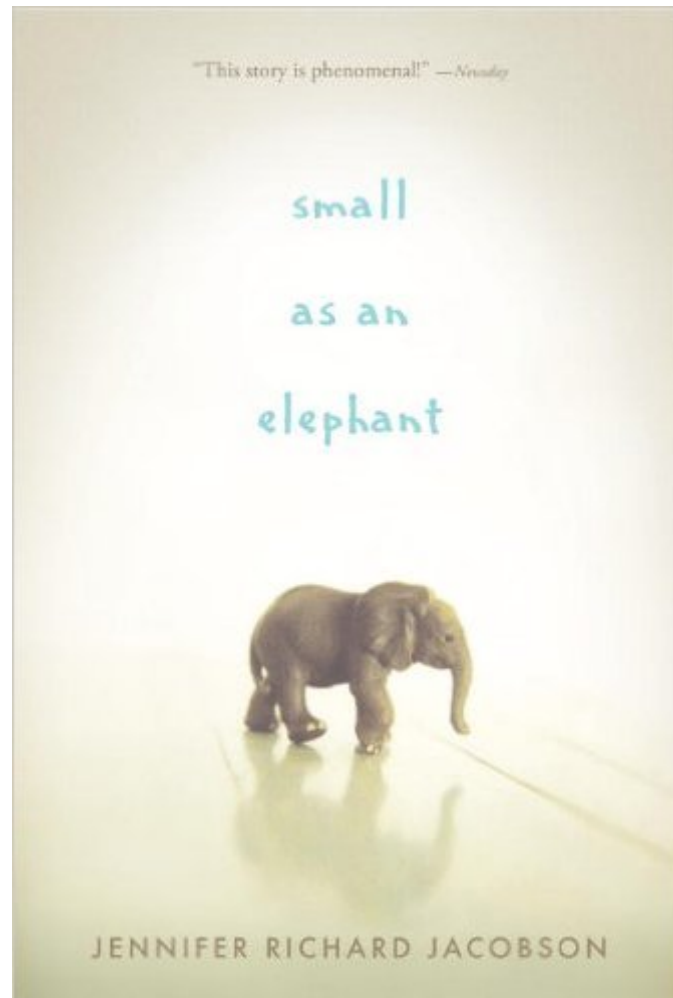


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# Small As An Elephant



## Synopsis

Jack's mom is gone, leaving him all alone on a campsite in Maine. Can he find his way back to Boston before the authorities realize what happened? Ever since Jack can remember, his mom has been unpredictable, sometimes loving and fun, other times caught in a whirlwind of energy and "spinning" wildly until it's over. But Jack never thought his mom would take off during the night and leave him at a campground in Acadia National Park, with no way to reach her and barely enough money for food. Any other kid would report his mom gone, but Jack knows by now that he needs to figure things out for himself - starting with how to get from the backwoods of Maine to his home in Boston before DSS catches on. With nothing but a small toy elephant to keep him company, Jack begins the long journey south, a journey that will test his wits and his loyalties - and his trust that he may be part of a larger herd after all.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 790L (What's this?)

Paperback: 288 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.8 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (196 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #38,740 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty](#) #50 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness](#) #55 in [Books > Children's Books > Animals > Elephants](#)

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

As I've read some of the reviews of this book on Goodreads, I've pondered on the various comments. Some people loved it, some people didn't. Some thought it was believable and some did not. I guess it just goes to show that few if any books are universally loved. This is the story of Jack, an eleven-year-old from Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, who finds himself alone at a campground

in Maine. His mother suffers from mental illness and has abandoned him. Jack knows that if he tells anyone about this, he will most likely be taken from his mother, and since this has happened before, he decides to try to find her before doing anything else. After discovering that his mother is not accessible, he decides to try to make it home. Once he realizes just how far away home is, he decides to do something that he hopes will let his mom know he forgives her. His struggles to get enough to eat, find a decent place to sleep, keep him from admitting that he and his mother need help. But eventually, Jack receives the help he needs. Some reviewers think the parts about the elephants are not necessary, but I disagree. Jack's love of elephants and the small plastic elephant he carries for most of his journey, help Jack complete his journey. Maybe it's because I have a similar passion for horses that I can understand Jack's passion and his clinging to that passion to avoid thinking about his mother's abandonment and the feelings that go with it. Yes, Jack does sometimes behave both older and younger than his age, but having worked with kids his age as well as younger and older, I can say that while some kids mature faster than others, but they all have moments of contradictory behavior (like many adults, too). In addition, sadly enough there are all too many children in the world who have to learn to take care of themselves far earlier than they should. I found this book an interesting, empathy-inducing read.

I am always looking for a good read for kids. This book is beyond good. It will hook kids immediately. It's fast paced but allows you to totally understand Jack; to get inside his head and heart. Kids will relate to Jack and be astonished at how logical his whole escapade is. I loved that as emotionally draining this book is, it also has a wonderful resolution. Excellent writing. I can't wait to put this book in the hands of boys or girls at my school!

*Small As An Elephant* could be a quick, sweet read, but it is so emotionally gut-wrenching, adult and older YA readers will find themselves slowing down to contemplate Jack's trauma and choices. Eleven year old Jack has been abandoned at a state park by his mentally ill mother. Younger readers will most likely focus on Jack's love for his mother, his desire to find her, and his adventures as he tries to get home. Older readers will share Jack's anger at his mother and see themselves in the adults in the story who did not pay careful enough attention to spot a desperate child in need of loving intervention. Jack must find his way home without anyone finding out his mother is gone. Since Jack was very small, his devoted, but dysfunctional mother has taught him not to trust adults and to keep their eccentric lifestyle a secret, or he will be taken away from her. She has isolated him from family and prevented him from establishing close relationships with teachers, classmates or

neighbors. This unhealthy upbringing actually helps Jack survive alone as he tries to make his way home. He is self-reliant and knows how to lie. He is also clever and a quick decision maker. Being eleven, however, he does not think his decisions through very well and gets himself in several sticky situations. The climax is exciting, but the ending is a little preachy. *Small As An Elephant* is a very good example of the best in YA literature. It can be read at many different levels with reluctant and average readers focusing on the events and more mature readers focusing on the relationships. Great and meaningful discussions will result.

*SMALL AS AN ELEPHANT* was beautifully written, incredibly compelling, and so emotionally intense that (especially as the mom of a young son) I sometimes found it almost painful to read, I was so scared and so invested in Jack's fate. I loved the ending, and I look forward to giving this book to my own son to read when he's old enough.

*Small as an Elephant* had me hooked from page one. The story was both riveting and touching, the characters (especially the protagonist Jack) were interesting and realistic, and the pace fast moving. Of course for me what was most impressive about *Small as an Elephant* was the level of writing Jacobson exhibits. She is obviously a talented storyteller, but the connection she creates between Jack and the reader really goes above and beyond. Readers will commiserate with Jack and his situation, and find themselves overwhelmed by Jack's futile thoughts of living with his mother again, and will tear up with the books touching and fantastic ending. Really it is this level of writing and connection to Jack that brings *Small as an Elephant* from a good book to a must read. All in all *Small as an Elephant* is a fantastic book. While it is short, readers will thoroughly enjoy the book. Jack is endearing and relatable, the premise is unique, and the level of writing is superb. Definitely worth the purchase.[...]

I absolutely loved this book. I read a lot of juvie-fiction (I'm a 5th grade teacher) and this was by far my favorite of my summer reading. This is the story about a kid dealing with the mental illness of a parent. As children do, he protects his mother, even when her behavior and neglect have taken everything away from him. Through sheer determination, he makes his way through the wilds of Maine and to a better life.

This book has just about everything you'd want and/or expect in a book for young readers. As a Grandparent, I am particular about the books I would like to see my Granddaughters read. Of

course, its now always my choice. I'd thought this one might be a good one for my 9 year old, but now that I've read it myself, I am certain my 12 year old Granddaughter would also enjoy it. Kudos to Jacobson for writing such as wonderful book.

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