Corgi-on-the-Cob and the Harvest Table



Nutmeg has asked each friend to bring one thing to the Thanksgiving table. Corgi-on-the-Cob brings the corn, of course: six cobs for six friends. But the path to the barn has a stream, a hill and a very big pile of leaves.



On Thanksgiving morning, there was frost on Corgi-on-the-Cob’s corn patch. The leaves had nearly all come down, and the stalks rustled in the cold.

Nutmeg’s invitation was pinned to his door. *Come to the harvest table in my barn. Bring one thing.*

“I’ll bring the corn,” said Corgi. “Obviously.”



He picked the fattest cobs he could find and laid them in his basket.

“One cob, two cobs, three cobs, four. Five cobs, six cobs.” He wagged. “Six cobs for six friends.”

Count together. How many cobs are in Corgi’s basket? (5 · 6 · 7)

Answer. 6. One for each friend at the table.



Corgi took the basket handle in his mouth and set off. The basket was heavy. It swung left and right with every step.

The path went down to the stream. Five flat stones crossed it, one after another.



On the middle stone, the basket swung too far. Two cobs tipped out. Plop. Plop.

They bobbed away down the stream.

“Four cobs for six friends!” said Corgi. “That’s not right at all.”

Count together. Six cobs, and two float away. How many are left in the basket? (3 · 4 · 5)

Answer. 4. Six take away two leaves four.



Something round and green paddled out from under the bank. It was Shelly-Pop.

She nudged one cob back with her nose, then the other. “Corn floats,” she said. “Lucky for you.”



“Six cobs for six friends,” said Corgi, putting them back. “Thank you, Shelly-Pop!”

“I’m going to the barn too,” said Shelly-Pop. “I’ll walk with you. Slowly.”



After the stream came the hill. It was steep, and the fallen leaves made it slippery.

Corgi has very short legs. The basket bumped on every step. Shelly-Pop was slower still.



Clip, clop. Pita-Pan came trotting up behind them.

“Goats are good at hills,” he said. He took the basket handle in his teeth and climbed. Corgi pushed the basket from below to keep it level.



At the top of the hill, Corgi counted again.

“One, two, three, four, five.” He counted again, slower. “Five.”

One cob was missing.

Count together. Corgi had six cobs. Now he has five. How many are missing? (1 · 2 · 3)

Answer. 1. Five and one more makes six.



They looked back down the hill. At the bottom, a huge pile of leaves was jumping all by itself.

Out popped Hop-Tart, with a cob in his paws.

“Is this anybody’s?” he called. “It was in my jumping pile.”



“Six cobs for six friends!” said Corgi. “Thank you, Hop-Tart.”

Now there were four of them walking along the lane to the barn: Corgi, Shelly-Pop, Pita-Pan and Hop-Tart. Corgi carried the basket the whole way, and he didn’t drop a single cob.



Nutmeg’s red barn was full of warm light. A long table stood in the middle, made of planks laid across hay bales. There were gourds down the middle and a jug of autumn leaves.

“The corn’s here!” called Nutmeg.



Ted-E-Bear had brought soup. Panda-Cake had brought rolls, still warm. Nutmeg had made an apple pie with a leaf cut in the top.

Panda-Cake cooked the corn in a big pot on the barn stove, then rolled each cob in butter.



Everyone sat down. Before anyone ate, Nutmeg stood up.

“This is a thank-you table,” she said. “Before we eat, everybody says one friend they’re thankful for.”



“Panda-Cake,” said Ted. “For the blanket fort.”

“Nutmeg,” said Panda-Cake. “For the barn.”

“Ted,” said Nutmeg. “For carrying the table with me, plank by plank.”



Then it was Corgi’s turn. He thought very hard.

“Shelly-Pop,” he said. “And Pita-Pan. And Hop-Tart.” He looked worried. “Is three allowed?”

“Thank-yous don’t run out,” said Nutmeg.



Panda-Cake set the steaming corn on the table, and Corgi handed it round.

“One for Nutmeg. One for Ted. One for Panda-Cake. One for Shelly-Pop. One for Pita-Pan. One for Hop-Tart.”

Six cobs for six friends.



Then Corgi looked down at his own plate. It was empty.

He counted the chairs. There were seven. He had counted six friends, and he had forgotten to count himself.

Count together. Seven friends are at the table, and there are six cobs. How many more cobs would they need for everyone to have one? (1 · 2 · 6)

Answer. 1. Six cobs and one more makes seven, one for each friend.



“That’s all right,” said Corgi. He made his ears stand up straight. “I had lots of corn this summer.”

Nobody said anything for a moment.



Then Hop-Tart snapped a piece off the end of his cob. Snap. He put it on Corgi’s plate.

Shelly-Pop did the same. Snap.



Then Pita-Pan. Then Ted. Then Panda-Cake. Then Nutmeg.

Snap, snap, snap, snap.

Count together. Every friend gave Corgi one piece. How many pieces are on Corgi’s plate? (4 · 5 · 6)

Answer. 6. Six friends gave one piece each.



Corgi looked at his plate.

“Six pieces,” he said. “That’s more corn than anybody!”

“Six pieces from six friends,” said Nutmeg.



They ate the soup and the rolls and the buttery corn and nearly all the pie.

Outside, the frost came back. Inside, the barn stayed warm right up to the rafters.



When the stars came out, Corgi walked home with Shelly-Pop, Pita-Pan and Hop-Tart. He carried the empty basket.

“One friend, two friends, three friends,” he counted.

“And you,” said Hop-Tart.

“And me,” said Corgi. “I’m counting me this time.”