

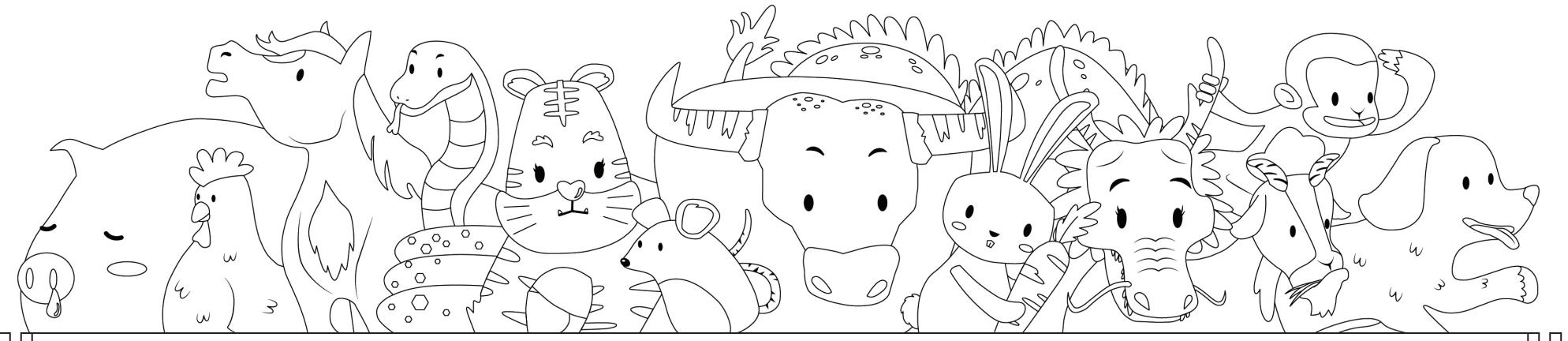
THE GREAT ZODIAC RACE

SINGAPORE EDITION

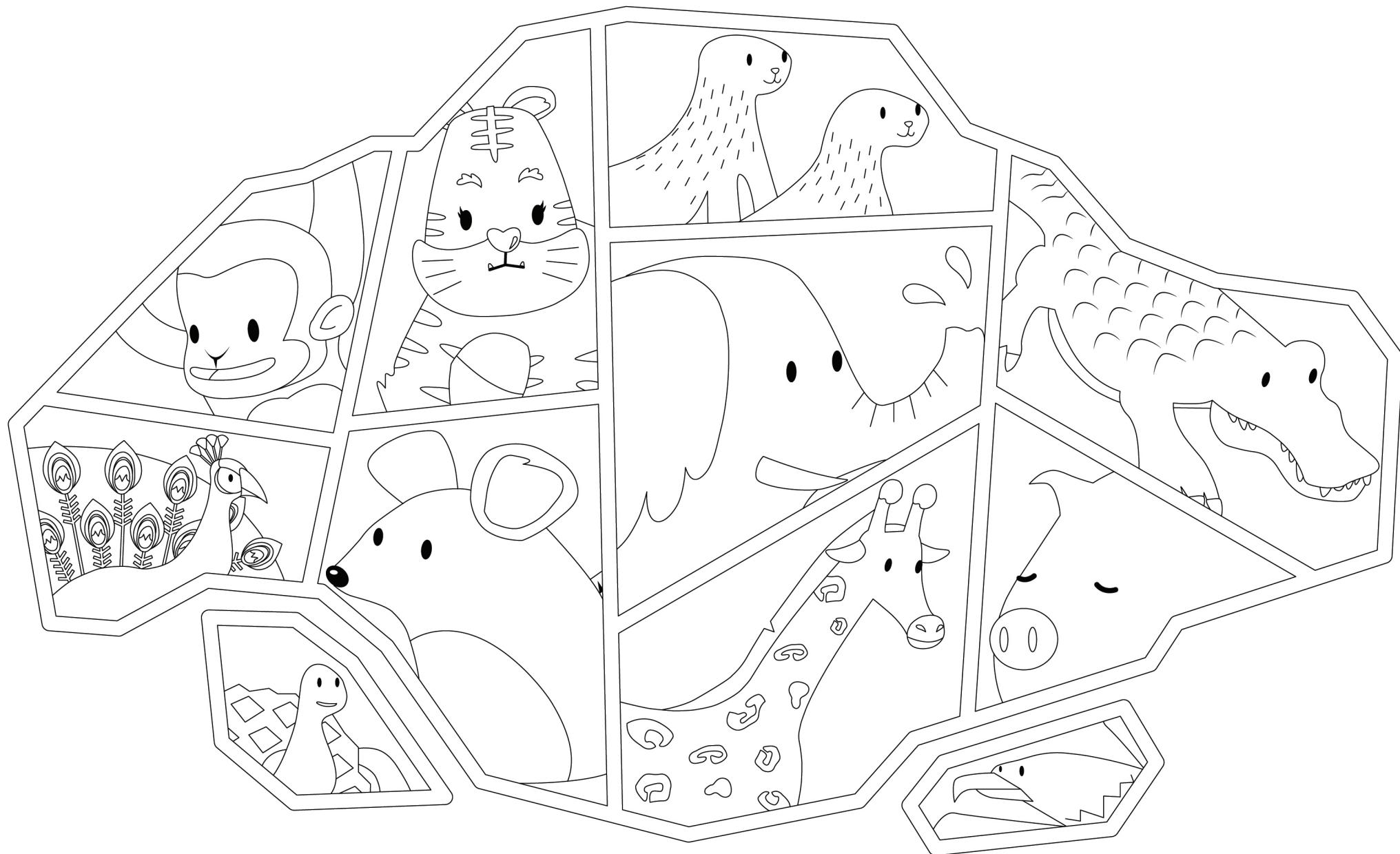


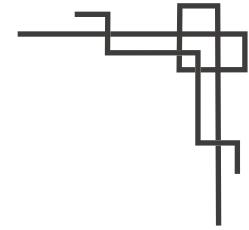
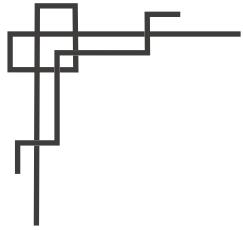
THE GREAT ZODIAC RACE

SINGAPORE EDITION



A long, long time ago in the jungles of Singapura, a Grand Race was planned to decide (you know, meritocracy) which 12 animals would be chosen as the Heavenly Zodiacs. News of this fanned quickly across our island shores, and many animals, big and small, were excited to be a part of the race.

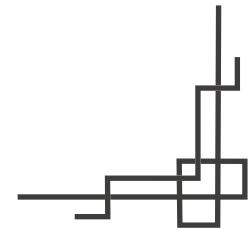
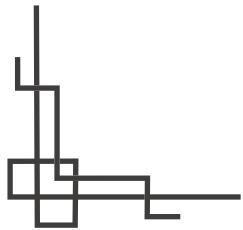


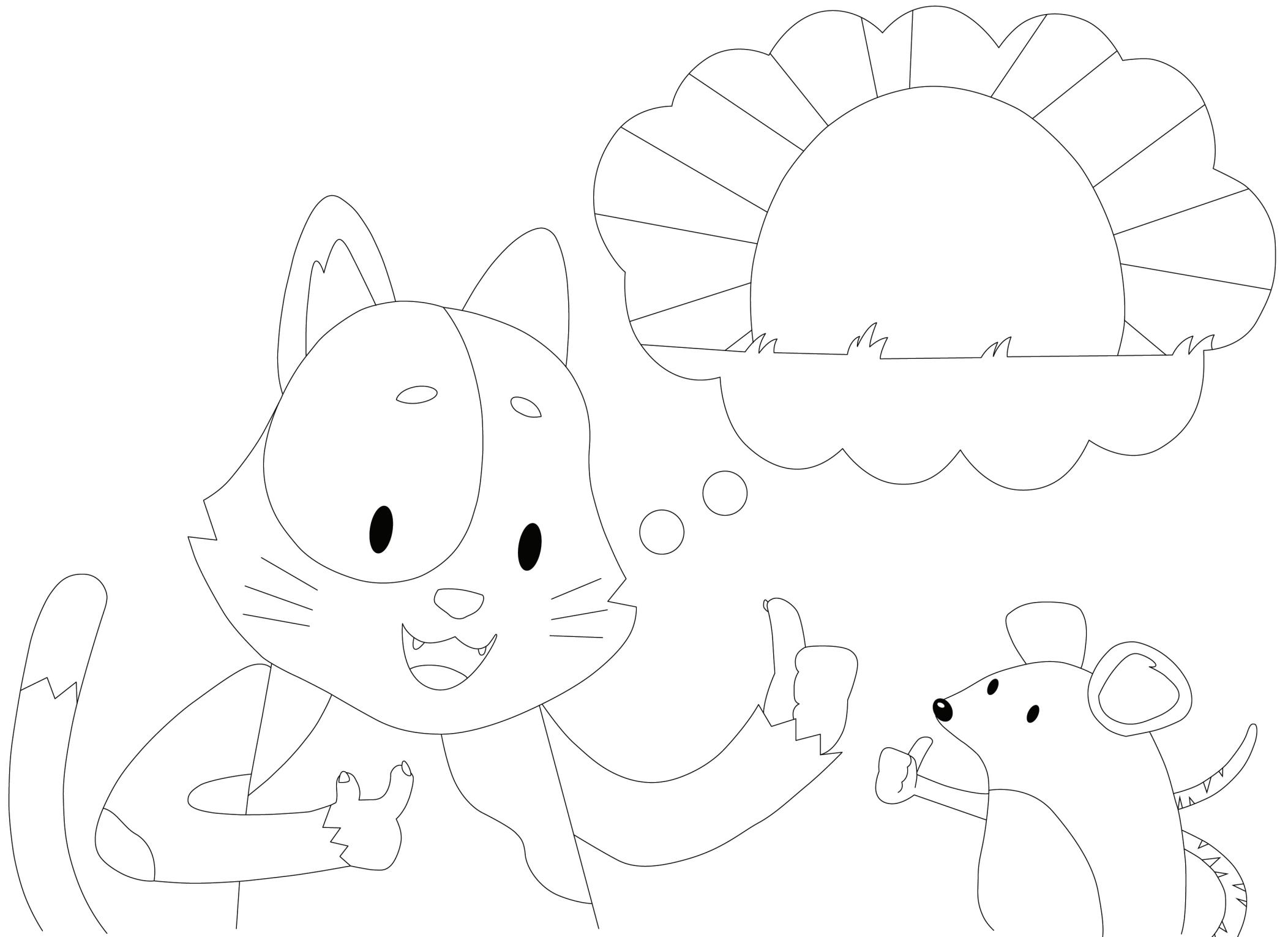


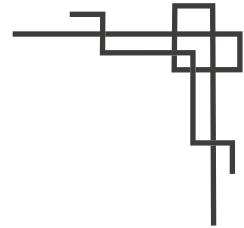
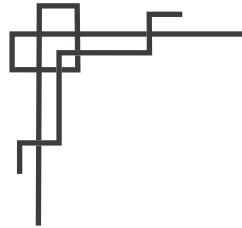
Upon hearing of the race, the Cat from Muscat Street asked along his best friend, the Rat from Ratus Road, to take part in the race and win it together.

However, the Cat had a bad habit of waking up late. Fearing that he might miss the Grand Race, the Cat asked the Rat to wake him up the next morning.

Rising real early, the Rat however, in his excitement, forgot about his promise and left without the Cat. Oh no!



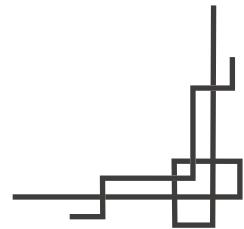
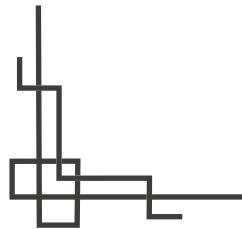


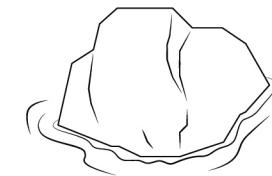
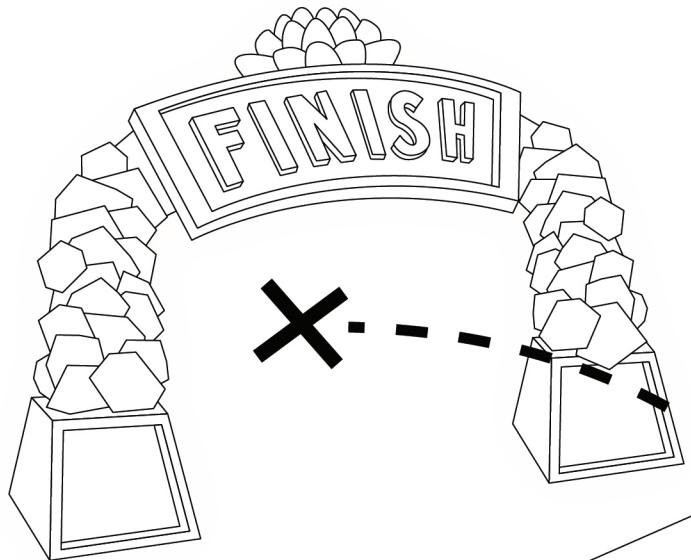
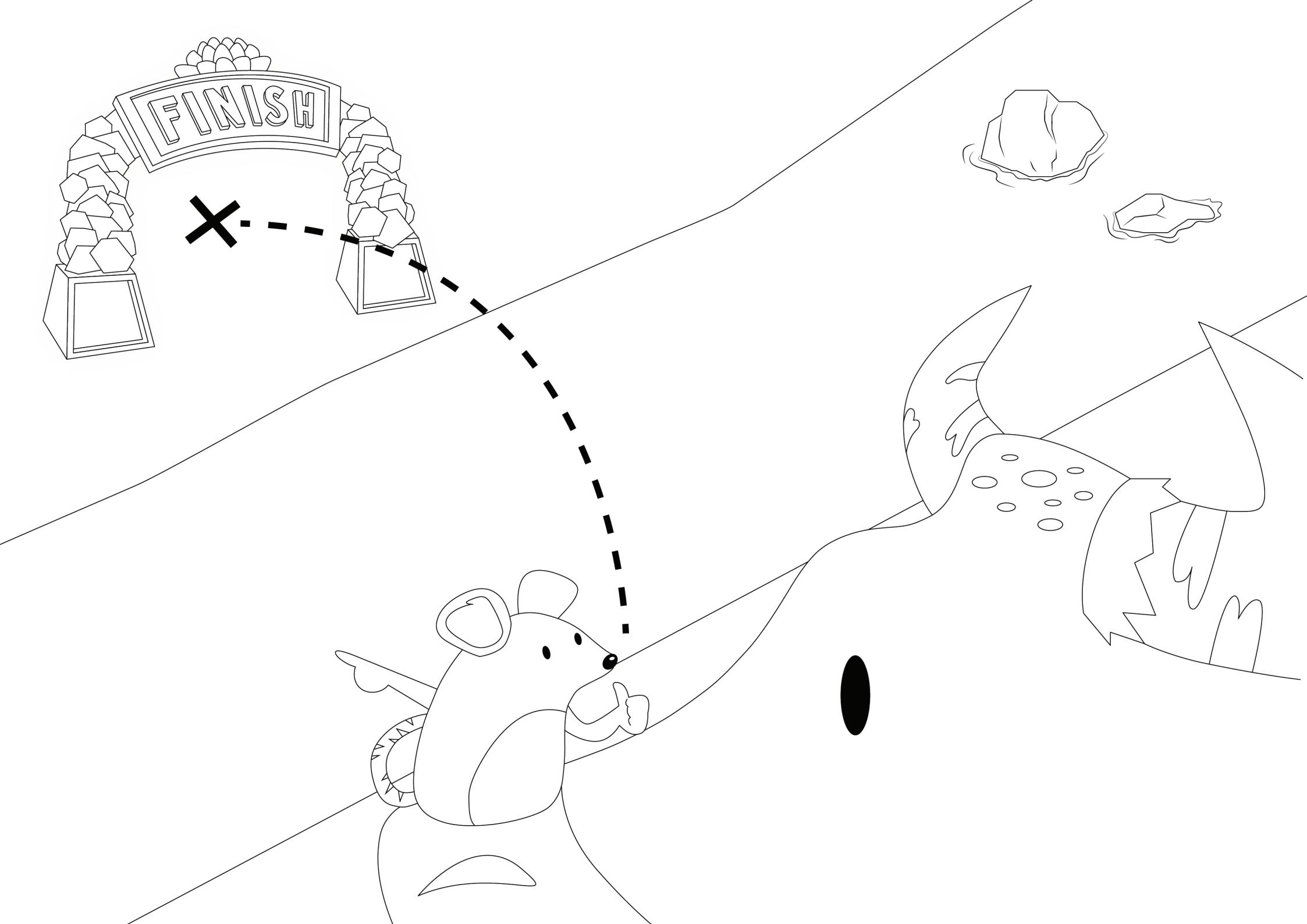


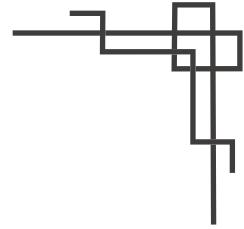
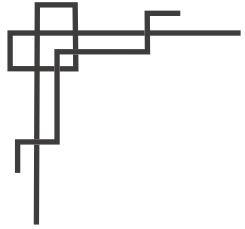
At dawn, the Grand Race begun and the animals sped on – darting, scurrying, galloping, hopping and pouncing ahead.

Before the finishing line, there was the great Singapura River to cross, and my, was it a long, winding river. The Rat was not a swimmer, but he certainly had ideas swimming in his head! Gnawing on the Ox's kind and dependable nature, the Rat convinced the straightforward Ox from Oxley Road to let him ride on his back across the river. The good Ox agreed, and they crossed the river steadily.

As they neared the other side of the river, the Rat quickly jumped off the unassuming Ox and scurried to the finishing line, coveting the spot of the very first zodiac. This is how the Rat came to be the first, followed by the dispirited Ox lumbering in second.



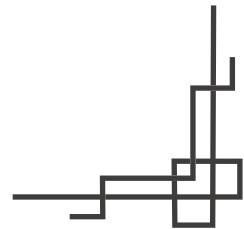
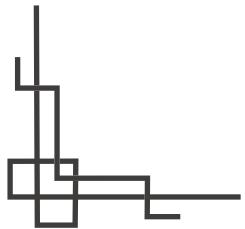




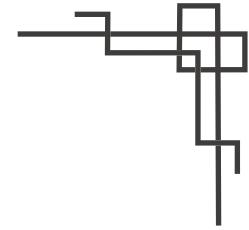
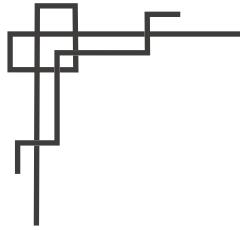
How did the rest of the animals do?

With legs like pillars of solid muscles, and the furthest pounce on the island to boot, the majestic queen of the Singapura jungles, the Tiger from Jalan Tiga, was just a tail behind.

Although she was a swift swimmer, she met heavy currents that kept her downstream. Pushing forward furiously, the Tiger clawed up the edge of the river, with her shiny wet pelt glistening in the bright noon sun, and fiercely strutted to claim the third spot.





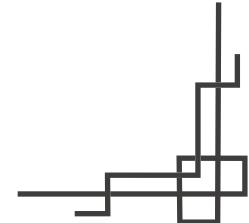
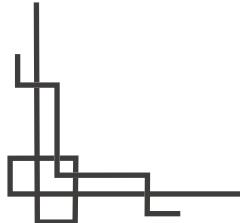


Hopping along, the quick-footed Rabbit from Woodgrove Avenue was behind the Tiger. Not wanting to smudge her winter white fur, with tiny heaves and huffs, she intelligently hopped from pebble to pebble towards the other side of the river.

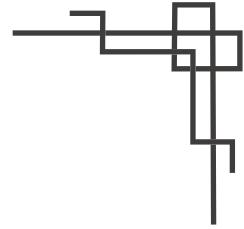
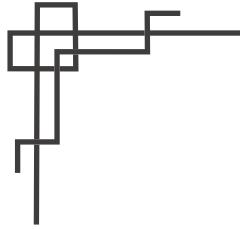
However, as she got more and more confident as she neared the banks, the Rabbit missed a step and in she went plunging into the cold river, almost getting swept away. Even with her athletic hind legs, she could not kick her way across.

By a stroke of luck, a log drifted by and she secured herself to it. But the log bobbed to the middle of the river, up and down, without going anywhere closer to shore. With her paws quivering, the Rabbit begun to give up hope. When suddenly, a strong gust of wind blew over the river, and the log drifted ashore.

The tiny but nimble Rabbit, though now drenched and grimy, dragged herself into the fourth place.







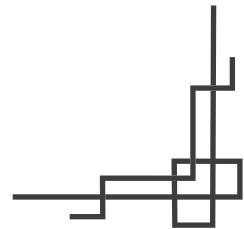
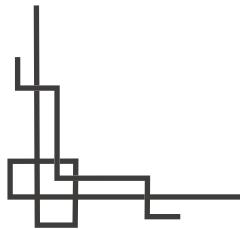
Then clouds gathered in the sky, as a long scaly tail lashes across the wide sky. The great Dragon from Burn Road caught up on the race as she soared above the land.

Though she did not hatch in Singapura, the Dragon had nested and made this tropical island her home.

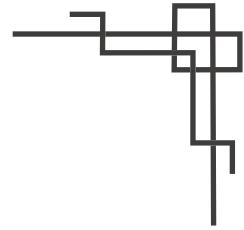
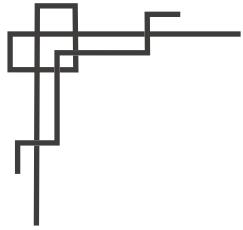
Racing over the island, she saw that the animals were thirsty. The Dragon felt for them, so she slowed down to rain over the dry pools in Singapura. This formed the first five reservoirs MacRitchie, Peirce, Seletar, Kranji, and Pandan of today.

Nearing the line, the Dragon also caught sight of the poor Rabbit struggling on the wretched log, so she puffed a big breath that sent the log all the way to shore. Unknown to the Rabbit, the Dragon had saved her. This is why till today, people say that babies born in the Year of the Rabbit enjoy the best fortune in the Year of the Dragon!

The Dragon came in fifth in line.

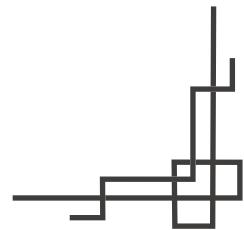
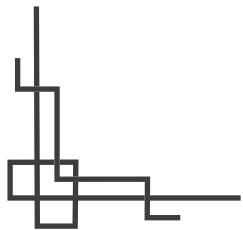


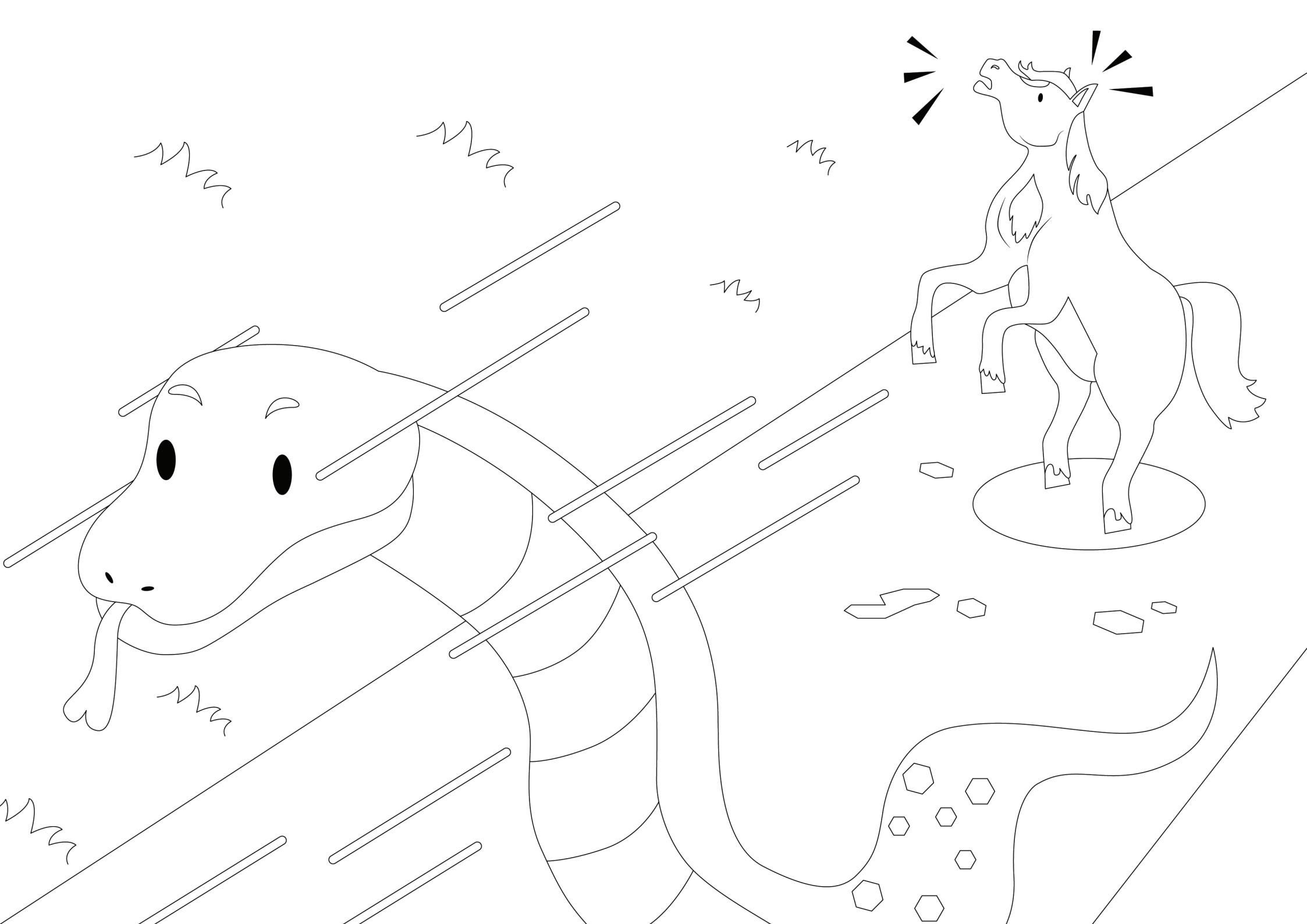


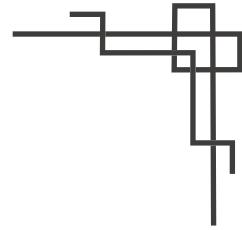
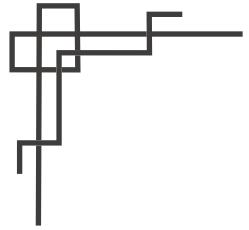


As soon as the Dragon joined the Rat, Ox, Tiger and Rabbit, the Horse from Gallop Walk sped in, kicking up a trail of golden dust in an untamed gallop.

Out of nowhere, the Snake from Peel Road launched forth from the wild bushes and surprised the Horse. Frightened, the Horse stumbled back, which opened a slit for the sly Snake to slither into the sixth spot. Well, the Snake had only been clever. The Horse then trotted in to a bitter seventh.

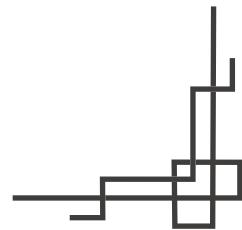
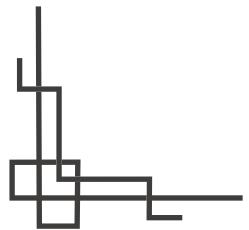


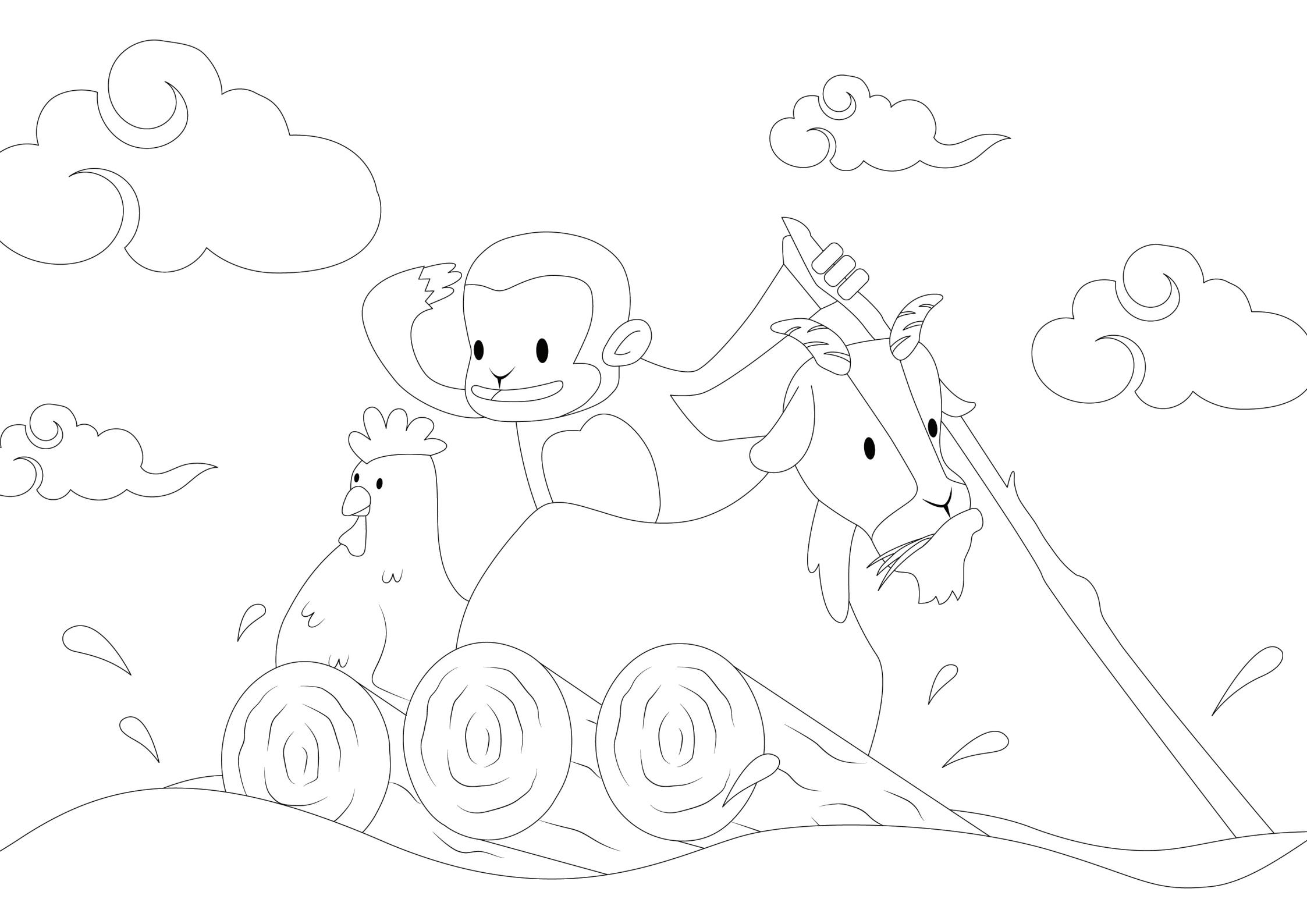


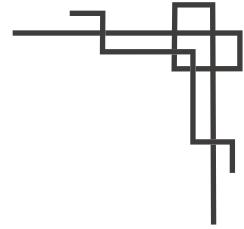
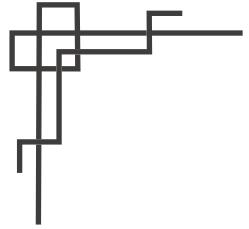


A moment later, the Goat from Buckley Road, the Monkey from Baboo Lane, and the Chicken from Henderson Road reached the Singapura River together. As neither of them could swim, they got together to build a small wooden raft. Tying together heavy logs with vines, they paddled across the deep river using lengthy branches.

Once they banked onto the river, there was a mad rush, with each racing themselves to the finishing line. In the confusion, the biggest of them all, the Goat, got ahead and came in eighth, followed by the Monkey, and then the smallest, the Chicken.

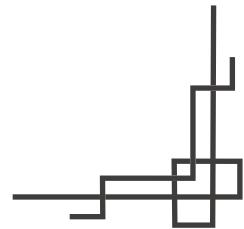
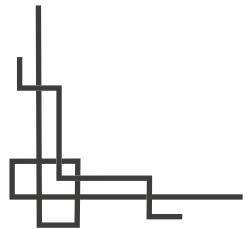


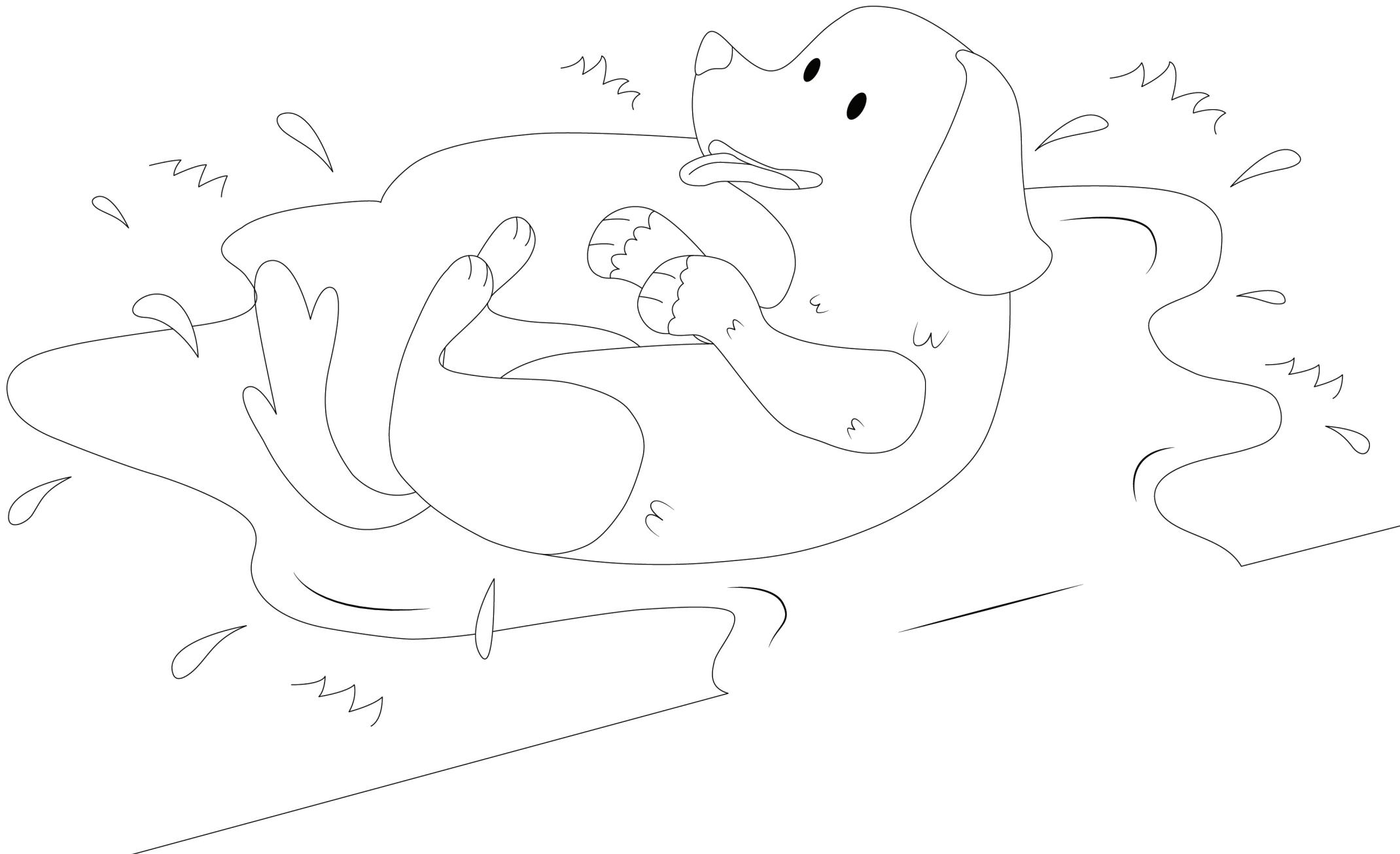


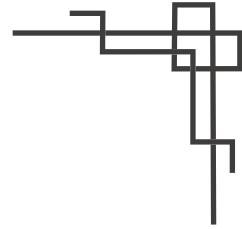
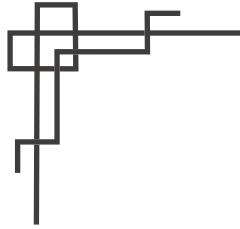


Over at the corner, danced in the Dog from Barker Road. The Dog was a fast animal and excellent swimmer. But he only came in eleventh as he was playful. Splashing around the river and rolling along the banks, the other animals all got ahead of him.

Nevertheless, the Dog waddled in with a silly smile. He was just happy that he got to have a great day!





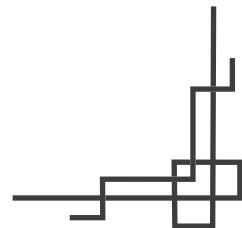
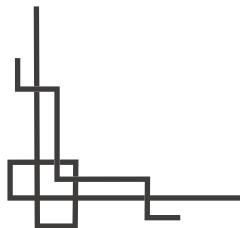


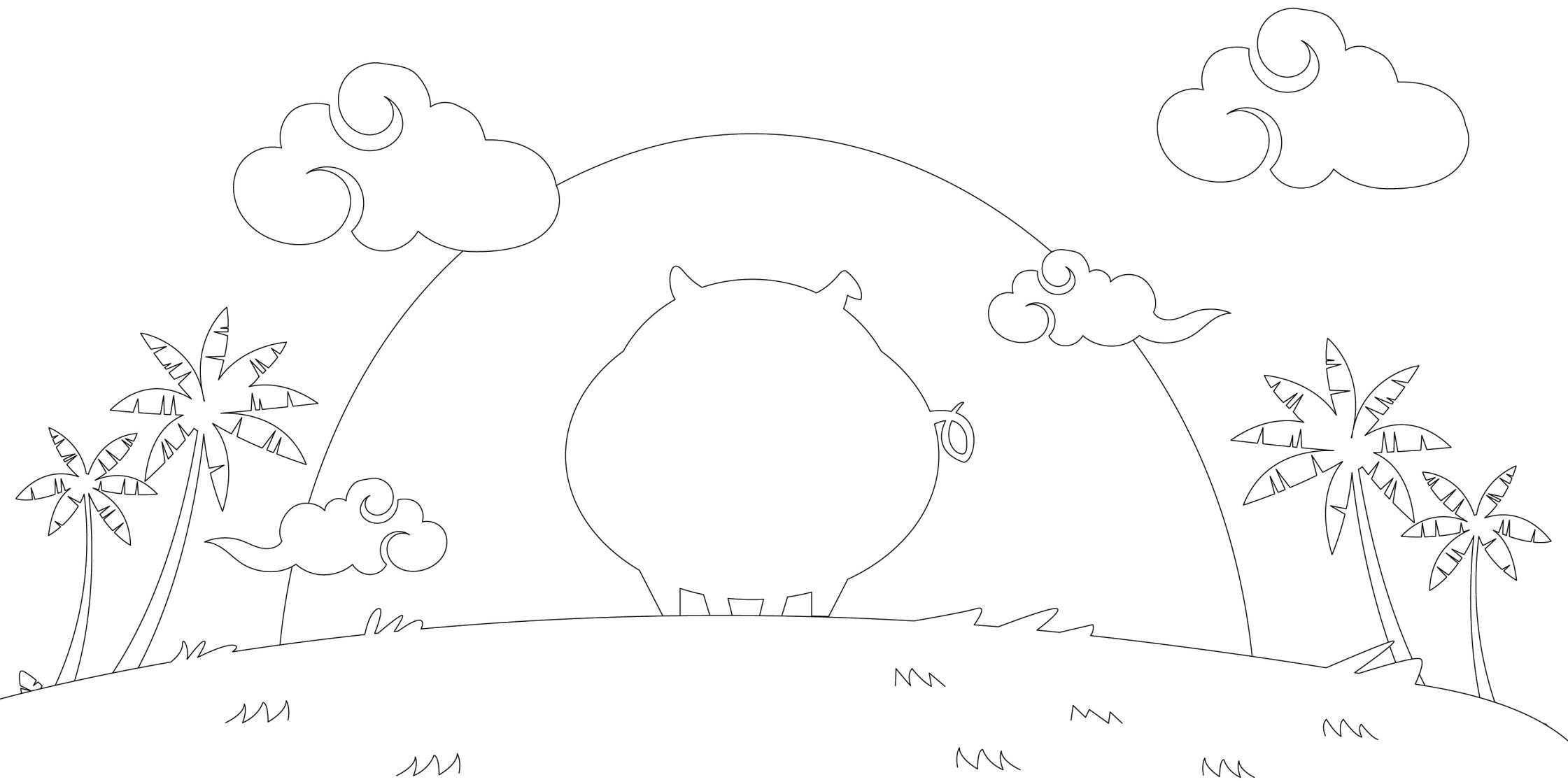
With one last spot remaining, a broad shadow peeked out from the horizon.

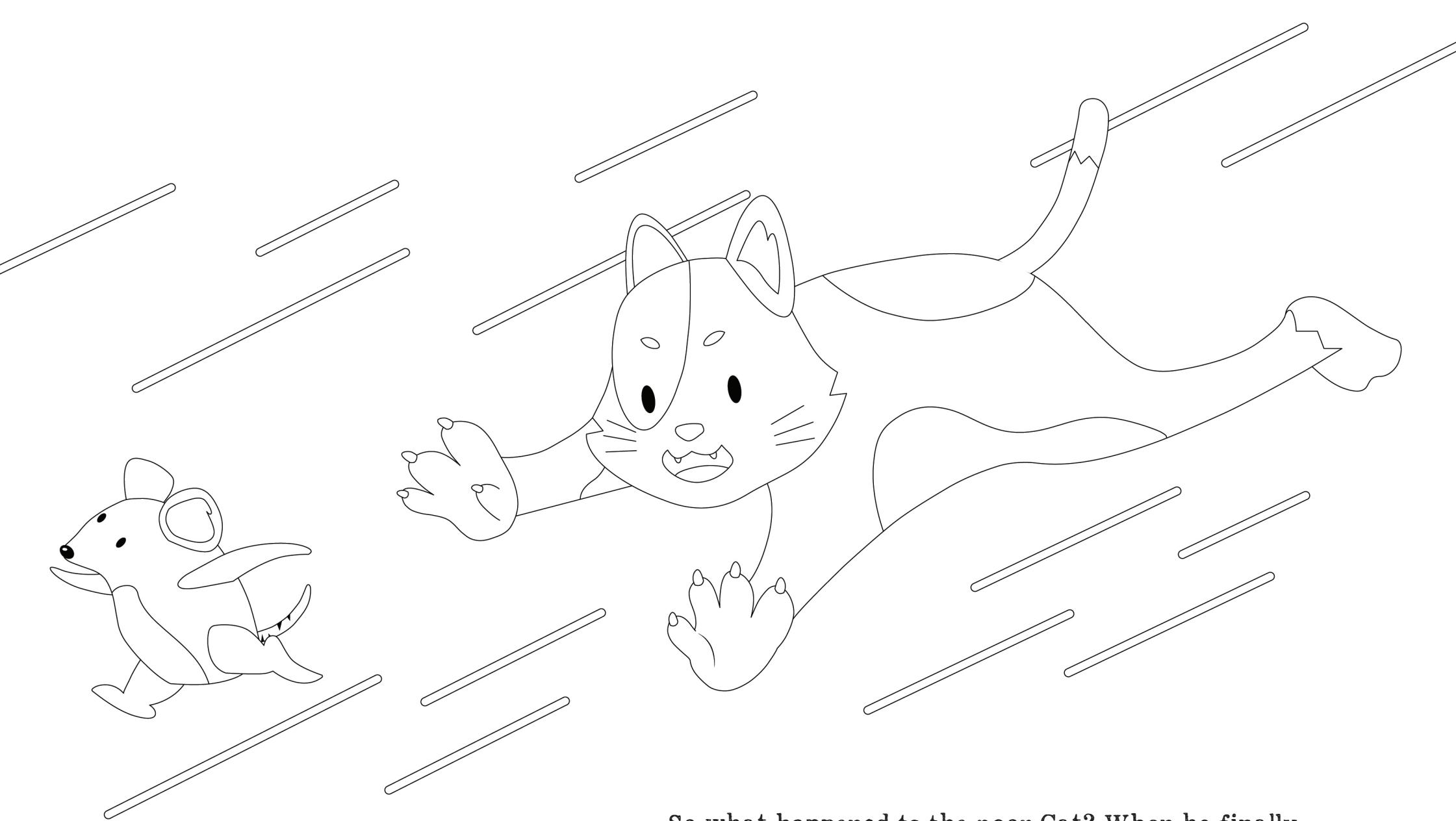
His sonorous snorts could be heard from afar, even before his large heaving form drew closer. Coming in last, but certainty not least, was the Pig from Lim Chu Kang.

Racing had made him very hungry and he ended up stopping along the way to snack on his favourite Ayam Penyet, Wanton Mee and Tandoori. He ate so much that he grew sleepy, and the Pig decided to take a nap, right in the middle of a race! Waking up just in time, the Pig rolled into the last position.

Much against the expectations of everyone, the Pig had won a spot too!

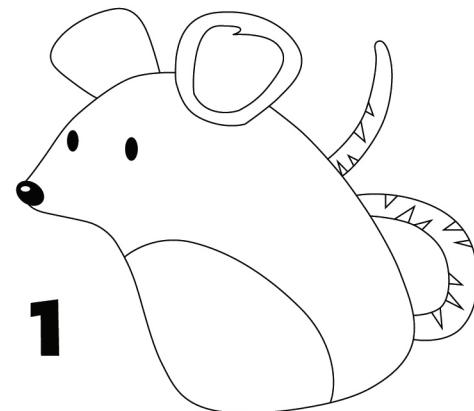




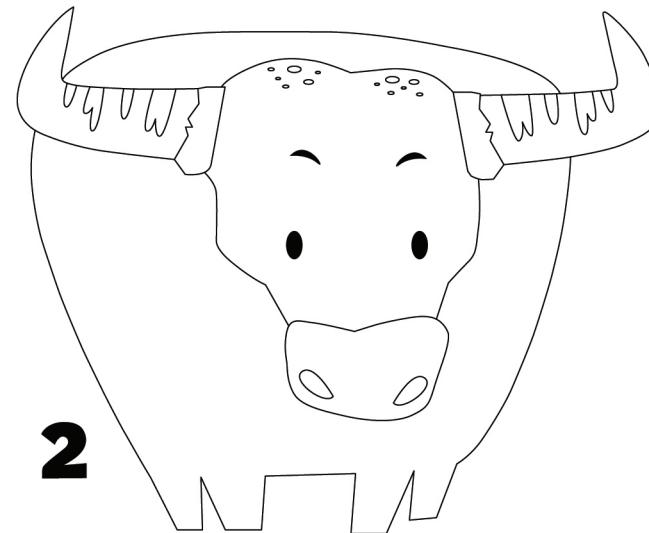


So what happened to the poor Cat? When he finally woke up, the sun was setting and he had missed the whole race. This is why, until this day, cats will always chase rats when they see one.

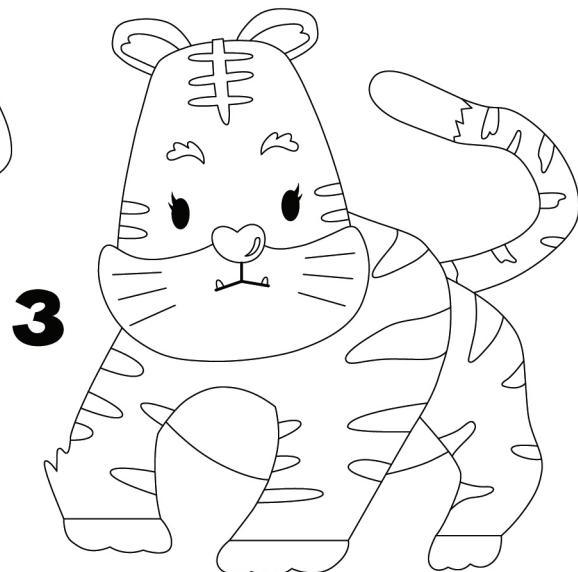
This, is our Singaporean story of how the 12 animals got their places in the Zodiac.



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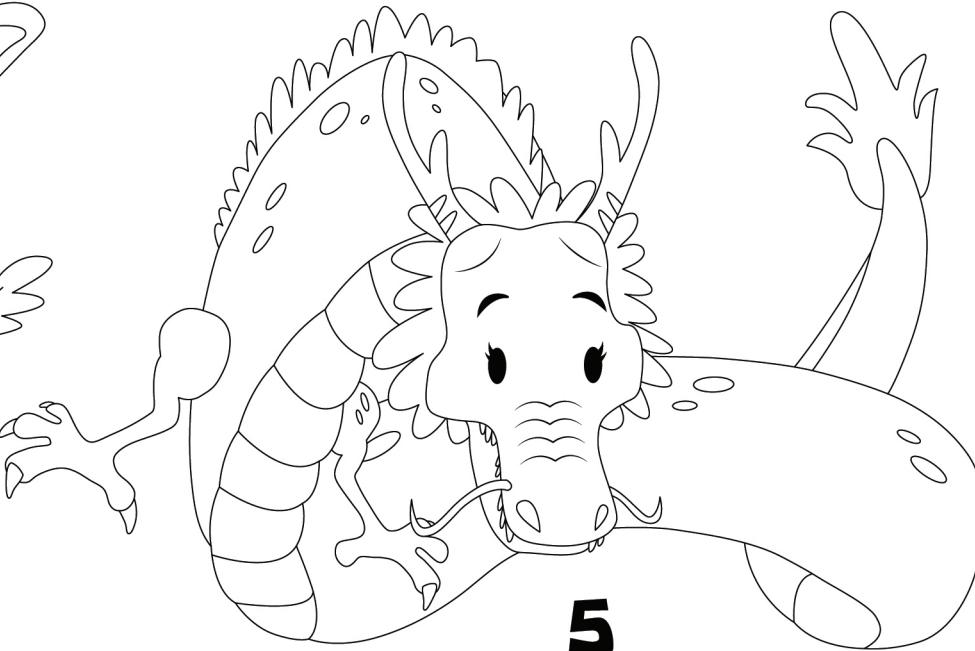
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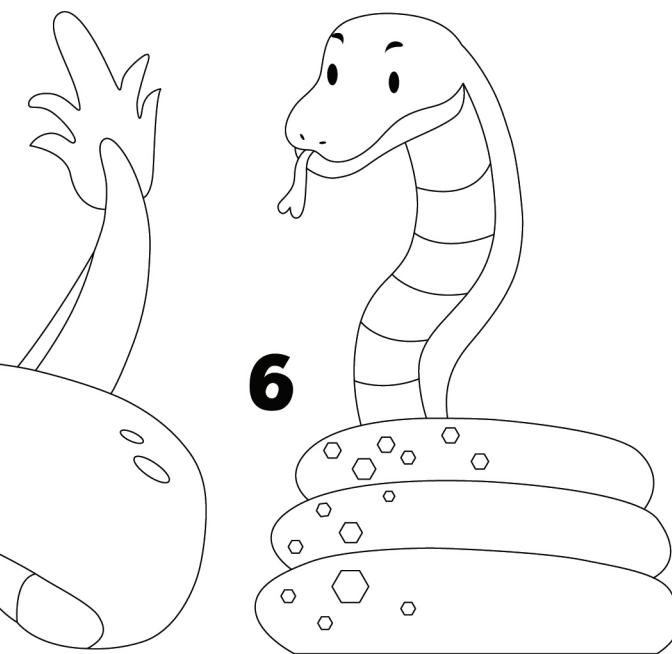
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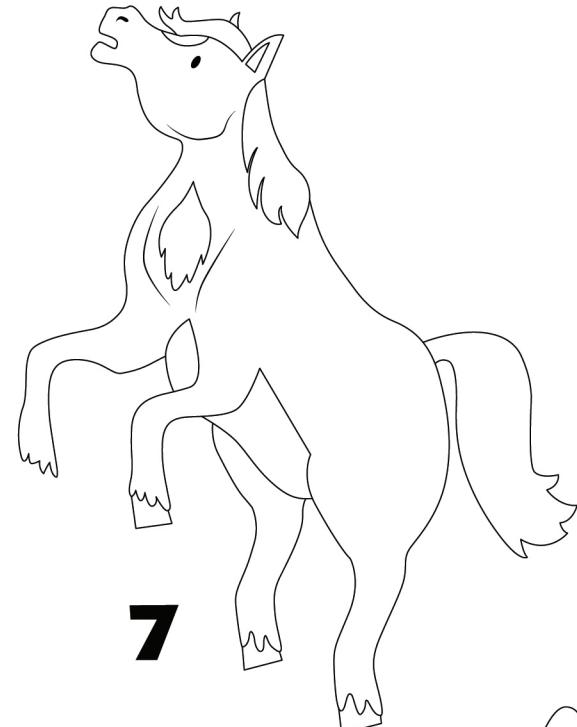
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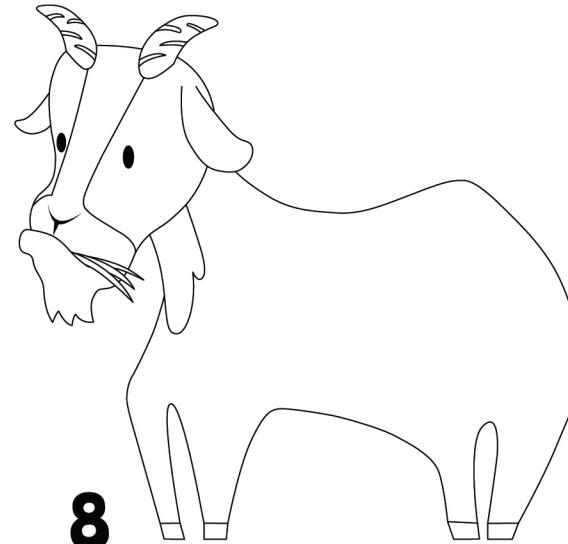
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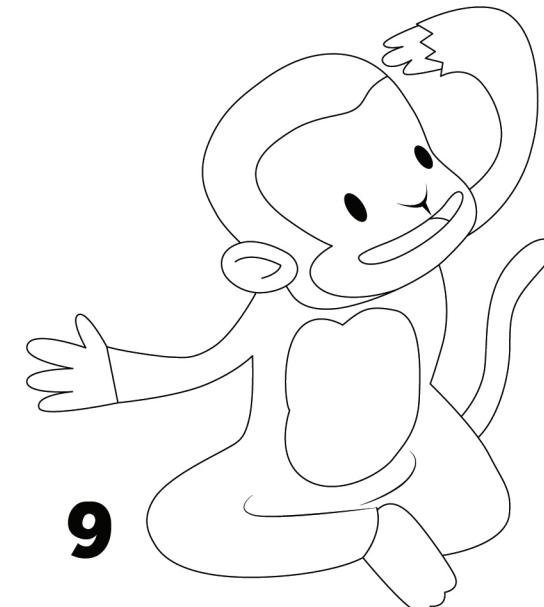
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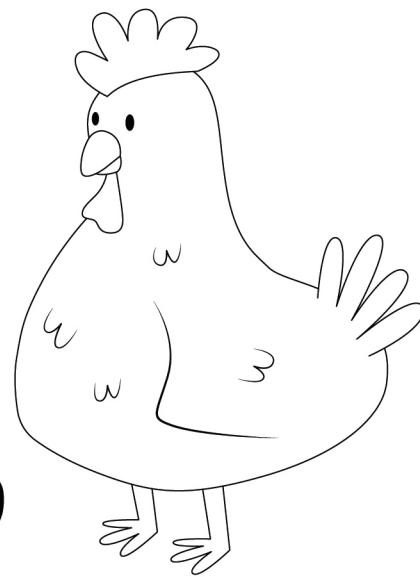
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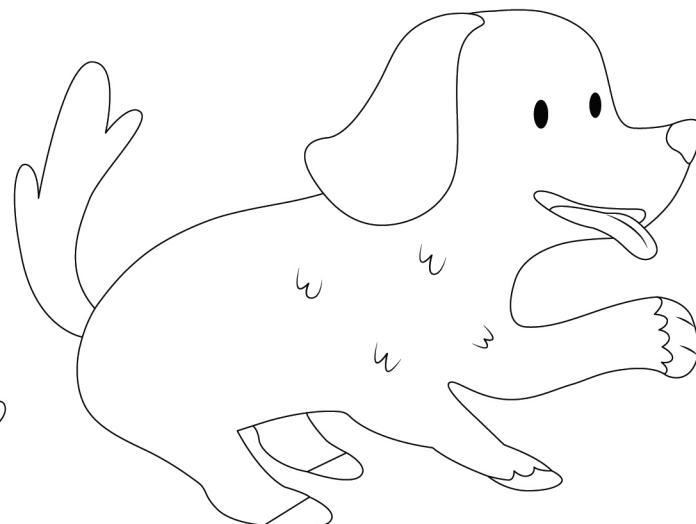
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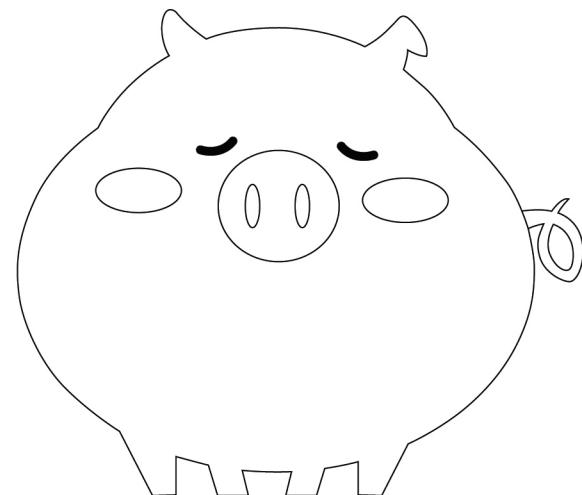
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