

## Book Activity Packet

By Johnette Downing

### About the Book

Move over Bra's Rabbit, there's a new trickster in town! When hungry Deer asks Possum how he stays so plump during the long dry season, the sly marsupial gets an idea. It wouldn't take much for Possum to help Deer; he could just climb that old persimmon tree and knock down the fruit. But Possum is just plain lazy and he'd rather trick Deer into doing the work for both of them. Once Possum decides to take advantage of his starving neighbor they both become marked forever.

**WHY THE POSSUM HAS A LARGE GRIN**

**By Johnette Downing**

**Illustrated by Christina Wald**

**JUVENILE FICTION / Fairy Tales & Folklore / Adaptations**

**JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Nocturnal**

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## About the Author

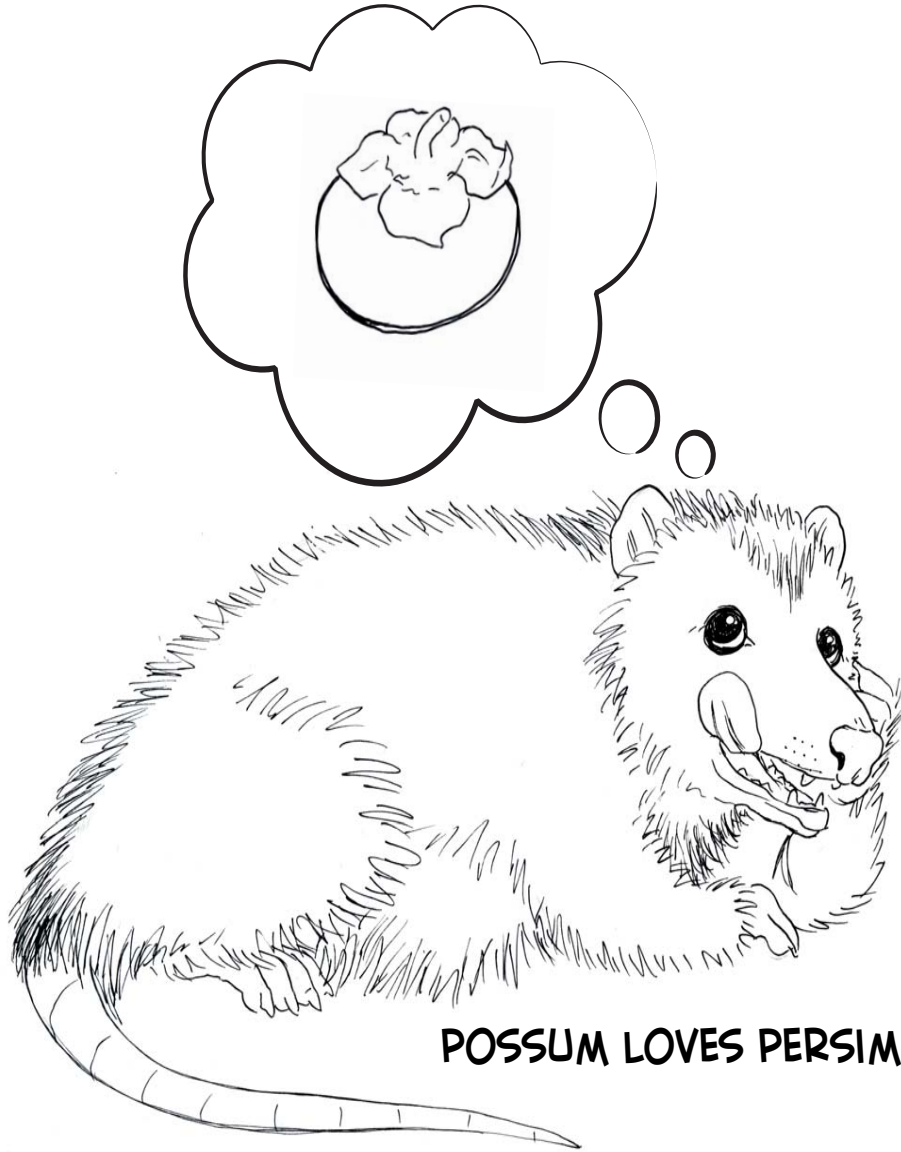
Johnette Downing is a multi-award winning, internationally recognized singer, songwriter and author. Her many accolades include six Parents' Choice Awards, four iParenting Media Awards, and four National Parenting Publication Awards. She wrote and illustrated ***There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Bugs, My Aunt Came Back from Louisiane, Why the Crawfish Lives in the Mud, and Amazon Alphabet*** and is the author of ***Chef Creole, Down in Louisiana, Why the Oyster Has the Pearl, Today Is Monday in Louisiana, Today Is Monday in Texas, Today Is Monday in New York, and Today Is Monday in Kentucky***. Downing lives in New Orleans, Louisiana.

## About the Illustrator

***Christina Wald*** specializes in illustration and toy, giftware, and product design. Wald graduated from the University of Cincinnati from the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning, with a BS in industrial design. She is the illustrator of Pelican's [Annie Jump Cannon, Astronomer](#). Wald lives in Cincinnati, Ohio.

# Coloring Sheet

WHY THE POSSUM HAS A LARGE GRIN



POSSUM LOVES PERSIMMONS!

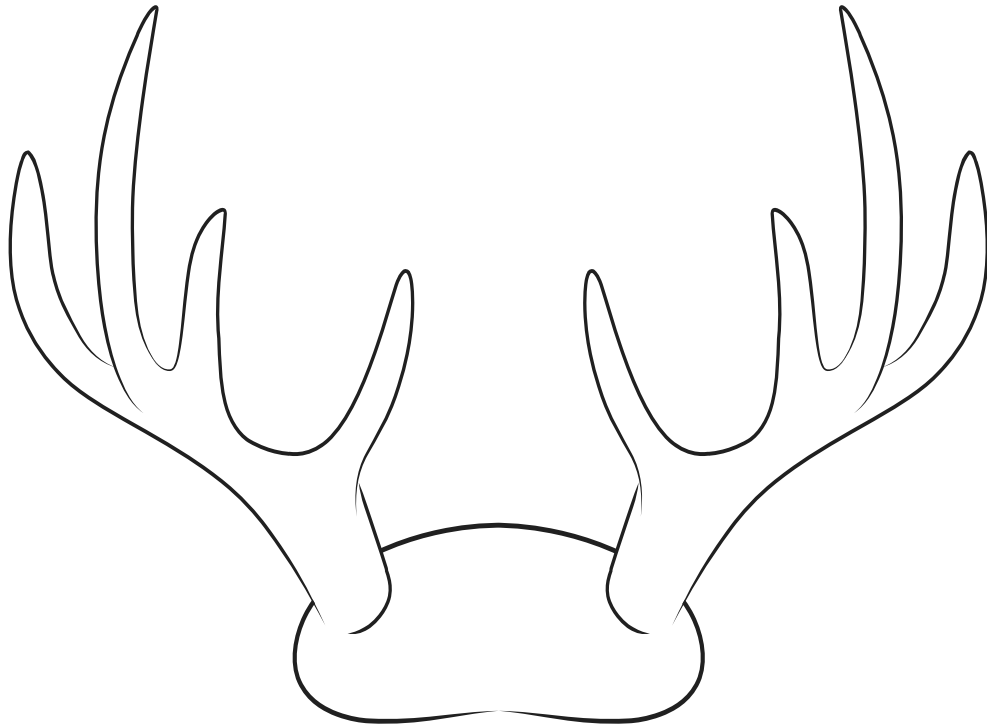
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## Antler Craft

- 1) Enlarge the image.
- 2) Color the image.
- 3) Cut out the image.
- 4) Staple string to the antlers and then, using the string, tie the antlers on your head.

**WHY THE POSSUM HAS A LARGE GRIN**



**GROW YOUR OWN DEER ANTLERS!**

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# Why the Possum Has a Large Grin

B U E A V I R C Y L R E V Y S  
 E G L Y H W E B A A B R T Z H  
 A N A N T L E R S T A X E A G  
 H B T Y J L D F V N V Z Z L T  
 D B T W A T C O H C D G Y F K  
 U A O N Y N Q J B L E N D L L  
 D F E M X P N H K E C G I M Z  
 W Q A H J X U O G T H X Q X G  
 Q K N O T S C R M U S S O P X  
 J J W I Z N A T F M A U M E O  
 C F Y B R L B T I M I L R F I  
 K L N O V G B N V N K S Q J Q  
 W K Z B J S R T X Y S B R A U  
 O J Q B A J O U W J H S R E E  
 T R I C K S T E R X E E R T P

POSSUM  
 DEER  
 PERSIMMON  
 GRIN  
 ANTLERS  
 TREE  
 HEAD  
 KNOTS  
 LAZY  
 CHOCTAW  
 WHY  
 LARGE  
 LAUGH  
 TRICKSTER  
 TALE

## Discussion Questions

- 1) The author Johnette Downing added a second “why” ending to this “*pour quoi*” or “why” tale. What is the significance of this double why ending?
- 2) Both characters in the story make choices that go against their natural instincts. What were these choices, and how did their choices mark them?
- 3) Have you ever been a trickster, and if so, in what way, if any, did the experience mark you or the person you tricked?
- 4) When should we trust?
- 5) When should we help others and when should we let natural selection take its course?
- 6) What differentiates good and bad tricks?
- 7) The possum is lazy during the daytime because it is nocturnal. If the deer had encountered the possum at night, would the story have a different ending?
- 8) What good came out of the story?

