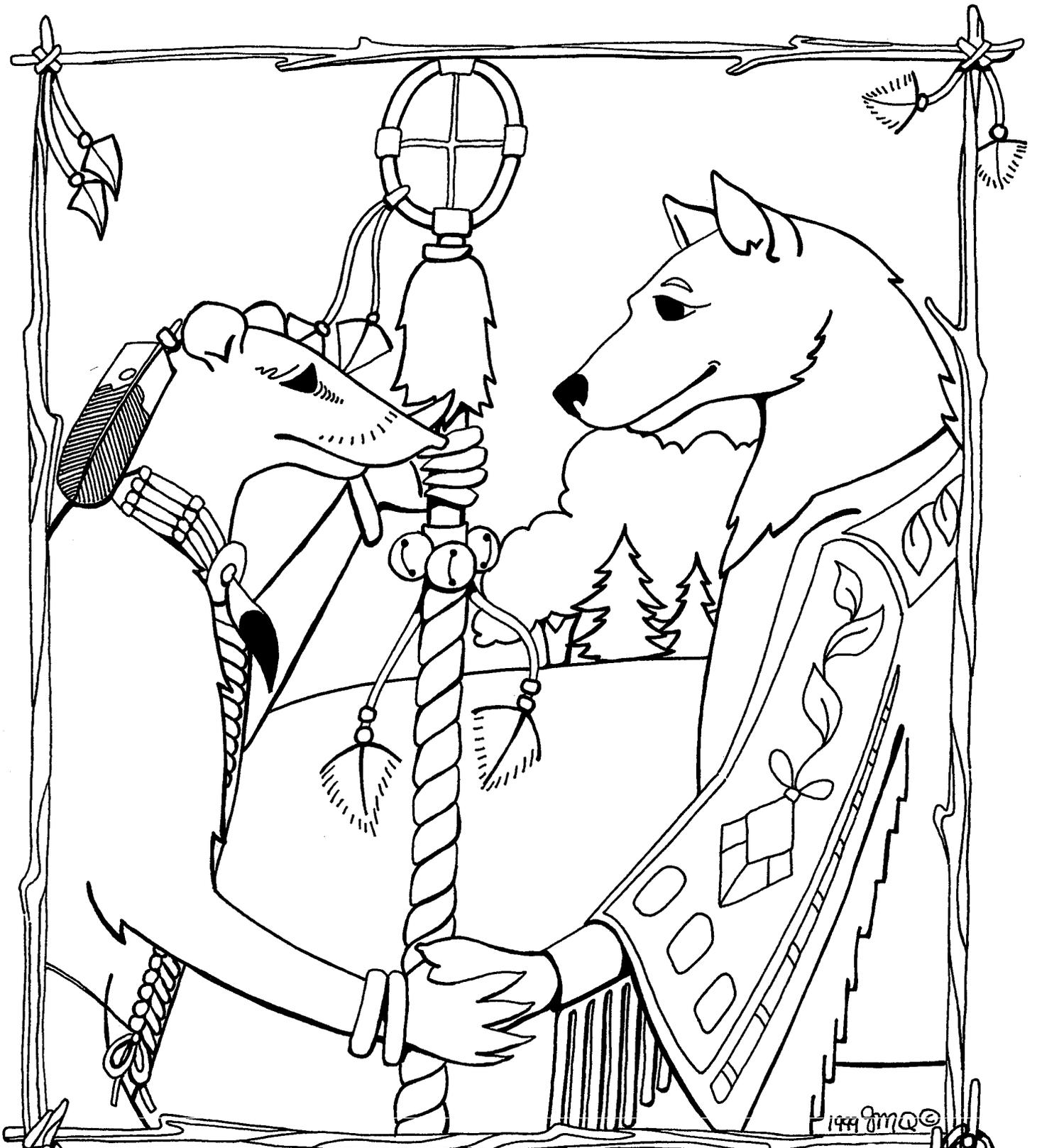
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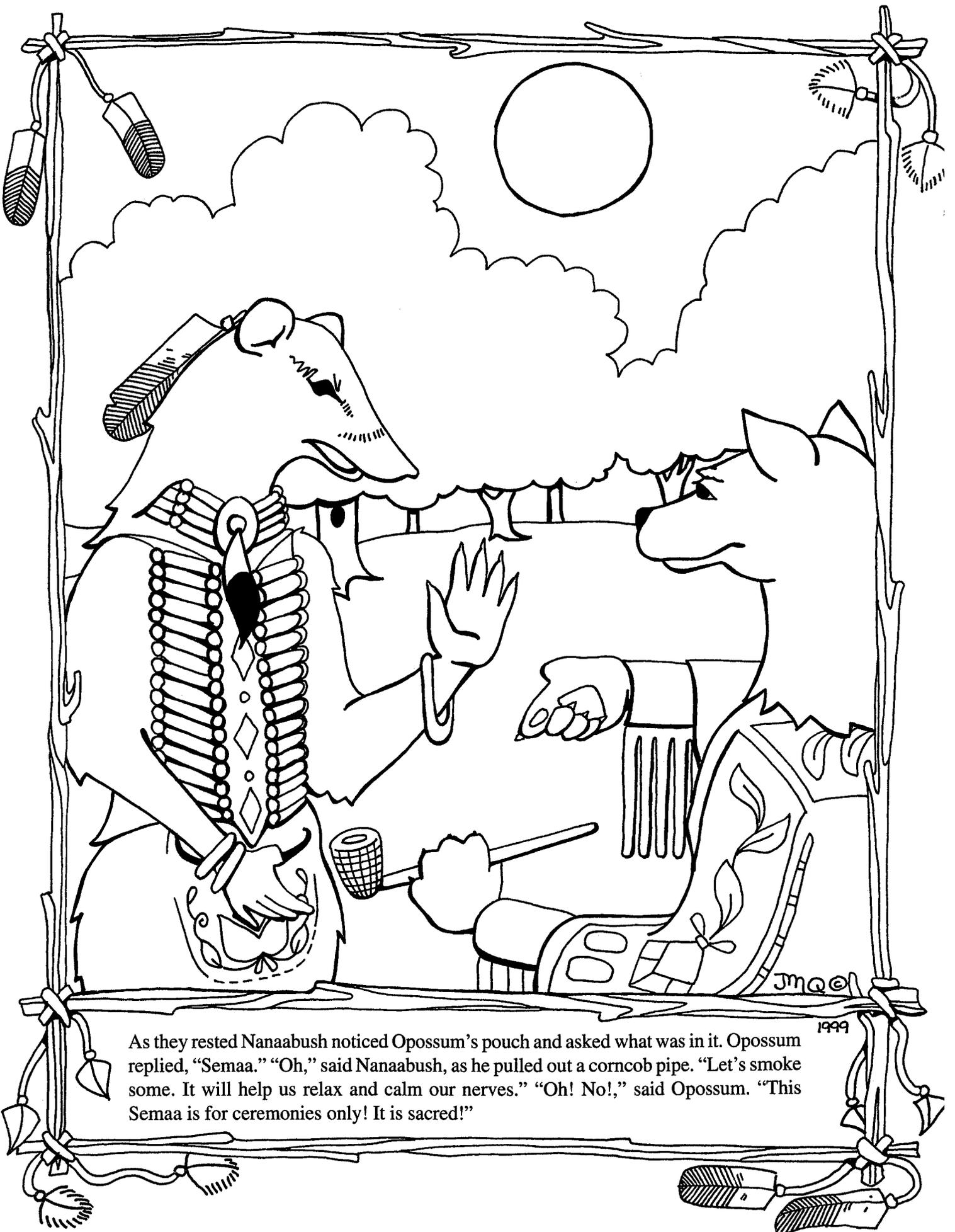
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Long ago the Creator gave the animals special duties. It was the Opossum's job to carry the sacred plant "Sema" also known as "tobacco."



One day Opossum was walking to an Ojibwe village. He met Nanaabush the coyote on the trail. Nanaabush asked if he could walk with Opossum. Happy for the company, Opossum agreed. After walking a short distance Nanaabush said, "Let's stop and rest awhile."

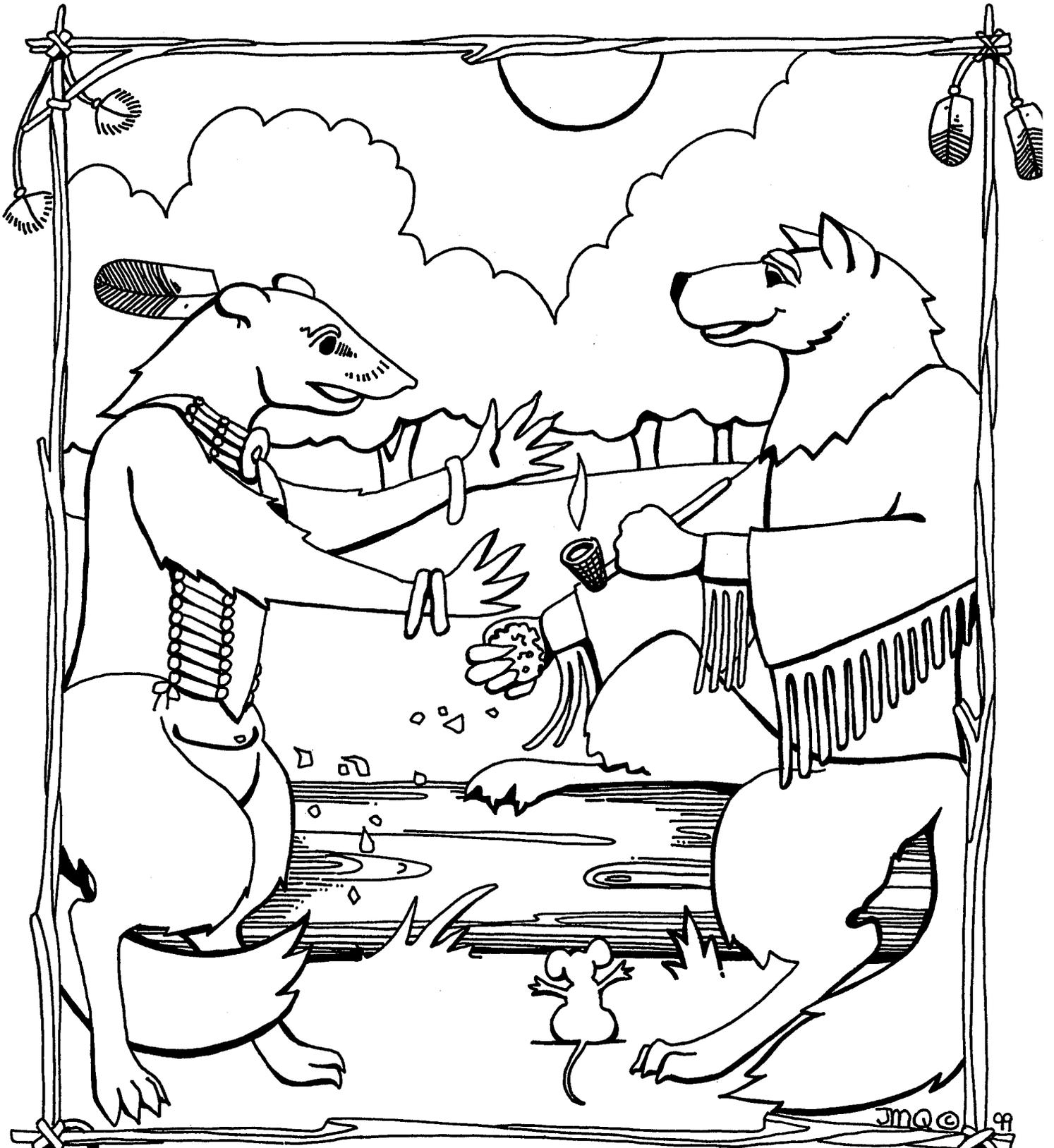


As they rested Nanaabush noticed Opossum's pouch and asked what was in it. Opossum replied, "Sema." "Oh," said Nanaabush, as he pulled out a cornucob pipe. "Let's smoke some. It will help us relax and calm our nerves." "Oh! No!," said Opossum. "This Sema is for ceremonies only! It is sacred!"

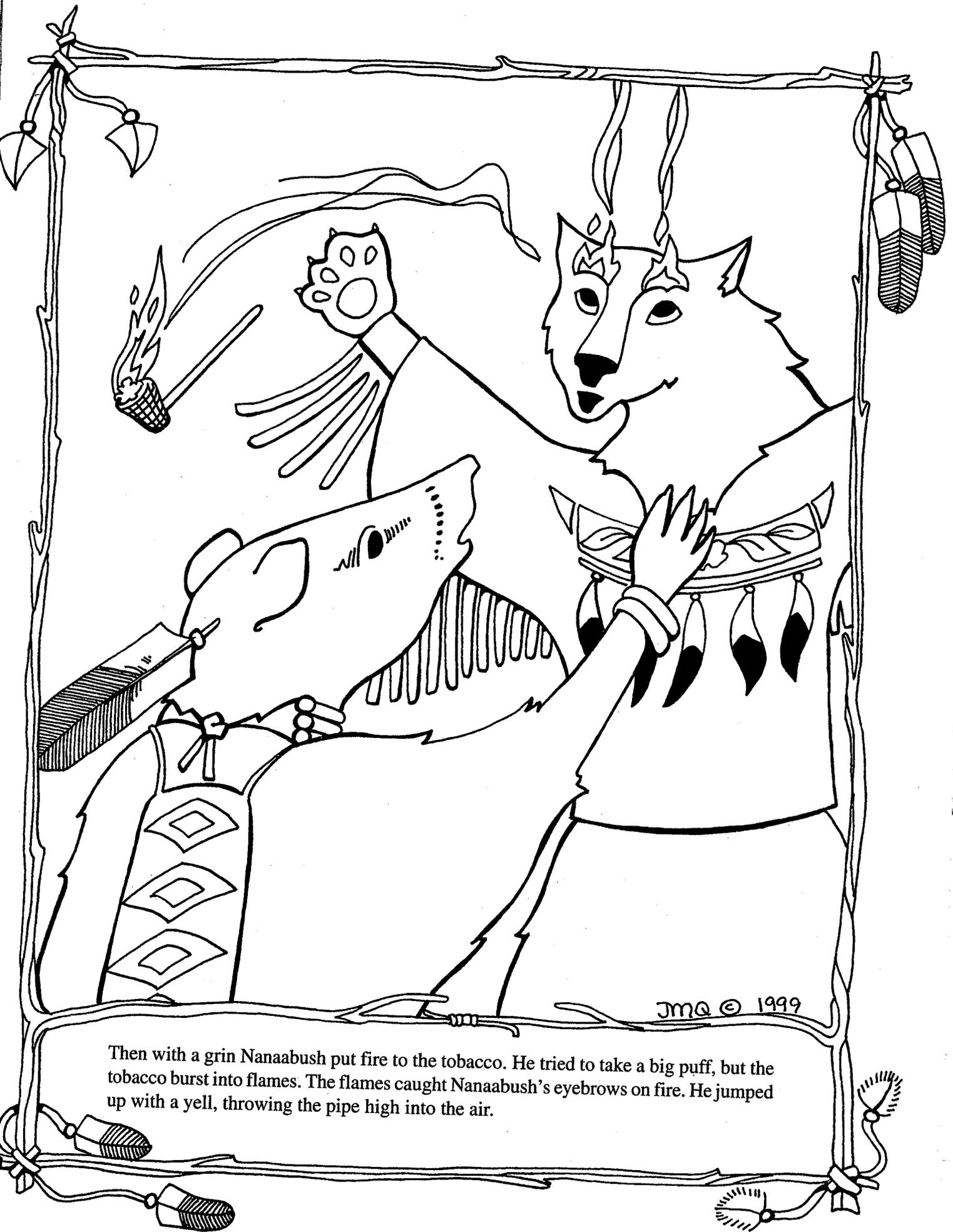
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Nanaabush quickly snatched a pinch of Sema, put it in his pipe and lit it. After taking a big puff, he offered it to Opossum. Even though he was very angry, Opossum did not want to cause a scene and make Nanaabush mad. So he took a small puff, and then another, and soon the pipe was empty.



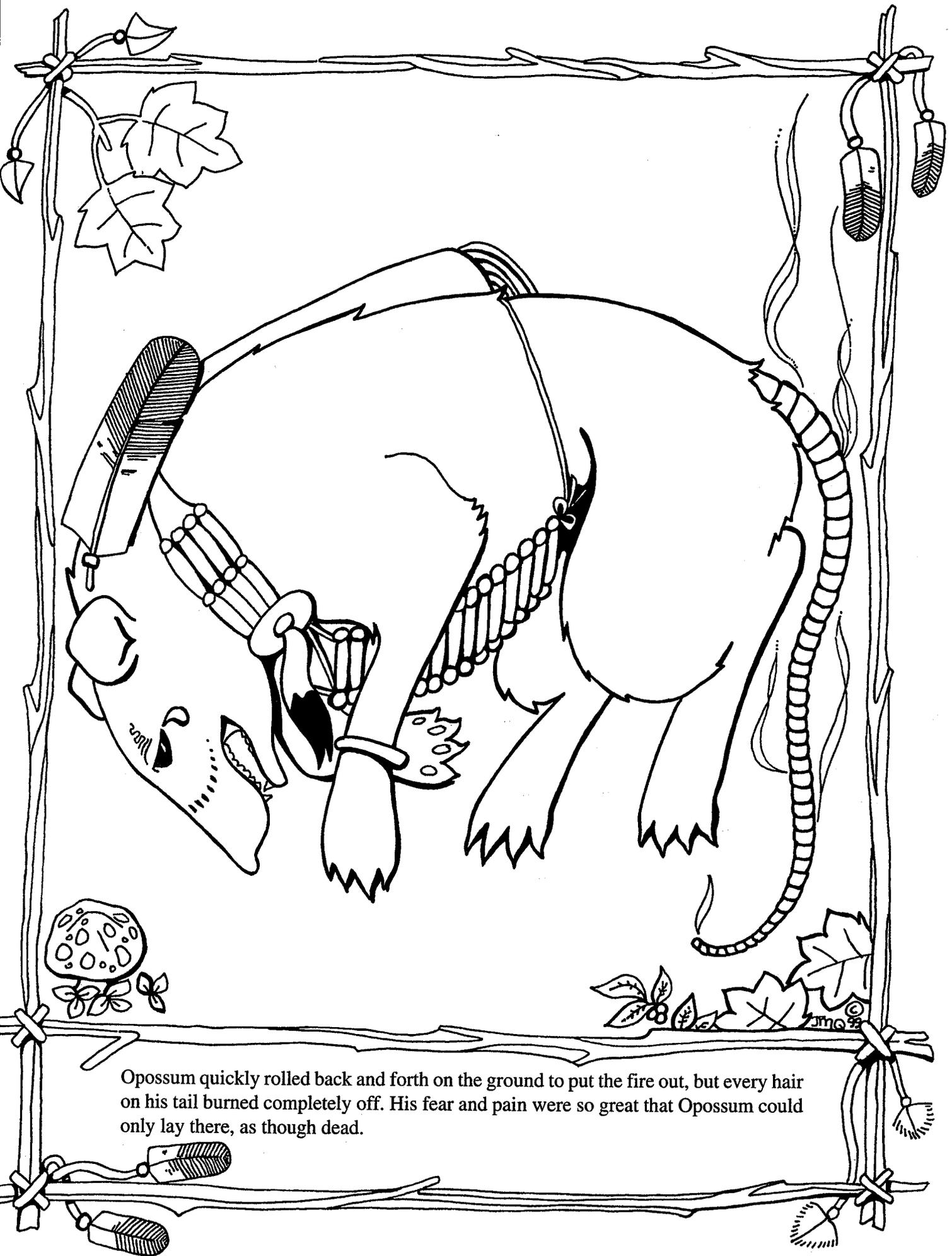
“See, nothing happened,” said Nanaabush, as he reached back into Opossum’s pouch. This time Nanaabush grabbed a big handful of tobacco and tried to stuff it all into his corncob pipe. It wouldn’t all fit, so he piled it high above the pipe.



Then with a grin Nanaabush put fire to the tobacco. He tried to take a big puff, but the tobacco burst into flames. The flames caught Nanaabush's eyebrows on fire. He jumped up with a yell, throwing the pipe high into the air.



The pipe came down on Opossum's furry tail, caught fire and began to burn. Nanaabush ran into the woods howling in fear and pain, leaving Opossum all alone.



Opossum quickly rolled back and forth on the ground to put the fire out, but every hair on his tail burned completely off. His fear and pain were so great that Opossum could only lay there, as though dead.

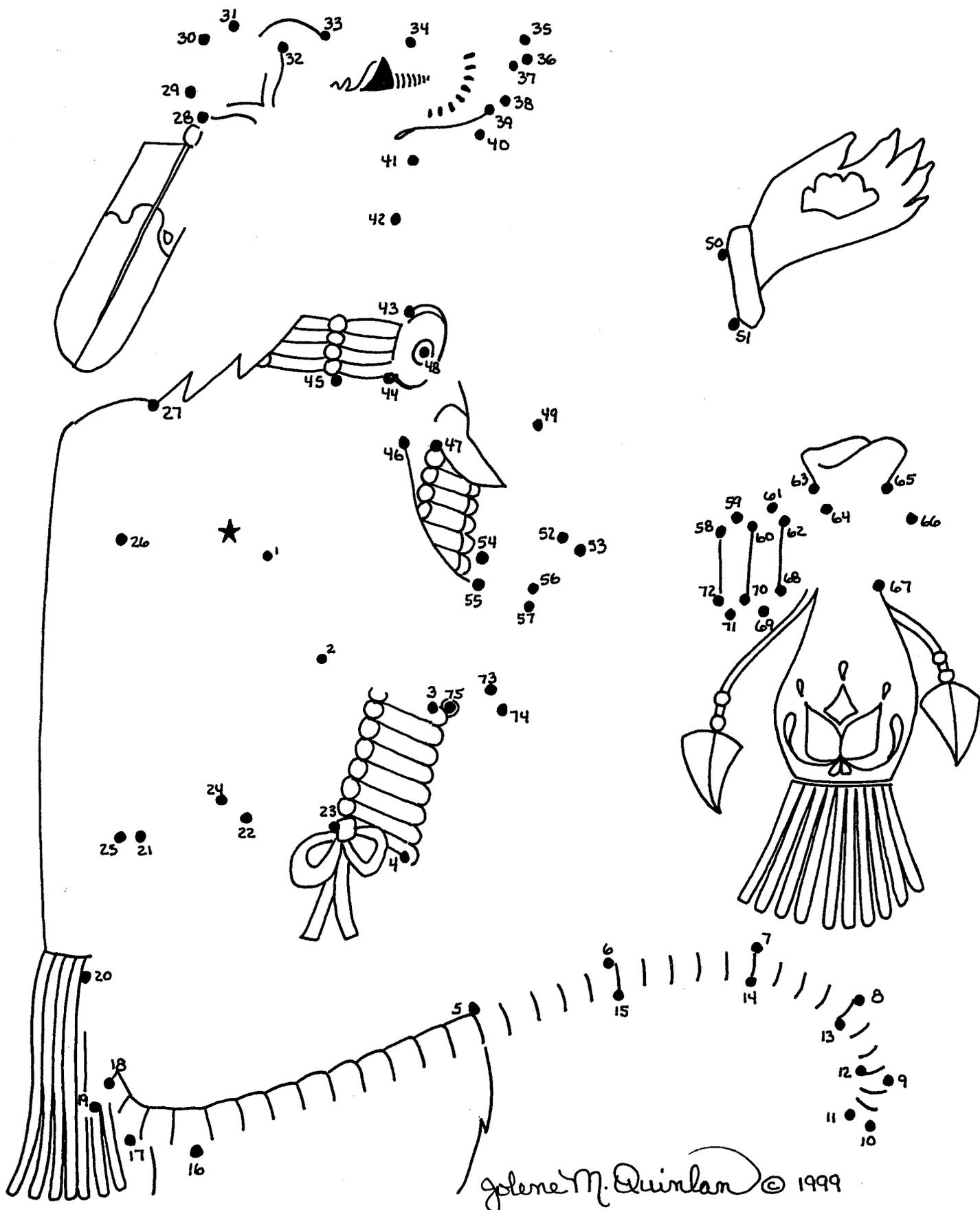


After a long time Opossum slowly got up. He felt sadness, guilt and shame because of what had happened. Opossum asked the Creator for forgiveness. He also asked the Creator to have another animal take care of the Sema pouch because he was no longer worthy to watch over it.



To this day Opossum and his entire family have kept their hairless tails to remind everyone to use Sema in the way it was meant to be used. The male opossum no longer has a pouch, and if anything bad happens to an opossum, it falls to the ground as if dead.

Dot to Dot. Start at the Star* and connect the dots.





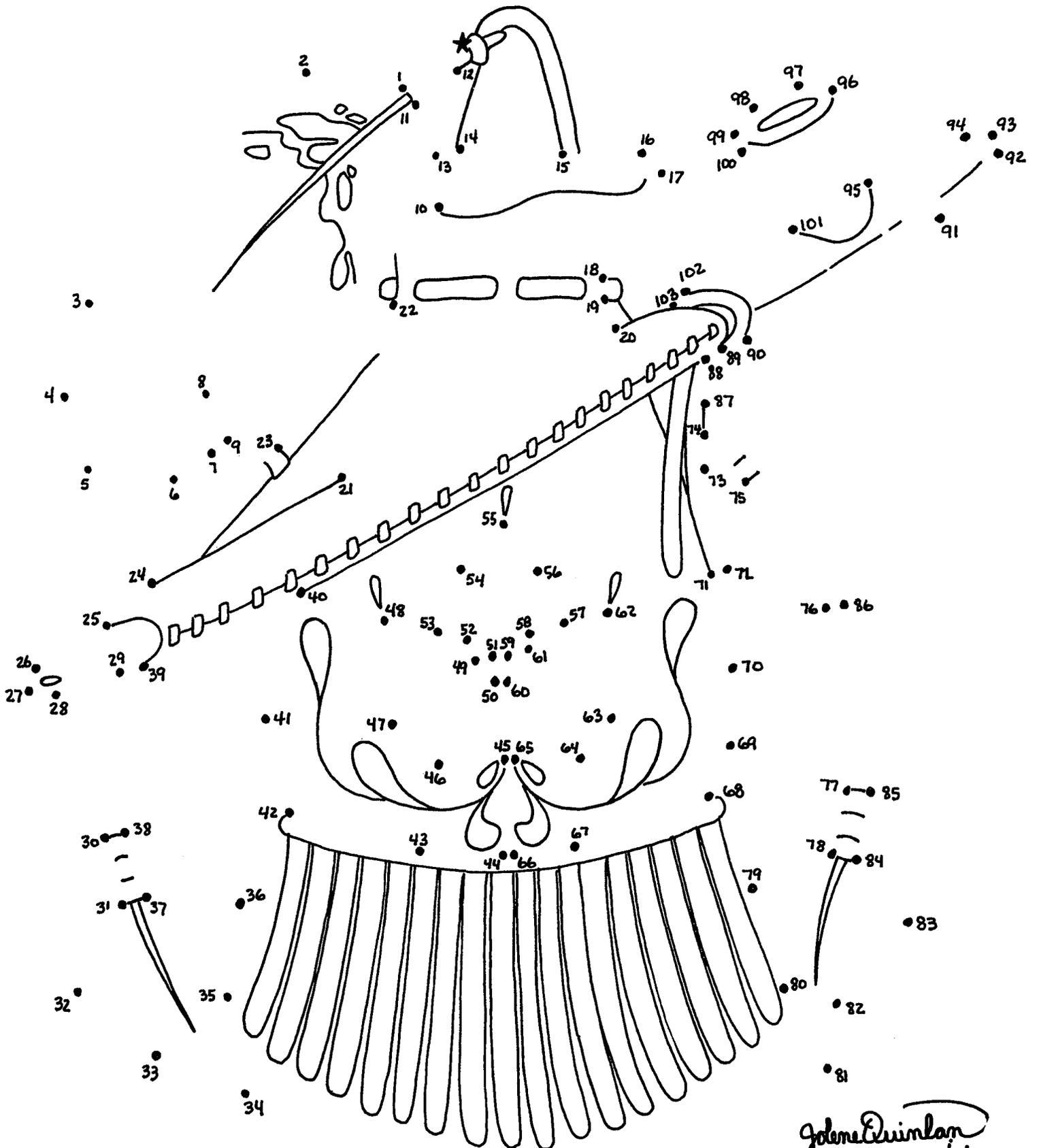
Find the 27 hidden objects:

- | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------|
| 6 Flowers | 2 Butterflies | 1 Pipe |
| 2 Turtles | 5 Feathers | 1 Staff |
| 1 Fish | 1 Breastplate | 3 Birds |
| 3 Opossums | 1 Choker | 1 Pouch |

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Jolene Quinlan
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Look for Opossum and his friends in new adventures in the future.

