

Experience Guide: *Necessary Discomfort*

1. Listening and Discussion Experience Guide:

Suggested questions¹ for critically reading Oliver Jeffers' *The Heart and the Bottle*

1. What do you think this book will be about (before reading)?
2. Who do you think the characters are (point to man and girl)? *or* What do you imagine the characters are feeling? (toward each other...)
3. How might the chair have become empty? *or* Why is the chair empty?
4. How do you think the girl is feeling (about empty chair)?
5. *p* Have you ever had an empty chair in your life?
6. Why does the little girl put her heart in a bottle?
7. Do you think she should have put her heart in a bottle?
8. *p* What would it feel like if your own heart was in a bottle?
9. What makes the little girl want to take her heart out?
10. Why was it so hard to get her heart back out of the bottle?
11. Why was the child able to take her heart out for her?
12. Is the chair at the end of the book the same chair as in the beginning of the book?
13. *p* Would you ever do what the girl in the book did?

Suggested statements for critically reading Oliver Jeffers' *The Heart and the Bottle*

Note: Sometimes it is easier or more natural to make open-ended statements during critical reading and wait for listeners to respond. You might try some or all of the following:

1. I don't know why the chair is empty.
2. The little girl might be feeling something hard.
3. The man is no longer in any of the drawings.
4. I wonder if the bottle will be a safe place for her heart.
5. I don't know why it was so hard to get her heart back out.
6. The little girl grew up and her heart is still in the bottle.
7. Only another little girl could take her heart out.
8. I wonder if it was hard to sit back down in the old chair.
9. I don't know if her heart was ever safe inside that bottle.
10. The grown up girl might still miss her friend.

¹ Questions marked with a *p* invite readers to make connections to their personal lives. Educators who know their classrooms best should choose if and when these questions will be appropriate.

2. Movement Experience Guide:²

Prompts

To begin: This series of movements is based on the three states of being that the girl's heart goes through in the book: open and curious - in a sealed bottle - open and curious again. It is helpful to read small excerpts of text and give ample time for listeners to move and adjust to this type of activity. The background music is listed within the experience and is at the educator's discretion; it has often been helpful in our experience to play some type of background sound to give learners a sense of privacy in their movement work.

1. First movement sequence:

Educator says: *The little girl starts our story open and curious. She asks questions and her "head was filled with curiosities of the world." Keeping a safe open space around you we are all going to make big open curious shapes with our bodies.*

Give a few moments for learners to think.

Educator says: *The ocean is a huge vast place- quite curious- can you move your body into big open shapes. Maybe the shape you make is low and large.*

Give a few moments.

Educator says: *The sky is sometimes blue or grey and feels high above us - quite curious too - can you move your body into a different open shape. Maybe this time you will make a high shape, a wide shape, or a shape the moves quickly.*

Give a few more moments. Invite learners to find a calm shape to settle into and rest while you say the next set of movement words.

2. Second movement sequence:

Educator says: *The little girl finds an empty chair and her world changes. She thinks it will be safer if she puts her heart in a glass bottle. It seems like things are safely fixed but, really, we know that "nothing was the same. She forgot about the stars and stopped taking notice of the sea".*

Give a few moments for learners to think.

Educator says: *The little girl's heart is now in a smooth glass bottle. Imagine your body in a bottle too. What kinds of shapes would your body make? Can you make a small tight shape in your space?*

Give a few moments.

² Inspired by the work of Kauffman, 2005.

Educator says: *The heart becomes heavy and awkward in the bottle. Can you make your body move heavy and slowly? Maybe your heavy slow movement is low to the ground; maybe you are moving heavily and slowly in a circle. You get to choose.*

Give a few moments.

Educator says: *The girl realizes she can't get her heart back out. Can you make a scared shape with your body? Is your body moving through a smaller space than it was before? Maybe your body has invisible walls around it. You might be making low movements or tall skinny quick ones.*

Give a few more moments. Invite learners to find a calm shape to settle into and rest while you say the next set of movement words.

3. Third Movement Sequence

Educator says: *When the little girl finally takes the heart out of the bottle the world becomes curious and wonder filled once more. "The heart was put back where it came from and the chair wasn't so empty any more". We are going to explore moving our bodies in curious wonderful ways once more but this time we can remember what it was like to be a heart trapped in a bottle.*

Give a few moments for learners to think.

Educator says: *The ocean is still a huge vast curiosity- can you move your body into big open shapes. Maybe the shape you make is low and large. It might be much bigger than the shape you tried before.*

Give a few moments.

Educator says: *The sky can also be yellow or pink. Sometimes it feels like a blanket all around us. Can you move your body into a brand new open shape? Maybe this time you will make a super tall shape, or a fat, wide shape, or a quick shape that fills the room.*

Give a few more moments. Invite learners to find a calm shape to settle into and rest. It might be appropriate to use transition words your classroom is used to as this experience comes to a close.

3. Art Experience Guide:

Material Guide³

*This guide is intended to provide ideas for materials you might want and/or be able to offer to students as they re-illustrate a page from *The Heart and the Bottle*. No materials are necessary. At minimum each learner will need one sheet of paper (it might be recycled or new and of varying sizes) as well as a drawing tool.*

Paper suggestions:

- Newsprint
- Printer paper
- Watercolour paper
- Poster Board Sheets
- Kraft paper
- Old cereal boxes, flattened
- Recycled paper
- Construction paper sheets
- Canvas (you might tear a thrifted cotton sheet into squares)

Material possibilities:

- Paint: watercolour, tempera, non-toxic gouache, poster paint
- Markers
- Coloured pens
- Coloured pencils
- Pastels: oil or chalk
- Crayons
- Writing pencils
- Found objects (many recycled materials work well)
- Craft or school glue
- Ribbons, buttons, zippers, fabric scraps, thread or cotton-floss

³ The material list is loosely inspired by Jeffers' own comments on his process and materials. He notes:

I use watercolour for my 'boy' stories, a whole range of types- from ones I still have from college, to expensive new ones. I use printer paper to make a range of drawings lines and scribbles that eventually become the components of a layered Photoshop file. I use heavy Arches watercolour paper for my watercolour painting. I use mounting board to glue old pieces of paper to if they are to be the base of the illustration. I also use whatever else I lay my hands on- any sort paper (collage is wonderful), gouache paint acrylic paint and the dulux colour matcher paint (the stuff for walls where you pick a colour and they match it). Taken from oliverjeffers.com.