



"A Tisket A Tasket" is a nursery rhyme first recorded in America in the late nineteenth century.

Early Version Lyrics

A-tisket a-tasket

A green and yellow basket

I wrote a letter to my mom

And on the way I dropped it,

I dropped it, I dropped it,

And on the way I dropped it.

A little boy he picked it up

And put it in his pocket.

In some variants, the second line is "I lost my yellow basket". In other variants, the last line is "A little girl picked it up and put it in her pocket".

In nineteenth-century England, the rhyme had somewhat different but evidently related words:

I lost my supper, last night,

And the night before,

And if I do this night,

I never will no more.

I sent a letter to my love,

I carried water in my glove,

And by the way I dropped it, I did so, I did so:

I had a little dog that said bow-wow!

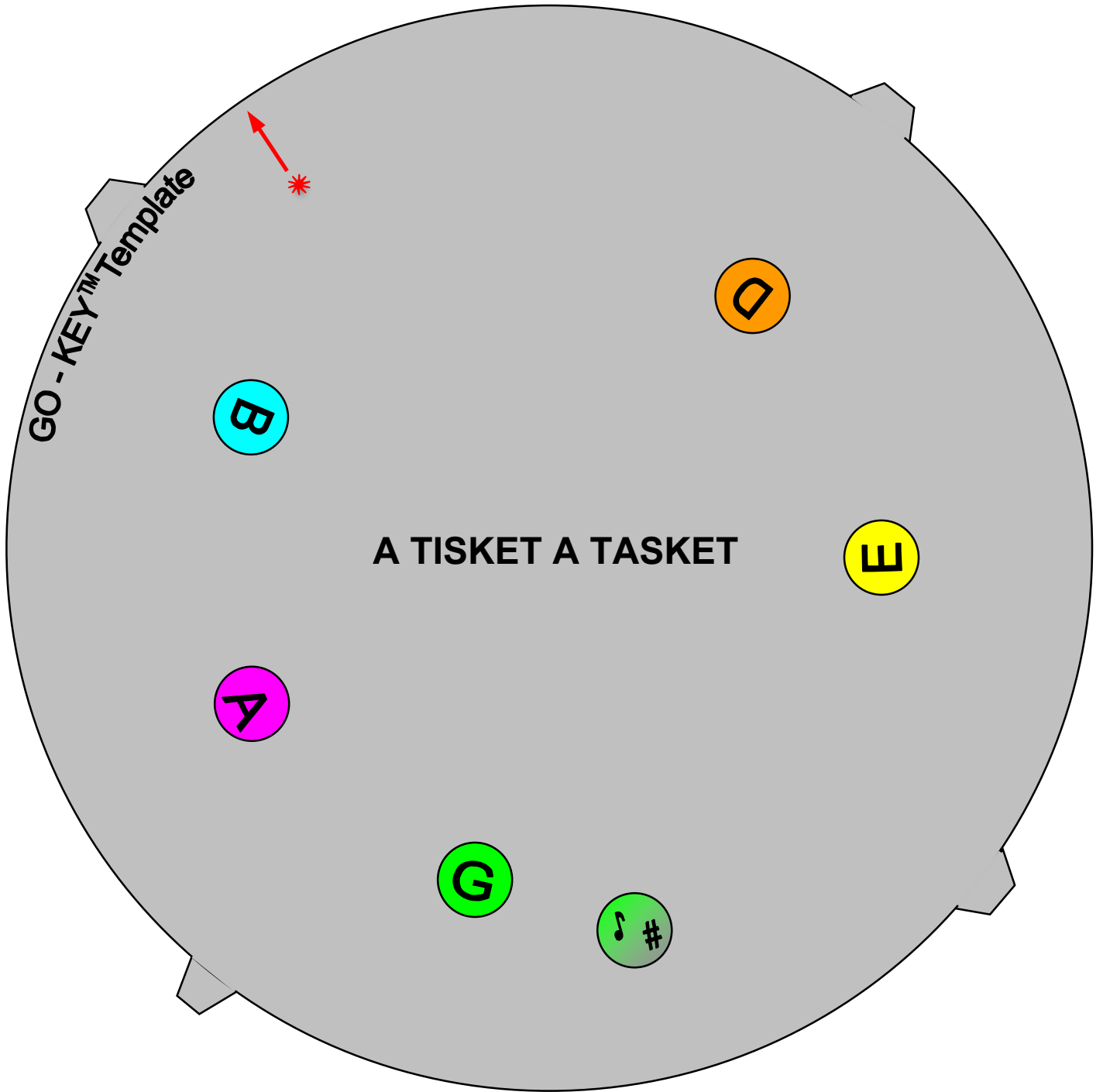
I had a little cat that said meow-meow!

Shan't bite you, shan't bite you,

Shall bite you.

I dropt it, I dropt it,

And by the way I lost it.



History and Origin

The rhyme was first noted in the United States in 1938 as a children's rhyming game. It was sung while children danced in a circle. One of the number ran on the outside of the circle and dropped a handkerchief. The nearest child would then pick it up and chase the dropper. If caught, the dropper either was kissed, joined the circle, or had to tell the name of their sweetheart.

It was used as the basis for a very successful and highly regarded 1938 recording by Ella Fitzgerald. Ella Fitzgerald, in conjunction with Al Feldman (later known as Van Alexander), extended and embellished the rhyme into a jazz piece that was her breakthrough hit with the Chick Webb Orchestra in 1938. It has since become a jazz standard. A follow-up song written by Fitzgerald and Webb entitled "I Found My Yellow Basket" (1938) was less successful.

The song was a major hit of the "pre-chart" era, reaching number one in Billboard's sheet music and Record Buying Guide (jukebox) charts, also number 1 on "Your Hit Parade".

Bing Crosby included the song in a medley on his album *On the Happy Side* (1962).

Lines from the song have been mentioned by Stevie Ray Vaughan, Half Man Half Biscuit, Ganksta N-I-P, Shangri-Las, Scarface, Eminem, Madonna, and Boondox.

Curly Howard recites a paraphrase of the (non-musical) rhyme in *The Three Stooges* short *We Want Our Mummy* (1939).

The music for the song was used in the opening scene of John Ford's 1940 film *The Grapes of Wrath* to help establish the contemporary time frame of the events of the film.

Ella Fitzgerald performed the song in the Abbott and Costello film, *Ride 'Em Cowboy* (1942).

A rendition of the song was also performed in the Paul Thomas Anderson movie *The Master* (2012).