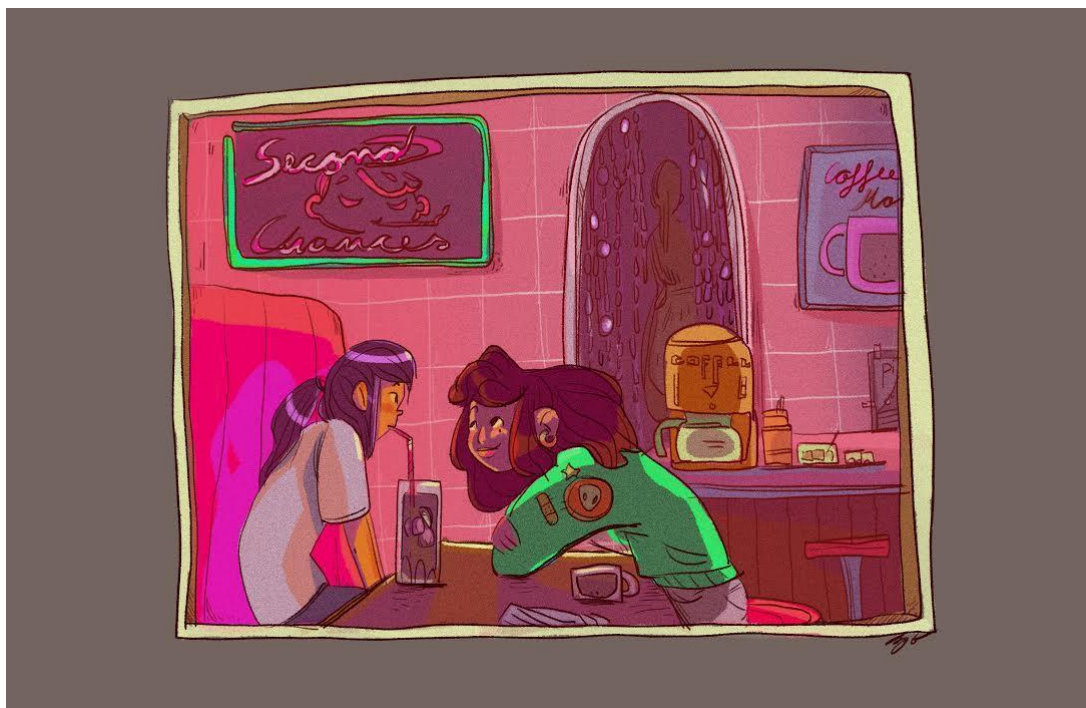


The Home for Emotional Orphans and Unappealing Children

By Vivian McInerney

Illustrated by Katia Grifols

Curriculum developed by Katy Eyberg



OVERVIEW

Quick-Glance 10 Points for Usage Guide

Student Population	
Age/Grade-Level Appropriateness	*12+/7th+
Genre/s	* Fiction * Short story * Teen drama
Length	* 3,224 words (13-minute read)
Content Advisories	* Depiction of cancer and death * Depictions of violence: a car accident and suicide attempt * The words “batshit” and “fucking” are used * Reference to teen intimacy

One-Sentence Summary	After years of battling cancer, Diane finds herself alone until she meets another “unappealing” adolescent, Una.
Lesson Planning	
Topics & Key Themes Overview	<p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Death * Family * Cancer * Religion * Belonging * Depression * Adolescence * Emancipation <p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Struggling to fit in * The inevitability of death * Family strain in response to tragedy * Humankind’s confrontation with death * Unusual friendships forged in shared trauma
Historic Events/Time Period for Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Medical progress and advances in the 1970s * Youth rights movement of the 19th and 20th centuries
Complementary Text	* Song: “Somewhere I Belong” by Linkin Park: https://bit.ly/1kKJP0N
Author & Artist Information	<p>Vivian McInerny is a career journalist and writer. Katia Grifols is a Los Angeles-based illustrator.</p>
Key Common Core Standards (found in detail following the curriculum)	<p>Grade 7 Common Core Standards:</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.6</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.B CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.D CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.B CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.4</p> <p>* Note: Questions recommended for assessment are marked with two asterisks.</p>

Author Biography

Vivian McInerney is a journalist and a writer. Her short fiction is published in *805 Lit+Art*, *Dunes Review*, and *The Cardiff Review*. She's a Fishtrap Fellow and recipient of a Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission grant for fiction, and her first children's book is forthcoming in 2021. She is at work on a second YA novel and a memoir about traveling overland through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India at age eighteen.

Artist Biography

Born and raised in Barcelona, Spain, **Katia Grifols** always hated raw tomatoes and cucumbers. In Barcelona, she began her career as a comic book artist, eventually landing in California, where she studied illustration for entertainment arts at the ArtCenter College of Design.

Her experiences with major LA studios opened her eyes to the realities of the entertainment business and, mixed with her desire to create original content, inspired Katia to create Glow in the Dark Concept Studio.

As the studio's mastermind, Katia plays a major role in the creation of the studio's in-house properties. She enjoys art direction, colors and research, brainstorming, strong coffee, and random Japanese kawaii's, but what she loves the most is encountering amazing storytellers and newfound creators! To this day, Katia still hates raw tomatoes and cucumbers.

SYNOPSIS

Not long after she turns 13, Diane gets diagnosed with leukemia and spends the next several years in limbo between life and death. Meanwhile, her parents divorce, and her mother struggles as a single parent to provide for Diane and her siblings. When Diane makes a miraculous recovery, she finds she does not belong in either her mother or father's respective homes. She only feels at home in her old hospital ward, but she cannot stay there. Her therapist connects her with Una Arnold, another former patient who does not fit in with her family, and their unusually forged friendship is born.

CURRICULUM

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

Topic

In a 10-minute journal entry, respond to the following questions:

- What does it mean to belong somewhere?
- How important is belonging?
- Where do you feel you belong?
- Have you ever felt you did not belong? Why or why not?

As a class, discuss answers to the first two journal questions.

Main Ideas

In a small group of two or three students, research the concept of emancipation. Read and discuss answers to the following questions:

- What does emancipation mean?
- What does it mean to become an emancipated minor?
- What are the process and requirements for becoming an emancipated minor?
- Find a real-life example of an emancipated minor. What happened to this person? Why did they become emancipated?
- Why do you think someone would want to become an emancipated minor?

Passage-Specific Themes

In small groups, read the following passage from “The Home for Emotional Orphans and Unappealing Children” and respond to the questions below:

The stranger at the foot of the bed, who I at first mistook for yet another doctor, was actually a priest performing last rites. Grandma Jean was there too, even though she'd been dead for years. She stood in one corner of the hospital room and smiled her perfectly white false teeth smile, and waved for me to join her, her wrinkly arms flapping the way they did. Then came a bright light, almost like a skylight had suddenly poked through the hospital ceiling above me, and I looked up and saw a long vertical tunnel opening directly overhead, stretching infinitely upward. I felt myself lifting out of my body, floating up and spiraling toward the bright lights. No angles with golden harps, which you might expect from a good Catholic girl, just an abstract, warm, white light that didn't only surround me but seemed to become me, or I became it, and I just knew what I was feeling was death and god and good, and it was okay.

Question One: What is happening in this excerpt? How do you know?

Question Two: This excerpt occurs near the beginning of the story. What do you predict happens next?

Question Three: How does this excerpt depict the act of dying? Does it align with your assumptions about dying? Why or why not?

Universal Themes

Class Discussion & Journaling:

What does the word adversity mean? Look up the word's definition in the dictionary.

In a 10-minute journal entry, write about a time when you have struggled with adversity. What happened? How did you and your family handle the adversity?

With a partner, research different ways people respond to adversity and develop resilience. Add your ideas to the whiteboard and discuss as a class.

Key Vocabulary

Definitions are context-dependent. Make sure any definitions you look up or work from are the ones that most correctly fit in the context of the story.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
abstract	morbid	Rosary session
triumphant	oblivious	Hail Mary

hysterical	sanctioned	slaughterhouse
ritual	simultaneously	psychiatric
pediatric	emancipated minor	leukemia
hesitation	prodigy	oncology
realization	apocalypse	
	vested	

Vocabulary Activity Options

1. What is a ritual? What is a significant ritual in your life? Write a brief paragraph describing this ritual, and share it with two neighbors in the classroom.
2. Working with a partner, select three or four words from the vocabulary list. For each word, create a mini-poster including the word, its definition, an example sentence, and an illustration. Post all vocabulary mini-posters in the classroom. Ask students to explore the posters in a gallery walk.

Optional: Ask each student to write a five-question quiz based on the vocabulary words, which their classmate will take. See who answers the most questions correctly.
3. Pick 10 vocabulary words from the list, and use them correctly in a short, creative piece of writing—either a short narrative, essay, or poem. Students pick the genre of their creative writing.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. What is your reaction to Diane's life after she recovers from cancer? Are you surprised, skeptical, jealous, happy, etc.? Why?
2. Diane claims she does not blame her mother for having "nothing to give" after her daughter recovers. This eventually leads to Diane's emancipation. Do you blame her mother for this? Do you think Diane's emancipation is the best choice for Diane? Why or why not?
3. Una tells Diane she "was guilty of being young." Do you agree with her self-assessment? Why or why not?
4. How do you confront grief and tragedy? Are there healthy and unhealthy ways to respond to adversity? How would you react if a close family member or friend suffered as Diane does?

Text-Dependent Question Options

1. Using specific textual evidence, compare and contrast Diane and Una. Examine everything from their physical appearances to their backstories and lingering challenges in life.
2. How does Diane's relationship with her family change over the course of her disease? Support your answer with specific evidence from the text.
3. A thematic statement is a sentence stating a text's theme. Work with a partner to write one clear thematic statement about this short story. In other words, write a sentence that states this story's main theme. Remember, your thematic statement should be general enough to apply to real life

outside the text but specific enough to be based on what happens in the story. Underneath your thematic statement, copy five pieces of supporting textual evidence that support it.

4. Study the story's art. What details from the story do you notice? Do you notice any added details? How is artist Katia Grifols' depiction of Diane and Una similar to what is described in the story? How is it different from what you imagined? Cite the story and the artwork.

Writing Exercises

Narrative

Select one other character from the story: Diane's father, her mother, her sibling(s), or Una. Rewrite a portion of this story from their perspective.

Optional: Find someone in class who wrote from the same perspective in their revision of the story. Share your respective versions of the story. How are they similar and/or different?

** Descriptive

In her story, McInerney depicts a near-death experience. Think about an important event in your life, and describe it in two to three paragraphs. You do not need to write about a near-death experience, but you should use telling details and sensory language, or language that activates all five senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound).

** Analysis

In literature, a character's tone is their attitude. In a two-page essay, analyze Diane's tone throughout the story. Do you think her tone is appropriate, given the situation? What does her tone reveal about her character and personality? Support your analysis with textual evidence.

Complementary Text Option

Read the lyrics to Linkin Park's 2003 song, "Somewhere I Belong," and watch the music video.

Somewhere I Belong

Written by Linkin Park

Performed by Linkin Park

When this began,
I had nothing to say
And I'd get lost in the nothingness inside of me
(I was confused)
And I let it all out to find that I'm not the only person with these things in mind (inside of me)
But all the vacancy the words revealed
Is the only real thing that I got left to feel (nothing to lose)
Just stuck, hollow and alone
And the fault is my own,
And the fault is my own

I want to heal, I want to feel,
What I thought was never real
I want to let go of the pain I felt so long (erase all the pain 'till it's gone)

I want to heal, I want to feel
Like I'm close to something real
I want to find something I've wanted all along
Somewhere I belong

And I've got nothing to say
I can't believe I didn't fall right down on my face (I was confused)
Looking everywhere only to find that it's not the way I had imagined it all in my mind (so what am I?)
What do I have but negativity?
'Cause I can't justify the way everyone is looking at me (nothing to lose)
Nothing to gain, hollow and alone
And the fault is my own,
And the fault is my own

I want to heal, I want to feel,
What I thought was never real
I want to let go of the pain I've held so long (erase all the pain 'till it's gone)
I want to heal, I want to feel
Like I'm close to something real
I want to find something I've wanted all along
Somewhere I belong

I will never know myself until I do this on my own
And I will never feel,
Anything else until my wounds are healed
I will never be
Anything 'til I break away from me
And I will break away, and find myself today

I want to heal, I want to feel
What I thought was never real
I want to let go of the pain I felt so long (erase all the pain 'til it's gone)
I want to heal, I want to feel,
Like I'm close to something real
I want to find something I've wanted all along
Somewhere I belong

I want to heal, I want to feel like I'm
Somewhere I belong
I want to heal, I want to feel like I'm somewhere I belong
Somewhere I belong

Writing Exercise

In a 10-minute journal entry, reflect on "Somewhere I Belong," and respond to the following questions:

- What is the song about? When would you want to listen to a song like this?
- To what extent do you think the song reflects Diane's experience in "The Home for Emotional Orphans and Unappealing Children"? How do you know?
- To what extent do you think the song reflects Una's experience in the story? How do you know?

Support your answers with textual evidence.

Optional: Share ideas with three classmates.

Activity Options

Classroom Activity One:

Body Biographies:

In a group of three or four students, create a body biography for one character from the story. Your group may pick one of the following characters: Diane's mother, Diane's father, Diane, or Una.

Take the following steps to complete the body biography:

1. Re-read the story, and underline or highlight all details relevant to your chosen character.
2. Pick up a large sheet of butcher paper from your teacher.
3. In your groups, trace the outline of one student lying on the butcher paper. This should create a visible outline of a human body.
4. Write your group's chosen character's name across the top of your butcher paper, near the outline's head.
5. In literature, symbols are objects with a deeper meaning than their physical presence. This means they're more than just objects; they help reveal theme, conflict, and/or character traits.

Discuss and select 10 symbols relevant to your chosen character. The symbols should be interpreted from the story or based on your assumptions about the character. All symbols should be based on specific textual evidence from the story.

6. Discuss and select five quotes from the story relevant to your chosen character and symbols.
7. Design, draw, and color the symbols and quotes around your group's butcher paper outline. This is your body biography. As much as possible, make your body biography resemble a real person.
8. Present your group's body biography to the class.

Required Materials: several sheets of large butcher paper, big enough to trace the outline of one student lying down

** Classroom Activity Two:

Inside-Outside Graded Discussion:

Note: This exercise requires class desks to be arranged in concentric circles. One circle should be larger, with 15 to 20 chairs, and one circle should be smaller, with 5 to 10 chairs. Plan to devote at least one complete class period to the inside-outside graded discussion.

Review the following discussion guidelines:

1. Each student must participate at least three times. They must incorporate at least three different, specific pieces of textual evidence into their comments.

2. The teacher must not interrupt or interfere with the discussion, unless absolutely necessary.
3. Students sitting in the larger concentric circle cannot speak. Only those sitting in the smaller concentric circle can speak. A student sitting in the outer concentric circle who wishes to speak must stand, politely tap a student sitting in the inner concentric circle on the shoulder, and take that student's spot in the inner concentric circle.
4. Students may direct the conversation however they desire, but it must remain focused on the text and topics inspired by the text. Possible conversation starters include: How do the story's characters confront tragedy? Is Diane's response to tragedy appropriate? Why or why not? Do you think McNerny's piece is a realistic story? Why or why not?

Home Activity

Interview a friend or family member about where and how they feel a sense of belonging. Submit your interview questions to the teacher for approval prior to the interview. After the interview, write a paragraph reflecting on the interview, your interviewee's answers, and what you learned from the experience.

Optional: Interview a friend or family member about a difficult time in their life, how it impacted them, and what they learned from it. Write a paragraph reflecting on the interview, your interviewee's answers, and what you learned from the experience.

Guest Speaker

Option One: Invite the author, Vivian McNerny, to answer questions about her story. Specifically, ask her about the extent to which the story is based on real life. Invite her to lead a writing workshop.

Option Two: Invite the artist, Katia Grifols, to speak to the class about how she created the story's artwork, as well as her career as an illustrator. Ask her to lead an art workshop.

Note: *Literature for Life* helps coordinate and facilitate author and artist visits.

Field Trip

Option One: Visit Hollywood's Museum of Death (6031 Hollywood Boulevard, LA). This museum focuses on serious matters related to death and dying.

Note: This field trip is not suitable for younger students. Graphic images of violence and death may upset some visitors.

Follow-up Writing Activity:

After visiting the Museum of Death, write a poem or brief paragraph reflecting on what you learned and how you felt during your time there.

Option Two: Sit in on a UCLA psychology class, ideally developmental psychology. Ask the professor questions about psychological issues related to emancipated youth. Coordinate your visit here:

<https://bit.ly/2Th4q5b>

Follow-Up Writing Activity:

After attending the psychology lecture, write a paragraph reflecting on the experience. What did you know about psychology before attending the lecture? What did you learn? How did you feel about attending a college class?

Option Three: Visit the Foster Youth Museum to explore an exhibit featuring art from young people in the foster care system. Read more about the exhibit here: <https://bit.ly/2TMprKd>

Note: The museum is a traveling exhibit, which is rented by different organizations in California. To learn when and where the exhibit will appear next, email foster youth activist Jaime Lee Evans at jaimeleeevans@gmail.com.

Follow-Up Writing Activity:

Reflect on the experience of visiting the Foster Youth Museum. What did you learn? What art pieces did you enjoy the most? Why?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS REFERENCE

This story and its exercises are appropriate for 7th grade and above. Seventh-grade standards are cited.

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Text-Dependent Question Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.6: Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

Writing Exercise Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.B: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Complementary Reading Text (Comparative Writing Exercise)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.5: Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.6: Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.6: Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1.B: Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.