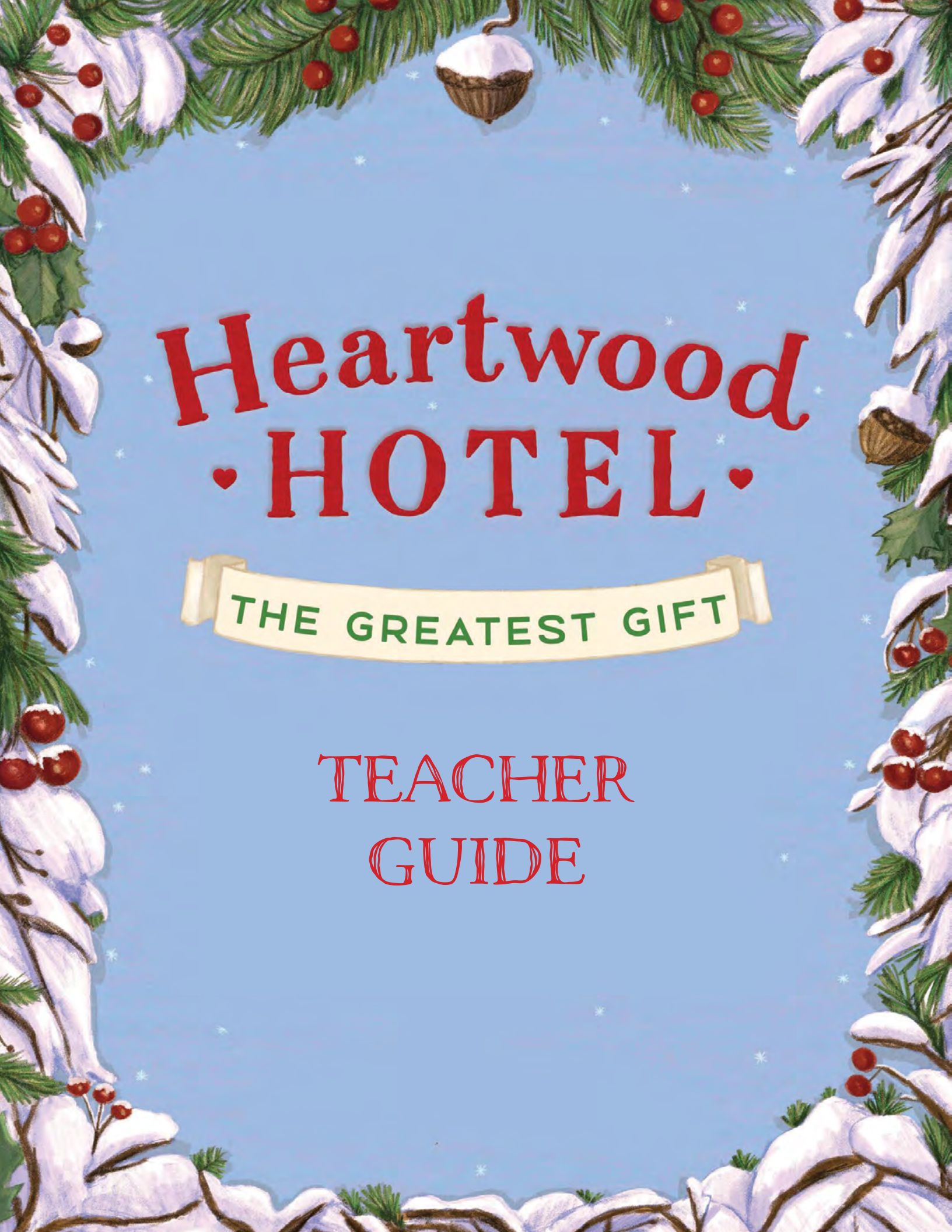
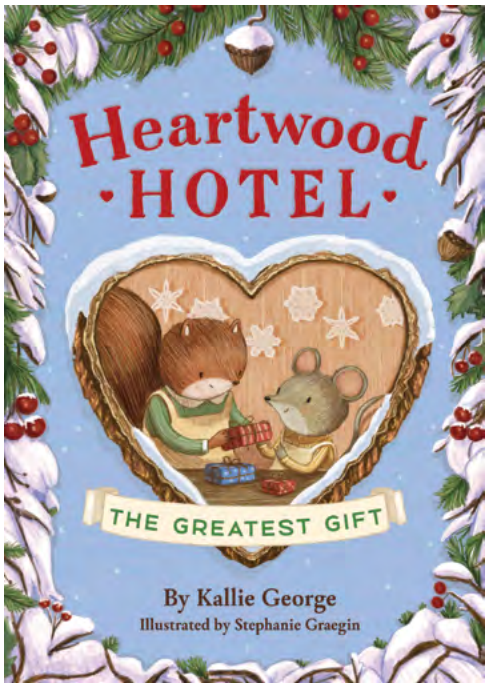

Heartwood
HOTEL
THE GREATEST GIFT
TEACHER
GUIDE

About the book



Mona the mouse has finally found a place to call home, the cozy Heartwood Hotel, where she works as a maid and sleeps snuggled up in a room with her best friend. Following the festive St. Slumber celebration, most of the guests have settled in to hibernate, and the staff is looking forward to a relaxing winter. But disruptions abound, from a difficult duchess to a mysterious midnight snacker. As the snow stacks higher, Mona will have to gather friends both old and new to keep the peace, finding help in some of the most unexpected places.

The second book in the enchanting Heartwood Hotel series, The Greatest Gift will warm your heart with its endearing characters and exquisite illustrations.

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (USA)
Hardcover ISBN: 978-1484732342
Paperback ISBN: 978-1484746394

HarperCollins (Canada)
ISBN: 978-0606399678

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 2: The Greatest Gift

Questions for thoughtful discussion

1) At the St. Slumber's Supper Mona gets many beautiful gifts. Yet, she is upset. Why?

2) As Mona works harder and harder at making her gift, she grows more and more determined for the gift to be a surprise. Why is that important to her? Do you think a surprise gift is better than one you know about? Why or why not?

3) In the end, Mona has to ruin her gift after ALL her hard work. Why? Does she care anymore about it? What has she learned about gifts?

4) What is the best gift that you ever got? Describe it

5) Hood has been stealing food for the orphaned animals— Do you think he should get in trouble for this? Why or why not?

6) The Duchess, although famous and wealthy, treats everyone terribly. But she has a secret. What do we learn about the Duchess? What does the Duchess learn from Mona?

Art © Stephanie Graegin

Activities for Creative Nourishment

ACTIVITY

Design a new festival at the Heartwood

Every season the Heartwood features a festival—sometimes more than one: The First Acorn Festival, the First Snow Festival, St. Slumber's Supper, St. Bright Eyes's Brunch, The Heartwood Hop! It's time to add a new festival to the hotel to attract new guests!

What is the name of the festival: _____

What season does it take place in: _____

What does it celebrate? _____

What do you eat it? _____

Now, design a holiday card for your festival!

Backside	Frontside

Art © Stephanie Graegin

ACTIVITY

Draw your own luggage

Mona the mouse is known for her walnut suitcase with the heart on it. But inside, she carries nothing. Most guest, on the other hand, have suitcases full of belongings. In the space below, draw what you think the following guests might be carrying:

A Speed-Reading Snail:

A Very Smelly Skunk:

A Duchess Rabbit:

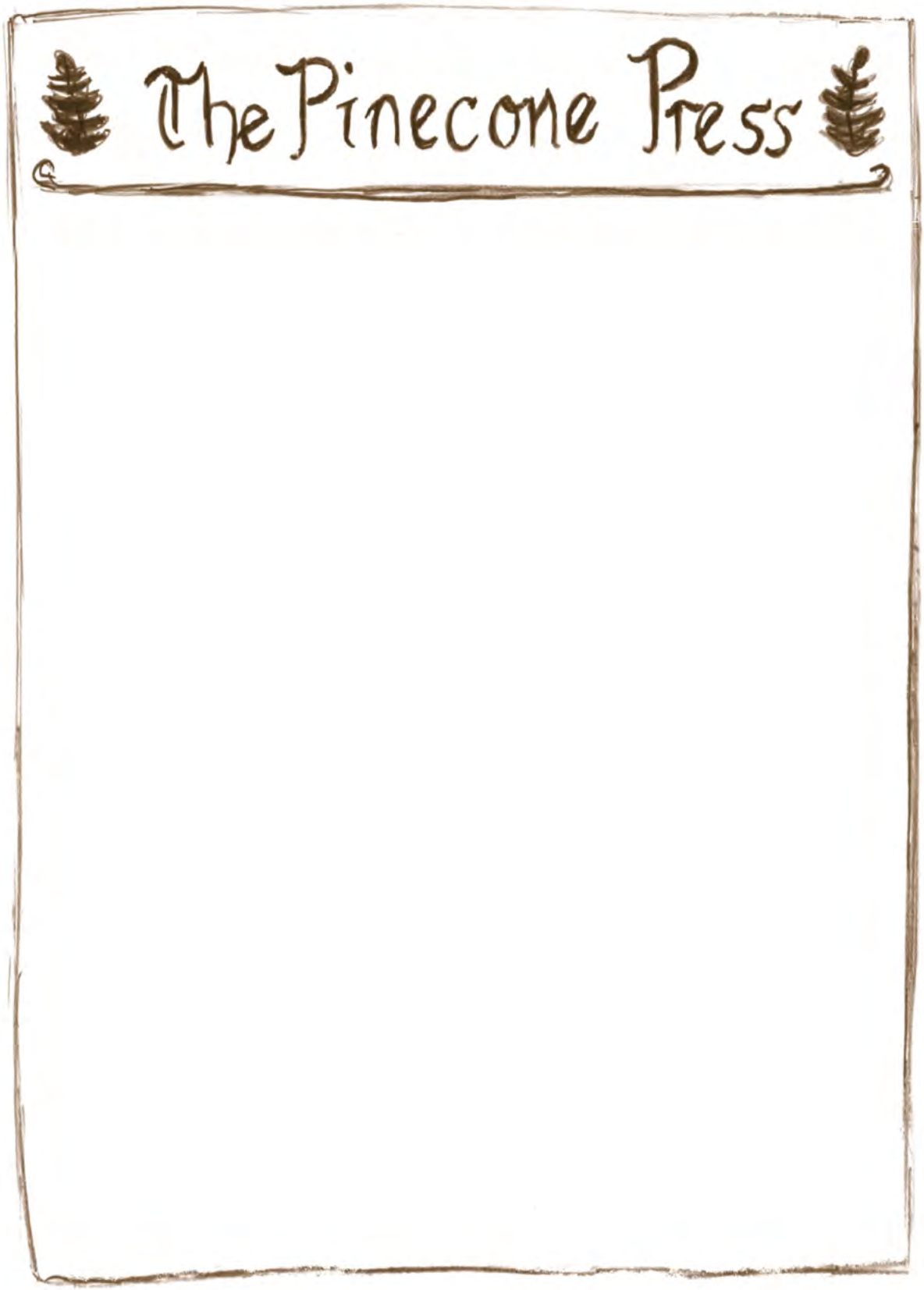
A Wily Wolf:

Art © Stephanie Graegin

ACTIVITY

Write an article for the Pinecone Press

The Pinecone Press has space for a new article. Come up with your own, below! Is it a feature story? An advice column? A review of a new hotel? You decide!



Art © Stephanie Graegin

ACTIVITY

Send a postcard from the Heartwood Hotel

Instructions:

Carefully cut out the postcard below and fold in half. On the backside, imagine you are a guest staying at the Heartwood Hotel and write a note to a family member or friend.

Postcard

← Stick your stamp here.

← This is the place to write the address of the person you're sending the postcard to.

↑ Write your note here.

Art © Stephanie Graegin

Heartwood HOTEL

THE GREATEST GIFT

written by
Kallie George

Illustrated by
Stephanie Graegin

www.heartwoodhotel.com