

**THE CUTTING CONTRACT**  
**A New Cutting Method for Little Hands**  
**Velma Neeley**

**Instructions for Opening and Printing**

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## The Cutting Contract

Do you want your students to learn a better way to cut? Then make this contract with them!

The method described below increases stability, consistency and cutting control. It takes preparation and practice, though, and that's where the contract comes in.

### **Strengthening the cutting fingers:**

Some children may need exercises to strengthen their fingers before any actual cutting is practiced. The thumb and middle finger of the child's dominant hand are the fingers to be exercised, and the pointer, or, index, finger becomes the scissor balancing finger.

### **Materials needed:**

A large empty coffee can and ten pincher-style clothespins are required for this exercise.

Using the cutting fingers, the child will squeeze the clothespins open, and clip each of them along the edge of a large coffee can, and then squeeze each one again to open and remove it. Monitor that the child doesn't use a fist to open and close the pins. Also, the can should not be tilted as the clothespins are removed. The correct motion when removing a clothespin is to squeeze and lift it upward.

### **Alternatives:**

Squeezing sponges in water, or squeezing any soft toy using the cutting fingers, can also be used as exercises. They serve, not only to strengthen the fingers, but also to draw attention to the two fingers that will slip into the holes of the scissors.

### **Pre-contract scissors exercise:**

The child should slip his cutting fingers into the holes of the scissors and wrap his index finger under the scissors for support. The child is now in the position to begin operating the scissors. You may want to take some strips of construction paper and direct the child to cut fringe, with this direction: Cut, cut, stop. Children need to learn to engage the scissors to cut, but they also need directions to STOP the cutting action.

### **Preparing the cutting contracts:**

Make several copies of the cutting pages, especially the first page, on light-colored construction paper. You will notice that each individual contract is lettered for the order in which it should be introduced. Cut out the individual contracts and give the child the small A lettered contract sheet first. Direct the child to place the thumb of the non-scissor holding hand on the star to stabilize the paper and then to cut, in order, on the lines that are numbered from 1 to 3. If the child has difficulty staying on the lines, you may widen them with a large black marker and gradually reduce the line width as the child becomes more skilled in this task. Several copies of individual contracts may be required in order to repeat the ones which cause the most difficulty.

After having practiced cutting short and long lines, and how to stop cutting, the child will begin cutting off corners. At this point, instruct the child to turn the paper towards the scissors while cutting, instead of turning the scissors to follow the lines. Try to keep the scissors in one position in front of the student. Don't allow the child move it from left to right to follow the lines. This practice of cutting off the corners is done in preparation for the curved lines and rounded shapes on the second page of contracts. The curved lines are to be cut by moving the paper with the paper-holding hand... just as on the earlier contracts where the corners were cut off.

When the child is ready to cut the rounded shapes on the final contracts, instruct him to fold the

paper through the center of the round shape and then to cut a small slit for the scissors to fit inside the shape and cut from there. This will not produce round shapes, but nice rounded holes in the paper. If you want a child to cut round shapes, just draw cutting lines from the edge of the paper to the circle line.

### **Cutting and assembling the puzzles:**

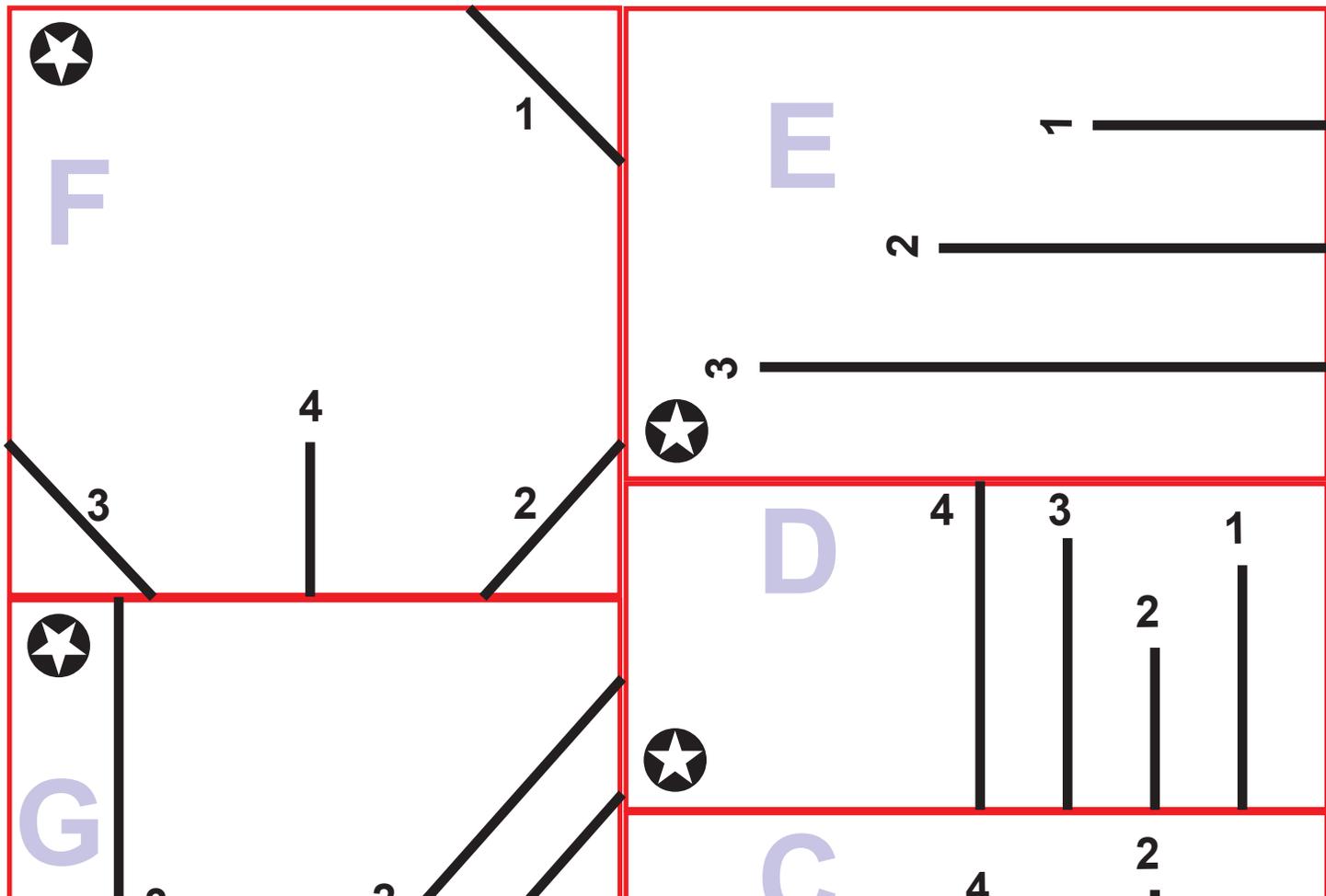
Puzzles are arranged in hierarchies which correspond to the individual cutting contracts. For example, after successfully completing Contract A, provide the puzzle of the Duck. Cut the duck puzzle in half so the child only has to make two additional cuts to complete the exercise. Next, arrange the pieces of the duck puzzle in the appropriate logical order and paste them onto the template provided. Similar puzzle exercises can be provided by using pictures from magazines.

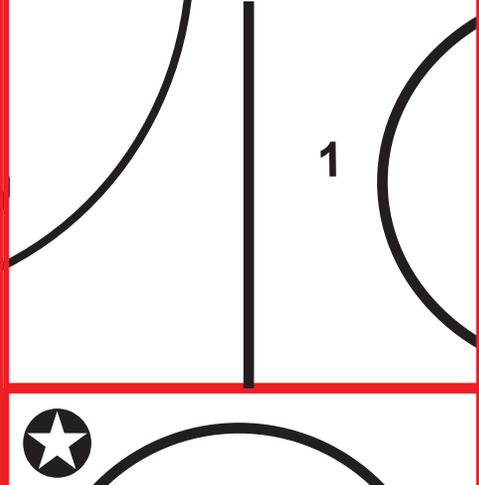
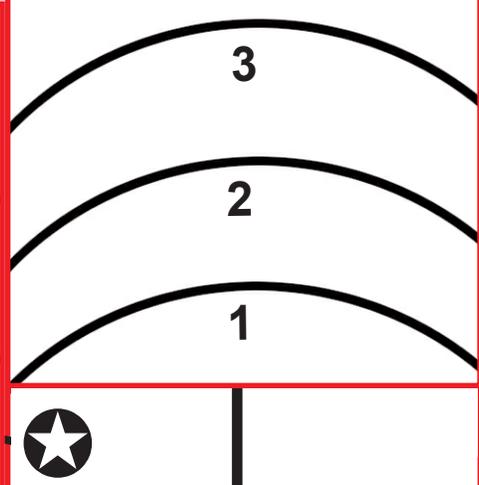
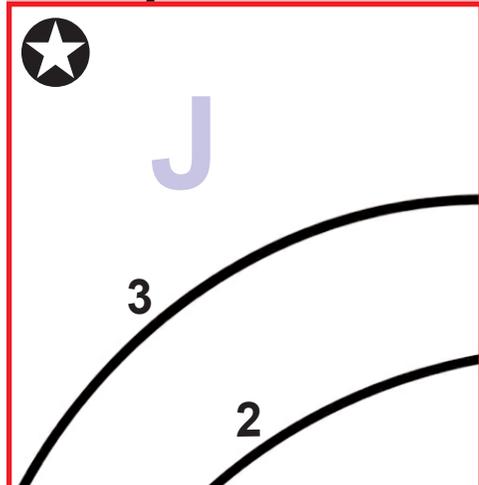
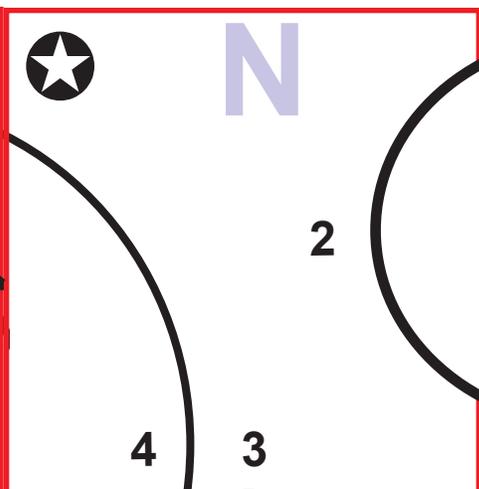
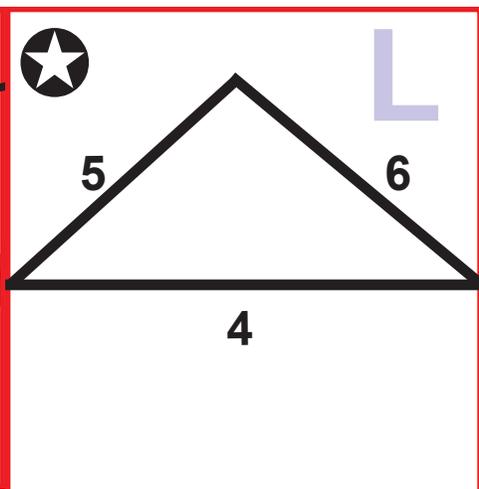
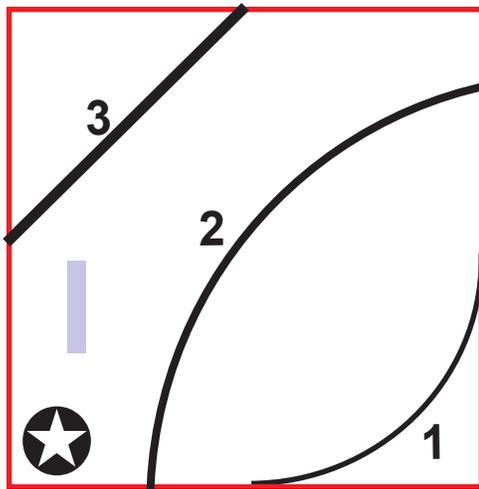
Below is a list of the contracts and their corresponding picture puzzles.

- 1. Contract A - Duck Puzzle**
- 2. Contract B - Octopus Puzzle**
- 3. Contract C - Porcupine Puzzle**
- 4. Contract D - Turtle Puzzle**
- 5. Contract E - Clown Fish Puzzle**
- 6. Contract F - Snake Puzzle**
- 7. Contract G - Leopard Puzzle**
- 8. Contract H - Lobster Puzzle**
- 9. Contract I - Goldfish Puzzle**
- 10. Contract J - Indian Puzzle**
- 11. Contract K - Alligator Puzzle**
- 12. Contract L - Gingerbread Boy Puzzle**
- 13. Contract M - Moth Puzzle**
- 14. Contract N - Walrus, Sun, and Igloo Puzzle**
- 15. Contract O - Balls Puzzle**
- 16. No Contract - Can You Cut Out An Angel Fish?**

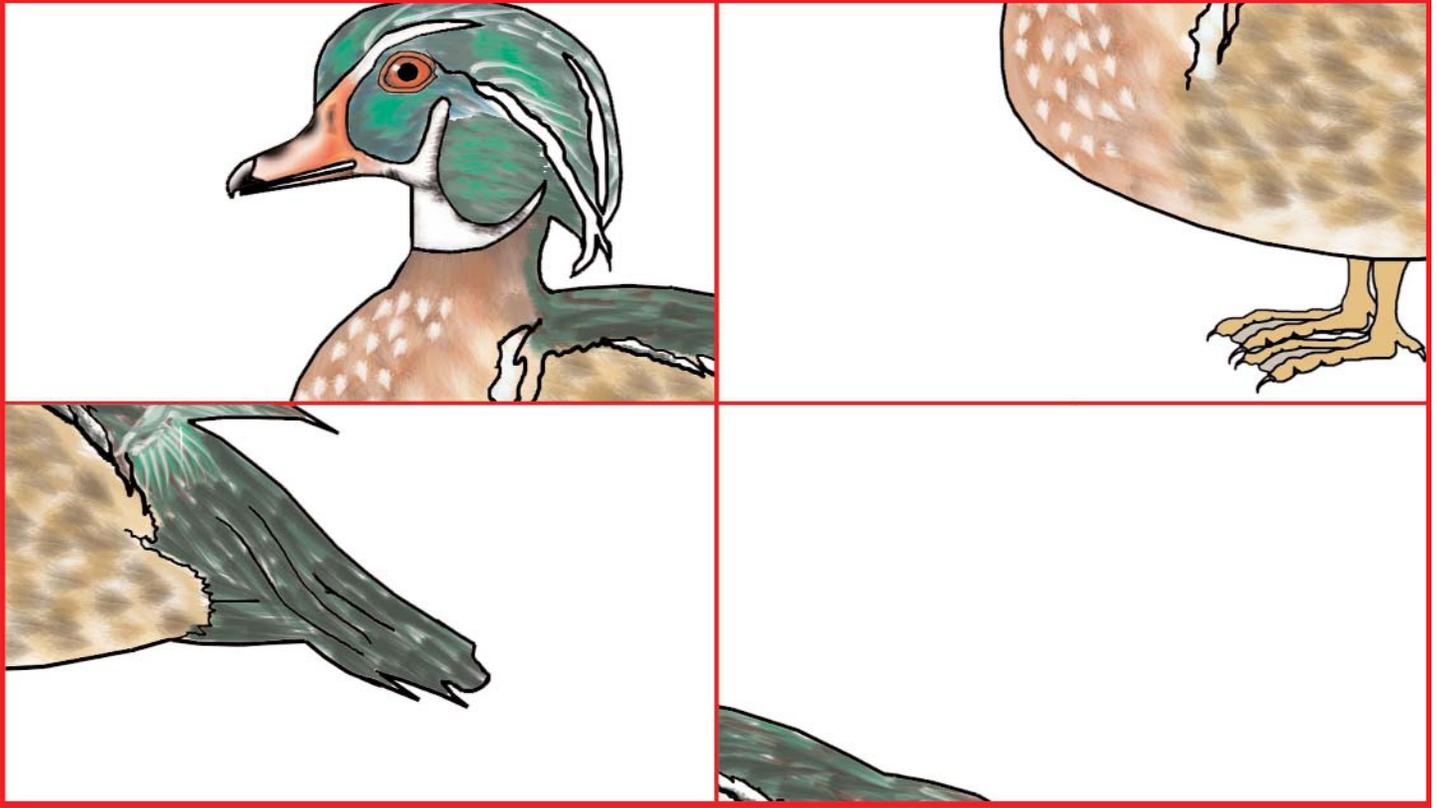
### **Cutting the Puzzles:**

1. Print the puzzle sheets in black-and-white or color on 8 1/2 x 11 inch white stock.
2. Trim the outer edges before beginning. The puzzles then may be cut into quarter or half sections for the child.

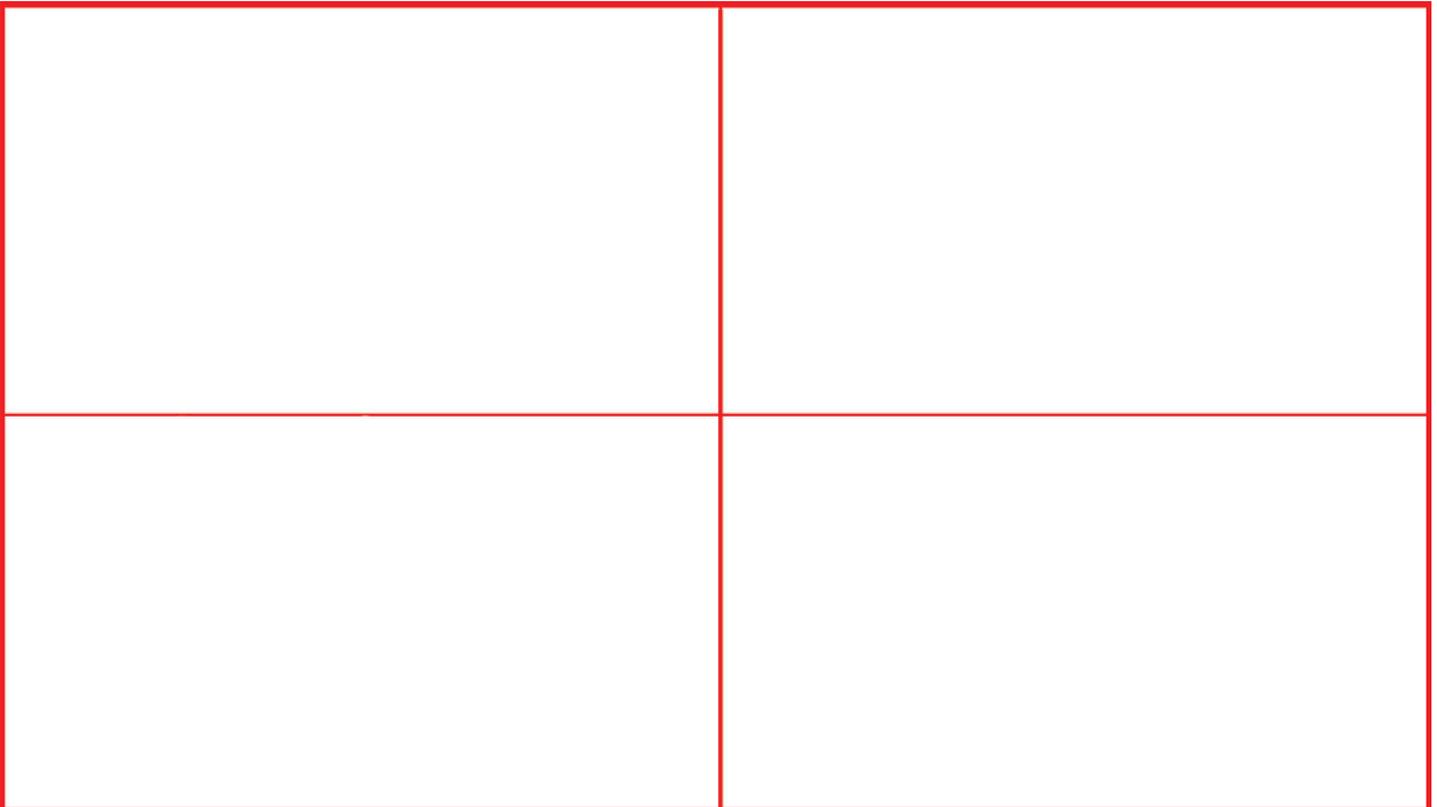




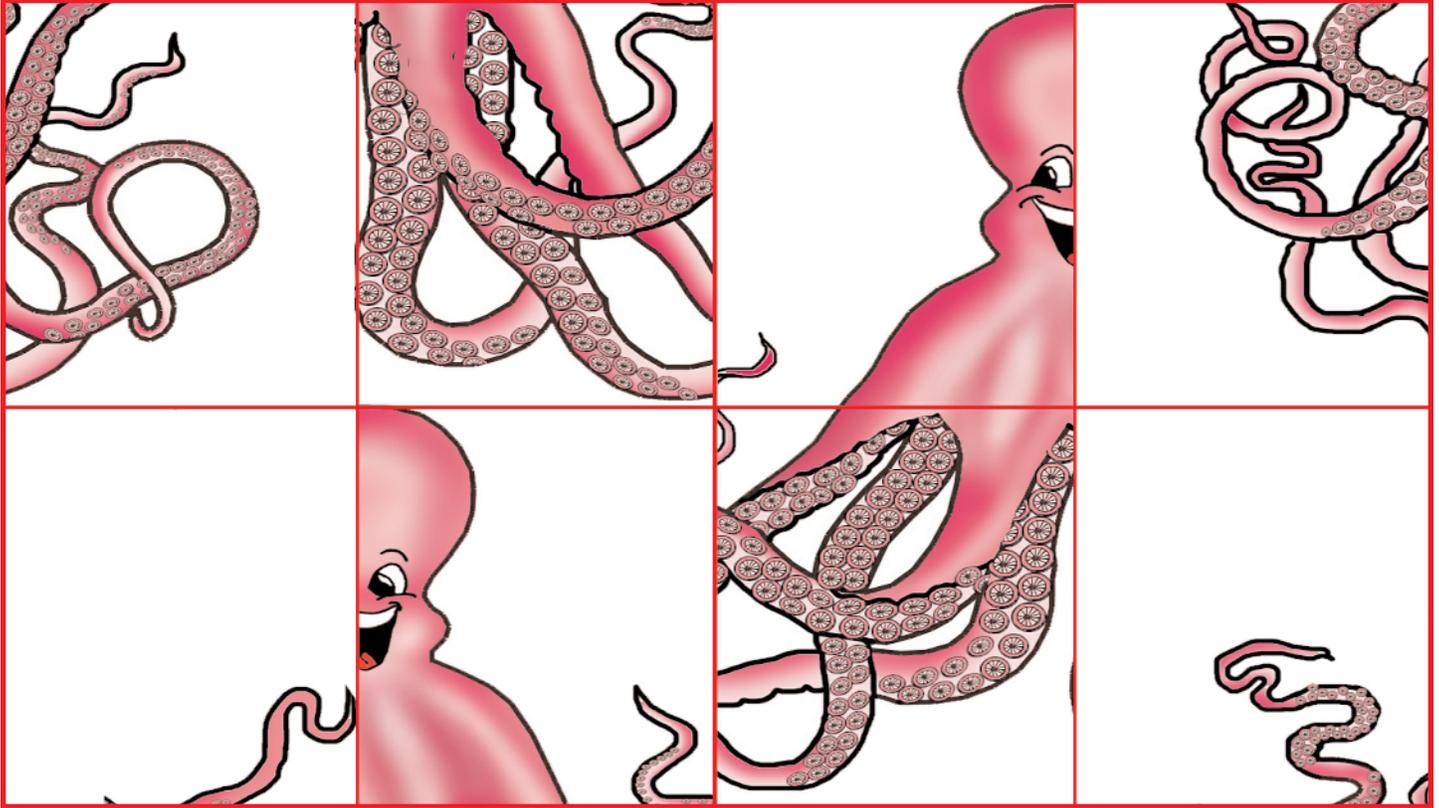
A. CUT THE DUCK



PASTE THE DUCK



**B. CUT THE OCTOPUS**



**PASTE THE OCTOPUS**

