

# Escargot



Image © Sydney Hanson

## Story Hour Kit

## ABOUT THE KIT



*Bonjour!* Use this *très magnifique* kit in an early childhood or elementary classroom, library, or bookstore or at a child's party or play date. Best for ages 3-8.

In this interactive picture book, a charming French snail talks directly to the reader. Escargot endearingly asks readers to declare that the “snail” is their favorite animal. After reviewing his many fabulous features, Escargot races the reader to the end of the book where a delicious salad awaits. Once readers have joined the snail in making fierce faces at invasive carrots, they will have no doubt who their new favorite animal is.

With the activities in this Story Hour Kit, your readers can do finger play with you, wear some snail tentacles (topped with a beret), make a snail standee to race other readers to the lovely salad, and take home some snail facts.

The kit contains:

- Poster and copy to share your event
- Suggested preparation
- Finger play
- Snail tentacle template
- Snail racer template
- STEM snail fact sheet

## ABOUT THE BOOK

### **Escargot**

By Dashka Slater

Illustrated by Sydney Hanson

Published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux

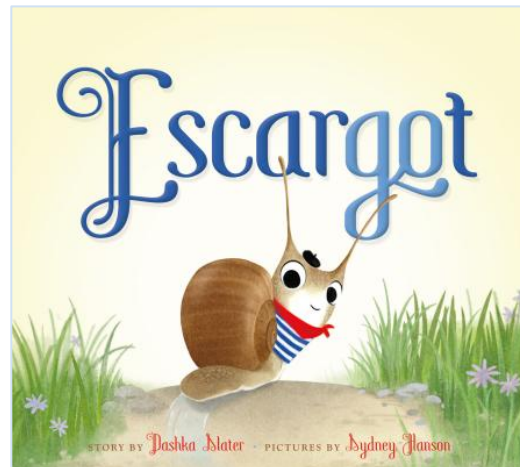
ISBN-13: 9780374302818

Age Range: 4 - 6 Years

*Bonjour!* Escargot is a beautiful French snail who wants only two things:

1. To be your favorite animal.
2. To get to the delicious salad at the end of the book.

But when he gets to the salad, he discovers that there's a carrot in it. And Escargot hates carrots. But when he finally tries one—with a little help from you!—he discovers that it's not so bad after all!



## PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"Escargot's voice is parfait, an airy blend of ego and need masterfully balanced in witty and well-turned sentences that leave plenty of room for audiences to get the joke...Trim, controlled pencil and watercolor art gives Escargot the inevitable French sailor's shirt, neckerchief, and teeny beret, but the jaunty guy's wide, sincere eyes reveal the depth of his yearning snail soul—and make for some great comic faces."  
—BCCB, **Starred Review**

"Say *bonjour* to your new favorite animal, the garden snail!...In Hanson's soft, cartoonish illustrations, Escargot's hammy expressions are perfectly in keeping with his gently boastful narrative. Give this charming read-aloud a little extra *joie de vivre* by reading it in your best French accent." —*Booklist*

"A charming little French snail takes center stage as it entices a child to share a meal. It's hard to imagine an escargot heading toward a salad as destined to be anything other than part of the dish, but this engaging snail upends convention...An unusual, tongue-in-cheek aid to getting children to eat a disliked food—even the dreaded carrot."  
—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Escargot is an adorable French snail trying to reach the salad at the end of the book. He admires himself and his shiny trail as he moves across the table to the salad. He hopes it has no carrots, because he really does not like carrots. Fun illustrations and a charming story make this a picture book for everyone to enjoy!"  
—Cathy Berner, Blue Willow Bookshop, *Spring 2017 Kids' Indie Next List*

## OTHER RESOURCES

Visit [MacKids.com](http://MacKids.com) for new and award-winning children's books and companion resources.

Visit [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com) for other story hour kits, event kits, treasure hunts, book club guides, book giveaways, and other ways to engage in children's literature with play, conversation, and social action.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

**Dashka Slater** has written several picture books, including ***Dangerously Ever After*** and ***The Sea Serpent and Me***, which was a Junior Library Guild Selection. She is also an award-winning journalist whose articles have appeared in *Newsweek*, *Salon*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Mother Jones*. She lives in California.

**Sydney Hanson** was raised in Minnesota alongside numerous pets and brothers. She has worked for several animation shops, including Nickelodeon and Disney Interactive. She lives in California.

## PREPARING FOR THE ACTIVITIES

You will, of course, create your own grand program or lesson plan! Following are simply suggested ways to prepare for an event or classroom experience.

\_\_\_ Locate a copy of the picture book **Escargot** by Dashka Slater and illustrated by Sydney Hanson (FSG).

### MARKETING

\_\_\_ If you list your events in newsletters and online calendars, here is some text that may help with those listings:

*Bonjour!* Escargot, the very handsome French snail, wonders if snails are your favorite animal. No? Well, after seeing Escargot's shimmery trail and the fierce face he gives carrots and receiving his copious air kisses (*mwah!*), you may discover that you have a new favorite picture book. We will be reading **Escargot** by Dashka Slater and illustrated by Sydney Hanson (FSG) and making our own racing snails. All welcome, but best for ages 3-8.

\_\_\_ If this event is for the public, print out the event poster (page 8), add your date, time, and location, and duplicate it to advertise the event. If you prefer to adapt the poster on your computer, you can find a JPEG of the poster design on [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com). Simply search for "escargot" and navigate to the Story Hour Kit listing. The font on the poster is Goudy.

### COSTUMES

*Oh là là*, Escargot is indeed a beautiful snail! The picture book is written in the first person, so you will get to take on the persona of the fabulous French snail. Should you dress the part?

\_\_\_ Consider gathering a striped shirt, a red scarf, and a black beret. (Escargot does not wear pants, but perhaps you should. That is the life of a human. *C'est la vie!*)

\_\_\_ Imagine making a snail shell. Can you take an old backpack and transform it with stuffing and duct tape or brown packing tape? Or create a shell shape with corrugated or ribbed cardboard. Try it. It will be *magnifique!*

After marveling at Escargot's tentacles and iconic French look, your readers may also want to dress up like their new favorite animal.

\_\_\_ Print enough "Escargot's Tentacles" (page 9) on cardstock or regular paper so that each of your participants can have a lovely set. Consider trimming the tentacles and bands to get ready for story time. Attaching pipe cleaners to the backs of the tentacles will allow your readers to have fun posing them. (We are wearing a pair as we type!)



# Escargot STORY HOUR KIT

\_\_\_ Consider securing red bandanas as well. There are a dozen plain red 11" x 11" bandanas available on Amazon for \$16.99. Look for "Solid Color Cotton Bandanas by CoverYourHair."

## FINGERPLAY

Our favorite animal Escargot is a snail of action! After a reading the picture book aloud, you may want to instigate a little action of your own. Author Dashka Slater created this poem and finger play:

[shushing finger to lips] **Sssh! Sssh! Sssh!**  
[finger wag] **Be careful** [megaphone hands] **not to yell.**  
[horn hands] **The shy little snail**  
[look around] **peeks outside his shell.**  
[sweeping motion with one hand] **He leaves a shimmery trail**  
[slowly] [horn hands] **as he sloooooowly slips and slides.**  
[hand to ear] **But when he hears me** [feet stomp] **stomp stomp stomp,**  
[rapidly] **he hides his head inside.** [tuck into a ball]

\_\_\_ Print enough "Finger Play for Young Readers & Tentacle Play for Young Snails" (page 10) for each of your participants. Trim and separate the two strips on the sheet.

## SNAIL RACES

In the book, Escargot races the reader to a bowl of delicious salad. You can give children an Escargot to make and take home and the opportunity to hold snail races with these small preparations:

\_\_\_ Print enough "Escargot on the Go" (page 11) sheets so each participant can have their own snail. Regular paper can work, but cardstock is much better. Trim and separate the two strips on the sheet.

\_\_\_ Make a sample of the standee. With three folds (along the dashed lines), you can turn the ½ sheet vertical "Escargot on the Go" into a triangular standee. Secure the bottom flaps with tape.

\_\_\_ Gather string, a pile of dimes (enough for each participant to have two), and masking tape.

\_\_\_ Cut enough lengths of string so that each participant can have one. The length of the string will depend on the length of your racing table. You want the standee at the start line of the race and the other end of the string dangling over the opposite end of the table. You will be attaching a dime to that end of the string. It will serve as a weight to slide Escargot across the table. If you want to add a touch of STEM, add in a lesson about Force, Motion, and Leverage.



# Escargot STORY HOUR KIT

\_\_\_ Make a sample of the racing snail. Cut a length of string or yarn. Tape one end inside the base of the standee. To the other tape a dime. Place Escargot on a tabletop and dangle the coin end of the string over the table. Does Escargot move? No? Try adding more weight.

\_\_\_ To increase the connection to the story, consider bringing in a salad bowl from home to place on your racing table.

## SNACK

\_\_\_ Since Escargot discovers that carrots in salad are *delicious*, consider buying individually wrapped packages of baby carrots for your salad bowl. They will make a fine snack (for readers to make a fierce face at).

## STEM

Snails have many exciting features like their shimmery trails! Add a touch of STEM to your story hour by handing out “Escargot’s Magnifique Facts About Snails.”

\_\_\_ Print enough “Escargot’s Magnifique Facts About Snails” (page 12) so that each participant can have one. Trim and separate the two strips on the sheet.



## SETTING UP THE DAY OF THE EVENT

\_\_\_ On a table, lay out tentacles and bands, pipe cleaners, tape, and possibly a stapler (to create the band). If you have not pre-cut the sheet, don't forget to lay out scissors. If you ordered bandanas, include those as well.

\_\_\_ On a table, lay out the vertical "Escargot on the Go" ½ sheets, tape, lengths of string, and your collection of dimes. Display your sample.

\_\_\_ Clear another table for your snail races. Lay down a start line and finish line with masking tape. Mark "Start" and "Finish" on the tape with a marker. Place your salad just behind the finish line.

\_\_\_ Consider putting half of your dimes and more tape on the snail race table. If they add another dime, how will that affect the outcome of the race? Snail engineering!

\_\_\_ If you obtained carrots for the salad bowl, pop them in.

\_\_\_ Lay out "Escargot's Magnifique Facts About Snails" where they will be taken home or taken back to the classroom.

\_\_\_ Lay out "Finger Play for Young Readers & Tentacle Play for Young Snails" near your story time chair for distribution.

\_\_\_ Get into your very cunning snail costume.

\_\_\_ *Voila!* You are ready!

## EVENT ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_ You might choose to make Escargot Tentacles with kids as they arrive (and after for latecomers).

\_\_\_ Read **Escargot** by Dashka Slater and illustrated by Sydney Hanson (FSG) aloud. There are so many ways to engage with the text. Have a grand read aloud!

\_\_\_ Conduct "Finger Play for Young Readers & Tentacle Play for Young Snails."

\_\_\_ Help children fold and assemble their "Escargot on the Go" snail racers.

\_\_\_ Lead snail races! Consider letting children adjust the weight on the end of their string to make the snail go faster or slower.

\_\_\_ Send children away with "Escargot's Magnifique Facts About Snails."

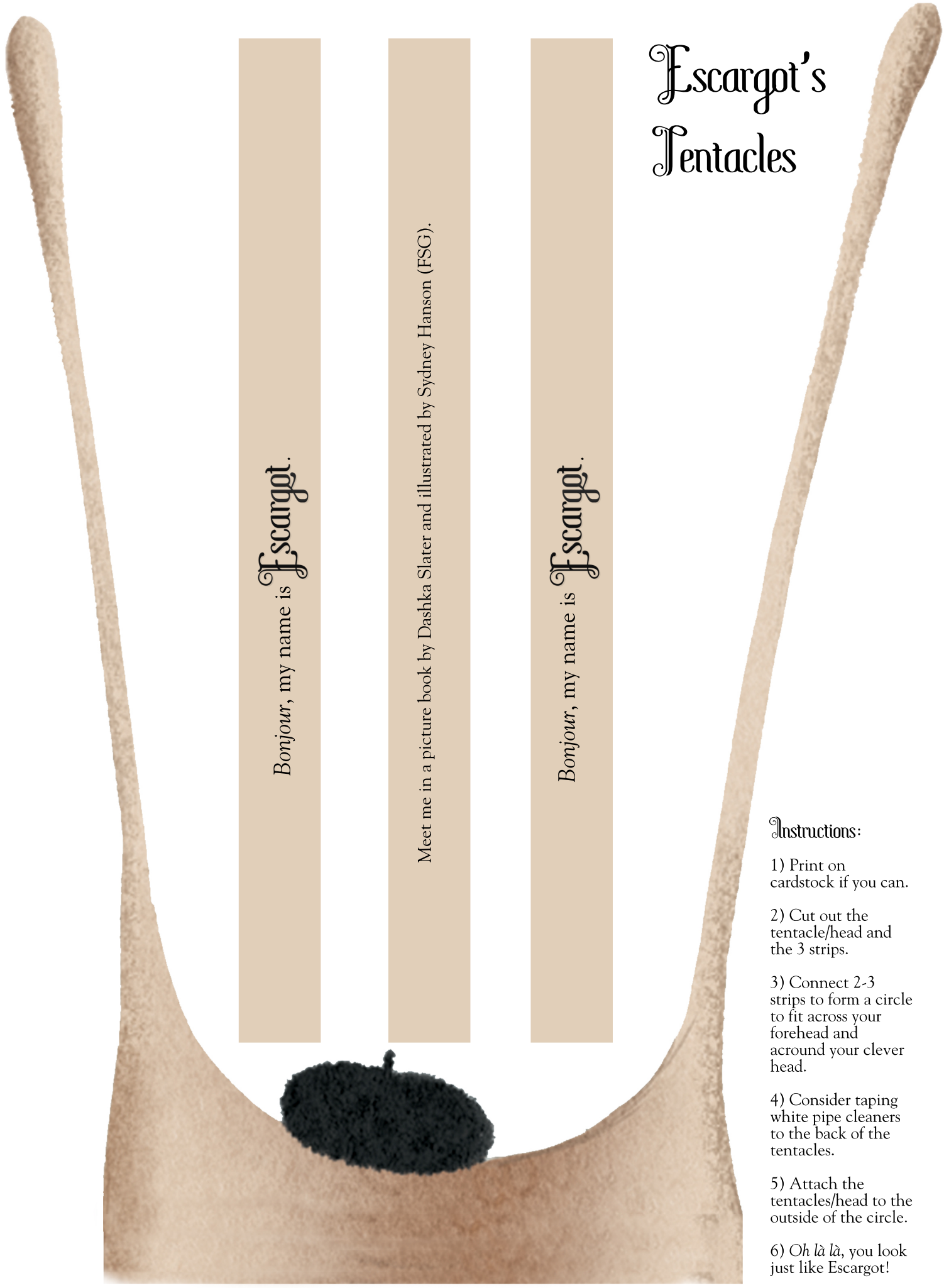
\_\_\_ *Oh là là*, you have run an amazing event. Escargot could not have done better. Time for a delicious salad!

# Escargot

## Story Time



Featuring the picture book *Escargot* by Dashka Slater  
and illustrated by Sydney Hanson (FSG).



# Escargot's Tentacles

*Bonjour, my name is Escargot.*

Meet me in a picture book by Dashka Slater and illustrated by Sydney Hanson (FSG).

*Bonjour, my name is Escargot.*

## Instructions:

- 1) Print on cardstock if you can.
- 2) Cut out the tentacle/head and the 3 strips.
- 3) Connect 2-3 strips to form a circle to fit across your forehead and around your clever head.
- 4) Consider taping white pipe cleaners to the back of the tentacles.
- 5) Attach the tentacles/head to the outside of the circle.
- 6) *Oh là là*, you look just like Escargot!

# Finger Play

## for Young Readers &

### Tentacle Play for Young Snails

[shushing finger to lips] Sssh! Sssh! Sssh!  
[finger wag] Be careful [megaphone hands] not to yell.  
[horn hands] The shy little snail  
[look around] peeks outside his shell.

[sweeping motion with one hand] He leaves a shimmery trail  
[slowly] [horn hands] as he sloooooowly slips and slides.  
[hand to ear] But when he hears me  
[stomp feet] stomp stomp stomp,  
[rapidly] [tuck into a ball] he hides his head inside.



For the picture book *Escargot*  
by Dashka Slater (FSG) and  
illustrated by Sydney Hanson

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Escargot on the Go

Image © Sydney Hanson

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# Escargot's Magnifique Facts About Snails

Here are some questions that children have asked about me, Escargot! I will answer them so you can all learn more about the mighty snail.

## Why are you called snails?

Because saying "terrestrial pulmonate gastropod molluscs" takes far too long.

## Why do snails make a "shimmery trail"?

Our shimmery trail is mucus that keeps us moist. We love to be moist! The mucus also allows us to move smoothly over rough surfaces. We can crawl over broken glass or even a razor blade and not get hurt! My shimmery trail is amazing!

## Is it true that you move very slowly?

*Au contraire!* We, in fact, travel 1 millimeter each second. We get around on our very strong muscular foot (and, of course, by using our shimmery trail!).

## Are you a boy or a girl?

*Oh là là*, I am both! I have both female and male body parts. Amazing, yes?

## Where did you get your beautiful shell?

I was born in an egg. To start making my shell bigger and stronger, I ate the egg shell I was born in. This is tremendous recycling on the part of Escargot!

## Do you have a family?

Oh, yes! 100 other eggs hatched alongside me. I also have relatives all over the world living in forests, jungles, deserts, and even in water! The largest part of my family lives under the sea. I would visit them but I cannot swim! *C'est la vie!*



Visit your library and look for books that include wonderful facts about snails. Do not believe the gardening books that say we are "pests." We are in gardens looking for the ingredients for our next delicious salad. *Mwah!*

From the picture book *Escargot* by Dashka Slater and illustrated by Sydney Hanson (FSG).

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