A (DEAD) THING LIKE ME

Activity Guide

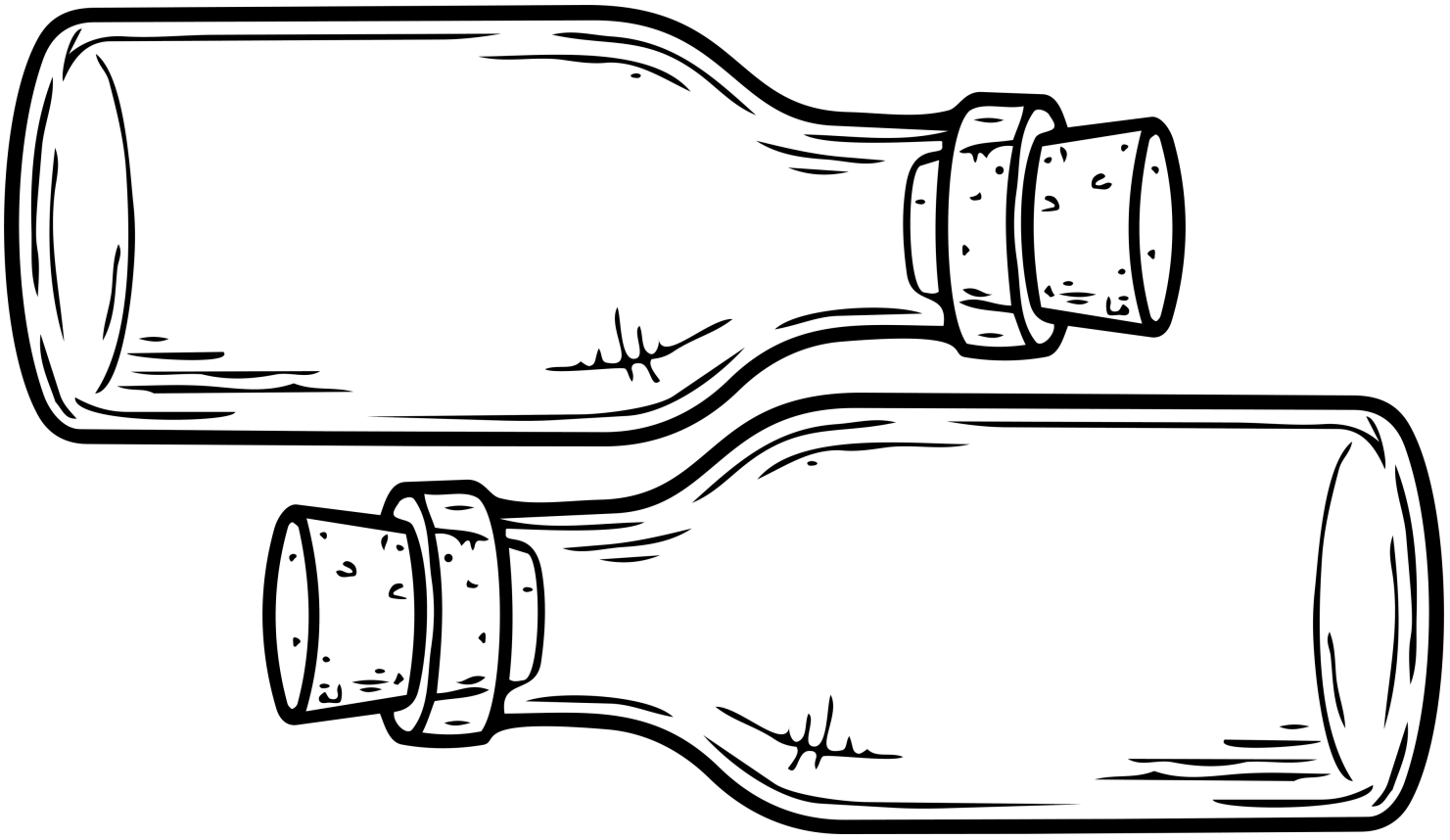
Create Your Own Memory Bottles

OPTION A

Pick a memory. In the bottles below or on a separate piece of paper, write or draw every sensory detail you can recall: what you saw, heard, felt, smelled, tasted, touched.

OPTION B

Make a visual impression of a new experience. Manipulate a kneadable rubber eraser in your hands until it becomes soft and pliable. Press it against a texture (like tree bark, a seashell, or a stone path) until the texture transfers onto the rubber. Dip the rubber into an ink pad and press in the bottles below or on a separate piece of paper until the texture transfers. Repeat. Now you've created a texture story of your experience.



Ground Yourself

Damon often expresses how disconnected he feels from his new human body. What he doesn't realize is this is a common human experience – you don't have to be a demon in a repossessed body to feel this way.

To ground yourself in your body, take a moment to experience all five senses. Fill the boxes below with what you notice.

FIVE THINGS YOU SEE

FOUR THINGS YOU HEAR

THREE THINGS YOU TOUCH

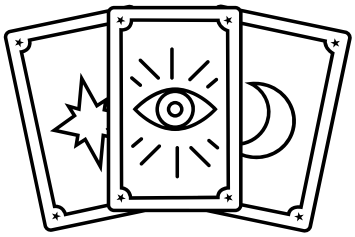
TWO THINGS YOU SMELL

ONE THING YOU TASTE

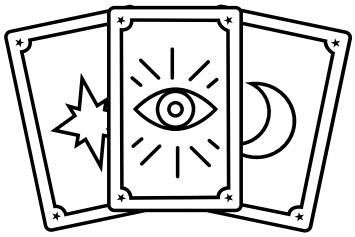
WHAT CAN YOU CONTROL?

When Logan is distressed after an ex friend shows up, she puts things into perspective by reflecting on what she can and can't control. Here's how to do the exercise yourself.

Think of a problem you're dealing with right now. In the appropriate circles, write examples what you CAN'T control (e.g. the weather, life and death, or the past), what you can INFLUENCE to some extent (e.g. your relationships or your health), and what you CAN control (e.g. your decisions and reactions).



CAN CONTROL



CAN INFLUENCE

CAN'T CONTROL

Write a Letter You'll Never Send

Logan writes a letter to her dead best friend, Avery, to tell her everything she wished she could've said when Avery was still alive. Sometimes, putting down how we feel on paper can help us process those emotions — even if it's a letter we'll never send.

In the space below, write a letter...

- To someone you've loved and lost
- To your younger self
- To your older self
- To a relative you wished you'd met

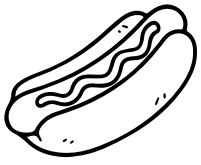
Express Yourself Through Art

Maggie believes art is how people heal. In the space below, draw, sketch, or paint something that expresses how you feel right now.

Describe Your Favorite Food

Hot Dog loves hot dogs: “One hot dog, please,” she imagines herself ordering in Chapter One. “Mustard. Lots of it. Ketchup, in bright red zig zags down the middle. Pickle relish too. And a scoop of banana peppers.”

Pick your favorite food and describe it below using words or images. Use as many sensory details as you can.



Imagine Eating Something Inedible

Hot Dog imagines what it would be like to eat the stars in Damon's bottle: "If I bit down on a star, would it burst in my mouth like orange caviar?"

Choose an item from the list below – or come up with your own – and imagine what it would be like to eat it. You can write or illustrate your answer.

WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE TO EAT...

- A forest
- An ocean
- A planet
- A sunflower field
- An emotion (e.g., happiness, sadness, joy, fear)
- A Saturday afternoon
- Summer
- Heartbreak
- A car engine
- The United States of America
- An iceberg
- Music
- A bonfire
- A sunset

Find Support

This book explores themes of loss, grief and mental health. If you find yourself struggling, there's lots of people who are ready to help you.

- Your guidance counselor is a good place to start.
- The national 988 hotline is free and confidential. You can also use the crisis text line by texting home to 741741.
- The Trevor Project offers confidential counseling for LGBTQ+ teens: call 1-866-488-7386 or text 'START' to 678-678.
- For life-threatening emergencies, call 911

Save these numbers in your phone for the next time you need them.

Who else can you reach out to? Fill out the box below.

List What You Want

In Chapter Seven, Hot Dog lists all the things she wants – from going to prom to eating winter oranges.

Take 5 to 10 minutes and write down all the things you want. Use specific details and concrete imagery whenever possible. Don't worry about punctuation or spelling; just freewrite as fast as you can.

Explore Surrealism

Surrealism often has a dreamlike quality. Author E.G. Young used one of her recurring nightmares to write about Hot Dog's inability to scream. Keep a "dream journal" for the next week and write down your dreams as soon as you wake up.

Once you have a few entries, choose one element from a recent dream and write a scene, story, or a poem based on it in the box below or on a separate page.

Create a Manual for Being Human

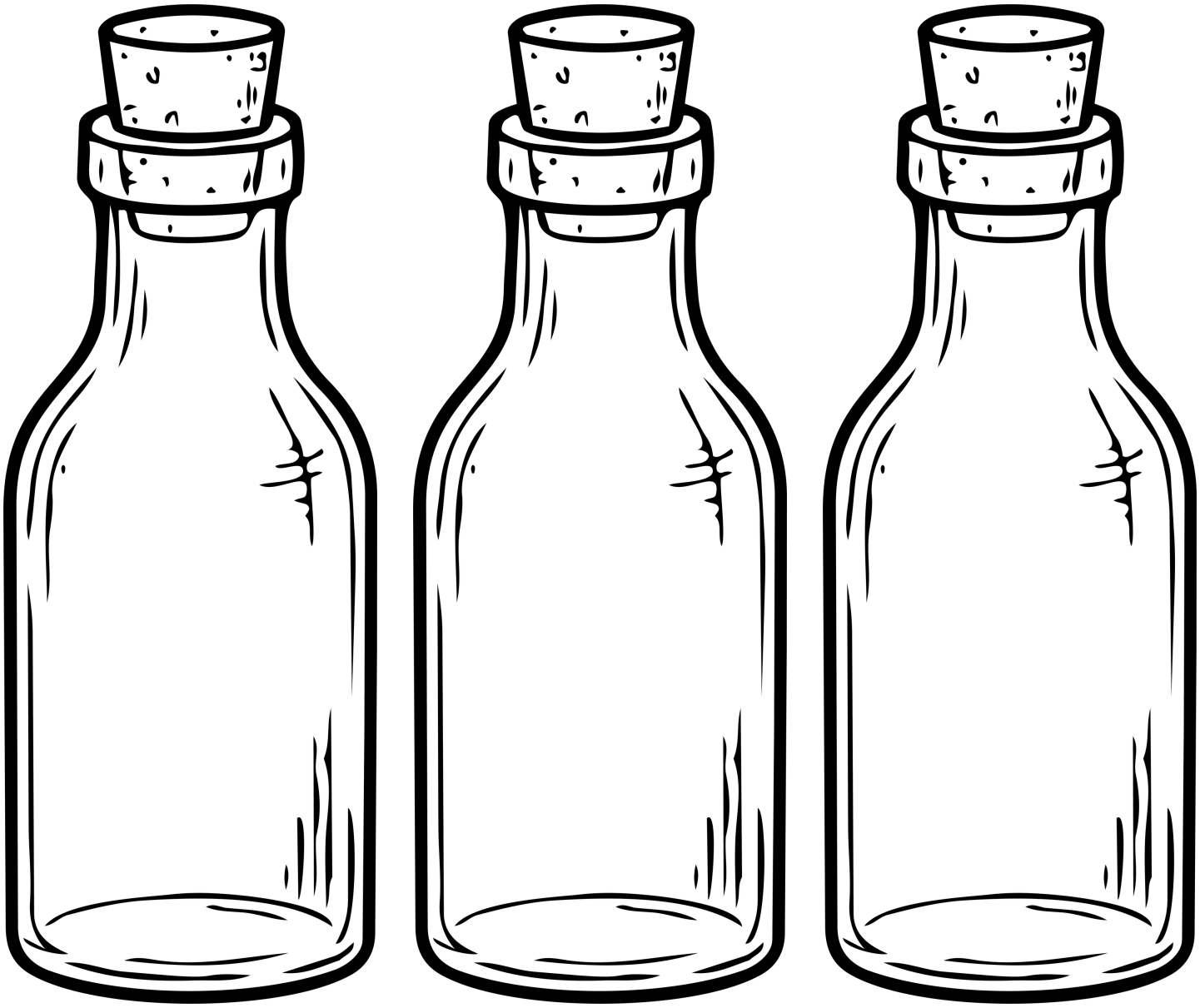
Damon says that demons have a "manual" for being human. If you had to create this manual, what would it say?

In the space below or on a separate page, write your own manual. You could also plan a script and record a video of yourself explaining tips for being human to a demon.

Mix a Potion for Being You

Hot Dog tries to create a potion filled with ingredients for being human.

If you were to mix potions that represented you and your friends or loved ones, what would you put inside it? Write or illustrate your answer in the bottles below.



Write an Ad for Damon's Deodorant

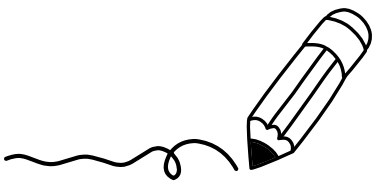
Damon often wears unusual deodorants with names like Fox Tooth, Holiday Lumber, and Sword Crush. Pick one of these deodorant scents — or come up with your own — and create an advertisement for it as a fake social media influencer.

Identify Character Arcs

In the writing craft book *Save the Cat Writes a Novel*, author Jessica Brody says every character goes through a journey of transformation and learns something about themselves. She identifies 10 universal lessons in fiction:

- Forgiveness (of self or others)
- Love (self love, family love, friendship love, or romantic love)
- Acceptance (of self, circumstances, or reality)
- Faith (in yourself, in others, or in the world/universe/God)
- Fear (overcoming it, conquering it, or finding courage)
- Trust (in yourself, in others, in the unknown, or in the universe)
- Survival (including the will to live)
- Selflessness (including sacrifice, altruism, heroism, or overcoming greed)
- Responsibility (including duty, standing up for a cause, or accepting your destiny)
- Redemption (including atonement, accepting blame, remorse, or salvation)

What "universal lesson" does this book explore? What does Hot Dog learn that most resonates with you?



Discussion Questions, Pt. 1

- How does Hot Dog change over the course of her story?
- Although Hot Dog can't speak because her lips are stitched, her dress never stops talking. What do you think this means?
- In the beginning, Hot Dog thinks eating hot dogs would make her a real, living girl again, but she realizes the truth is much more complicated. What does Hot Dog learn about what it means to "be human?"
- The author has said this book is a "love letter to life," even though it's also about death. How does this book celebrate life?
- Who is Hot Dog — Chloe, Avery, or neither?
- How do you feel the author resolved the mystery of Hot Dog's past? Were you surprised, satisfied, or disappointed? Why or why not?
- Even though Hot Dog is the main character of this novel, she doesn't have a line of spoken dialogue until halfway through. How did this affect your reading experience?
- Damon often talks about how strange it is to exist inside a human body. Do you ever feel that way? Why or why not?
- Logan experiences cyberbullying. Have you ever been bullied? How did it make you feel? How did you deal with it?
- Why do you think Hot Dog's ghost eater is a disembodied finger?
- What do you think the ghost crabs symbolize?
- Why does the Other Room exist in Logan's house?

Discussion Questions, Pt. 2

- Chapter 56 is completely blank. Why do you think the author made this choice?
- This book uses elements of surrealism to create a dreamlike quality, like when Hot Dog is watched by ghost crabs who carry her memories. Can you give examples of surrealism in other books, movies, or visual arts?
- Surrealist author A.S. King once said, "Death and surrealism have a lot in common." What do you think she means by this? How does surrealism help explore the themes of life and death in this novel?
- The author used Dragon Nuance dictation (speech to text software) to write this book. Do you think the fact that the author spoke the words aloud had any effect on the writing style? Why or why not?
- This book is written in first person present tense. How would the book have been different if it had been written in past tense or third person POV?
- Who was your favorite character? Which one did you relate to most?
- What were your favorite and least favorite scenes?
- Would you like to have Horse, the demon snake, as a pet? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Horse wanted to be put in the body of a horse instead of a snake?
- If the book were made into a movie or TV show, who would you cast to play the different characters?
- What do you think happens to the characters at the end of the book? Do you think they all reunite?