

Ursula Dubosarsky & Andrew Joyner

# One Little Goat



## One Little Goat Teachers Notes

Written by Ursula Dubosarsky and Illustrated by Andrew Joyner

Published by Little Hare in March 2017

### SYNOPSIS

*It starts with one little goat.*

*It ends with one little goat.*

*But what happens in between is a whirlwind of nonsense and fun.*

International favourites Ursula Dubosarsky and Andrew Joyner make the most of their advanced sense of the ridiculous in this hilarious read-aloud traditional tale.



### THEMES

The text of *One Little Goat* is a lively and sometimes ludicrous repetitive-accumulative verse. It is full of lively antics, misbehaving animals and objects, nonsensical chains of events, and is hilarious fun to read aloud. It is also a traditional song that is recited at the close of the Jewish Passover, and is known as the *Chad Gadya*, or *Had Gadya*. Some have said its presence at the end of the Passover feast represents the promise of a moment of fun for younger children who may otherwise not sit patiently through the remainder of the ceremony. Deeper meanings have also been ascribed to it. Some suggest the *Had Gadya* is an allegory in which each creature or object represents a major force in Jewish history; some say it represents the spiritual journey, and others suggest apocalyptic, ethical or political significance. When considered as an allegory, the random events of the *Had Gadya* can be seen as following a logical rather than nonsensical sequence.

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### WRITING STYLE

Ursula Dubosarsky is an accomplished fiction and picture-book author, but she has expressed reluctance to be called the 'author' of *One Little Goat*. Rather, she considers herself simply as having transcribed the traditional *Had Gadya* text into words that work as a picture book text. The form of the text can be described as repetitive-accumulative. It begins with a simple event, followed by a second event and a repeat of the first; then by a third event with a repeat of the second and first, and so on. The eventual list is often long and complex and ends with an abrupt surprise (for example, *The Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly*). The pace and rhythm of repetitive-accumulative verses also often changes halfway through, switching from short to long descriptions (for example, *The House that Jack Built*) or, as is the case with *One Little Goat*, adding animal sounds, exclamations and commentary, and longer descriptions of the new additions to the list.

### ILLUSTRATION STYLE

When illustrating *One Little Goat*, Andrew Joyner wanted to make the book entertaining for all readers and not just for those aware of its cultural background. He approached it mainly as a nonsense text, full of curious events and hilarious action. One of his puzzles as an illustrator was to make the nonsense elements make more sense. In doing this, Andrew has given the text a completely new meaning, adding a visual narrative that shows a community of children playing together and playing practical jokes on one another. He has also created a sense of the story being an 'imaginary dream', or a slip in reality, by changing elements of the setting during the imaginative sequence. At the same time, Andrew wanted to reflect the cultural background in some way, and has created a setting that reflects the lifestyle on *kibbutzim*, the communal farms of Israel.

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### AUTHOR BACKGROUND

Ursula Dubosarsky wanted to be a writer from the age of six, and is now the author of over 40 books for children and young adults, which have won several national prizes, including the NSW, Victorian, South Australian and Queensland Premier's Literary Awards. Apart from fiction and picture books, she has also written the non-fiction 'Word Spy' books about the English language.

*One Little Goat* will be Ursula and Andrew's fourth book together. Their previous titles include *The Terrible Plop*, *Too Many Elephants* and *Tim and Ed*. Ursula Dubosarsky lives in Sydney with her family.

### ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Andrew Joyner is an Australian illustrator and cartoonist. In 2009, his first picture book was published, *The Terrible Plop*, written by Ursula Dubosarsky. The book has been shortlisted for many awards (including the CBCA Book of the Year 2010 and the Prime Minister's Literary Awards 2010), and has been made into an acclaimed play – *Plop!* – by South Australia's Windmill Theatre. In 2011, Andrew released his own series of books, *All About Boris*, a loveable and adventurous warthog. *The Swap*, his picture book collaboration with author Jan Ormerod, won the CBCA Book for the Year for Early Childhood in 2014.

Along with his children's book work, Andrew illustrates regularly for newspapers and magazines, both locally and internationally, and in 2010 he illustrated *Your Place or Mine?*, a cookbook by Gary Mehigan and George Calombaris of Masterchef. He lives in Strathalbyn, South Australia, with his family and nineteen pets.



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### STUDY NOTES

1. Many traditional rhymes are considered harmless and meaningless, intended for the entertainment of small children, and seem to make little logical sense. Scholars sometimes explain nursery rhymes in terms of political or social history. Many of the best-known rhymes in the English language are thought to refer to British history. Select three traditional English-language nursery rhymes that appear to be meaningless entertainment and research their possible allegorical meanings.
2. Collect some popular children's rhymes from non-English cultural contexts from children in your class (such as Mandarin, Greek, Farsi, Dinka). What formal similarities do these rhymes have with English-language nursery rhymes: consider rhythm and pattern, tone, length, theme, form, characters, action.
3. Three well-known English-language repetitive-accumulative rhymes are *The House that Jack Built*, *The Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly* and *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. In what ways are their forms similar, and in what ways do they differ from *One Little Goat* (consider such things as length, number of incidents, pattern, rhythm and endings)?
4. How has Andrew Joyner used the background **objects** to differentiate between 'normal' life and 'imaginary events' in the illustrations? How does this help to give the text a logical sequence?
5. How has Andrew Joyner used the background **characters** (as opposed to the girl and the goat) to develop a narrative that brings cohesion to the textual narrative?
6. Write a narrative based on the the points of view of the three children who adopt the disguise of the 'dark and strange' character. How does this alternative narrative provide a cohesive element to the events of *One Little Goat*?
7. The girl in the story appears to believe the cat ate her goat. According to the illustrations alone, what does Andrew Joyner suggest actually happened to the goat? How successfully do the illustrations help to make sense of this strange occurrence?

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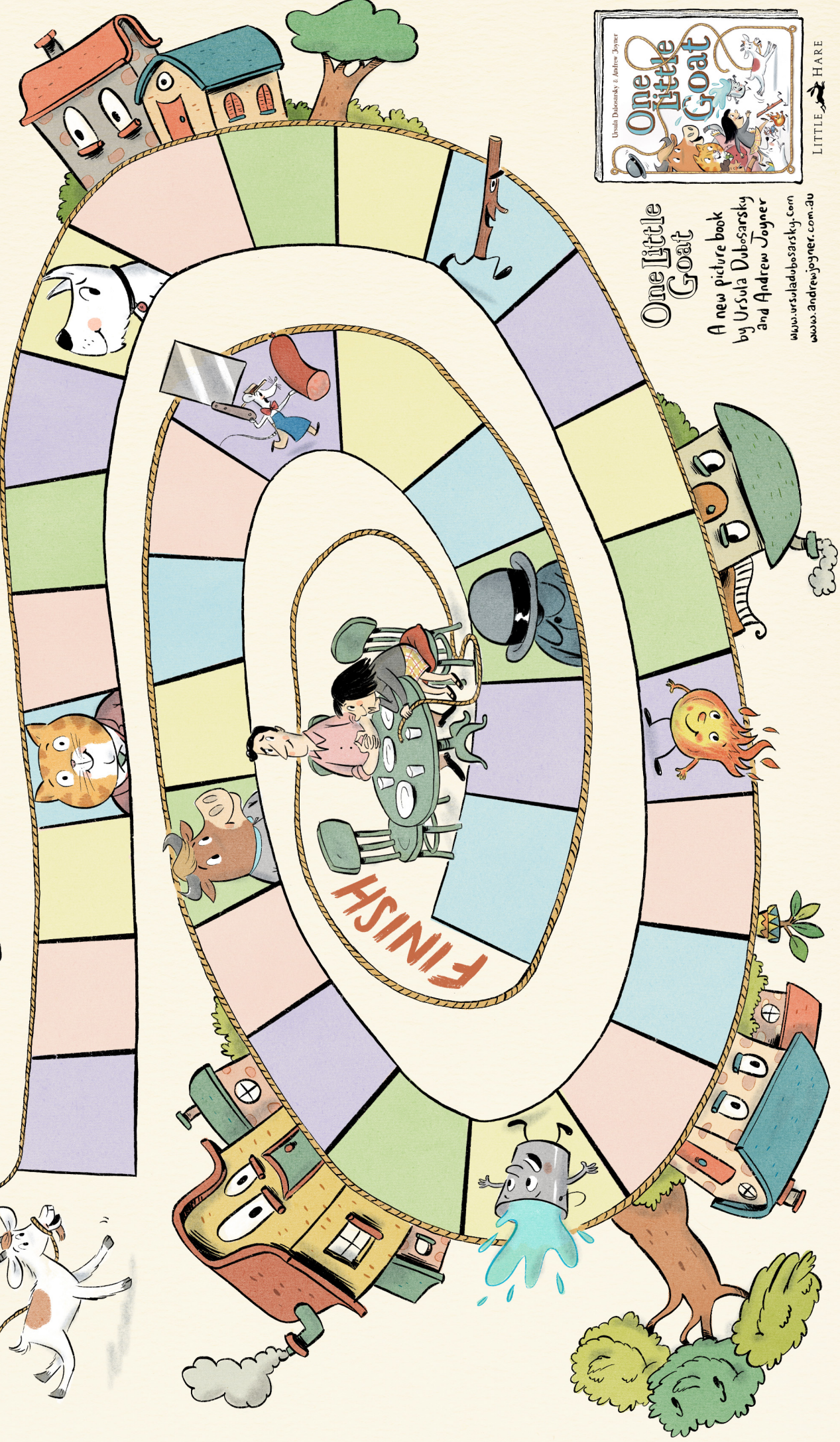
### ACTIVITIES

- *One Little Goat* is a repetitive-accumulative verse: it begins with a simple event, followed by a second event and a repeat of the first; then by a third event with a repeat of the second and first, and so on. Divide your class into groups and have them read out specific events in the text, until the whole class is involved.
- Ask students to write their own repetitive-accumulative verse. What if daddy came home with a little baby monkey? Remember that the more nonsensical the verse, the better!
- Once students have written their own verse, have them illustrate it with colourful drawings.



# One Little Goat Board Game!

Can you help the little goat  
get home in time for dinner?



One Little Goat  
A new picture book  
by Ursula Dubsarsky  
and Andrew Joyner  
www.ursuladubsarsky.com  
www.andrewjoyner.com.au

LITTLE HARE

# One Little Goat Board Game!

## INSTRUCTIONS

Cut out your Little Goat counters.

Take one each.

The first person to play throws the dice and moves the number of squares the dice shows.

If you land on a picture, you must get up and make a Sound and an action that goes with the picture.

So, for example, if you land on the dog, you must run around on all fours and bark. **WOOF WOOF!**

Or if you land on the bucket of water, you must get up and pretend to be a bucket and make **SUSHY SLOSHY** water sounds.

Some of the pictures will be harder than others. (Hmm, what does a **STICK** sound like???)

Take it in turns to throw the dice and move your Counter.

If you land on this square **MISS A TURN!**



The first person who reaches the end must sit up and make a Sound like a little baby goat.

Then that person is **THE WINNER!!!**

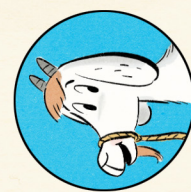
## WHAT YOU NEED

One dice

Two to four players

If you like, you can glue the game and the Counters to some card to make it a bit sturdier. Old cereal boxes work well!

CUT OUT THE COUNTERS



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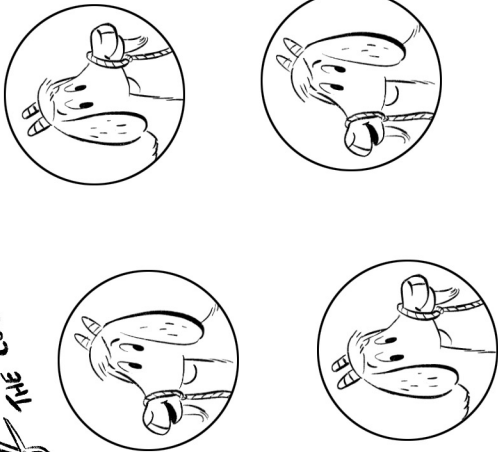


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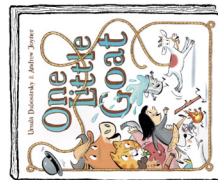
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