

**COLLAR & CUFFS CO PRESENTS**

# Bitter & Sweet

Part 3 of the Strings & Things sensory story suite

Commissioned by



Mainspring  
Arts

Supported by AOK Trust

**time to change  
champion**

helping to end mental health discrimination



Family Arts  
Standards

with Family and Childcare Trust

# 3. Bitter & Sweet

## Resources Required

### **A ball of string**

You will need this for every story in the suite, it doesn't matter what colour or material the string is made from: it just needs to be sufficiently long to wind into a ball and so you can make multiple sensory effects with it by trimming pieces off and still have enough left to keep a ball, and it needs to be reasonably strong too. Alternatively, you could use wool or ribbon.

### **A device to stream audio tracks & sound effects on**

Click the link: <https://soundcloud.com/julia-collar/sets/bitter-sweet>

### **Optional - a device to play a YouTube video on**

Click the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnndSkcjlBw> If you don't have a suitable device or screen, then just use the audio with the string.

### **Things to Taste**

- Sweet e.g. honey, golden syrup, sugar cubes/crystals or sugar water, squash/cordial
- Sour e.g. lemon juice or slices, vinegar, piccalilli or other pickle
- Bitter e.g. marmalade, coffee, citrus peel shreds, cocoa (make as for hot chocolate but leave out the sugar)
- Salty e.g. salt crystals or salted water, crisps or pretzels, soy sauce
- Umami e.g. cheese, ham, mushrooms, tomatoes, Worcestershire sauce

Adjust delivery of tastes according to your person's dietary, allergy, or swallowing needs. You can dot tastes on lips or tongue, you do not need to have spoonfuls - unless you love the flavour!

### **Sweets in coloured wrappers or coloured paper/cellophane and dried beans, coins, marbles or other small, hard objects, a jar or container to put them in**

If you can't find any real sweets, then have a different colour of paper for each of the five flavours, and wrap an equal amount of objects in squares of paper, twisting the ends to make them look like sweets. Extra paper/wrappers for making sounds with.

### **A saucepan, large spoon or spatula, a thick warm sweet substance to stir**

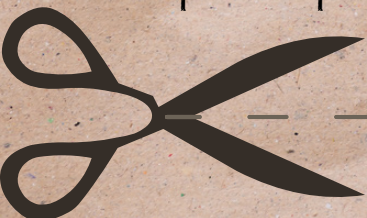
Porridge, custard, caramel or a white sauce made with flour, water/milk, and a little bit of butter; add vanilla essence or honey to the porridge or white sauce to make it smell sweet.

### **A straw or thin tube rolled from cardboard, warm soapy water**

If you have handsoap with a sweet smell - you can even find candy scented ones - then use this.

### **An apron or piece of fabric you can wrap round yourself**

### **A favourite drink and snack to have afterwards**



# To Start the Story

The preface to every story in the suite

Each story starts and ends the same way, creating routine and consistency that orients the person you're sharing the tale with and supporting transitions in and out of the experience.

If you use Story Massage then download the strokes for the poem by clicking the image:

If you don't, then follow the actions overleaf; the words in **BOLD** are the ones you read, the words in normal are the actions.



**We found a magic ball of string,**  
**It came to us from Who Knows Where.**  
**With it we can make most anything:**  
**A telephone, a flight of stairs.**  
**A hole in a tree, the moon in the sky,**  
**A fishing line, a butterfly.**  
**With our string we explore both**  
**Known and unknown -**  
**The whole world awaits!**  
**But, without leaving our home.**



**We found a magic ball of string,  
It came to us from Who Knows Where.  
With it we can make most anything:**

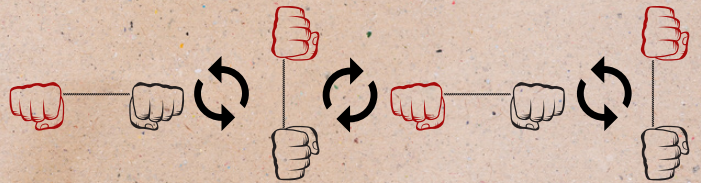
Roll the ball of string slowly and rhythmically on the person's palm

**A telephone,**

Hold the ball to the person's ear

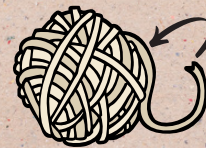
**a flight of stairs.**

Hold a short length of string horizontally between your hands and keeping your left fist stationary, rotate the string 90 degrees left to vertical; then, keeping your right fist stationary; rotate 90 degrees right back to horizontal whilst raising your arms to give the impression of stairs - invite/assist the person to hold the string in the middle while you move. See diagram below.



**A hole in a tree, the moon in the sky,**

For the hole, pull some string from the ball and touch the free end back onto it to create a circle; your person may like to feel the circle, or you could peep through it. Vary the size of the circle by making big ones you could fit your whole body through and small ones that slip over a finger like a ring. For the moon, lift a circle up above your heads.



**A fishing line, a butterfly.**

For the fishing line, use the free end and 'cast' the line out across the room or gently on to the person's hand or lap - can they catch it? For the butterfly, take the free ends of the string and make it into two floppy loops. Hold the loops in your fist and flap them like wings.



**With our string we explore both known  
and unknown -  
The whole world awaits!**

Return to rolling the ball of string around your person's palm.

**But without leaving our home.**

Close the person's fingers over the ball of string with yours over the top, and rest.

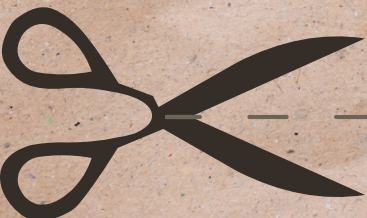
## **Song: We've Got A Tale To Tell**

Clap, tap, bang, or stamp along - focus on rhythm and anticipation: use instruments or pots and pans, or just your bodies.

**We're going to tell a tale,  
We've got a tale to tell  
We don't know where it ends,  
We just know that it ends well.**

**It may roll round the sofa,  
It may roll out to sea  
We're going to chase that tale  
And see what we can see!**

**Hey, ho, and let's pretend  
Unravel the tale, see where the yarn ends  
Hey, ho, and let's pretend  
Unravel the tale,  
And see where the yarn ends!**



# Bitter & Sweet

## Sensory Story

The words in **bold** are the ones you read out, the ones in normal describe sensory activities and experiences to support the story.

— — — — —

**One day, everything was different. We had to stay at home. We couldn't go out, not even to school/swimming/day centre, etc. We couldn't see our friends. We couldn't even see our family unless they lived in the same house as us. We missed everyone lot.**

**Staying at home felt strange, but we knew we had our magic ball of string, and with string we can do most anything!**

Roll the ball of string on the person's palm or lap. After a few repetitions, shake the ball on the person's hand, leg or chest to create a vibration, and get ready to sniff!

**What's that smell?**

Pretend to look for a smell - be as silly as you like, and use lots of exaggeration: you may want to look round the room, or sniff yourself or your person. Find imaginary horrible smells, find smells you don't mind, but make it clear you're looking for something. Finally, go back to your ball of string and sniff loudly.

**Mmmmm, it's delicious! I wonder what it can be. It seems to be coming from our ball of string - if we make a big loop with the string, perhaps we can go through it and travel to somewhere else?**

Make a big loop and fit yourselves through it together.

**This is a very warm place indeed, and it smells sweet and sticky.**

Offer your person the warm saucepan to feel and smell, but don't stir yet.



**There is someone working here. They are cooking something. Can you hear the saucepan bubbling?**

Blow down the straw/tube into the soapy water to make lots of bubbly noises. Invite your person to put their hands into the water to feel the bubbles being made. Blow them up between fingers for extra tickly sensations!. Change character by putting on the apron, or tie fabric around you to create the impression of an apron.

**Hello! Welcome to Taffy Doodles Sweet Shop! I'm the Master Taffy-Maker.**

Play the Taffy Doodles Chime sound effect, repeat if required.

**We're world famous for our saltwater taffy. Saltwater taffy is a curious chewy candy that's sweet and salty at the same time. I'm just making today's batch, come and see!**

Invite your person to stir the saucepan making lots of glooping noises with the mixture. Scoop it up on the spoon, let it dribble back into the pan, etc.

**This pan of taffy is cooked and ready to go into the taffy pulling machine. We loop the taffy mixture onto moving bars, the bars turn round and round, and as they turn they put lots of air into the taffy to make it chewy and soft and scrumptious.**

Make a loop of string and tie the ends together, place your person's arms through the loop as if doing the actions for Wind The Bobbin Up, and place your arms under theirs. Play the sound effect of the taffy machine, and as you wind your arms round and round, the string should roll with you. Alternatively, play the video clip of the taffy machine in action: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnndSkcjlBw>

**Because here at Taffy Doodles' we're known for making sweets that taste two ways at the same time, we've been asked to invent some special Memory Taffy for people who are staying at home to be safe and well. Memory Taffy helps people taste their thoughts and feelings: sometimes we think and feel lots of things at the same time, so we've invented lots of combinations. You can test them for me and see what you think!**

Stir the saucepan again as you speak the words, then play the 'Yucky or Treat' song.

**The first flavour of Memory Taffy is Sweet & Sour. First taste the sweet, then the sour, then mixed together.**

Invite your person to taste each item as described e.g. a drop of honey on its own, then a drop of lemon on its own, then a mixture of the two together.



**This taffy flavour remembers the days when someone was feeling snappy, cross or disappointed about having to stay home to be safe and well. The sour is their sharp thoughts and feelings, the sweet is for balance because not *all* days at home were sour ones.**

Pour the sweets you're using for this flavour into the jar. Listen for the sound, and shake the jar for extra effect.

**The next flavour of Memory Taffy is Bitter & Sweet. First taste the sweet, then the bitter, then mixed together.**

Play the 'Yucky or Treat' song, then repeat as above with your sweet and bitter tastes, separately then together.

**This taffy flavour remembers the days when someone found it difficult to do very much - perhaps they spent all day in their pyjamas, perhaps they planned to do something like school work/cleaning/gardening/crafting etc but they couldn't manage it, and then they felt bad about it afterwards. The bitter is their regretful thoughts and feelings, the sweet is for balance because not *all* days at home were bitter ones.**

Pour the sweets you're using for this flavour into the jar. Listen for the sound, and shake the jar for extra effect.

**The next flavour of Memory Taffy is Umami & Sweet. First taste the sweet, then the umami, then mixed together.**

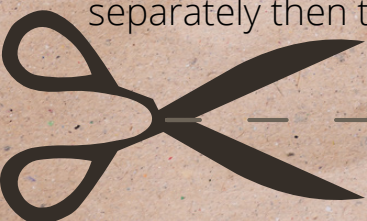
Play the 'Yucky or Treat' song, then repeat as above with your sweet and umami tastes, separately then together.

**This taffy flavour remembers the days when someone was feeling worried and unsure. The umami is their worried thoughts and feelings, the sweet is for balance because not *all* days at home were worried ones.**

Pour the sweets you're using for this flavour into the jar. Listen for the sound, and shake the jar for extra effect.

**This taffy flavour is the one you helped me put in the taffy pulling machine - it's Salty & Sweet. First taste the sweet, then the salty, then mixed together.**

Play the 'Yucky or Treat' song, then repeat as above with your sweet and salty tastes, separately then together.





**This taffy flavour remembers the days when someone felt sad about not being able to do the things they usually like to do, or about not being able to see the people they most like to see. The salty is their sad thoughts and feelings, the sweet is for balance because not *all* days were sad ones.**

Pour the sweets you're using for this flavour into the jar. Listen for the sound, and shake the jar for extra effect.

**This last taffy flavour is something I've never done before: it's taffy with only *one* flavour! Taste it! What is it?**

Play the 'Yucky or Treat' song and offer your person only your sweet taste.

**Yes, this taffy is just sweet. This taffy remembers all the lovely memories from that time at home: spending time with your family, the nice weather and playing in the garden, (*add in whatever may be specific and relevant to your person*). The sweet taffy balances out ALL the others, because there were nice thoughts and feelings in every day if we look for them.**

Pour the sweets you're using for this flavour into the jar. Listen for the sound, shake the jar for extra effect.

**We've put all these different taffies together into the same jar so we can be sure we can taste *all* of our memories. Some we may like more than others, but they are all part of the flavour of life.**

Help your person to close the jar. Then take off the apron.

**It's time to wind back the ball of string and go home.**

Make a big loop of string and fit yourself through it.

**Goodbye Master Taffy-Maker, thank you for letting us taste your Memory Taffy!**

Hold the loop open with one hand and the apron with the other, wave to the apron and throw it through the loop and let it fall to the floor out of sight.

**Well, who knew our memories had so many different tastes all at the same time? I'm feeling hungry now, shall we go and see if we can find a drink and a snack, and let's hope it's a treat taste, not a yucky one!**

Play the 'Yucky or Treat' song again.



# Yucky or Treat?

*A tasting song*

**Bitter, sour or salty?**

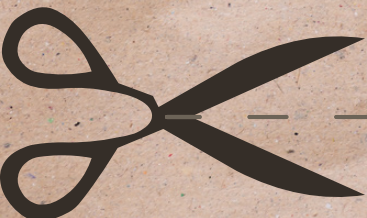
**Umami or sweet?**

**Which one's yucky?**

**Which one's a treat?**

Make this an action song using touch on your person's hand:

<b>Bitter, sour, or salty?</b>	For bitter, gently squeeze the tips of your person's fingers; for sour, rub a circle on the palm; for salty, drum fingers like raindrops on the palm - practice this as the words move quite quickly when sung!
<b>Umami or sweet?</b>	For umami, brush your palm twice down your person's palm; for sweet, squeeze their hand gently.
<b>Which one's yucky?</b>	Repeat as for bitter, sour or salty
<b>Which one's a treat?</b>	Repeat as for umami or sweet

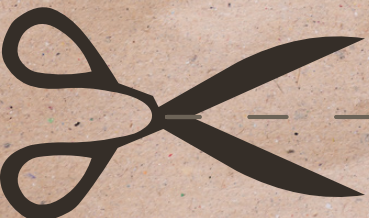


# To End The Story

The epilogue to every story in the suite

**We used our magic ball of string,  
That came to us from Who Knows Where.  
With it we made most anything:  
A telephone, a flight of stairs.  
A hole in a tree, the moon in the sky,  
A fishing line, a butterfly.  
With our string we explored  
Both known *and* unknown.  
The whole world was ours!  
But, without leaving our home.**

Repeat Story Massage or movements used in the prologue, adjusting for the word changes.



## **Song: The Tale That Was Told**

Rock or sway to the song, repeat as required. Alternatively you could roll the ball of string in your person's palm again as a calming massage.

**The tale that was told,**

**It was told to last.**

**We called up the bitter and sweet**

line changes depending on story

**We created our past.**

**For now it is done,**

**It rests in our reverie;**

**For the tale that was told**

**Is made of nought but a memory**

**And here the tale ends,**

**And here the tale ends.**

**And here, and here,**

**And here the tale ends.**

