

How To Use: VALENTINE'S GUEST HOUSE

Discussion Prompts

Here are some ideas for things to talk about while sharing the book – you could ask a few different questions each time you read it.

Look at the cross-section on the endpapers together - can you find the following?:

Elsie

An unexpected guest

Elsie's cart

Valentine's room

Someone using a toilet

There's something unusual on the title page – it's a good place to pause and talk about what you think the story could be about!

A tram stops outside Valentine's Guest House. Have you ever seen or ridden on a tram?

The storeroom door says 'Staff Only'. Talk about what this means and why guests might not be allowed to go in there. Sometimes signs say things like 'No Entry' or 'Private', which means the same thing. The symbol below the sign is used in many places to remind people not to do something – you could look out for examples the next time you go out and about.

There are lots of other signs in the book – can you find them all?

What would you do if you found a tiger in your home? What would you say to it? Would you let it sleep in your room?

Elsie and Valentine redecorate Elsie's room to make Emmet feel more comfortable. What is your favourite part of her new room? Do you like the paddling pool? Or the glowing stars?

Emmet has a lot of food on his breakfast table! What would you choose from the breakfast options on the page? If the child you're reading with hasn't stayed at a hotel with breakfast included, you could talk about how guests are often invited to help themselves to a range of pastries and cereals.

Valentine, Elsie and Emmet wait for more visitors to arrive. How do you think they feel? Are they worried? Frustrated? Bored? Can you remember a time that you had to wait for something?

'She wanted a room with a view, but the stairs had been made for someone bigger.'
You could use this page to talk about accessibility; is it fair that the guest cannot climb the stairs? Luckily, Elsie has an idea...

The family changes their front door to make it more accessible; can you guess which door each animal will use? Don't forget that they'll need to reach the door handle!

The guest house is starting to look more fun, isn't it? Has your favourite animal appeared in the book yet? If not, what is your favourite animal, and what sort of room would you design for them?

'Before long, Valentine's became a guest house that was just right for anyone who came.' This illustration shows the same view as the first one in the book. Can you spot some of the differences?

Activities

Room for Everyone!

In the book, Elsie and Valentine redecorate to suit the needs of their guests. Talk about (or draw!) the rooms you would design for the animals below. For example, a hamster might like a wheel to run around in and we're sure a shark would appreciate a room with plenty of water!

- Bat
- Hamster
- Shark
- Ostrich
- Cat

Flyer Fun

Why not make a flyer or leaflet to promote Valentine's Guest House?

Here are some ideas:

- Talk about all the things the guest house has to offer; a breakfast buffet, underground rooms and much more!
- You could draw a map of the area and mention the tram in the 'How to Get There' information.
- Pictures will help potential guests see what the rooms are like!
- With adult supervision, look at websites for B&Bs and think about how they encourage guests to choose to stay there.

Role Play Area

You could create a guest-house-themed role play area for younger children.

The desk on the title page provides lots of ideas:

- Prepare a collection of old keys and add numbered tags to them or create keycards.
- Create a desk area and add props like a notepad, a bell, flowers, maps and leaflets about local attractions, a guest book and a cardboard tablet with booking details on the 'screen'.
- Depending on the location, guests could be family members, other children or even toys.