

Rag & Bone Puppet Theatre

*OWL*

at Home

STUDY GUIDE

## *Table of Contents*

Before the play .....	4
Vocabulary .....	5
Theme words .....	5
The Company .....	6
Meet the Author & Illustrator.....	7
Talking about the Production.....	8
Story Graphic Organizer .....	9
Comprehension & Discussion Questions.....	10
Music .....	11
Science Extensions/Inquiry Questions.....	12
Owl facts .....	12
Les mots et les images .....	13
Word Search.....	14
Owl Mask.....	15
Useful Links .....	16





Dear Teachers,

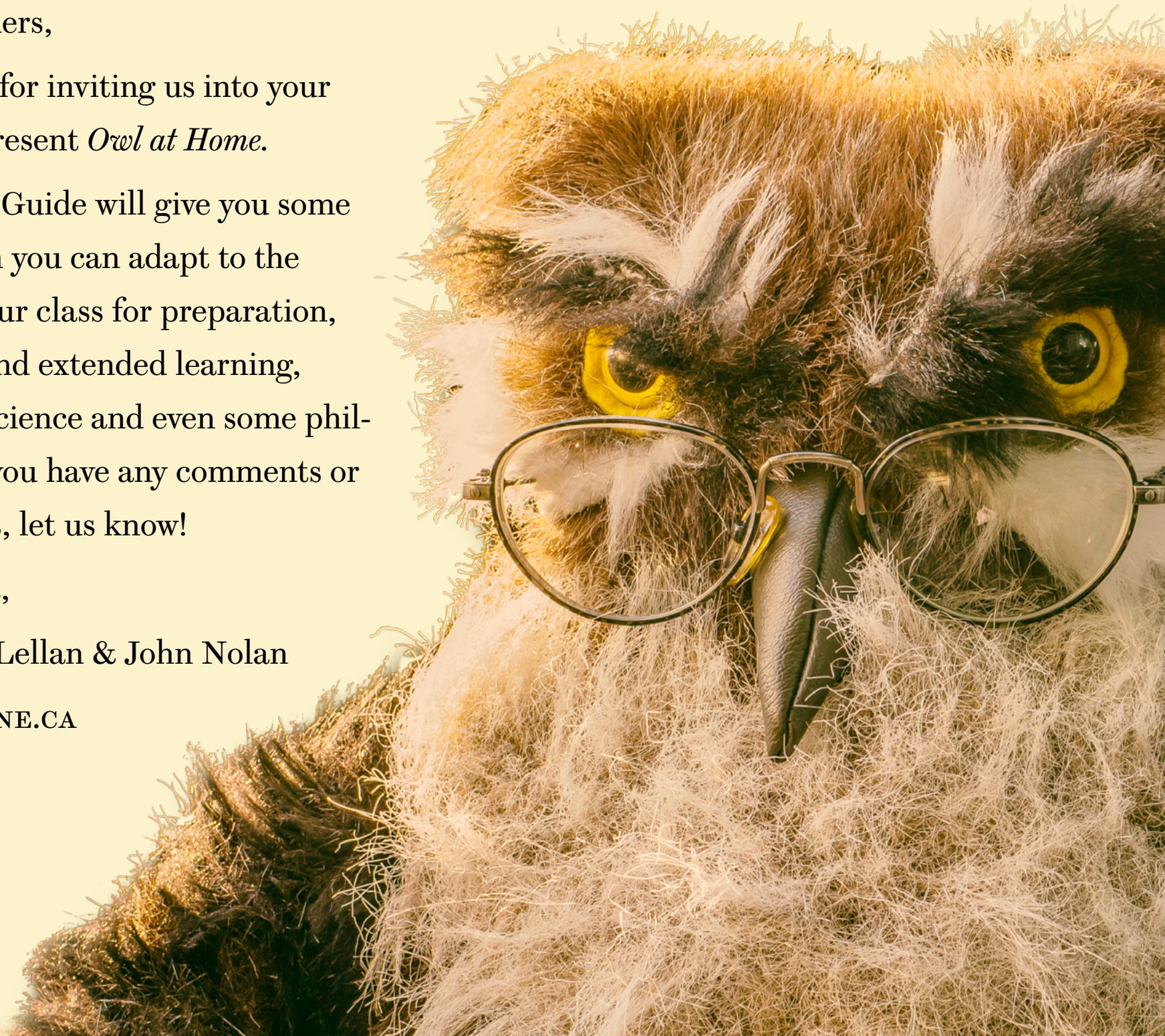
Thank you for inviting us into your school to present *Owl at Home*.

This Study Guide will give you some ideas which you can adapt to the needs of your class for preparation, follow up and extended learning, including science and even some philosophy! If you have any comments or suggestions, let us know!

All the best,

Kathy MacLellan & John Nolan

RAGANDBONE.CA





## *Before the play*

What do you notice about the music you hear in movies or TV shows?

Be on the lookout for how music works in this show.

If you were going to put on a play about a talking owl, how would you show the owl?

How do you turn a book into a play?

What is different about a movie or TV show and a play?

What do you know about owls?



Illustrator: Briois, J. From an album of 51 drawings of birds and mammals made at Bencoolen, Sumatra, for Sir Stamford Raffles. Watercolour. Originally published 1824. British Library



## Vocabulary

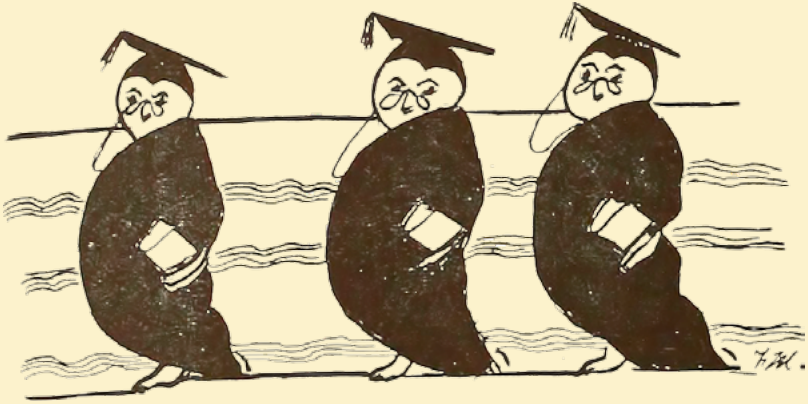


Image from *Ravelings* (1904). Hewes Library, Monmouth College

*A few words younger students might not be familiar with:*

owlets	parliament	kettle
nocturnal	wisdom	seashore
mammals	farsighted	

## Theme words

*These words are important to the story. You might make sure ESL students know them:*

moon	knocking	tears
song	home	upstairs
battered toast	snow	downstairs
hot pea soup	guest	window
fire	bump	
winter	sad	

## *The Company*

Founded in 1978 by John Nolan and Kathy MacLellan, Rag & Bone's shows include *The Nightingale*, *A Promise is a Promise*, *The Story of Holly & Ivy*, *Felicity Falls*, *The Light Princess*, *Zoom at Sea*, *The Tempest*, *The Flying Canoe*, *The Wind in the Willows* and *The Last Polar Bears*. Rag & Bone has been awarded a Citation of Excellence in the Art of Puppetry from UNIMA-USA, the international puppetry association.

Kathy MacLellan is an award winning writer, performer and puppet-maker. Kathy has written over fifty television scripts, including episodes of *Under the Umbrella Tree*, *Theodore Tugboat*, and *Mr. Dressup*.

Actor, puppeteer, and designer John Nolan has built sets, props and puppets for stage and television, and has appeared on television and in many theatres, including GCTC, The National Arts Centre, Opera Lyra and Odyssey Theatre. He played Jackson on YTV's *Crazy Quilt*.

Kathy & John have also taught many puppet-making and drama workshops in schools across Ontario.

In the Ottawa area we are accompanied by musician Russell Levia, and, on tour, by Ainsley McNeaney.

Russell is a popular Ottawa musician who appears frequently in clubs, folk festivals, and daycare centres. He has been working with Rag & Bone for 20 years.



The Last Polar Bears



Felicity Falls



The Wind in the Willows

Ainsley, a singer-songwriter based in Montreal, has an honours degree from the University of Toronto in classical percussion performance, and has been singing and playing the piano her whole life.



## *Meet the Author & Illustrator*

### **ARNOLD LOBEL**

Arnold Lobel wrote and illustrated many, many books during his lifetime. His drawings of cats, mice, pigs, and other animals are favourites of children everywhere.

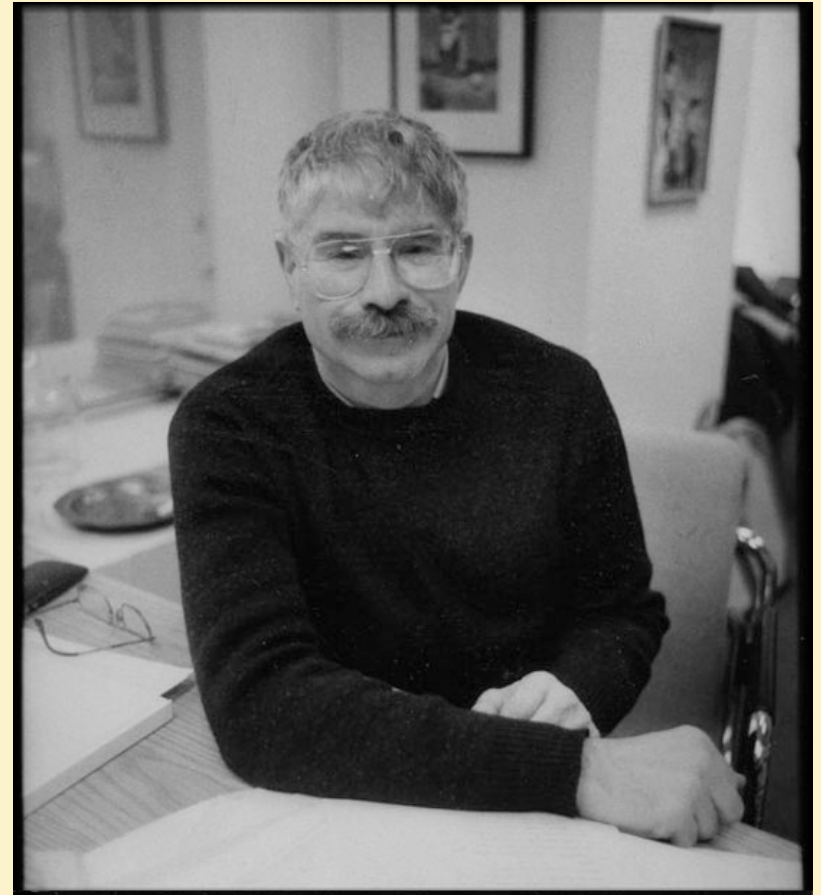
Arnold Lobel grew up in Schenectady, New York, where he lived with his grandparents. When he graduated from art school, he married Anita Kempler, and they moved to New York. He and his wife had two children, Adam and Adrienne.

When he first started drawing pictures for children's books, Arnold Lobel got many of his ideas from the cartoons his children liked to watch.

Arnold Lobel used to tell stories and illustrate them to entertain his classmates when he was a young boy.

He said that taking books out of the library was one of the things he loved to do most when he was a child.

—from the Houghton Mifflin Company Education Place Website



### **OTHER BOOKS WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY ARNOLD LOBEL**

*The Book of Pigericks*

*Days with Frog and Toad*

*Frog and Toad All Year*

*Frog and Toad Together*

*Mouse Soup*

*Mouse Tales*

*Owl at Home*

*Ming Lo Moves the Mountain*

*Uncle Elephant*

## *Talking about the Production*



Image from page 234 of *A history of British Birds*. By the Rev. F.O. Morris." (1862)  
British Library

What choices did they make to tell the stories?

How did they show the main character, Owl?

What is the Owl puppet made out of?  
(*Fun fur*)

How did they show these other things:

Owl as seen from far away?  
(*finger puppet*)

The pea soup  
(*a bowl, a spoon, paper maché*)

The mashed potatoes  
(*foam on a plate*)

The snow  
(*cloth*)

The sea  
(*cloth*)

The moon  
(*balloons*)

The fire  
(*red gloves*)

Strange bumps  
(*John and Kathy's hands*)

Candle  
(*Kathy's face*)

Stairs  
(*cardboard stairs, and a folding ruler*)

Why not just use the real objects, like real mashed potatoes or real snow?



## Story Graphic Organizer

Choose one of the stories: *The Guest*, *Strange Bumps*,  
*Tearwater Tea*, *Upstairs & Downstairs*, or *Owl and the Moon*.

Name: ..... Date: .....

Title: .....

Characters:

Setting:

Problem:

Solution:

The story makes me think of:



## Comprehension & Discussion Questions

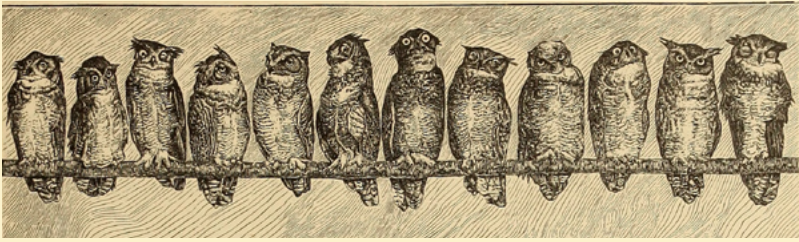


Image from *American art and American art collections; essays on artistic subjects* (1889)

### THE GUEST

- How did the production show that Owl's house is very cozy at the beginning of the story?
- Why was that important for the story?
- Why did the pea soup freeze?
- Owl says, "Winter, you are my guest. This is no way to behave!" In what ways is Winter a very rude guest?
- What is a better way to behave when you are a guest in someone's house?

### STRANGE BUMPS

- What were the strange bumps?
- Why was Owl afraid of them?
- Was Owl right to be afraid of them?
- In what ways did Owl over-react to the problem?
- How did he solve the problem?
- Was this a good solution?
- What are you afraid of?

- Are there things that are good to be afraid of?
- What should you do when you are afraid of something?
- Do you know any other books about fears?

### TEAR WATER TEA

- Why did Owl try to think of sad things?
- How many sad things can you remember?

*(chairs with broken legs, songs with forgotten words, books missing pages, clocks that have stopped, mornings nobody saw, mashed potatoes not eaten, pencils that are too short)*

- Do you agree that these things are sad?
- Can you see why Owl thinks they are sad?
- Why did Owl feel better at the end of the story?
- What sad books or movies have you enjoyed?
- Why do we enjoy sad things sometimes?

### UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS

- How many stairs are there in Owl's house? (20)
- Why does Owl run up and down the stairs?
- Why did he sit on the tenth stair?  
*(because it was half-way)*



British Library



- What if Owl could travel at the speed of light? Could he be upstairs and downstairs at the same time?
- Do you ever wish you could be in two places at once?
- Can you think of any other stories in which a character is in two places at once? Does this cause any problems for the character?

### OWL AND THE MOON

- Why did Owl go down to the seashore?
- If Owl is looking at the moon, is the moon looking at Owl?
- Are they good friends?
- Why does Owl think that it is kind of the moon to light his way?  
(*Because Owl is kind*)
- Why doesn't Owl want the moon to come home with him?
- Why did Owl think the moon had gone away?
- How did the moon come back?
- Why did Owl feel happy at the end of the story?



Image from *Elements of Zoology* (1884). The Library of Congress

## Music

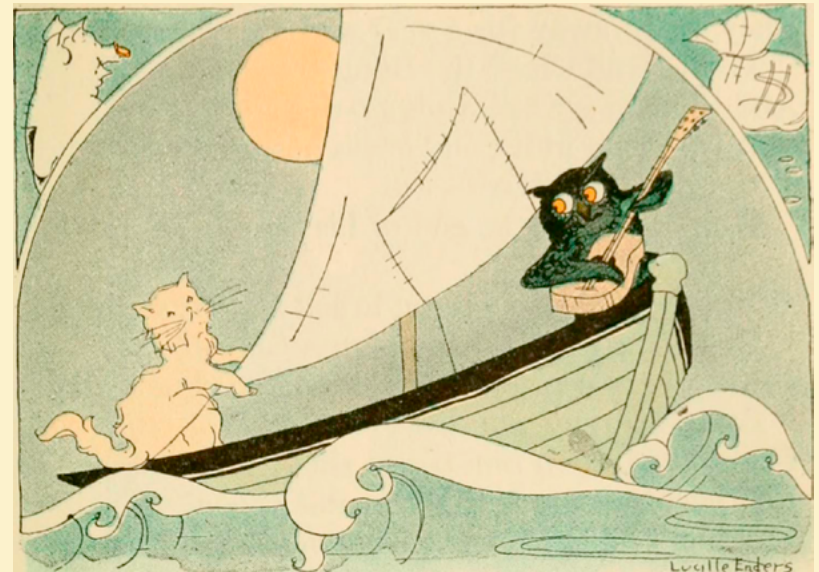


Image from *Journeys through Bookland* (1922): Sylvester, Charles: Internet Archive

- How did the music help show the feelings in the story?
- What did you hear?
- Can you remember some music that sounded fast? Slow? Loud? Soft? Funny? Sad?
- What instruments do you remember?
- What other sounds did you hear?

## Science Extensions/Inquiry Questions



"The White Owl" from *The British Zoology*. Illustrator: Mazell Brown; London, 1766 British Library

Why do we insulate our houses?

Why doesn't winter come in?

Is it possible to be in two places at once?

Can you drink salty water?

Why does the moon seem to stay with you?  
(It's so big and far away.)

How does our natural fear of the unknown keep us safe?

### *Owl facts*

How many different kinds of owls are there?

200

What do owls eat?

*Owls eat insects and small mammals—but some eat fish.*

What are baby owls called?

*Baby owls are called owlets.*

Do owls look at things by turning their eyes or their heads?

*Owls can't turn their eyes to look at something—they turn their whole head almost all the way around—about three-quarters of the way—without moving their shoulders.*

When do owls sleep?

*Owls are mostly nocturnal—they stay up all night and sleep during the day, but not all of them.*

Do owls have ears?

*No! Many owl species have "ear" tufts on their heads that aren't ears at all. These tufts of feathers seem to show if the bird is in a bad mood, or happy or sad.*

What do we call a group of owls?

*A group of birds is a flock; we say a school of fish and a pride of lions. And a group of owls is called a parliament of owls, a study of owls or a wisdom of owls. People think owls are very wise.*

Do owls have good eyesight?

*Yes and no. Owls are farsighted. They have a hard time seeing something that's very close, but have excellent eyesight for things that are far away, like the moon in the sky.*



## *Les mots et les images*

*Pouvez-vous écrire le mot correct  
en dessous de chaque image?*

L'hibou

La chouette

La lune

L'hiver

Le feu

Triste

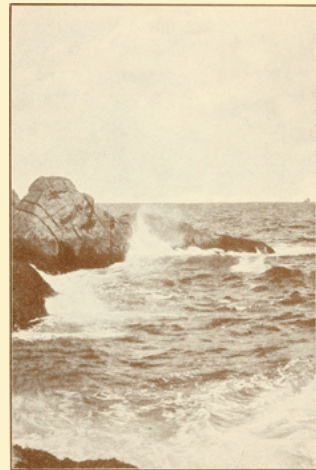
La soupe

La mer

La musique

La guitare

L'harmonica



## Word Search

*There are words hiding in the box of letters. Can you find them? They could be hidden upside-down, backwards or on a diagonal! Circle the letters of the list words.*

song	owlets
battered	parliament
hot	wisdom
pea	farsighted
soup	kettle
winter	seashore
knocking	theatre
home	rehearsal
guest	harmonica
bump	singing
upstairs	prop
downstairs	puppet

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



Colour, then cut out the shape and the eyes. Staple a string or ribbon on the edge beside each eye. If you print on cardboard you could attach a ruler or a strip of corrugated cardboard on the side as a handle.

## *Owl Mask*





## Useful Links

- [The Barn Owl Trust Kid's Page](#)
- [Owl Worlds](#)
- [Photos and videos of owls,](#)  
[The Barn Owl Centre](#)
- [The Owl Pages](#)  
*(including stories, art and mythology)*
- [Best Owls in Children's Books](#)

*Owl at Home* is widely regarded as a way to introduce philosophical principals to children. Here are two excellent sites:

- [Teaching Children Philosophy,](#)  
[Mount Holyoak College,](#)
- [Centre for Philosophy for Children,](#)  
[University of Washington.](#)

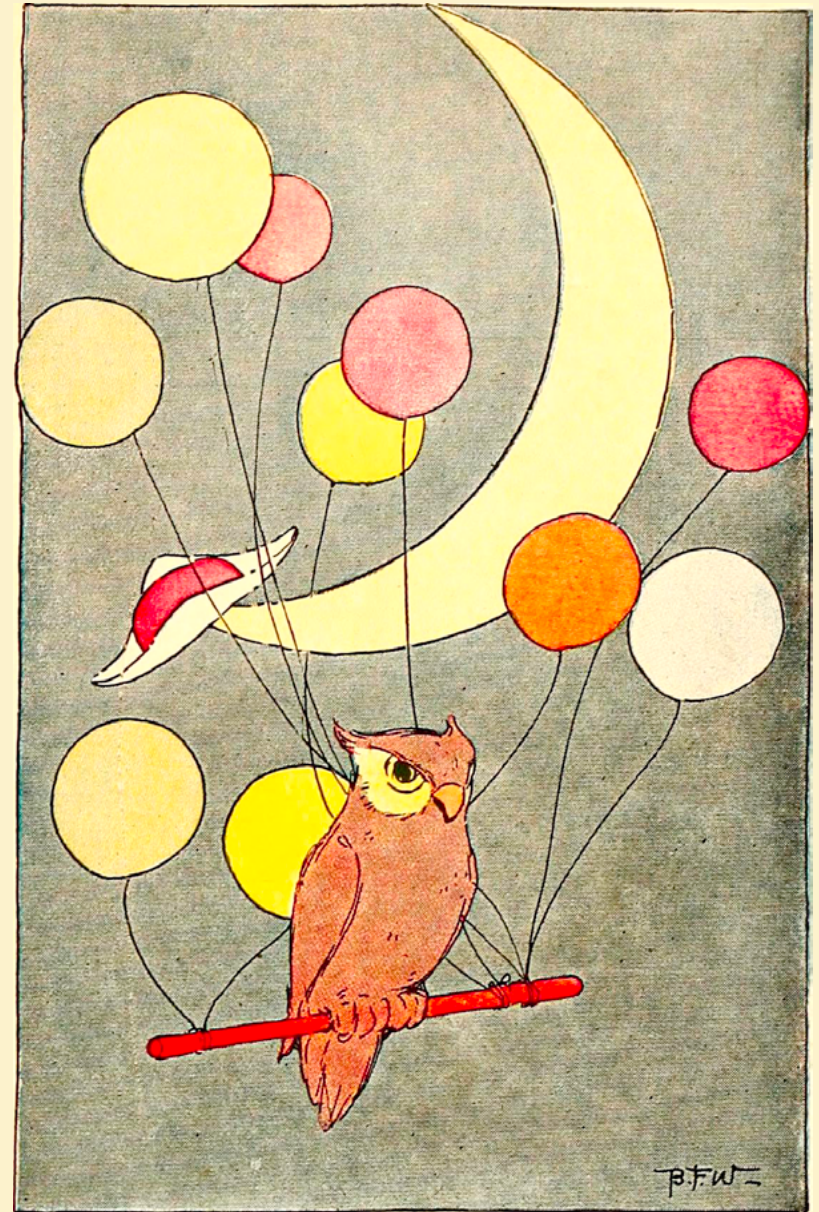


Image from *The Peter Patter book; rimes for children* (1918), Blanche Fisher Wright, illustrator.  
Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

# Rag & Bone

1693 Boyer Road, Ottawa, ON K1C 3L1

(613) 824-5972

WWW.RAGANDBONE.CA