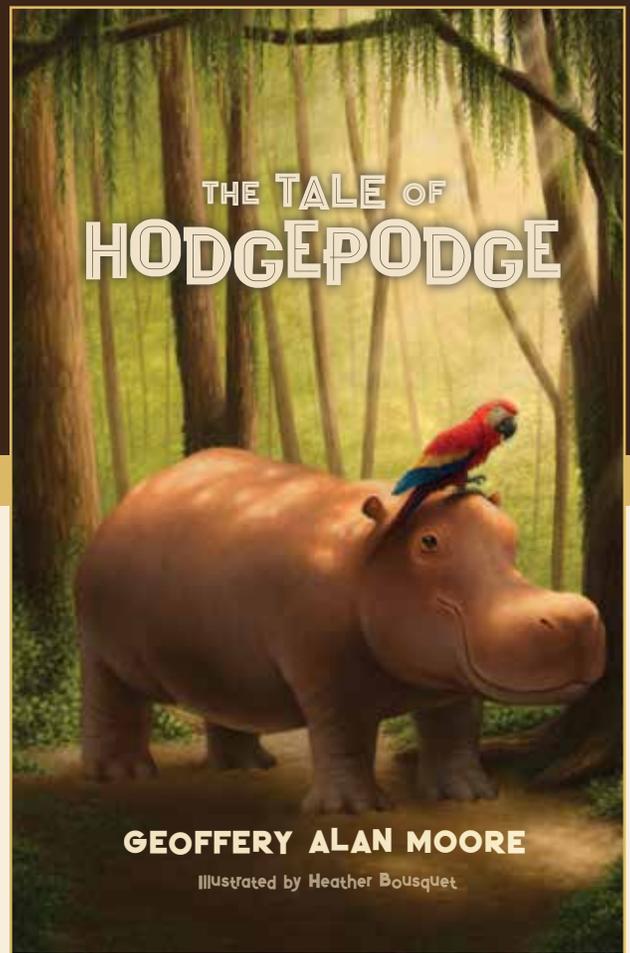


THE TALE OF HODGEPODGE

TEACHING GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

When Moxie the elephant finds a baby hippo alone in the jungle, she is mystified; she's never seen a hippo before. She brings him back to the savanna but the other animals are skeptical of this stranger because they've never seen a hippo either. As he grows up, Hodgepodge (the name they gave him) gets into so much trouble that he is banished by Scab the camel and the other animals. He runs off into the jungle to find his original mother and find out why she abandoned him. There, he meets Krakatoa the philosophical, poetry-spouting parrot who becomes his guide as they face a gang of orangutans, a giant boa constrictor, a fierce Komodo dragon and many other dangers. Krakatoa educates Hodgepodge in his quest for his inner Wow as they look for his mother and for "the place just right" that Hodgepodge dreamed about.

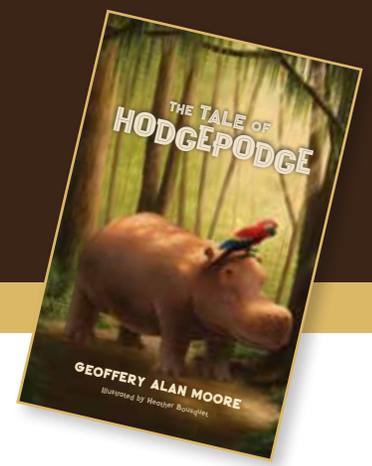
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Scab the camel *assume* that little Hodgepodge would cause trouble, even though he knew nothing about him? Was that fair? If you were trying to persuade Scab and the other animals to accept the strange newcomer, what would you say to them? (Remember, they had never seen a hippo.)
2. Why do you think Hodgepodge had a hard time making "together-friends" with the other animals? Was there anything he could have done differently? What advice would you have given him?
3. When Moxie tells Hodgepodge that he's not an elephant and his original mother left him in the jungle, he thinks there is something "bad-wrong" with him. Why does he think that?
4. Why does Hodgepodge convince himself that he can learn to fly? Why does he keep trying to fly even when he crashes all the time and all the other animals try to talk him out of it?
5. When Krakatoa asks Hodgepodge to tell his story, he says, "I don't really want to talk about it." Why doesn't he want to talk about it? What does Krakatoa do to help Hodgepodge open up and start talking?
6. Krakatoa tells Hodgepodge, "Be amazed to be exactly what you are." Why do you think he tells him this? Should a person be amazed to be exactly what they are? What are some things that make it hard to feel that way? What are some thoughts that would help us to feel that way?

CONTINUED ON BACK

THE TALE OF HODGEPODGE

TEACHING GUIDE



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

- 7.** After Krakatoa saves Hodgepodge from the hyenas, Hodgepodge tells the parrot, “I’m really sorry I said you were like the other grown-up animals. You’re not.” What do you think he meant? How was Krakatoa different from the other animals who tried to give Hodgepodge advice?
- 8.** What caused Hodgepodge to discover his roar? Can difficulties and problems help us discover good things about ourselves? Can you give an example?
- 9.** Discuss Krakatoa’s line: “The world is here for our enjoyment.” Why do you think he said that to Hodgepodge? What are some ways that Krakatoa taught Hodgepodge about enjoyment?
- 10.** Discuss Krakatoa’s line: “Before you take the safe, easy way, think about all the adventures you’ll miss if you do.” Name some animals in the book who took the “safe, easy way”. Name some animals who took the adventurous way. Can you think of some examples of people who took an adventurous way in life—either people you’ve read about or people you’ve known?
- 11.** Krakatoa tells Hodgepodge, “The Wow is always inside you whether you feel it or not. You just have to learn to listen to it.” When Hodgepodge learned to listen to his Wow, how did that change him? Do you think we human beings have something like a Wow inside us? What else might you call it?
- 12.** In Wow Lesson #1, Krakatoa tells Hodgepodge to repeat three things: (1) I am Hodgepodge, the one-and-only me, (2) I am Hodgepodge and there is no one like me, (3) I am Hodgepodge—and no matter what has happened or what anyone says—I am a good thing. Why does he want Hodgepodge to repeat these things? Why did Hodgepodge have trouble repeating the third thing? Do you think this is a good lesson for people?
- 13.** The first time Hodgepodge sees the butterflies, he hardly pays any attention. The second time he sees them, he is amazed and delighted. What has Hodgepodge learned that made this difference?
- 14.** At the end of the book, Hodgepodge tells Krakatoa that the trip through the jungle was the most difficult, frightening thing he had ever done. Then he says, “But it was also *splendiferous!*” Why did he say it was splendiferous? What made it splendiferous even though it was very scary?

