

## Tofu Ling Sets Sail

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### Illustrations Discussion Questions and Answers

#### Discussing the Illustrations:

The artistic elements of Tofu Ling Sets Sail are representations of the illustrator's visualization of the story. A reader sees the images through his or her own eyes; therefore, this portion of the book is purely subjective. It is the intent of the illustrator to cause the reader to examine the illustrations with questioning and wonderment; with not only an overall impression, but by noticing detail and purpose. They are intended to be inspirational, and thought and feeling provoking. These responses, of course, will determine the readers' answers to the discussion topics.

#### Discussion Leads:

The first two pages of the story show Tofu and his mother. Discuss how the colors depict the feeling of the scene.

*Tofu and his mother are sitting in the garden. Bright colors such as magenta, yellow, pink and green are used. Flowers seem to be floating in the air and Tofu is jumping and floating. Tofu seems happy and the colors and flowers give a bright and happy feeling.*

Describe the things in the scene that tell your eyes that Tofu has arrived at Uncle Hiroshi's cabin.

*It is a scene of a dock by the water with a rustic cabin. There are rocks, pine trees and fishing nets. The colors are softer and feel more like they are in a place near the ocean.*

The moon in the sky appears with a face. Explain why the illustrator may have added the face.

*The face on the moon gives it personality and life. The lines, shapes and design on the face are drawn in the style of Pacific Northwest Indian Coast Art.*

The boys awake and find the boat has drifted out to sea. Describe the things in the illustration that give the impression the boys are surprised.

*The boys are standing at the railing of the boat and have their mouths open. We can imagine that they are screaming 'aaaahhhhh' as they discover they are no longer tied at the dock. We can only see their open mouths, teeth, tongue noses and whiskers which help us to imagine that this is a really big moment and a large reaction. Tofu and Kenji appear to be very close to us and this helps us to sense their surprise.*

Tofu and Kenji stand on the deck when they discover they are out to sea. Explain what appears in the waves at the edges of the illustration and the possible reason they are there.

*There are small designed fish in the waves. You almost do not notice them, but they are there. Their bodies are curved to fit inside of each wave, making them feel as if they belong there and are important to the story of the illustration.*

The first clue in the song tells the boys what they will see. Describe what they think they see and what it really is. What features in the illustration trick their eyes into this illusion?

*It might be a flower pot on the ocean, but it is really an island with Medrona trees and white blossoms. The shape and colors of the island in the distance resemble a flower pot with white flowers and green leaves. When we see the shape far off in the distance our eyes are fooled to think it is a flower pot. The island is the pot. The trees are the flowers, stems and leaves. This is an optical illusion, or a trick of the eye. \* (This illustration is based on a very small island near Fidalgo Island in Puget Sound, Washington. The small island is often referred to as 'Flower Pot Island'.*

Describe the sound the boys hear and the things in the illustration of seals that gives the idea of their mannerisms and behaviors. Tell if you find one seal that looks different from the rest and what might be represented.

*The sound is the barking of seals. The seals seem playful in the water with fins and tails flapping and water splashing. There are painted splashes and drops of water. The illustration is done to make the sounds and images come alive. One seal on the rock has lines and shapes drawn on his body to represent the style of Pacific Northwest Indian Coast Art.*

Name the green illusion that is seen in the water and what about it tells you its true identity.

*The first part of the illusion you see is a sleeping dragon's head. On the next illustration, we see that it is not a dragon, but an island with many pines and fir trees.*

Tell your ideas about parts of the island that could be parts of the dragon.

*The trees could be scales. The eyes could be rocks or hills. The feet could be parts of the landform of the island that extend out into the ocean, creating coves and bays. The tail could be a long thin strip of land. The wings could be sail boats docked behind the island. The steam coming from the dragon could be mist, fog and clouds.*

Identify the hidden images and the animals in the last illustration. Tell the reason the illustrator may have included these images in this illustration, and in other illustrations in the book.

*There are killer whales, seals, eagles, and a raven. The illustrator included these in the style of Northwest Pacific Indian Coast Art in honor of this style of art, which is indigenous to the Northwest region of the country where the story takes place. The myths and beliefs associated with these animals are a part of the Indian culture of the region.*

Throughout the book, portions of the illustrations extend outside of the borders. Describe how and when you see this and the reason for it.

*The extending of portions of the illustrations outside of the borders is intended to draw the reader into the illustration by creating a bit of an optical illusion that this portion of the picture is closer to the reader and is somehow escaping the borders. It is a form of optical illusion and sometimes includes the technique Trompe l'oeil. It is also fun and adds a bit of whimsy.*

Explain why you think the illustrator chose to paint in the style represented in Tofu Ling Sets Sail. Tell how you might paint it and why.

*The illustrator chose to paint in a watery, loose style to show the coolness of the water and the colors of the Northwest Pacific United States. She added detail to include elements of the beauty and culture of the region.*