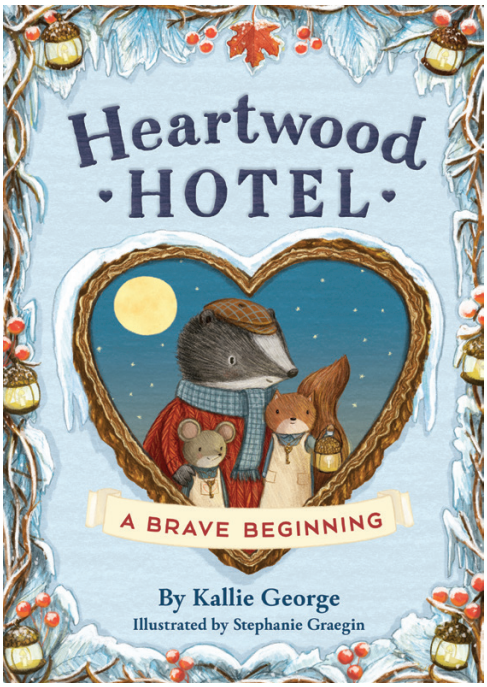
Heartwood HOTEL

A BRAVE BEGINNING

TEACHER GUIDE

About the book



Mona is on a grand new adventure to help run the Heartwood Maple, a new branch of the Heartwood Hotel. Now, Mona and her good friend Tilly the squirrel are preparing to welcome their first guests in the coldest and windiest winter yet. Mona dearly wants everything to go as perfectly as possible and earn the new branch a five-acorn review.

But when cleaning supplies begin to go missing, and strange sounds are heard at night, Mona begins to worry. Is something haunting the new hotel?

The newest installment of the Heartwood Hotel chapter book series is another cozy adventure through an imaginative woodland, complete with charming black-and-white illustrations, comforting themes, and a classic feel.

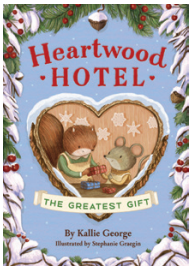
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA & Canada)
Hardcover ISBN: 978-0316567756
Paperback ISBN: 978-0316567763

About this Guide

These discussion questions and activities are designed to support the goal of helping students explore the books and their own creativity. Tap into the adventure of this series with language arts lessons in creative writing, character studies and more!

Art © Stephanie Graegin

The Heartwood Series



Book 1: A True Home

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA)

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1484731611 • Paperback ISBN: 978-1484746387

HarperCollins (Canada) – ISBN: 978-1443443937

Book 2: The Greatest Gift

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA)

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1484732342 • Paperback ISBN: 978-1484746394

HarperCollins (Canada) – ISBN: 978-0606399678

Book 3: Better Together

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA & Canada)

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1484732359 • Paperback ISBN: 978-1484746400

Book 4: Home Again

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA & Canada)

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1484732366 • Paperback ISBN: 978-1484746806

Book 5: Family Forever

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA & Canada)

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0316567732 • Paperback ISBN: 978-0316567749

Book 6: A Brave Beginning

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA & Canada)

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0316567756 • Paperback ISBN: 978-0316567763

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About the author

Kallie George is the author of several books for children, including the Magical Animal Adoption Agency series. She is an author, editor, and speaker, living on the Sunshine Coast in BC, Canada, near the sea. She holds a master's in children's literature from the University of British Columbia. In addition to writing books for young readers, she leads workshops for aspiring writers. She happened across the Heartwood Hotel on a hike with her husband and wishes she was a mouse like Mona so she could stay there, too. Visit Kallie online at kalliegeorge.com.

About the illustrator

Born during a blizzard on Groundhog Day in Chicago, Illinois, Stephanie Graegin spent her childhood drawing and collecting fauna in Fort Wayne, Indiana and Houston, Texas. She received her BFA in Fine Arts from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland. She later attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, obtaining a Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking. Stephanie now lives in Brooklyn, is still drawing, and has managed to keep her collection down to one orange cat. Find out more at graegin.com.

Art © Stephanie Graegin

Book 6: A Brave Beginning

Questions for thoughtful discussion

1) At the beginning of the book, Mona thinks: "Why did no one ever tell you that the scariest things weren't just wolves and owls, but daring to take on new adventures?" What scary adventure is Mona taking on? Why do you think it is scary to her?

2) There are lots of fun rooms in the Heartwood Maple. What is your favorite? Why?

3) There are always a lot of new characters in a Heartwood Hotel book. In this book who is your favorite character? Why?

4) Mona is finally having memories of her parents. What are some of these memories? Why is she having them now? What does she learn about her parents?

5) Who is Frost Feather? (Hint: There could be more than one answer to this question!)

6) Tilly says it's scary being brave, and Mona replies that she thinks that IS being brave: doing something even when it scares you. Do you agree? Can you describe a brave thing you or someone you know has done?

7) What does Mona learn about success? What do you think true success is?

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Activities for Creative Nourishment

ACTIVITY

Draw your memory

Mona's memories are partially being triggered by different senses: things she sees, smells or touches. In fact, memories are often triggered by smells! Draw one of your favorite memories you've had with your family based on a smell.

The smell I'm thinking of is: _____

This is my memory of when: _____

Now draw it below . . .

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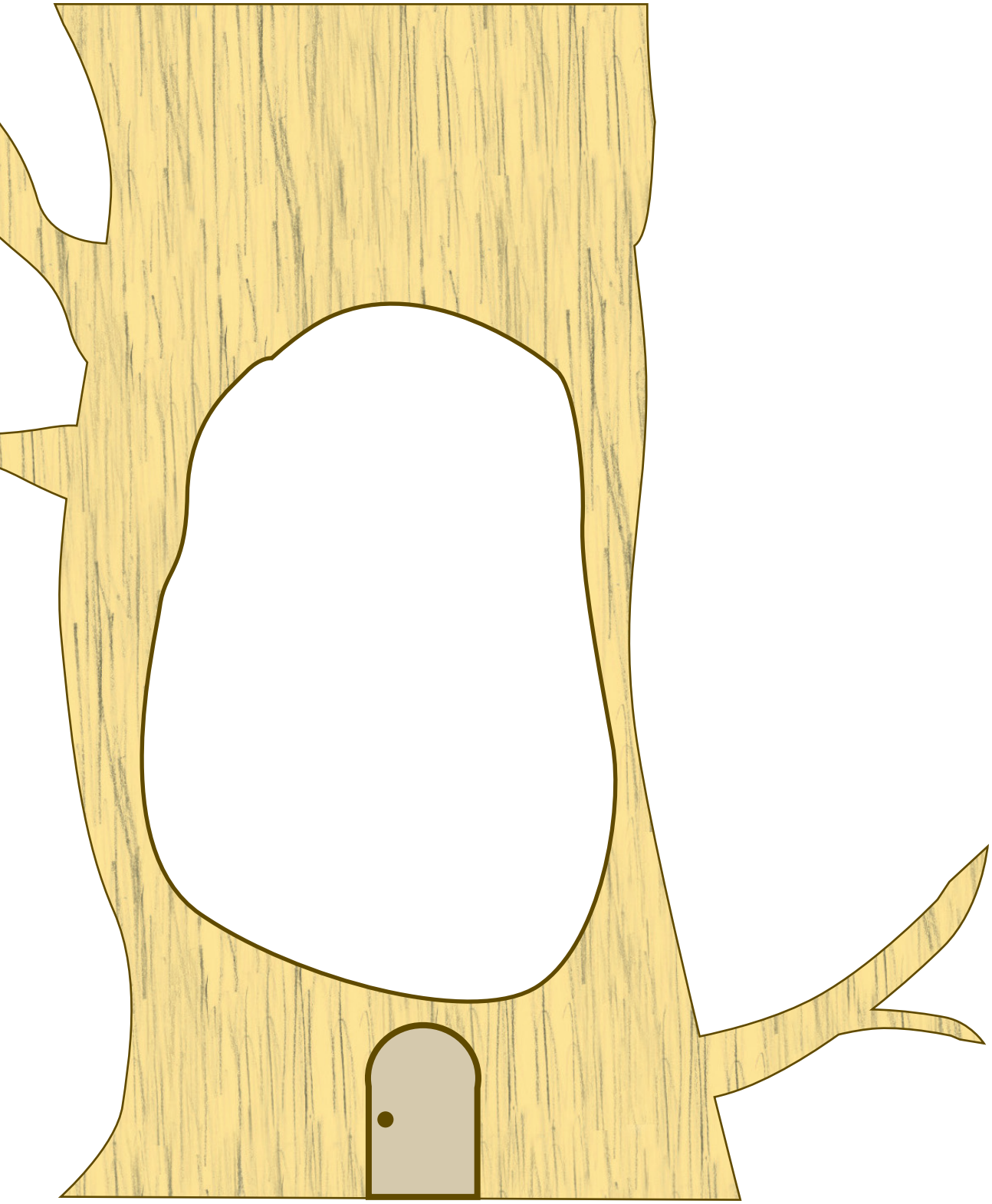
ACTIVITY

Design a playroom

In the space below, design a new playroom for the Heartwood Hotel. This is like a playground for small animals. It could be inside or outside the tree. What fun things would you include?



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ACTIVITY

Write your own ghost story

Frost Feather is a mysterious ghost bird that is said to bring cold wind and bitter memories on its wings. Can you write a fun ghost story, with animals as the main characters? You could start with the sentence, Once, in a forest far away, there was a mysterious tree . . .

Art © Stephanie Graegin

ACTIVITY

Draw your own theatre poster

Around the Heartwood Maple there are lots of theater posters, like for The Spirits of the Wintry Woods. Design and draw your own poster for a play that might be performed at the Heartwood Maple.

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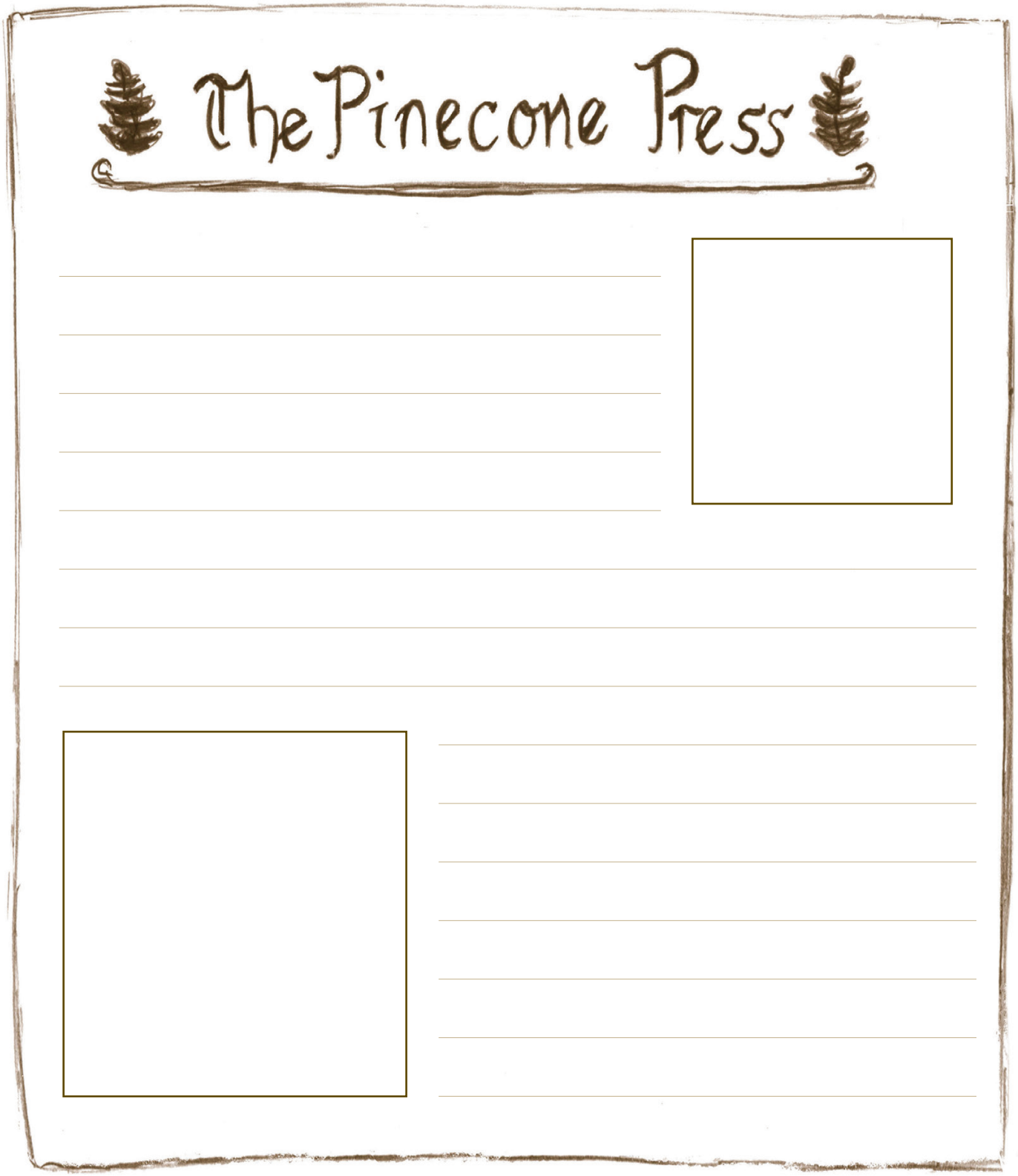
ACTIVITY

Write your own review

Imagine you are an animal character who works for the Pinecone Press and write a review of an imaginary tree hotel. You can draw a picture in the boxes, including one of your animal character!



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Kallie George

Illustrated by
Stephanie Graegin

www.heartwoodhotel.com