

## You Weren't With Me - Reading Guide

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Themes: reuniting after long separation from loved one, rebuilding trust

Lesson/Notes: Little Rabbit expresses a variety of feelings to Big Rabbit who has been gone for a long time. Children may be separated from an important adult (usually a parent) for a variety of reasons - parent job displacement, immigration issues, military deployment, temporary out-of-home placement, parent incarceration, illness/treatment, etc. This story can help children reconnect after a long separation and learn their feelings are normal.

*It is very hard when someone you are close to is gone for a long time. It's okay to feel angry, sad, confused, worried, or hurt. You may not feel like you can trust that person right now. It usually helps to talk about what you are feeling and thinking. You can also draw your feelings.*

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### Discussion Questions

- *What did you notice in that story?*
- *What had upset Little Rabbit?*
- *How did Little Rabbit feel when Big Rabbit was not there?*
- *Did Big Rabbit think about Little Rabbit while they were apart?*
- *Do you think Little Rabbit felt better after telling Big Rabbit how he felt?*
- *Do Big Rabbit and Little Rabbit still love each other?*
- *Would you like to tell me about a time you may have felt like Little Rabbit?*

### Activity: Draw It Out

Suggested Supplies: colored pencils (or markers, paint, etc.), craft paper

- Invite the child to draw how (s)he felt while the loved one was away. This is open-ended to encourage self-expression through art.
- Ask the child if (s)he would like to tell you about the drawing, but do not require it.
- If you are "Big Rabbit" to this child, you and the child may also want to draw or talk about what you both have been doing while apart.