



Guided Imagery for *Nothing but the Truth* by Avi



Purpose of the Guided Imagery Activity: To create the tension of being trapped, of not having anything that you can do. To create the feeling that no one is listening to you and that nothing is in your control—whatever is happening to you, you are trapped, so that you can better empathize with all of the characters in the novel

When to use this guided imagery exercise: Towards the middle of the book, after the situation escalates to out-of-control proportions, but before the “denouement”. I might suggest around chapter 15. But use this whenever it is convenient. It will be a great intro to a creative writing activity for the kids to be able to think of their own ending of the story before they read it in class. This could also help get them ready for a multi genre research paper, as an exercise in writing styles and developing voice for a short story or the like.

SO THAT (evaluation/assessment): The students can write about what should be done in the situation, realizing that every character feels so trapped. Each student should write about either what he/she would do (from one character’s perspective) or write about what should happen in general (what many of the characters should do) to help resolve the situation in the best way. What should Philip (Miss Narwin, Dr. Doanes, etc) do to resolve the story in the best way possible—and what is the best resolution?

Music to use: “A Walk in Jurassic Park: I. DNA and the Dino” performed here by BYU Wind Symphony found on *Brigham Young University Bands * 1995-1996 in Review*. Running Time: 4:58 (track #19 on the CD)

What’s good about this music: It creates the mood and sustains it through changes of dynamics (p-ff) and ends without any real resolution. The entire piece has a feeling of discontent and entrapment.

Steps to follow:

Have students clear their desks and calm themselves.

Turn down the lights and begin in a clam voice to explain that we’re going to have a guided imagery lesson. Explain that means that we are going to visualize a scene while we listen to some music that will help us feel what is going on better.

When everyone is ready, calmly begin reading the paper after you turn on the music so it’s not too loud at first. Gauge your reading to the mood of the music and what is going on in the story.

After the exercise, explain to the students that every character in the story feels trapped by circumstances. This could be a really good class discussion. What can they really do if no one is going to sit down and listen and then admit that he or she was wrong? (Which they are all too proud to do) Who is in the right here? Who should take the blame? Should it be shared? These are all good questions that we can talk about as a class when we understand that everyone feels trapped. (Then see the evaluation above)



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Turn on music and then read the following story, allowing time for the students to imagine themselves doing the activities, and think about how they are feeling and what they are thinking, so that they feel as trapped as the characters in the story.

One day at school, your friend Aaron (Erin) asks you for your locker combination because the lockers in the east wing are being repainted. You agree that it would be a good idea for your friend to share a locker with you. What a fun time you will have sharing a locker for a week or so.

The next day, you're running late for school and you run to your locker, which is, thankfully right outside of your first period English class. You pick up your copy of *Nothing but the Truth* and throw it in your book bag. You can't go to class without it again, or you'll start losing points. Stupid class. Stupid book.

You look to see if there is anything else that you need for class and notice that a brown paper bag is falling out of your overcrowded locker. It's not your lunch, whose could it be? Oh, that's right; Aaron (Erin) is sharing your locker this week. You find a nice little place for it on the very bottom of the locker and duck into English class as the bell rings. Good. You didn't want a tardy. Today is going to be okay.

The announcements start and you listen as the assistant principal explains that some drug dogs are going to be going through some of the classrooms, for training today. Great! Less time in some class today, hopefully for you. After the announcements are over, your teacher tells you that your class will be the first in the classroom training, so if everyone would stand out in the hall while the dogs train...

You see the two police officers coming down the hall with their two dogs. Everyone is out in the hall with the class, just waiting and playing around. But the dogs don't go into your classroom; they stop in front of your locker and bark and sniff. What is going on?

Maybe they smell Aaron (Erin)'s lunch; maybe they're hungry; but they are drug dogs. This isn't looking very good in front of your entire class. So the police officers open your locker and look in—everyone is looking from the police officers to you. How are you feeling? What is going on here?

They pull out the brown paper bag that you just stuffed back into your locker not twenty minutes ago and look inside—it's marijuana!!! How did that get into your locker? What are the police officers doing? What is everyone saying? How are you feeling?

The Assistant Principal takes you and the police into his office and you try to defend yourself, explaining that the bag has to be Aaron (Erin)'s.

But they don't seem to listen to you. Nothing else of Aaron (Erin)'s was in your locker, and your fingerprints would be on the bag, wouldn't they?

The police take you away and soon the entire school knows. You are having to take the blame for the illegal substance, and no one is listening to your side. How are you feeling? What are you thinking? What do you want to do? What do you think you can do at this point—with all of the evidence already stacked against you?

How do you feel? What do you think?