

The Map of Small Things



Wonder · trips & family gatherings

A lost travel itinerary leads a family to make a different kind of map.

Four reader parts. About 2–4 minutes of reading, or 12–20 minutes with discussion and the closing activity.

Free preview booklet. Read together or pass. Home-print edition; this is not a bound-book order.

READER 1 / PASS THE STORY

The wind took their itinerary just outside the station. It sailed over a wall before anyone could catch it. Dad looked at his empty hand. He had planned the trip for weeks: the famous tower, the old palace, the best view. “I remember the tower,” said Emi. Her grandmother pointed in two directions at once. Neither direction contained a tower.

READER 2 / PASS THE STORY

They stopped at a bakery to ask. While Dad found the street on his phone, Emi noticed a sparrow drinking from a dented watering can. She drew it on the back of a receipt. Her brother drew the enormous pastry he hoped they would buy. Grandmother added the blue door across the street. “That is not a map,” Dad said. “There are no distances.”

PAUSE TOGETHER

Should they keep chasing the original plan? How could they make room for both kinds of day?

There is no single right answer. Hear each other before continuing.

READER 3 / PASS THE STORY

By lunchtime the receipt had three companions. There was a staircase where their footsteps made an echo, a shopkeeper who taught them a greeting, and a bench exactly warm enough for a nap. Dad still wanted to reach the tower. They agreed to go after lunch. At the top, he looked out over the city and realized he could recognize none of their favorite places from above.

READER 4 / PASS THE STORY

On the train home, Dad unfolded a proper street map and asked for a pencil. Emi thought he would finally correct their drawings. Instead he marked the bakery with a small bird. Grandmother found the blue door. Her brother drew a pastry so large it covered two streets. They kept the tower too, near the edge. The map was inaccurate in several important ways. It was the only one they wanted to keep.

Take a breath. Then turn the page for your conversation.

After the last line

1. What makes a trip memorable for you?
2. When has an unexpected detour become the best part?
3. What ordinary place belongs on a map of our time together?

A SMALL THING TO DO TOGETHER

Draw a shared map with one small memory from each person. Accuracy is optional; label why each place matters.

Host notes: Invite four readers, rotate in pairs, or let one person read it all. Listening and passing count. Suggested for ages 8+ with a facilitator who has previewed the story. Discuss the characters rather than your own life whenever you prefer.

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