

LEVEL 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Character Insight

1. Skip feels proud only after he tries something meaningful to him.

Why do you think effort changed the way he felt about himself?

2. Flash is confident on the outside but not as kind on the inside.

Why do you think someone might act impressive but not supportive?

3. Breezy starts out nervous, and Skip helps her.

Why do you think helping someone else can make you feel stronger too?

4. Bubbles is joyful but unfocused.

Can joy ever distract someone from growing? When is joy helpful, and when is it not enough?

Story Analysis

1. Skip wobbles throughout the whole story.

Do you think “wobbling” is something that ever goes away, or is it something we learn to grow through?

2. When Skip looks at the perfect painting, it doesn’t feel like his.

Have you ever done something “right” but still not felt proud? Why do you think that happens?

3. Flash laughs at Skip, but then shows a small sign of softening during the art show.

What might this tiny gesture mean about her? How can one small action change a relationship?

4. Skip drifts toward the Open Dock when he feels ashamed and unsure of himself, the same place he was once told he wasn’t ready to explore.

Why do you think he went there in that moment?

What does returning to the Open Dock reveal about how hurt he felt and what he was searching for inside himself?

Themes & Meaning

1. The book says pride comes from trying, not from being the best.

If that’s true, why do so many kids (and adults) still compare themselves?

2. Comparison entered Skip’s life from the outside.

Where do you think comparison comes from in real life? Why do humans do it?

3. Palm trees bend but don’t break.

What do you think the palm tree represents in Skip’s world? How might it represent something in your world?

4. Some boats shine brighter, move faster, or turn sharper.

What does the story teach about living in a world where people have different strengths?

5. Kindness appears in small moments (like Breezy’s soft voice or Flash’s tiny gesture).

Why do small acts sometimes matter more than big ones?

6. What does the phrase ‘practice fosters pride’ mean in Skip’s story? Where do you see this happening?

Behavior and Social Understanding

1. If you saw someone wobble in real life, at school, on a team, or trying something new, how would you choose to act? What would be the “Skip way” and the “Flash way”?

LEVEL 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

1. When Skip feels embarrassed, he turns inward and almost withdraws from others.
What are healthy ways to respond when you feel like you do not belong?
2. Flash's teasing changes the way other boats behave.
Why do you think people sometimes join in laughter even when they do not agree with it?
3. Breezy tries again after failing, and Skip's encouragement matters.
How does encouragement from someone else affect your courage?
How does encouraging someone else change you?

Illustration Interpretation

1. When Skip paints the palm tree, the lines wobble just like he does.
Why is it important that the painting resembles his movement?
What does this reveal about identity?
2. The lighthouse, beacon, and buoy appear in the illustrations as quiet symbols.
What might each one represent about limits, growth, or independence?

Life Application

1. What is something in your life that feels like a wobble right now?
What would "trying with care" look like instead of trying to be perfect?
2. If you could create your own "palm tree moment," something that helps you feel steady, what would it be?
3. How can you remind a friend that their effort matters more than being the best?
4. What is one way you can practice caring more about the inside feeling of pride than the outside feeling of applause?

Meta-Reflection (For advanced readers)

1. Why do you think this story was written? What problem or feeling is it trying to help kids understand?
2. If you re-wrote the story from Flash's point of view, what might her inner thoughts look like?
Would her story be different from what we see?
3. Why do you think Skip helped Breezy even after he had such a hard time with his own wobble? What does that say about the kind of boat he is becoming?
4. How might the story change if Skip never painted the palm tree?
What would he have lost?
What would the harbor have lost?