

STORYKEEPERS PRESS PRESENTS

BOOK CLUB HOST GUIDE

The Mingles in Wilderland - Book One: Timbit's Emprise

One guide for hosting, discussion, characters, author background,
the Wilderland journey, and optional meeting extras.

CONVERSATION FIRST. EVERYTHING ELSE IS OPTIONAL.

1. Hosting the Conversation

A relaxed book club does not need a lesson plan. It needs a good room, a few strong questions, enough time for people to disagree, and permission to follow whatever catches fire.

A simple 75-minute gathering

- 10 minutes - arrive, food or drinks, and one-sentence first reactions.
- 15 minutes - favorite character, scene, or surprise.
- 35 minutes - choose 5-7 discussion questions; do not try to finish every question.
- 10 minutes - one carry-home question: what idea from the book is still following you?
- 5 minutes - linger if the conversation is still alive.

Hosting principles

- Story first. Do not turn the evening into school.
- Ask for evidence from the story without demanding one correct interpretation.
- Invite quieter readers before returning to the fastest talkers.
- Let disagreement stay friendly. A good book club produces better questions, not unanimous answers.

2. Discussion Questions

Choose the questions that fit your group. The goal is not to finish the list; it is to open the story.

- The Mingles begin as outsiders. What turns a collection of outcasts into a chosen family?
- Which friendship feels most earned? Which relationship still feels unfinished?
- When does one of Timbit's strengths become a weakness?
- Pippin's fierceness protects her and isolates her. When does that balance begin to change?
- How does Quill's uncertainty about his past shape the way he understands others?
- Which scene best shows the difference between strength and courage?
- What makes Gaia frightening: force, certainty, control, or something else?
- When does leadership become service rather than command?
- What does the Refuge offer that Havenbrook does not?
- Which character handles guilt, grief, or the past most honestly?
- Does the novel convince you that ordinary or small people can matter?
- Why does the story return to shared life, food, memory, and friendship after the crisis?
- What unresolved thread most makes you want Book Two?
- If you could ask the author one question, what would it be?

3. Meet the Mingles - Quick Reference

Character	Who they are	Conversation lens
Timbit Sciurid	Squirrel inventor; earnest, ambitious, determined to make a difference.	Identity, innovation, leadership, failure.
Pippin Lapidore	Rabbit survivor; fierce, guarded, loyal, and hard to fool.	Trust, grief, courage, hard truth.
Quilliam "Quill" Thornridge	Porcupine without memory of his past; curious and observant.	Identity, perspective, mercy, wonder.

Character	Who they are	Conversation lens
Snicker	Small weasel with a sharp edge and surprising warmth.	Loyalty, sacrifice, belonging.
Captain Horatio Proudfoot	Landlocked sea captain and mentor with a complicated past.	Education, redemption, responsibility.
Smudge	Practical caretaker and quiet leader.	Service, restraint, competence.
Whisk	Outsider learning what it means to belong.	Welcome, trust, repair.
Gaia Varron	The Archon; commanding antagonist certain of her right to rule.	Power, certainty, fear, control.

Spoiler-light by design: broad roles and themes only.

4. Behind the Book - Author Q&A;

Why animal characters?

The animal world lets the story feel familiar and slightly displaced at the same time. Readers can recognize fear, ambition, prejudice, friendship, faith, failure, and courage without the story becoming a lecture about a particular contemporary group.

Who is the book for?

The aim was a family novel rather than a narrowly age-banded one: accessible enough to read aloud with younger listeners, but layered enough to give older readers and adults something substantial to discuss.

Why such a rich vocabulary?

The prose was designed to move quickly while still giving readers unusual, precise, historical, scientific, and invented words. The sentence should carry the reader even when a particular word stretches them.

Why is belonging central?

The travelers begin as people who have been categorized as unwanted. Their journey asks whether belonging is granted, earned, or built together through loyalty, truth, repair, and shared purpose.

What interests you about courage?

The story is less interested in fearlessness than in what happens when a frightened person accepts responsibility and takes the next necessary step anyway.

5. Wilderland Map & Journey Prompts

Use the published Wilderland map - or the interactive map on the Mingles website - as a conversation piece rather than a geography assignment.

- Trace the route and identify where the story changes direction emotionally as well as geographically.
- Which locations function as safety, temptation, memory, danger, or possibility?
- Which place would you most want to visit? Which would you avoid?
- Where does the group become a real “we” rather than three individuals traveling together?
- How does distance change power: who can escape, who is trapped, and who controls movement?

6. Optional Meeting Extras

Use one or two of these only if they add delight. Skip them if the conversation is already good.

- Favorite Mingle - and the one you would least want as a roommate.

- Character you trusted too quickly or misjudged at first.
- Scene you would most want illustrated or filmed.
- Casting prompt: choose voices rather than faces; who should sound warm, clipped, ceremonial, dangerous, dry, or unexpectedly funny?
- Each person brings one song that fits a character, location, or turning point and explains the choice in one sentence.
- Close by having everyone write one unfinished question from the novel on an index card; shuffle and read them aloud.

Keep the evening human. The guide is here to support the conversation, not control it.