



[kiranmillwoodhargrave.co.uk](http://kiranmillwoodhargrave.co.uk)

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# A SECRET OF BIRDS & BONE

Kiran Millwood Hargrave

## CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER RESOURCES

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[thereaderteacher.com](http://thereaderteacher.com)



[chickenhousebooks.com](http://chickenhousebooks.com)

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
Front cover	<p>Ask children the following when looking at the front cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think the book will be about?</li> <li>• What things can you see on the front cover?</li> <li>• Why do you think the book has the title A Secret of Birds &amp; Bone?</li> <li>• What kind of story will it be? What genre do you think it belongs to?</li> <li>• Who might enjoy it?</li> <li>• Based on the cover, who might you recommend it to? Why?</li> </ul> <p>Now read the blurb on the inside front cover – were any of your predictions correct?</p>	<p>Write what children can observe (<i>I can see ...</i>); what they can infer (<i>I think ... because ...</i>); and what they want to question about the cover (<i>I wonder if/what ...? etc.</i>).</p>	<p><b>ART</b> • After reading the book, use what you now know to draw alternative covers for the book.</p>
A Message from Chicken House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon hearing this personal message from the book's publisher, what does this add to your predictions about the cover and the story?</li> <li>• Does what Barry Cunningham said make you think about any other stories that you have previously read?</li> <li>• Why do you think the publisher uniquely chooses to put these messages in the front of their books?</li> </ul>	<p>After reading the story, write your own messages of reflection about the book to other readers in the school to recommend it to them.</p>	<p><b>COMPUTING</b> • Record your own messages like these and attach them to books in the classroom or school library, using QR codes for other children to scan to see video recommendations.</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a monastery?</li> <li>• Where does Sofia live? How old is she today?</li> <li>• How does the author describe the details of the house?</li> <li>• Who is Corvith?</li> <li>• What was the first thing that Sofia had ever made?</li> <li>• What does the author mean when she describes Mamma being</li> </ul>	<p>The author describes Mamma as being 'crushed beneath an invisible sack of weighty worry'. Can you write a simile of your own to describe how Mamma feels?</p>	<p><b>ART</b> • The setting of Sofia's charnel house is described in detail in this chapter. Draw an illustration of what you think her house looks like.</p> <p><b>ART</b> • As Mamma is a bone-builder, sketch your own creation made from bones.</p>



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	<p>'crushed beneath an invisible sack of weighty worry'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which other characters are we introduced to in this chapter? What do we learn about them?</li> </ul>		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is smallpox?</li> <li>Which object marks the monastery boundary?</li> <li>What does it mean to have a 'hankering' for something?</li> <li>How is the stranger described? What can you infer about her character?</li> <li>How does Sofia work out who the stranger might be? Who does she think the stranger is at first?</li> <li>What did Sofia hear in her mother's voice for the first time?</li> <li>What does the stranger offer Mamma to go along with her order?</li> </ul>	<p>Write a character profile for Mamma including all the information that you know about her already and anything you can infer so far.</p>	<p><b>DRAMA</b> • In small groups, re-enact the stranger scene. Freeze frame at different points and reflect on what each character is feeling (Mamma, Sofia and the stranger). Don't use any dialogue. Make sure to show the reactions of Mamma and Sofia towards the stranger.</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has life changed since the visit from the stranger?</li> <li>Which metaphor is used to describe the way the bones are arranged on the walls?</li> <li>What term of endearment does Mamma call Sofia? What does it mean?</li> <li>What gift did Sofia receive from Ermin?</li> <li>How many reliquaries has Mamma created for the cathedral as one of her life's ambitions?</li> <li>What do you think the Palio is?</li> <li>How do you think Sofia is feeling at the end of this chapter?</li> </ul>	<p>Write a setting description of the house.</p>	<p><b>PSHE</b> • Mamma's moods are described in this chapter in more detail. Talk more about how moods and emotions are a significant part of this story. Research mental health and depression and the effects this can have on people, and look into the work charities do to help people who suffer with it.</p>



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4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why could Sofia only imagine the events of the Palio before?</li> <li>• Which districts take part in the Palio?</li> <li>• How does Sofia hide herself and Ermin when walking through the dressmakers' district?</li> <li>• Why are magpies mentioned repeatedly in this chapter?</li> <li>• What do you think the significance of them are? Could they be a symbol for something?</li> <li>• What clues can you find that show the people in the crowd at the Palio are uncomfortable about seeing Sofia and Ermin there?</li> <li>• What do you think might happen to Ermin next?</li> </ul>	<p>Imagine you are a spectator at the Palio. Write a setting description about what it is like on race day. Make sure to include the sights, sounds and smells of the day.</p>	<p><b>HISTORY</b> • Research more about the history of the Palio, a horse race held twice yearly and known as the most important event in Siena. Find out what happens on the day of the Palio and create a presentation about the event.</p> <p><b>GEOGRAPHY</b> • Research more about the city of Siena in Italy to place this story into context.</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is the verb 'yank' used to describe the way Sofia pulls her brother? What does this suggest?</li> <li>• Who are they surprised to see emerge from the palazzo?</li> <li>• What does it mean to run like a person 'possessed'? Can you act this out?</li> <li>• Why do the people in the crowd think Mamma could be sick?</li> <li>• How does Mamma's expression change when she catches sight of Sofia?</li> <li>• Who rescues Sofia from the horses? What impression do you get of the boy?</li> <li>• What causes Sofia to react by biting him on the hand?</li> </ul>	<p>Write a prediction paragraph about why you think Mamma was running away from the palazzo across the piazza.</p>	<p><b>MUSIC</b> • Create a soundtrack for the scene where Sofia sees Mamma running. Research music from films with similar scenes to achieve the desired effect.</p>



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6

- What does it mean when it says Sofia felt like she'd fallen into one of the paintings in the cathedral? Why is this effective?
- How does the author show the passing of time in this chapter through description?
- Why and how does Sofia feel like she has to act like the big sister for Ermin and Corvith?
- What does Sofia do to Ermin that is reminiscent of Mamma?
- What new information do we learn about Mamma? What is her first name?
- What does Sofia discover has been stolen from her?
- What does Ermin want to carry on with building whilst awaiting Mamma's arrival back at the house? What does this show about his character?

Write a set of instructions for building the bed bigger. Make sure to include the names of the bones as parts and the names of the tools used.

**ART** • Look at paintings that are usually found in cathedrals. What do you notice about them? How are they similar? How are they different?

7

- Which are the longest bones that the bed is made out of?
- What prevented Sofia from asking Ermin to take over, even though she knows that he is the better builder?
- Can you identify a moment in this chapter when the atmosphere changes? Why and how does it change?
- Who is Sister Rosa and where has she come from?
- Why has she come to the bone-house for Sofia and Ermin?
- Why did the convent feel more like a prison to Sofia?
- How would you describe the mood at the end of this chapter in the convent room between Sofia and Ermin?

Write a diary entry from Ermin's perspective detailing the events of this chapter about having to leave his home with Sofia and arriving at the convent.

**SCIENCE** • In this chapter, Sofia and Ermin line up the bones in size order from femurs to ribs. Investigate the size of the bones in the human body and find out which are the longest and shortest.

**MATHS** • Take measurements of different bones within the human body and compare them to that of bones in other animals. Who has the longest and shortest bones?



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8

- Who has awoken the children? How?
- Why was it a good thing for Sofia when she saw not very many children playing in the courtyard outside the convent window?
- Why does Sofia stop Ermin from talking more about their mother to Sister Rosa?
- Why is Duchessa Serafina Machelli not seen outside the palazzo?
- Do you feel any sympathy for Sofia or Ermin in their new home?
- What can you infer about Sister Rosa's character so far?
- Do you think the girls will be friendly towards Sofia? Why?

Create an emotions graph to plot Sofia's changing thoughts and feelings throughout the last chapters. You may wish to refer to key events such as: the locket present from her mother; the events of the Palio; the locket being stolen; leaving home and arriving at the convent.

**PSHE** • Sister Rosa says that 'boys don't sew'. Do you agree? Begin a whole-class discussion about the things that have been seen through history as 'boy' and 'girl' things. Learn about stereotypes and discrimination through this discussion. Create posters about gender equality in the twenty-first century and understand more about how things have changed.

9

- Who does Sofia get paired up with to work on sewing?
- Why does Sister Rosa make the girls work so still and in silence?
- What is a seamstress?
- How does Sofia feel about sewing compared to doing woodwork?
- Why does Carmela stop Sofia from talking to her brother?
- What makes Carmela whisper the word 'smallpox'? What do you think actually happened to Artie? Was she adopted?
- Who do you think made the creak at the end of the chapter?

Write a continuation of this chapter, describing what you think will happen next when they hear the creak.

**DESIGN TECHNOLOGY** • As a class, try doing some sewing. Have a go at doing some simple sewing stitches like a running stitch and a backstitch.



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10

- Where do you think the boy has gone?
- What does it mean for Ermin to be called a 'born carpenter' by Father Retto?
- Why does Carmela correct Flavia by saying 'when you get chosen' instead of 'if'? What does this show about her character?
- What gives Sofia the creeps?
- Why do you think the nun's robes are softer than the coarse linen that the children have to wear?
- Why is the hardest job left for Sofia to do?
- How does the author create tension between the characters of Sofia and Sister Rosa at the end of this chapter?

Write the events of this chapter from the perspective of Sister Rosa.

**DESIGN TECHNOLOGY** • As a class, try out woodwork. Be creative and make a model using simple cutting and joining techniques.

11

- Do you think Sister Rosa knows about the boy's presence?
- What does Sofia realize about the way the boys treat their clothes compared to the girls?
- Sofia wants to leave the convent without permission. Can you think of a time when you have done something without permission?
- What would you do in Sofia's situation? Would you be brave enough to leave the convent?
- Why does Ermin want to stay?
- How do the children react to the arrival of Corvith?
- What effect does ending the chapter with the words of Sister Rosa – 'Dinner time, children' – have on the reader? Does she remind you of any characters from other books you have read?

Write about a time when you have done something without permission. What was it? What did it feel like? Were you right to do it?

**SCIENCE** • With the arrival of Corvith in this chapter, learn more about crows. Find out what they eat, how they are adapted to their environment and their significance in literature, myth, legend and fable throughout history.



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12

- Why does Sofia give her cup of milk and honey to Carmela?
- What stops Sofia from sneaking out? Who does she see in the shadow of the doorway?
- What happens to Carmela in this chapter?
- How does Sofia manage to cover up her movement when the guard looms over her?
- What causes Sofia's relief to turn to ice?
- Whose voice emerges from the shadows? Predict who you think it belongs to.
- Read to the end of chapter 12. How does the chapter end with a twist? Summarize how the author creates a sense of suspense and anticipation for the reader.

Write a diary entry from Carmela's perspective detailing the events of this chapter when she gets kidnapped.

**DRAMA** • In pairs, one child takes on the role of Sofia and one child takes on the role of questioner. Hotseat the character of Sofia to find out how she felt at the moment she saw Carmela being kidnapped by Sister Rosa and the guard. Once complete, swap roles.

13

- What does 'chided' mean?
- Why did the thief boy move Corvith from his original hiding place?
- What is the boy's name?
- What is the name for something that can be added to a drink to make someone sleep?
- Why does the boy keep his face covered? What caused the scars on his face? Is there anything Sofia could or should have done differently in this situation?
- How do Sofia and Ermin behave towards Ghino? Do you think Sofia and Ermin could become friends with him?
- How did Ghino's parents try to heal him of the pox?

Rewrite this chapter from the point of view of Ghino, recounting how he felt when Sofia revealed the scars on his face.

**DRAMA** • Work with a partner to act out the exchanges between Sofia, Ermin and Ghino during this chapter. Think about body language, expression and tone to convey emotion.





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14

- What is the tunnel compared with to show its unending length?
- Why does Gino mark the walls with a chip of chalk?
- What causes Sofia to stop and stare at the rocks?
- What is the 'first rule of living underground' according to Ghino?
- What does it mean if something is 'engulfed by a torrent of water'?
- Why does the author choose to end this chapter with the sentence 'A gasp escaped her lips'? What is this an example of?
- Predict what you think Sofia has seen.

Write down five questions that would be in Sofia's mind at the moment she is going through the tunnel.

**GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY** • Learn more about the Bottini in Siena – the town's underground river and the 25km system of tunnels that has brought running water into the houses of the city. Discover more about how medieval engineers from the 12th to the 15th century cunningly solved the problem of the city being built on a hill by carving a network of aqueducts under the city.

15

- What is a 'cavern'? How would you describe it?
- What does the space remind Sofia of? Have you ever visited a cathedral? Can you compare this experience to one of your own?
- Why does the author describe the sounds of the cavern? How does this add to the description?
- What does Sofia do to show that she can breathe the air more easily here? Act out her behaviour.
- What are the only signs that people have been here before?
- Why does Sofia stop herself thinking that she is better than Ghino?
- It appears that Ermin is more of a natural at most things than Sofia such as carpentry and swimming. Why does this dynamic between them switch when she enters the water?

Write an internal monologue as Sofia when she enters the water to get inside her thoughts.

**MUSIC** • Use different instruments to soundtrack the sounds of the cavern scene. Think about the volume, tone and tempo of the music to make it as dramatic as you can.



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16

- What do the verbs 'clenched', 'knocked' and 'kicked' tell you about how Sofia is thinking and feeling in the opening scene of this chapter?
- What literary technique does the author use in these sentences 'The current caressed her legs...' and '...a circle of light ruptured by rocks...'?
- What does Sofia spot down underneath the water?
- The sentence 'We're coming, Mamma. If you're at the end of this, we'll find you.' on page 134 is written in italics. What is the effect of this?
- How does Sofia open the grate?
- Where does all the water go?
- Why is an ellipsis used in one of the last sentences of this chapter?

After learning about female architects in the cross-curricular activities (next column), write a non-chronological report about a female architect.

**DESIGN TECHNOLOGY** • In this chapter Sofia discovers the grate, and she corrects herself to say that it is 'woman-made' rather than man-made as she recognizes that her Mamma made it. Learn more about architects who are female and the buildings or objects that they have constructed.

17

- What does it mean when it says 'Sofia braced herself'?
- Why does the guard call Sister Rosa Capitana?
- What is Sister Rosa revealed to be?
- Why is Sister Rosa horrible towards the guard?
- Why does the author show Corvith's fear of the magpie?
- What small spark of hope does Sofia get from what Capitana Rosa has said?
- It is clear that Capitana Rosa has lied to Sofia about her mother. What do you think Capitana Rosa wants, and why?

Write a one-paragraph summary of the events in this chapter.

**DRAMA** • In pairs, dramatize and come up with voices for the scene between Capitana Rosa and her guard. Record bits of speech and improvise using your character voices, making Capitana Rosa's sound as sinister as she is.



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18

- What does the word 'beastly' mean to describe Capitana Rosa? Can you think of any other words to describe her character?
- What does it mean when Corvith is described as turning his 'haughty head' away?
- What other option does Ghino suggest that Sofia try eating if she doesn't like the root biscuits?
- What does the river remind Sofia of?
- What silvery object do they spot across the river?
- Where did Ermin get the sprig of lavender from?
- What effect does the last sentence of this chapter have on the reader?

Write a character description of Capitana Rosa, now we know more about her.

**ENGLISH** • Choose two characters from the ones we have been introduced to so far. Create character templates by drawing an outline of two people. What words and phrases from the text can you add inside the template to describe what the character is like internally, and outside the template to describe what the character is like externally? How do they differ from each other?

19

- Find a phrase in the beginning of this chapter that shows that Sofia is nervous when going across the river on the chain.
- How does Sofia comfort Ermin like Mamma would have done?
- What does it mean when the pain 'receded' from her ankle?
- Why do you think the phrase 'It's all right' has been repeated during the last few chapters either as a question or a statement?
- How does the author describe the dangers of the water?
- What does Sofia do to help Ghino? How has their relationship changed over the course of the story?
- Why does the author choose to end this chapter with Ghino throwing up all over Sofia's feet?

Write a diary entry from the perspective of Sofia showing how nervous she was when crossing the river and helping Ghino to safety.

**GEOGRAPHY** • As the river plays a big part in this chapter, learn more about rivers, how they are formed and the power of rivers linked to erosion.



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20

- Why is Mamma a genius?
- Do you think the children should listen to Corvith and follow him? Why?
- Who does Sofia want to put the blame upon if their plan ends up going wrong?
- How are Corvith's breaths described?
- What is Corvith scared of?
- Can animals feel scared?
- What happens to Sofia at the end of the chapter?

There is a description of the steps being 'chalk white' in this chapter. Generate your own descriptions of objects based on their colour such as 'flame red' and 'ocean blue'. Write them in sentences to show your understanding.

**MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES** • There have been numerous Italian place names mentioned in the story so far. Learn some simple Italian phrases and what some of the place names mean, such as the Piazza del Campo.

21

- What can Sofia see in the tower?
- Where do they think the guard will be?
- What does Corvith do to disguise himself as a magpie?
- Read to the end of page 171. What do you think Corvith has in his beak?
- What does the word 'discernible' mean?
- What causes all the magpies to fall unconscious?
- How does Sofia feel when she sees Ghino is caught by the guard at the end of this chapter?

Create a timeline of events in the story so far which you can build on as you continue to read.

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING** • The appearance of magpies within the book has become more significant. Learn the well-known magpie rhyme that starts 'One for sorrow, two for joy', discover its origins and perform it to the class.



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22

- How does Sofia remember that this is the magpie that visited her house with the stranger?
- What literary technique does the author use in this sentence '... her heartbeat hammering the realization home'?
- Why does Sofia say that Ghino is a liar?
- What clue does Sofia have that her mother is no longer in the palazzo prison?
- Where do they think Mamma is now?
- What does Sofia mean when she says this is 'Ghino's domain'?
- Where do Sofia and Ermin choose to go?

Imagine you are Sofia. Write a heated letter to Ghino describing and directing your anger at him after finding out that he has been working together with Capitana Rosa.

**DRAMA** • Roleplay the scene with Sofia, Ermin, Ghino and the guard. What is the impact of each character's actions? What do you think each character is feeling and why?

23

- How does Sofia reassure herself at the beginning of this chapter?
- What does it mean when Mamma's hand is described as 'calloused'?
- How do they know that they have arrived home?
- Why does Ermin say that Sofia looks like Mamma?
- How is Sofia wrong about the view 'being the same as ever'?
- Why are the magpies described as a 'swarm' or a 'storm cloud'? Is this effective?
- What is a 'skeleton key'? Why can it only be made of bone?

Make some predictions about the rest of the story, which you can come back to at the end.

**SCIENCE** • Bone is revealed in this chapter to be a very versatile material that is capable of special things. Understand more about the properties of materials by investigating the properties of bone and what makes it a special material in the human body. Find out about the qualities of other materials in the body, such as skin.



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## Comprehension Questions

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24

- Why was it the right decision to go above ground to the cathedral?
- Why do they wrap cloths round their mouths?
- Which entrance to the cathedral does Sofia lead Ermin to?
- What does it mean if something has been 'ransacked'?
- How do you think Ghino feels when he accompanies Capitana Rosa into the cathedral? Does he like her?
- What does Ghino have from Sofia that he and Capitana Rosa hope will convince Mamma?
- Which room do you think they enter at the end of this chapter?

Look up any unfamiliar vocabulary used in this chapter, such as words for the parts of the cathedral, and use it in sentences to show your new understanding.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** • Learn more about places of worship by investigating the parts of a cathedral, many of which are named in this chapter.

25

- What is outlined in blue on the map?
- Who finds the small wooden door with the bone keyhole behind the map?
- Read to the end of page 198. Predict who you think is behind the door.
- Why does Carmela echo everything that Sofia says back to her? How does this show her shock at seeing her?
- Where does Sofia suggest Carmela should hide?
- Who does Ermin say should take her there?
- What do you think Sofia finds behind the door at the end of the chapter that makes her mouth fall open?

Imagine you are Carmela. Write a diary entry about what has happened to you from when you were kidnapped in the middle of the night to now. Describe how you are feeling and all of the different thoughts and things you have seen up to this point.

**GEOGRAPHY** • Based on the descriptions of this chapter, draw the map of the city. Look at maps of Siena to help you using online software like Google Maps.



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26

- Why is the colour white repeated during the opening of this chapter?
- Describe what Sofia sees in this room.
- Read to the end of page 205. Predict who you think is about to enter the room through the door.
- How does Sofia know that Capitana Rosa is one of the people?
- How does she sense the stranger is there too?
- Who is the real identity of the stranger?
- What does it mean when Duchessa Machelli says 'appearances are everything'? What does this show about her character?

Create a character description of Duchessa Machelli and include any new information we have learnt about her.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** • Research more about who saints are, the origin of the word 'saint' and about the different saints. Create a presentation of a saint of your choice.

27

- Why does Mamma refuse to do as Duchessa Machelli asks?
- What is the name of the huge magpie?
- How do they lie about catching the children in the palazzo's magpie tower? What effect does this have on Mamma?
- What does it mean for someone to 'come to their senses'?
- Why did Duchessa Machelli decide to hide her true identity?
- Why does Duchessa Machelli volunteer for Ghino to be healed first?
- How does Duchessa Machelli show her lack of compassion towards the children in this chapter?

Write Ghino's version of the story so far – what do you think happened to him?

**PSHE** • Duchess Machelli is very concerned about her appearance and that of others. She regards Ghino as being an outsider for the way he looks. Discover more about the concept of body image in the twenty-first century and learn more about how we can appreciate ourselves and be body positive.



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28

- How does Sofia use the element of surprise to strike?
- What is the only option of escape for Mamma, Sofia and Ermin?
- How does the author capture the action in this chapter? What words does she choose to use to show aggression from certain characters?
- What is an 'awful admonition'?
- How does Corvith use the magpies to block Orsa's advance?
- Why is the word 'pandemonium' effective to describe the scene at the Palio?
- How is Capitana Rosa stopped at the end of this chapter?

Turn the scenes of this chapter into a script.

**DRAMA** • Act out the play script you have written, thinking about how you can turn stage directions into action. Take on each role to understand what each character is feeling.

29

- How does the tone of Duchessa Machelli's voice signify her threatening nature? How does she try to intimidate Sofia?
- Why is Sofia frightened more of Duchessa Machelli's actions rather than her scars? What does this show about her?
- What does it mean if someone is a 'fraud'?
- Duchessa Machelli says that Mamma considers herself an artist and Sofia says she is one. In your opinion, what or who is an artist?
- Why does she call Ghino a 'gutter rat'?
- How does Duchessa Machelli compare the experiences of the treatment of Ghino to the treatment that she will face?
- It says that Sofia 'bristled' on page 230. Mimic this action with a partner and describe how this shows how she feels.

Retell this chapter from Duchessa Machelli's perspective – consider carefully the different emotions you'd be feeling and how these would differ from the ones Sofia feels.

**ART** • The meaning of an artist is considered in this chapter between Sofia and Duchessa Machelli. What do you think constitutes being an artist? What is art?

**PSHE** • The question 'What is a woman if she is not beautiful?' is posed by Duchessa Machelli. Debate this and highlight how the world's perceptions have progressed to value women for more than their appearance.





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30

- What is a 'friperry'?
- How does Duchessa Machelli use Orsa to get information out of Sofia?
- Read to the end of page 232. Predict what revelation Mamma will reveal about herself and have to explain to Sofia.
- Why does Duchessa Machelli have such strong feelings towards the children and want to lock them up?
- How did she lock them up?
- What does the saying 'out of sight, out of mind' mean?
- What had Sofia inadvertently done to cause the citizens of Siena to get angry with Duchessa Machelli?

Imagine you are one of the citizens hearing the conversation between Sofia and Duchessa Machelli. Write an impassioned riot speech about how she has let down the city and how you want to order her to leave Siena now.

**SCIENCE** • The phrase 'science requires sacrifice' is used within this chapter. Do you agree that to make advancements in science, that we need to sacrifice things, animals and people? Write a balanced argument about if you think that science requires sacrifice or not.

31

- How does Sofia feel when she sees Mamma?
- What does Mamma say to Sofia and Ermin when she sees them?
- Why couldn't Sofia drink the milk and honey?
- What does it mean to be 'gravely ill'?
- How does Sofia's memory of the night that Ermin was healed differ from the one she first thought?
- What have we learnt about Sofia? Who had actually healed Ermin that night?
- Are you surprised by this?

Think back to a memory you have had. Write a short account of it and try to describe it in as much detail as you can. Can you recall it accurately?

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING** • See if you can orally describe a memory you have had recently to a friend. Can you talk about it for a minute without hesitation? Do you remember it all or do you embellish things that you can't quite remember exactly?



## Chapter

## Comprehension Questions

## Writing Opportunities

## Cross Curricular Opportunities

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- Why didn't Mamma tell Sofia she was a healer?
- Why had Mamma built the bone room for Duchessa Machelli?
- Was Mamma right to channel the secret river for their benefit?
- How did Duchessa Machelli blackmail Mamma?
- What is 'deception'?
- What final revelation amazes Sofia?
- If you were Sofia, would you forgive Mamma?

Write a paragraph describing how you would use the gift of healing to make the world a better place.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** • Learn more about the act of healing. Understand that we all need some healing in our lives, whether that is physical healing because our bodies feel weak or hurt or maybe we need emotional healing, for when we are feeling down or upset. Discuss how healing is a key part of religious stories and the ways in which we can help to heal ourselves.

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- Why does Sofia say to Ermin that she'll tell him the story when he's old enough?
- How does the author use humour when Sofia reveals that she saved Ermin?
- What does it mean when Sofia says she 'would never under-estimate herself again'?
- Why does Sofia want to share her gift?
- How is this different to what Mamma did with her gift?
- How does Sofia feel when she offers Ghino a chance to stay with them and move into the bone house?
- Why is the final line of this book 'Welcome home, thief'?

Write a book review based on your thoughts about the story.

Write a letter to Kiran Millwood Hargrave telling her all about your thoughts and feelings about the book.

Compare your predictions from the start of the story to now – were you right about anything?

**PSHE** • The phrase 'Small things could change the world' is used by Sofia in this chapter. Is she right? Can small things change the world? Make a list of small actions that can make a big difference to changing the world and try to complete an action every day or every week.

**GEOGRAPHY** • Write a fact file including everything you have learnt about Siena from this story.

