

## **Discussion Guide:** *The Big Adventures of Mr. Small* by JoAnn Adinolfi

### **Format & Narration**

1. Information in the book is offered in many different ways. Sometimes it is described, sometimes there's dialogue and sometimes there are labels to inform the reader. Analyze a specific page and show what kind of information is given in each of these different ways.
2. Could this story be told entirely through speech bubbles? Where are descriptions needed?
  - a. Redraw some of the pages, adding or taking out dialogue. How do your changes affect the pacing of the story? Do they speed the plot up or slow it down?
3. How does the author use the Googly Eyes to show different points of view? Give specific examples.
  - a. Why does the book open and close with the Googly Eyes? What do they add to the story?
4. How does the story change if Mr. Small tells it? What about the Googly Eyes? Or Big Dusty? Or the Dust Sucker 3000?
5. Write your own page of this story, telling it from a different point of view, perhaps even that of the mouse coming out of the mouse hole. You can also invent your own character to tell the story.

### **Major Themes**

#### ***Adventure***

1. Mr. Small isn't the only one who goes on an adventure. List the adventures of each character.
2. Write your own story about the adventures of Cheesy Cat or the Dust Sucker 3000.
3. The last page shows the Googly Eyes trying to find a new home. Write a story about their search and the problems they have with each place.
4. Mr. Small faces different dangers in his Big Adventure. What kinds of dangers are there and how does he handle them? Some are objects (like the rug maze) and some are characters (like the Dust Sucker 3000). Which danger do you think is the scariest? Which is the funniest?
5. The ending of the book hints at another adventure. What adventure does Mr. Small mean? Draw a last page showing this adventure. Include the Googly Eyes and what they say and think.

#### ***Friendship***

1. Does Mr. Small leave his cozy house to find a new friend? How does he become friends with Big Dusty? What about the Googly Eyes? Are they friends or just observers?
2. What do the different characters do to show that they can be good friends?
3. Does Mr. Small make friends with every character by the end of the book? Is he friends with Cheesy Cat? How about the Dust Sucker 3000?

Can you think of any other major themes in the book? Write a list of possible themes and an example for each.

### **Character Development**

1. How would you describe Mr. Small's personality? List the scenes that show his character.
2. How do you see Big Dusty when he is first introduced? Is he friendly or mean? Does your view of him change later on? Why or why not?
3. Do the Googly Eyes have a personality? Give examples of how you see their character.
4. What about Cheesy Cat and the Dust Sucker 3000? Name three characteristics for each of them.

### **Playing With Language**

1. The Googly Eyes use a lot of puns, or jokes that make a play on words by using words that sound similar. They can also use different meanings of a word to make the saying funny. For example, the Googly Eyes "keep an eye" on Mr. Small.
  - a. List other places in the book where you find word play.
2. Can you think of other puns about eyes or seeing that the author could have used?

### **Get Creative!**

1. Comics are a fun way to tell a story. Draw your own comic with a hamster as your main character. What kind of personality does this hamster have? What kind of adventure would the hamster go on? Who would he or she meet along the way?