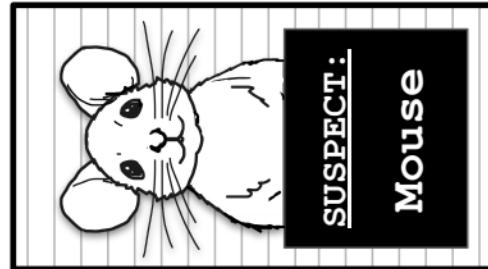
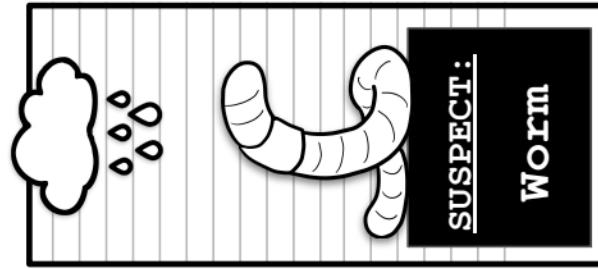


**THE MOUSE SAYS:** "You think that I ate the leaves? Don't make me laugh. I was there for all the nuts, seeds, and juicy earthworms in the leaf pile. Plus, it's a good place for me to hide from pesky predators. I broke up the leaves a little as I walked and burrowed in them. I did not eat them, though! You should talk to the worms; I saw them deep down in the leaf pile. Who knows what they were doing down there?!"



**THE WORM SAYS:** "What was I doing in the leaves? Well, I live in the dirt underneath the leaf pile. It rained, and when it rains, my worm friends and I come out to eat things on the ground. Tasty stuff, like animal poop and dead leaves! So yeah, I ate some of the leaves; I'm a hungry worm. But only SOME...I'm not *that* hungry. I'll tell you what: I saw a lot of other things show up after it rained, too. Mushrooms and mold seemed to pop up out of nowhere. Kind of suspicious, huh?"



**THE RED FOX SAYS:** "What was I doing near the leaf pile? I'm a hunter! I know that mice hide in there, so I ran through the leaves to catch one for dinner. Well, *tried* to catch one at least. I didn't eat the leaves, though! I only stepped on them and broke them into smaller pieces. If you want to know more, your best bet is to talk to the mouse that got away!"



**THE FUNGI SAY:** "What were we doing there? We live here on the forest floor! We can't catch food like foxes and mice, or make our own food like plants. So we have to eat the dead stuff on the ground. And what did we see in our home? A bunch of wet, dead leaves...a feast! Those mushy bits of leaves after it rains are especially delicious! We ate a bunch of the wet leaf pieces, but it wasn't just us! We're not taking the fall alone. Bacteria were there, too, sneaking around."



**THE BACTERIA SAY:** "I can't believe you can see us! The leaf pile? Yeah...we were there, it's true. To be fair, my kind are everywhere. But we *especially* love wet places and dead things. So you better believe a bunch of us showed up in the leaf pile after it rained. Even though we're small and don't have a mouth, we still need food! We ate a good amount of the wet leaves, but not all of them! You can't blame it all on us!"