



In this story, Baby Weasus goes for a picnic and finds a small creature hiding, who has no home. She invites him to come and live with them after they have a picnic.

**Conversation prompts:**

Small hides hoping he is found.

Whilst this is an oxymoron, I wanted it written in that way as there are many children (and adults) who hide hoping they are found. There will be children in your class who do that. It will speak to them, a point of recognition for those quiet shy children who don't say 'me me' but want to be noticed and chosen. You could discuss what they could do to help people who are hiding hoping to be found such as at playtime etc. Too shy to ask to join in- maybe a finding bench where you can sit if you feel you want to hide but be found.

Baby Weasus accepts Small without question. You could say that Small is a refugee. "xxx is rather like Small isn't she? She was found and came to live with us at our school"

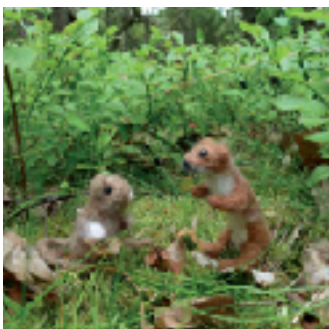
Small sits in the tea cup which makes baby weasus giggle. A difference of culture that can be charming and funny to one child but upsetting to be laughed at by others. One could have talk about what do we do that others find funny/odd? Even if you are different you can still be friends. Everyone is different, some are good at maths, some drawing, we shouldn't say we are the same but embrace our differences. Good, gentle opportunity to talk about them.

Emily says there is always room for one more and we should always make others feel welcome. A good skill for children to work with socially, always room for one more in a game, on the bench etc when they tend to say no, just us, go somewhere else.

Baby Weasus gives up her bed without a thought. She is rewarded with something even better. This story is a good starting point for discussions on new people joining the class, refugees in particular. What can we do like Baby Weasus to make him feel welcome? Perhaps we could weave him a bookmark or a cushion or whatever it might be. Get them involved in the welcoming. They could write a story about who they found lost when out for a walk. What were they? What did they look like? Where were they from? Describing words, draw a picture. Maybe describe the place they came from, how they got there. Often worries and fears will come out in their own stories that you can then talk about with the child. Always emphasising the kindness and being matter of fact.

Where do you think small came from? What do you think he might be?

You can also do some work with photography and illustrating a story by taking photos of teddies or such like.



"What if he are just? and baby weasus.  
 "I don't know" said the small hare  
 "I got me in my own in this under  
 the cover of ferns and sweet-smelling  
 woods" said he  
 "Well I found you! Come and have a picnic  
 with me, me, Baby Weasus. The are here!  
 (singing)  
 "Thank you the world is my home" said  
 the small hare.

## Celestine and the Hare Paper Boat for Panda



The kind Panda will bring by the sea  
But in dreams.  
She gently tapped him on the shoulder  
Her warm hand always lighter  
And kinder.  
She asked him to come with her as the  
hat a surprise for him.



Panda longs to sail on the sea. He pretends to sail on the rug. Baby Weasus makes his dream come true for no other reason than to be kind to a friend. The joy in giving because you can. Be gentle with dreamers. That's a bit like xxx we need to be gentle with him sometimes don't we when he's dreaming.

Have you ever been so happy you cried? Tell me about it. Write about it.

What would you wish for that you could do for one night only. Or if a bit older, even better is what wish would you grant to a friend/family member for one night only. They then have to think about others. The joy in giving to someone else is a good thing to practice.



Tanda goes paper boat, Panda found  
helped to sail Boat Panda, bring  
while dreams of, and weasus will  
dream about it at the  
From the journey to make: come from  
Katie was so happy to see it.

Could do a secret wish for someone in the class. Make a boat each. You can write wishes on your boat. Good wishes for the future, or you can write regrets that need to be let go of, and then sail them away if you have access to water where they can sail away. They can write fortunes and sail them in a tub and pick one out and open up to see what it says. Maybe

the teacher can write names inside the boat and they pick a boat and have to pair with that person that week - random choice of desk partner except they choose so can't be cross with you, as they chose it. Sailing away regrets can be a good way to let things go and start afresh. Be prepared to read some heart breaking things though. I had a boy who said his dad was sailing his boat (His dad has been killed in a car crash 3 days earlier).

Boats can be hung in the classroom as a mobile. You can make a sea out of a blue cloth and have your boats sailing on it. They can make a flag for their boat. Who is sailing your boat? Paper cut out person (or creature of course) maybe 2. Where are they going?

Sing a sea shanty. Look at a map of the seas and decide where to sail.

Write poems about the sea, or sailing or wishes.

A sailor went to sea sea to see what he could see see see - plays on words.

Science- how can we make our boat sail for longer. Wax crayon on the paper, candles, foil paper, size of paper, waterproofing materials, Timing floating and logging data.

How much weight can the boat take before it sinks (plasticine blobs work well and good practice at estimating and weighing them to right weight. Who can put the most in their boat? Skills of where to place it as well as how much.



Honey for Tea has lots of eco stuff in it about growing plants and bees. We all know someone who stings when they are scared and sometimes they sting because they are feeling small and scared and not because they are mean. Even if you don't mean to. Discussion on when you've stung a friend when you didn't mean to.



Emily loves to sit by the hive and watch the bees do their little bee dance. She wears her beekeeper's hat when she sits close to the bees. It is easy to get scared and sting when you are a small bee, even though you don't mean to hurt your friends.

Baby Weasus wants to pick flowers for Emily but she says grow some instead. Huge opportunity to create a wildlife garden. Read the story, make the bees and then take them for a walk outside to see if they can find anything that their bee might like. Observation of plants, flowers that they might not notice before. After that, you could talk about what could

we do to help the bees more? Grow some bee friendly flowers. Research what those might be. Grow them on the window sill- good botany lessons there and then plant out. Even better if you can find plants that you can eat too. Sunflowers are magical of course. Nastursiums are easy for little fingers.

Make a bee hotel, butterflies, other bugs.

Wildlife bee garden.

Make a mobile out of the bees and hang in the classroom.

When making the bees, so they don't start swinging them around and smacking each other with them, tell them the rhyme

What do you suppose?

A bee landed on my nose

Then what do you think?

She gave me a wink

And said I beg your pardon, I thought you were a garden!

They can try and land the bee on their nose which is a bit tricky and keeps them focussed inwards and not at each other.

Buzzy poems. Alliteration, onomatopoeia. buzzy fuzzy

Eco projects. Make their own bug out of pine cones, ash keys etc etc. Design a bug on paper, draw it, describe it. What does it eat, where does it live? Favourite plant etc.

Tree species and ID.



Finding your place.

Discussion around books and what sort of book is your favourite. Fiction, non fiction.

King Norty can't read but he is clever. You may have children in your class who can't read. They can identify and see that they can be clever too.

Reading to others is a good thing to do. Read to each other or they can offer to read to a younger class if older. I had the oldest class listening to the learners read for 10 mins each morning. Each child gets practice and is heard, links in playground with big ones, you can match boys up with big boys who think it is cool to read, think about pairings and it can really work. Big ones who struggle to read can get a lot of self esteem from helping little ones with it. Gives the big tough kids and excuse to show their caring side because they have to but it then flows over into other areas such as the playground.

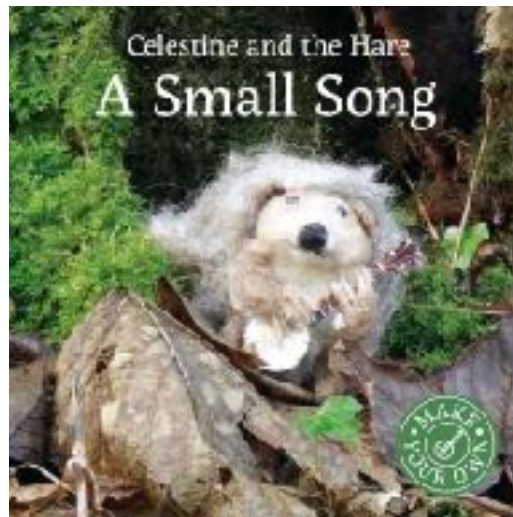
What you reading today? Making bookmarks for others, what would you put on for so and so?

Thinking about others. Maybe make some to sell at a fundraiser to buy books for the library or for a charity.

Humour of King Norty using a chocolate biscuit for a book mark. They could think up some other funny things that don't work. Draw them, have a laugh but also good for finding opposites, language, lateral thinking. Maybe a silly use but then also a good use that isn't intended.

This book celebrates all readers, those who like stories, factual books, those who can't read. Baby Weasus is a strong brave girl , Small is a quiet gentle boy who likes butterflies.(gender differences, colours etc.

Lots of discussion around reading styles and books.



### A Small Song

Here we revisit Small again and a memory is triggered of his home through music.

What song reminds you of home? Did your granny sing to you?

What nursery rhymes can you remember?

If you have refugees, you can discuss what it might be like to miss your home and everything you came from. Or if you've moved, miss your family or friends. Break ups, missing dad /mum.

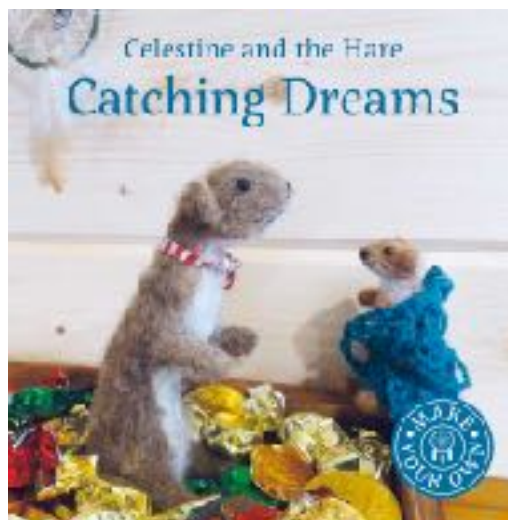
Is there something we can do to help xxx not miss home so much. Is it food you miss? A smell? A song? Sing songs from different countries, listen to different music, folk songs etc.

Learn instruments. Practice. How you have to practice to be good at something. Can link to other things, like writing or reading too.

What instruments could we make? Good science on the rubber band guitar. Can you make an octave? Can you get it in pitch? Can we make drums (very popular) wind instruments from watering cans, junk orchestra. Glasses with water in, bottles blow over them different water in them. Can they fill water bottles to make 3 blind mice or something on it. Pitch, science of more or less water to make different sound. They can figure it out themselves..

Play a tune and see if others can tell what it is. Lots of science of acoustics.

Good way to open a discussion on missing home. Empathise. It is hard isn't it. My class, when I was a teacher learned a New Zealand Maori blessing for their class mate from there and sung it to him on his birthday as a surprise. Made me cry, never mind him!



### Catching Dreams.

The main obvious theme is nightmares but there is also the theme of death. I wanted to write a book about what happens if you die? that doesn't tell lies. I was told I'll always be here for you but my parents both died young and weren't. Children can handle death a lot easier than we think if they can find a way to talk about it. This book is a great way to broach the topic of someone close to them dying.

King Norty tells BW who will love her more fiercely and how the circle around her will close that bit more tightly. This is a perfect intro to say who will love you more fiercely when mummy dies? Who is in your tribe and your circle? Talk about the tribe around the child.

Conversation starters are great.

When I read this story to schools, all the children immediately start telling me about their nightmares. 9 year olds often have quite bad nightmares, there's a developmental stage around this age when they realise they are separate and alone in the world and can often start having nightmares, doing rituals, questioning if their parents are really their parents, struggle, become clingy etc. Talking about nightmares in the day time can be helpful in a matter of fact way. Oh gosh that's a bit frightening isn't it. What does your daddy/mummy/granny do to help you when you have a nightmare? Makes it normal and they see others have them too. Talking them through can help.

I was careful to not say that the dream catcher would always work, because sometimes they don't and nightmares sneak through. Children won't trust you if you say it always will and it doesn't, becomes more frightening. Comforting to say reminder that you are not alone if one sneaks through.

You could get them to describe their perfect dream, what would it be? Write it down. Good story telling exercise and it tells you a lot about the child too!! Make a dream catcher for the classroom that could be one for catching wishes, or catching good deeds and tie a feather or bead on the bottom for the good deeds. Visible reminder of acts of kindness.

Whilst these might be seen as younger books, you can read them to older children too. They can write a story taking a photo of their teddies to illustrate it perhaps for a younger class.

## **Crafts**

Nimble fingers, nimble mind. Really really important for children to do craft work and be dextrous with their hands. Do finger rhymes with them here is the church and here is the steeple type things. Knitting is fabulous as it has a crossing over movement that exercises the brain.

ADHD, fiddlers, can't sit still-ers.

"They can't bounce off the walls if there are no walls"

Outside in the green for 20 mins is to be said to be effective as a dose of ritalin. If the school can get a pet pig or some such animal, this can be so very helpful. Rather than sending a child out of the classroom, sending them off to give an apple to the pig can work wonders. Time out of the room, time in the green, a non judgemental creature glad to see you when others maybe aren't. Time to give him a scratch and a chat and then back to the classroom. Obviously there are a lot of problems with this but maybe a garden area and plants to water, or a guinea pig or something is doable. Or going to empty the compost bin if can't have animals.

Stick weaving is a simple form of knitting. Really portable and really great for boys. Boys adore it and will do it for hours if they are allowed to have a go and it isn't presented as a 'girly' thing. I had 3 boys at the last festival I did aged about 9 who wove for an hour in silence didn't move... till I had to tell them to leave. One boy said it was the best day ever.

For those fiddlers, adhd type children, stick weaving can be really helpful, as can knitting once they are good at it. Part of their brain is buzzing away and stopping them focussing. What the weaving/knitting does is occupy the buzzy part of the brain so the rest of them can focus on learning. Doesn't create 100% focus but it does allow the 20% or whatever there is there, to focus. I had a 14 year old who knitted in my class- talked to him about it first and he agreed might be helpful. Some of his friends joined in and they knitted squares for blankets for refugees. Simple squares doesn't require counting etc. Stick weaving is a constructive fiddle. They can make ropes for the nursery children to use, or skipping ropes or make strings for hanging things in the classroom. Plait them together to make rugs, do something useful with them so not a mindless thing. You can talk about how the miners used to knit on the way to the mines, or fishermen sewing their nets if they have already been got by the gender thing. Young ones will be fine and the sticks can go in their back pocket too. Great for car journeys, mini bus trips etc.

I went to a school with a mixed class of 5-8 year olds. I was warned about 4 children in there and told not to worry if they didn't listen or were removed from the class. One boy, Charlie had an assistant. It was immediately obvious to me which the 4 were. All boys. They crowded round to talk to me and were desperate to meet the creatures. Charlie kept getting into trouble, he went off to get a drink, spilled the water, bumped into someone else, knocked their seed planting over, cries of Charlie did... Charlie did... I noticed that sometimes Charlie didn't. but of course he had a reputation so everyone assumed he did. He had disappeared and the teacher was threatening that he wouldn't be allowed the story at the end (poor boy needed those stories more than anyone) Anyway, I asked him to come over and tell me who his favourite character from the books was. Now, everyone assumed that it would be King Norty. But no, he said Small. I love Small. And here was a bumbling clumsy boy that was really a bit Small and sometimes stung because it is hard not to sting your friends sometimes when you are small and frightened. I asked him if he could help me. Would he mind holding Small for me ever so gently while I read the story. He'd need to sit near me and be very gentle. Yes please he said. He sat with Small cupped in his hands, gently stroking the top of Small's head for the whole story. Didn't move a muscle. First time he'd sat through a story.

Ask a child who is their favourite character and why. It will tell you something about that child.

Make your most dangerous child your safety officer. The one who might set fire to things, the one who is in charge of reminding you to put the candles out. The one who cuts things to remind you to collect all the scissors in. Count them up for you. They are hyper aware of these things so use it. All these children need praise and recognition.

Who is hiding hoping to be found. Notice the Smalls in your class, allow them to be invisible sometimes when they need to, be gentle with your dreamers, give them time, don't put them on the spot but give them a moment. If they are going to be asked to read out loud, let them see which passage and know so they can try it in their head first. Tell them how clever King Norty is, even though he can't read. Not reading doesn't mean you are stupid. Charlemagne was illiterate.

Me and school visits.

I can do school visits and pick up on any of these themes and can also do virtual Skype visits from my Shed if money is tight. I offer one free Skype visit a month to schools. See my website for details. I am also happy to do some work with teachers on crafts and the above. I taught in a `Steiner school for 20 years and was classed by Ofsted as an outstanding teacher. I was the first Steiner teacher to gain secondary QTS through teaching at a `Steiner school. I was part of a gold star Comenius project working on portfolio style learning for children and peer feedback. Happy to share these sorts of things on a school visit.

Books published by Graffeg

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