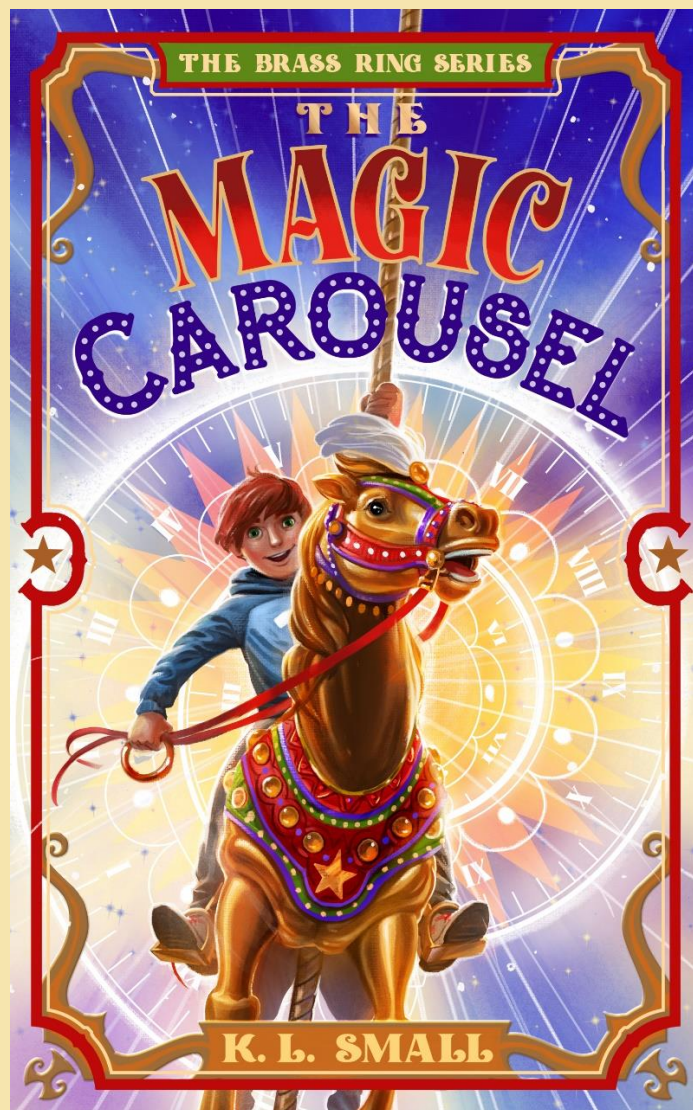


DISCUSSION AND TEACHING GUIDE

For Middle and Upper Elementary (Grades 4-6)



Created by K. L. Small - July 2023

“This is a perfect read-aloud for elementary-aged students or older readers. For homeschooling families, this book could serve as a fun stepping-off point for further exploration, particularly for those families who are structuring elementary unit studies around historical novels.”

- Goodreads reviewer

A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR AND READER

This Guide is a resource to support *The Magic Carousel* (Book 1 of The Brass Ring Series) by K. L. Small. Teachers, parents, and readers are encouraged to use the discussion questions and activities in this Guide to improve the experience of reading the book. In addition to this Guide, *The Magic Carousel* includes a section at the back of the book called “Things You Might Want to Know” and a glossary.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Magic Carousel is a time travel adventure book that includes factual elements of how horses have been used in the past. The story is a fictional account based on historical information. In addition to the historical material, it includes contemporary themes of bullying and alcoholism.

When Russell’s eccentric, storytelling grandpa moves in with the family, Russell loses his bedroom and has to take Grandpa to the carousel in the park every day. As if he doesn’t have enough to deal with already. He’s flunking fifth grade, bullied at school, and his dad’s drinking has made him feel like a failure. Russell dreams of being a firefighter but fears he isn’t courageous enough.

Then Russell rides a carousel horse with Grandpa. Thanks to a magic brass ring, he finds himself magically transported into the past, where he faces life-and-death challenges. Each ride is a new, risky adventure. If he’s not careful, he could be trapped in one of his wild adventures forever!

This is the award-winning first story in the Brass Ring Series.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Author K. L. Small lives in Florida on a horse ranch called Carousel Acres. She owns two horses and four barn cats. She is a member of the National Carousel Association.

Starting around age ten, she read every horse book she could get her hands on. Those books inspired her to become an author and a horse owner.

The Magic Carousel is the first book in The Brass Ring Series. Future books in the series will follow Rusty on *The Christmas Carousel* and *The Haunted Carousel*. K. L. Small wrote *A Dress To Remember: A Fairy Tale*. She also has several short stories published in anthologies.



Learn more about K. L. Small by visiting her website (<https://kathleenismall.com>) and subscribing to her newsletter to stay current on her journey as an author.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read through the pages of this Guide and select any discussion questions and/or activities that seem most interesting to you. Activity worksheets are provided for your use. You may develop your own activities based on something suggested here. Have fun and explore ways to expand upon the information included in *The Magic Carousel*.

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY GUIDE

Many discussion questions and activities are provided below. Pick a few that seem most interesting to the reader. It's not recommended to do all of them.

Chapters 1 – 4 (pages 1 – 39)

Discussion Questions

1. What is Russell's reaction to going to the park every day with Grandpa?
2. How does Tyler bully Russell?
3. Why does Russell decide he won't take Grandpa to the carousel again?
4. When Russell compares his family to the carousel horses with chipped paint and broken parts, what does that tell you about his family?
5. Why doesn't Russell want to hold Grandpa's hand on the carousel?
6. What happens when Russell holds Grandpa's hand?
7. What is life like in 1827? What things are missing?
8. What dangers does Russell face in 1827? What is he afraid of?
9. What is Russell's reaction to returning to the carousel after the mountain man experience?

10. What does Russell notice about his Grandpa?
11. How does Russell feel when Grandpa is taken away in an ambulance?
12. What did you learn about Russell's family in Chapter 4?

Activities

1. Plan an outing with a grandparent or older relative. Think about the kinds of activities an older person might enjoy.
2. Locate your nearest park. Identify the types of facilities and spaces that are there.
3. Research the mountain man lifestyle (1825-1840) and why they attended an annual rendezvous.

Chapters 5 – 7 (pages 40 – 65)

Discussion Questions

1. How is Tyler bullying Russell in the classroom?
2. When Russell's teacher gave the class a writing assignment, what instructions did she give them?
3. Was it surprising to learn that ponies were used in coal mines?
4. What were conditions like in a mine?
5. When Russell visits Grandpa in the hospital, how did they communicate?
6. What promise did Russell make to Grandpa?

Activities

1. Write a short story using the instructions Mrs. Williams gave Russell.
2. Research the history of mining, focusing on how children and animals were part of that history.
3. Try communicating with someone for five minutes without speaking.

Chapters 8 – 9 (pages 66 – 84)

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe Duchess' personality?
2. What was Russell's reaction to riding in the parade?
3. What would life be like for Russell if he didn't find the brass ring?
4. Why did Mr. Babson's words mean so much to Russell?
5. How did Sarah defend her brother?

Activities

1. Research what it was like for a circus to come to town in the 1890s.
2. If you could travel back in time like Russell, decide what circus act you would do. Make a poster to promote your act.

Chapters 10 – 12 (pages 85 – 108)

Discussion Questions

1. Besides bakery items, what other things might be delivered by a horse and wagon?
2. Why didn't Russell help Jasper right away?
3. How come the magic seemed to be broken?
4. What made Russell return to ride Gretta again?
5. How did facing Ragman to help Jasper make Russell feel?
6. Why was rescuing Jasper a major turning point for Russell?
7. In Chapter 12, Russell recalls a terrible event in his life. How did that make you feel?

Activities

1. List things in your home that would have been delivered by horse and wagon in 1895.
2. Think about a time you might have seen someone being bullied and what did you do.

Chapters 13 – 14 (pages 109 – 132)

Discussion Questions

1. How did the plans to close the carousel for repairs complicate Russell's goal to keep his promise to Grandpa?
2. Why did Storm Bringer's name and his parents' names worry Russell?
3. Was it difficult for Russell to compete in events he had never done before?
4. What did you think of Storm Bringer helping Russell?
5. Chapter 14 was intense for Russell. Do you think it was a good thing that the truth came out about his grades?
6. How can one person's problem (like Russell's father) affect others?

Activities

1. Design your own coat of arms.
2. Early carousels started as a way to practice the skills that were tested in tournaments. Research the history of carousels.

Chapters 15 – 17 (pages 133 – 156)

Discussion Questions

1. What was Tyler's reaction when Russell stands up to him?
2. Were you surprised to learn that horses pulled fire wagons before fire engines existed?

3. How did talking about the birthday party help Russell and Tyler?
4. What was the connection between the baby and Russell?
5. How had Russell changed by the end of the story?

Activities

1. Visit a museum that has a fire history display.
2. Compare Chapters 1 and 17. Make a list of what is different and what is the same.

CONCLUSION

The Magic Carousel deals with the contemporary problems of bullying and alcoholism. The magic brass ring and the carousel horses take Russell back in time to different situations where horses played an important part in everyday life. Through those time travel adventures, Russell learns about courage and confronts the challenges in his life. There's much we can learn from history, as Russell discovered. Thank you for sharing a little bit of that history through reading *The Magic Carousel*.

ACTIVITY SHEETS

The following pages are activity sheets that can be printed and used to reinforce words and concepts from the book. These include:

- Vocabulary Worksheet
- "What If" Exercise
- Word Search
- Crossword Puzzle (answers are on the last page)

THE MAGIC CAROUSEL

VOCABULARY WORKSHEET

Write a definition for the following words:

1. Carousel
2. Stroke
3. Steam pumper
4. Rendezvous
5. Band organ
6. Saddle
7. Bully
8. Accommodation
9. Quintain
10. Dalmation
11. Pit Pony
12. Mountain man
13. Intensive care
14. Squire
15. Rehabilitation

THE MAGIC CAROUSEL

“WHAT IF” EXERCISE

What if you had a magic ring and could travel back in time on a carousel? Using the space below, write or draw your answers to the following questions:

- What animal would you ride?
- What time would you go back to?
- What adventure would you have?



MAGIC CAROUSEL ACTIVITIES



WORD SEARCH

Find the words listed below and circle them.

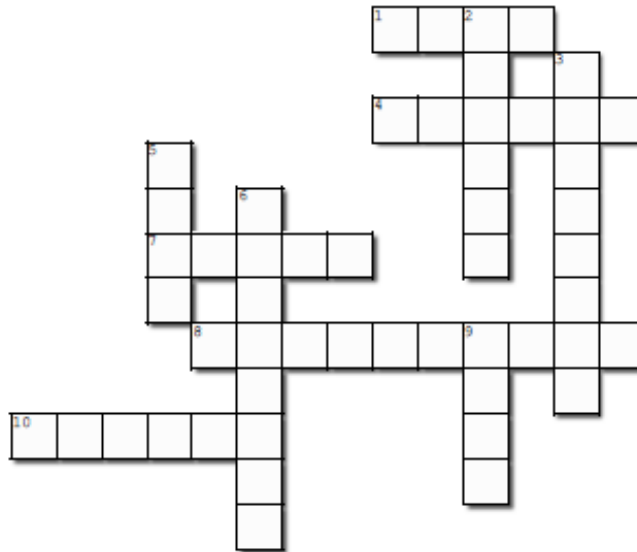
A	B	U	L	L	Y	W	G	S	N	G	O
M	D	R	V	I	F	I	R	E	P	P	C
X	E	Z	A	U	T	T	A	S	U	C	A
L	L	E	S	S	U	R	N	R	K	I	R
U	I	S	U	F	S	D	D	O	L	R	O
Z	V	I	N	P	O	D	P	H	T	C	U
G	E	Q	U	I	N	T	A	I	N	U	S
W	R	E	N	D	E	Z	V	O	U	S	E
E	Y	O	H	L	P	R	A	D	J	O	L

- CAROUSEL
- HORSES
- RUSSELL
- BULLY
- RENDEZVOUS
- CIRCUS
- QUINTAIN
- REINS
- DELIVERY
- FIRE
- GRANDPA
- BRASS



Magic Carousel Crossword Puzzle

Complete the crossword puzzle below



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

1. Time travel destination
4. The Duchess performs at the _____
7. The ring is made of _____
8. Middle Ages games
10. Roscoe and Jimmy are _____

Down

2. Grandpa's health problem
3. Unacceptable behavior
5. Russell saves a _____
6. Merry-go-round
9. Pit pony work site

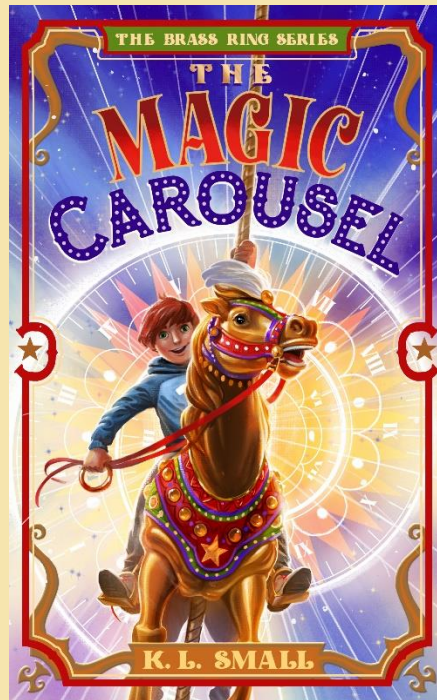
Answers to the crossword puzzle:

Across

1. Time travel destination (**past**)
4. The Duchess performs at the _____ (**circus**)
7. The ring is made of _____ (**brass**)
8. Middle Ages games (**tournament**)
10. Roscoe and Jimmy are _____ (**horses**)

Down

2. Grandpa's health problem (**stroke**)
3. Unacceptable behavior (**bullying**)
5. Russell saves a _____ (**baby**)
6. Merry-go-round (**carousel**)
9. Pit pony work site (**mine**)



The Magic Carousel

Written by K. L. Small

Cover and Illustrations by Brandon Dorman

Future titles in The Brass Ring Series:

The Christmas Carousel (2023)

The Haunted Carousel (2024)

Subscribe at www.kathleenismall.com to receive a monthly newsletter