

Teacher's Information File

Teachers may find it useful to read through this before embarking on teaching *You're Safe With Me* and using the collection of free resources available from www.lantanapublishing.com/education.

An introduction to the book

As a combination of cradle 'song' and creation fable, *You're Safe With Me* is the perfect book to use with children who are starting to enquire how and why stories work. Focusing on common childhood fears such as thunderstorms, *You're Safe With Me* shows how stories can reassure readers by explaining the inexplicable.



By providing explanations for common natural phenomena such as thunder, lightning and rivers, *You're Safe With Me* can provide a springboard for children to use their own imagination in explaining the workings of the natural world. Poonam Mistry's enchanting illustrations also offer an evocative way of portraying animals and their habitats, in a style that students will enjoy copying in their own artwork.

This book is a perfect example of how moral stories can have elements that can be both culturally specific and universal and could lead to a thought provoking discussion of how different cultures explain life's mysteries.

About the Author

Chitra Soundar grew up listening to stories from Indian epics and folk wisdom. The inspiration provided by these narratives is evident in *You're Safe With Me*, as is her love for stories in general. A consummate storyteller, Soundar can often be found in schools and libraries, making up stories with children and regaling audiences with stories from her childhood. Soundar is also a prolific blogger and tweeter, composing articles on all matters to do with both reading and writing. Her website can be found here: <http://www.chitrasoundar.com/> and her Twitter handle is @csoundar.

About the illustrator

Poonam Mistry's work is heavily influenced by her love of nature, folklore and traditional Indian art. In this story, her very distinct style evocatively captures scenes from the natural world in a way that should inspire young children to look more closely at the world around them.

What else do I need to know?

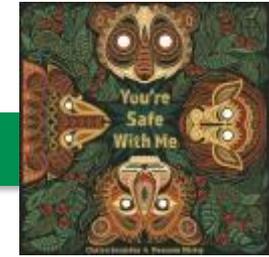
Here are some useful links to other stories that use animals to deliver a moral message (*Aesop's Fables*) and the words of popular cradle song, Brahms Lullaby. Students could compare the content and the style of this lullaby with the message of *You're Safe With Me*.

- <http://www.taleswithmorals.com/>
- <http://www.parenting.com/baby/sleep/popular-lullaby-lyrics>



There is some interesting information about Norse gods and goddesses here:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/04/thor-odin-norse-gods-guide-iceland-temple-vikings-deities>



CURRICULUM PLANNING (*You're Safe With Me*) – KS1

The following table shows how *You're Safe With Me* could be integrated within lessons across the curriculum.

Literacy		
Comprehension	Grammar	Composition
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Prediction 2) Guided reading 3) Using a dictionary to find the meaning of challenge words 4) Summarising the story 5) Inferring characters' thoughts, feelings and motives from their actions 6) Investigating language and imagery in the story – particularly similes and metaphors 7) Discussion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Forming compound sentences using 'and' 2) Subordination and co-ordination in sentences 3) Text sequencing. 4) Using full stops, question marks and exclamation marks 5) Capital letters 6) Nouns, adjectives, adverbs 7) Expanded noun phrases 8) Statements, questions, exclamations and commands 9) Using the present and past tense 10) Apostrophes 11) Commas to separate items in a list 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Poetry – write a sound poem for an aspect of the weather, including exact representations of sounds (as in <i>You're Safe With Me</i>), sound verbs and sound effects like alliteration. 2) Letter – write a letter from a mother or father to their child, where they comfort them about something that has scared them. 3) Narrative – write a story to explain the existence of or 'job' done by a feature of the natural world. 4) Information text – write a fact file for one of the animals featured in the story.

Humanities and Science	
Geography and Science	RE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Learn about the water cycle by watching this fun YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWb4KIM2vts. 2) Try and identify all the animals featured in the story and plot their 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Write a profile for one of the Norse gods or goddesses that help explain an element of the natural world. 2) Discuss why people look for explanations for things that are scary or

<p>natural habitats on a world map.</p> <p>3) Find a variety of different pictures of the natural world to show how different animals look after their young. Label these to show how mothers and fathers nurture baby animals.</p>	<p>difficult to understand.</p> <p>3) Compare the Christian creation story with another creation story from a different religion or part of the world. What are the similarities or differences between these stories?</p>
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Other Curriculum Links	
Art/Music	IT
<p>1) Create a soundscape with different musical instruments (some of which could be improvised) to bring alive the life of a storm.</p> <p>2) Imitate Poonam Mistry's distinctive illustration style by imagining what a different weather scene might look like, e.g. could you create a snowy scene in Mistry's style?</p> <p>3) Write a song, that includes a powerful chorus, that comforts children who are scared of the dark.</p>	<p>1) Research online to see if you can find out about lullabies or cradle songs that are used in other different cultures.</p> <p>2) Using the computer, design a weather cartoon, featuring only the sounds made by the different elements of weather that are mentioned in <i>You're Safe With Me</i>.</p>

Assembly links

- 1) Students share their biggest fears and present to the rest of the school how storytelling can be used to reassure young children.
- 2) Perform soundscapes or lullabies to the rest of the school to share the work that the class have created during this unit.

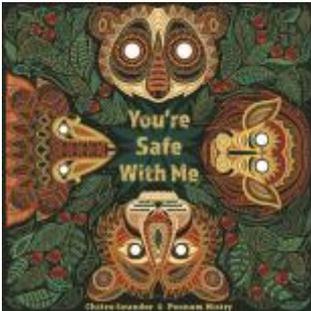
WOW features

- 1) Invite Chitra Soundar in for an author visit. More information about how to do this can be found here: <http://www.chitrasoundar.com/storiesfromindia/>.
- 2) Create an evocative school display of Poonam Mistry style illustrations.
- 3) Students imaginatively reenact the story of *You're Safe With Me* to foster and encourage team work and develop confidence.



Guided Reading Resource

A step-by-step teacher's guide for reading *You're Safe With Me* as a class reader. These questions could also be used to prompt discussion in small groups or for independent readers approaching the text on their own.



Cover image

- What is the title of the story?
- Who is the author? Who is the illustrator?
- The illustrator of this book has a very distinct style. What animals do you think the illustrator has chosen to show on the cover?
- Why might the four animals on the cover be shown facing each other?
- Who do you think the "You" and the "Me" in the title might refer to?

Pages 1-2

- What animals can you spot on this page?
- Why do you think the little ones on this page "couldn't sleep"?
- Why do you think young children (or animals) might be scared of the dark?
- Have you ever tried to get to sleep during a thunderstorm?



Pages 3-4

- Can you see what is happening in this picture?
- Why do the words curve round in a semi-circle?
- Do you think Mama Elephant acts like a human mother on this page?
- Why does Mama Elephant tell the baby animals: "You're safe with me"?

Pages 5-6

- What animals can you see in this picture?
- On this page, the trees make a "SWISH-SWISH" noise. What noises do you think the trees would make in different types of weather?
- Could you do an impression of the wind "moaning"?
- When weather is described like a human, it is called personification. Can you think of another sound word to describe the noise of the wind?
- On this page "the little animals woke up and whimpered." What do you think the word "whimpered" means?

Pages 7-8

- Why does Mama Elephant “whisper” on this page?
- She tells the baby animals that the wind is “an old friend of the forest”. Why do you think this would comfort the babies?
- What do you think Mama Elephant means by: “He brings us seeds from faraway lands”?
- Could you think of another positive explanation for the ‘job’ of the wind that could be used to comfort little children?



Pages 9-10

- How does the illustrator represent the wind on this page? What does it look like?
- What is the little monkey’s main complaint about the wind?
- How does Mama Elephant explain the loud noises made by the wind? Why do you think it would help the baby animals to think of the wind as a tired old man or woman?
- What is a breeze? Why is a breeze often described as being “gentle”?
- Why does Mama Elephant repeat the line: “You’re safe with me”?

Pages 11-12

- How does the illustrator show that the baby animals are scared in this picture?
- Could you do an impression of the thunder and its echo: “DUM-DE-DUM”?
- The thunder is described as “clattering”. Can you think of another verb that you could use to describe the noise of the thunder?
- What is an echo? How do the clouds provide an echo of the thunder?
- Why do you think the animals were so “startled” by the noise of the thunder?



Pages 13-14

- How does thunder “bring us water from the sea” and make the forest grow?
- How does the picture on this page illustrate the words?
- When a writer uses two ‘s’ letters next to each other (“scattered seeds”) it is called alliteration. Can you think of another way of describing the forest using alliteration?



Pages 15-16

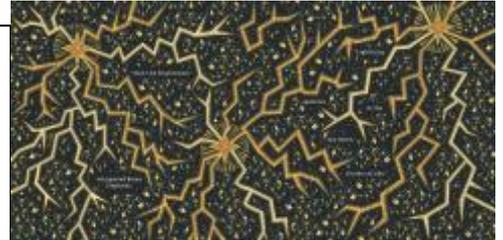
- What type of animal is “little lorris”?
- How do the two descriptions of the thunder contrast: “she’s groaning from the weight of the rain” and “as fluffy as cotton flowers”?
- Mama Elephant repeats the same line: “You’re safe with me.” In a song, repeated lines like this are called a chorus. Why does this line make a good chorus for the story?
- Have you noticed that Mama Elephant “whispers” again? Why does she continue to do this?

Pages 17-18

- What type of weather is being described here?
- Why are the words “lit up” and “flickered” good words to describe this type of weather?
- The words “CRACK-TRACK” and “FLASH-SNAP” are used to describe the sound of the weather here. Can you think of any other fitting sound words?
- What does “gasp” mean? Can you do a good gasp?

Pages 19-20

- How is the lighting shown on this page?
- How does the picture show that the lightning “sparkles” when the clouds collide?
- What does “collide” mean? What sort of consequences are there when objects “collide”?



Page 21-22:

- When tiger cub says “he’s bright”, what is he referring to?
- Why do you think “little shiny stars” are more comforting to the animals than lightning?
- How does the picture show that the tiger cub has been reassured by Mama Elephant’s words?
- Do you think Mama Elephant’s words would reassure you in a storm?

Page 23-24:

- What are the verbs (‘doing’ words) on this page?
- Which of the noises described on the page do you think is the scariest: the rumbling river or the croaking frogs?
- Can you do an impression of somebody “trembling”? In what situations do people normally tremble?
- What do you think the frogs are doing in this picture?

Page 25-26:

- How does Mama Elephant explain the action of the river?
- In Mama Elephant’s eyes, what would happen to the world if the rivers didn’t exist?
- How does the picture on this page match the words that Mama Elephant uses to reassure the baby animals?



Page 27-28:

- What type of animal is a “pangolin”?
- Mama Elephant says that the hungry river “eats all the shadows in the forest”. What event, that happens every day, does Mama Elephant’s words explain?
- What can you see in the picture on the right of the page?
- Why does “grumbled” sound less scary than “rumbled”?



Page 29:

- What “little ones” can you see falling asleep on this page?
- How do the words on this page follow directly from the words on the previous page?
- Why is it important that the last words of the story are: “You’re safe with me”?
- Why do you think the story ends with the baby animals falling asleep?

At the end of the story:

- What was your favourite page in the book? Can you explain your answer?
- If you had to summarise the message of the book in five-ten words, what would you say?
- What is the most effective sound word in the story? Can you explain why this word is so powerful?
- How many different animals are shown in this story? Why is it important for the author to show a wide range of animals?
- What types of stories use animals to deliver a message to their readers? Can you think of any other examples?
- Why do you think the author chose to write a story about thunderstorms and animals struggling to go to sleep?
- Do you think it is important for stories for young children to end in a positive way?

Challenge words in the story:

whimpered clattered scattered terrify loris
 flickered gasped collide rumbled
 trembled pangolin



Resources to accompany *You're Safe With Me* written by Chitra Soundar and illustrated by Poonam Mistry



