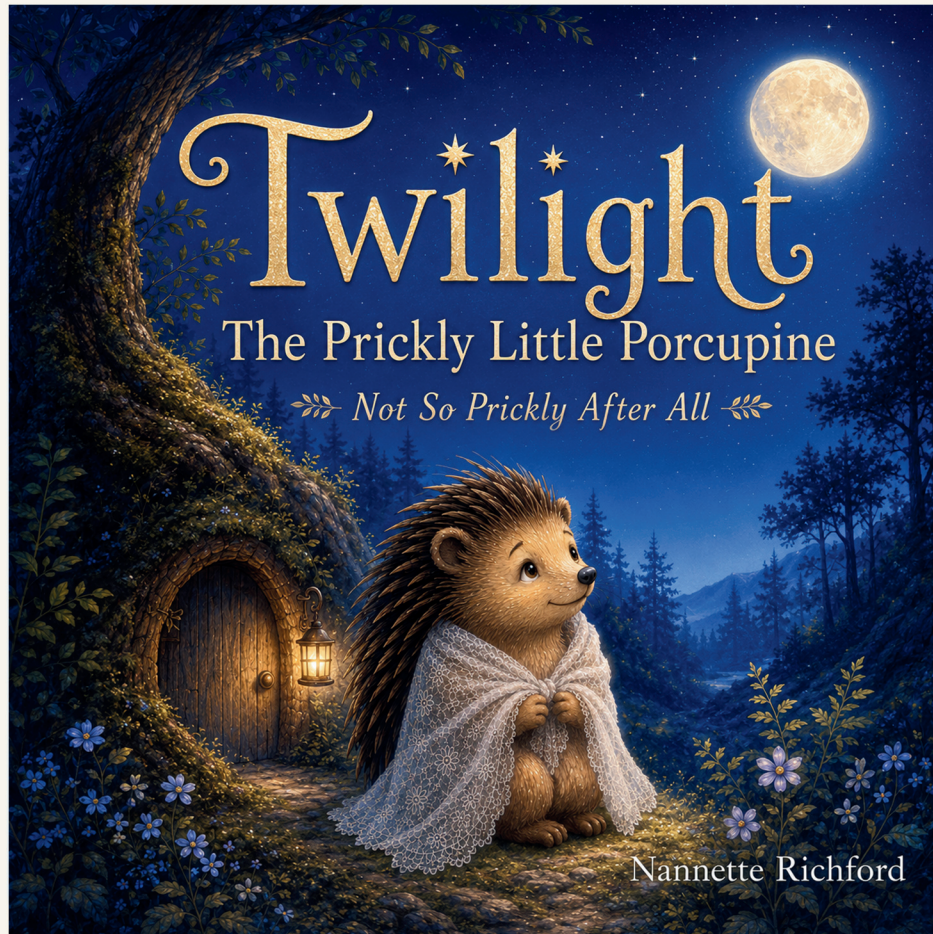




Companion Activities for Reading, Reflection & Nature Study

Kindness • Belonging • Communication • Porcupine Science

For Classrooms, Libraries, Homeschool & Families

Conversation prompts, literacy activities, social-emotional connections, nature study, and five ready-to-print student pages inspired by Twilight's story.

About the Story

Twilight, a little porcupine, lives apart from the other forest animals - not because she wants to be alone, but because her sharp quills make them afraid to come close. Twilight knows she would never hurt them. She longs for a way to show how gentle and loving she really is.

When Twilight gathers the courage to reach out through a series of mysterious notes, the forest begins to change. Her words help the others see what they could not see from a distance. Their growing understanding leads to an act of kindness made especially for Twilight - and, at last, a way for friendship to come close without asking Twilight to become someone else.

Themes

- **Belonging**
Everyone wants to feel included.
- **Kindness**
Small acts can make closeness possible.
- **Vulnerability**
Sharing feelings can feel risky.
- **Courage**
Reaching out takes quiet bravery.
- **Acceptance**
Understanding grows when we look beyond first impressions.

Learning Connections

- **Literacy**
prediction, sequence, word meaning, written messages
- **Social-emotional**
feelings, empathy, belonging
- **Nature study**
porcupines, quills, animal defenses
- **Creative expression**
notes, drawing, role-play

For Educators & Families

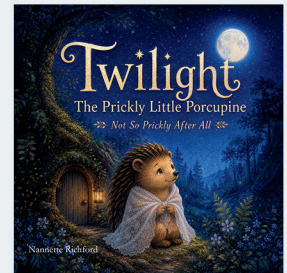
This guide is designed to extend the story through conversation, observation, writing, drawing, and creative activities. Choose the pieces that best fit the age, interests, and needs of your children or students.

Before You Read

Take a look at the cover and title before opening the book.
What do you notice? What do you think might happen?

- 1 What do you notice about Twilight on the cover?
- 2 What does the word “prickly” mean? Could it mean more than one thing?
- 3 Why might other forest animals be nervous around a porcupine?
- 4 What do you think “Not So Prickly After All” might mean?
- 5 If you had something difficult to say, what are some ways you could share it?

Look at the Cover



Look & Predict

Choose one detail from the cover that gives you a clue about the story.

I noticed:

I think it might mean:

Educator Note

There are no right or wrong predictions. The goal is to encourage children to observe, wonder, make connections, and become curious about the story before reading. Younger children can answer aloud rather than write.

After Reading

Remember | Think | Connect

Remember

- Why did Twilight live apart from the other forest animals?
- What did Twilight want the others to understand about her?
- What did she decide to do?
- How did the forest friends respond as they began to understand?
- What did Aurora make for Twilight?



Think

- Why might writing a note feel easier than speaking face-to-face?
- Did the notes change Twilight, or change what the others understood about her?
- Why was it important that the friends wanted to do something kind for Twilight?
- What did the shawl make possible?
- What does belonging mean at the end of the story?

Connect

- Have you ever wanted someone to understand something about you?
- What makes someone feel welcome in a group?
- What can you do when you are unsure about someone who seems different?
- How can you show that you are ready to listen?
- When might writing or drawing help you share a feeling?

Notice the Change

Talk together about what changes from the beginning of the story to the end - and what stays the same.

At the beginning, Twilight feels... _____

Twilight is still... _____



At the end, Twilight feels... _____



Story & Language

Sequence | Word Meaning | Messages

Retell Twilight's Journey

Use the story events to talk about what happened at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end.

Beginning

Twilight wants friendship, but the other animals keep their distance because they are afraid of her quills.

Middle

Twilight reaches out through mysterious notes. The friends begin to understand how she feels and want to show that they care.

End

Aurora creates a soft shawl. Twilight can welcome her friends close while remaining exactly who she is.

Talk About the Sequence

What happened first? • What helped the friends understand Twilight? • What happened before the friends could gather close?

One Word, Two Ideas

Prickly can describe something that has sharp points - like a porcupine's quills. People also use prickly to describe a mood or manner that feels hard to approach.

Literal: sharp to the touch

Figurative: hard to approach

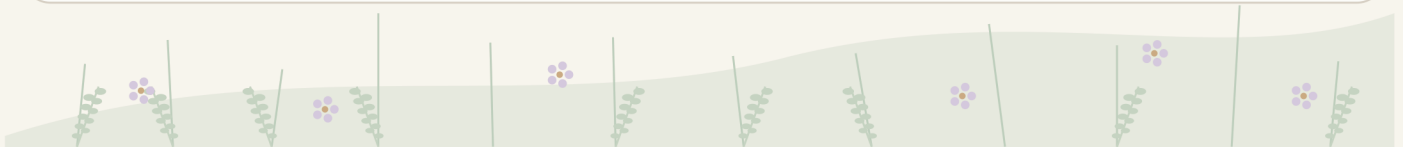
Why a Note?

A note lets Twilight choose her words carefully. It gives the reader time to stop, think, and listen. Ask children how writing, drawing, or speaking can each help us communicate.



Educator Note

For younger children, simply retell the events aloud and ask what came next. A separate sequencing printable provides six larger cards for hands-on use.



Nature Connection

Porcupines & Their Quills

Built for Defense

North American porcupines are covered with thousands of quills. Quills are modified hairs made of keratin - the same material found in our hair and fingernails. They protect the porcupine when a predator gets too close.

Quill Facts

- **They do NOT shoot.**
Quills are loosely attached and can come out on contact.
- **They can stand up.**
When threatened, a porcupine raises its quills as a warning.
- **They are barbed.**
Tiny backward-facing barbs help a quill stay lodged.
- **New quills grow.**
Lost quills are replaced over time.

Look Closely

Quills cover the back, sides, and tail. The face and belly are much softer.



Storybook or Real Life?

Twilight's feelings, notes, and magical shawl belong to the story. Her quills connect to real porcupine biology. Compare the book illustrations with a photograph of a real porcupine. What looks realistic? What was imagined for the story?

Try it: Name one fact and one make-believe detail.

Educator Note

Porcupines usually avoid conflict. Their quills are a defense, not a way to chase or attack other animals. That makes a useful connection to the story: something that looks frightening from a distance may be protective rather than unkind.

When It Feels Hard to Reach Out

There Is More Than One Way to Share

Twilight wants others to know how she feels, but saying it out loud is difficult. She begins with notes. Children can explore the idea that reaching out does not have to look the same for everyone.

Ways to Reach Out

Say it

Tell a trusted person what you want them to know.

Write it

Use a note, letter, or a few simple words.

Draw it

A picture can help show a feeling or idea.

Ask for help

A trusted adult can help you find the words.

What Could You Say?

- A new student is standing alone.
- A friend tells you something that was hard to say.
- You want to join a game but feel shy about asking.

A Gentle Reminder

A child never has to share a private feeling with the group to take part in this activity. Children can answer for Twilight, invent a pretend situation, or keep their own writing private.





Finding the Words

Say It • Write It • Draw It

Twilight's notes open a door between her and the forest friends. Try making a message that helps someone understand, feel welcome, or know that you care.

Choose a Message

☐

I want you to know...

☐

I feel...

☐

I hope...

☐

Would you like to...

Write or Draw Your Note



You can write words, draw a picture, or do both.

Share It - or Keep It Private

A note can be given to someone, read aloud, saved for later, or kept private. The goal is to practice choosing words that are clear and kind - not to require anyone to reveal something personal.



Put Twilight's Story in Order

Cut out the six cards. Mix them up, then place them in the order the events happen in the story.



The other animals keep their distance because they are afraid of Twilight's quills.



Twilight decides to find a way to show how gentle she really is.



Twilight writes and delivers mysterious notes.



The forest friends begin to understand how Twilight feels.



Aurora weaves a soft, magical shawl for Twilight.



Twilight and her friends can finally gather close.

Porcupine Quill Detective

Look closely, learn what quills really do, and compare real-life porcupines with Twilight.

1. Look at the Porcupine

Circle the part covered with quills.

Put an X near a soft part of the body.

Point to the tail.



2. True or Make-Believe?

Porcupines can shoot their quills.

☐

True

☐

Make-believe

Quills are modified hairs.

☐

True

☐

Make-believe

Quills help protect a porcupine.

☐

True

☐

Make-believe

A porcupine has no quills on its belly.

☐

True

☐

Make-believe

3. Storybook or Real Life?

Name or draw one detail about Twilight that comes from real porcupine biology and one detail that belongs to the make-believe story.

Real-life detail:

Storybook detail:



Sometimes I Have Something to Say

Twilight uses notes when speaking feels difficult. You can answer for yourself, for Twilight, or for an imaginary character.

Something I wish someone understood:

A feeling that can be hard to say aloud:

Someone I can talk, write, or draw to:

One kind way I can begin:

Draw or Write a Message

Sharing is optional. You may keep this page private.



Prickly: One Word, Two Meanings

Some words can be used in more than one way. Prickly can describe something you can touch - or a way someone seems to others.

Touch / Literal

Means: covered with sharp points.

- ☐ a prickly porcupine
- ☐ a prickly burr
- ☐ a prickly cactus

Feeling / Figurative

Means: seeming difficult to approach.

- ☐ a prickly mood
- ☐ a prickly reply
- ☐ feeling prickly after a hard day

Which Meaning?

Write L for literal or F for figurative.

- ___ The thistle felt prickly on my hand.
- ___ He gave a prickly answer because he was upset.
- ___ The porcupine's back looked prickly.
- ___ She felt prickly and wanted a little space.

Think About the Title

Why do you think the book is called Not So Prickly After All? Does the title connect to Twilight's quills, her feelings, the way others see her - or more than one of these?



Twilight's Welcome Notes

Cut out the cards. Use them as conversation starters, kindness reminders, or note-writing ideas.

WELCOME NOTE

I'm glad you're here.

Add a name or tiny drawing if you wish.

WELCOME NOTE

Would you like to join us?

Add a name or tiny drawing if you wish.

LISTENING NOTE

Thank you for telling me.

Add a name or tiny drawing if you wish.

LISTENING NOTE

I can listen.

Add a name or tiny drawing if you wish.

KINDNESS NOTE

We can find a way together.

Add a name or tiny drawing if you wish.

KINDNESS NOTE

You matter to our group.

Add a name or tiny drawing if you wish.



Using This Resource

This companion guide was created to extend the reading experience of *Twilight The Prickly Little Porcupine: Not So Prickly After All* through conversation, observation, nature study, creativity, and gentle social-emotional learning. Activities may be adapted to fit the age, interests, and abilities of the children you are working with.

Suggested Uses

- Classroom read-alouds and literacy centers
- Homeschool lessons and family learning
- Library storytimes and book groups
- Social-emotional learning conversations
- Nature study and creative extensions

A Note on Adaptation

Not every child needs to complete every activity. Younger children may respond by talking, pointing, moving, or drawing. Older children can add writing, explanations, or independent observations. The goal is to support curiosity and connection - not to turn the story into a test.

A Note on Personal Sharing

Some pages invite children to think about feelings or communication. Children should never be required to disclose private experiences. They may answer for Twilight, use a fictional example, draw instead of write, or keep their response private.

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