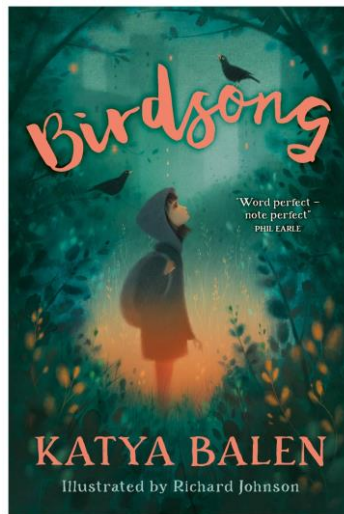


Y4 Book Drop - Birdsong Discussion Guide



Task 1

Read Chapters 1 & 2

“There is music everywhere - if you know how to listen.” (page 1)
What does Annie mean by this? What ‘music’ does Annie hear in Chapter 1?
What ‘music’ can you hear around you? Make a list in your Homework book.

Read Chapters 3 & 4

How has Annie’s life changed after the crash? How does Annie feel? What is she thinking?
Look at the way Chapter 2 ends. How is this similar to the way Chapter 1 ends? Why do you think the author, Katya Balen, chose to do this? What effect does it have?

Read Chapters 5 & 6

Why does Mum use the word ‘adventure’ when talking about moving house? (page 13)
Why does the memory of the crash come flooding back to Annie when she opens the window?
Compare the description of her old house (page 13) to their new flat. How are they complete contrasts? Do you think Annie and Mum will be happy there?

Task 2

Read Chapters 7 & 8

“The silvery scar stretches like a ghostly road along my skin.” Discuss the comparison/simile.
Do you think Annie has been doing her exercises? Justify your point with evidence from the text.
If you could give Annie any advice at the end of Chapter 7, what would you say to her?
Does the description of the playground make it an inviting place to be? Justify your point with evidence from the text.

Task 3

Read Chapters 9, 10 & 11

Compare the mood of Chapter 8 with the opening of Chapter 11. What are the contrasts? What effect does going outside have on Annie?
How is the character of the boy revealed through Chapters 9 and 11? Do we find out everything about him straight away? Why is he revealed slowly to the reader?

Task 4

Read Chapters 12, 13 & 14

How does Annie feel about Noah at first? How does this change over these chapters?

How is the patch of wild garden like 'a secret world'? What effect does it have on Annie?

Find out 5 facts about blackbirds and write these in your homework book. Can you spot a blackbird in your garden or when you are out and about?

Task 5

Read Chapters 15, 16 & 17

Collect 5 words and phrases from Chapter 16 that interest you and capture your imagination. Write these in your diary, ready to share at school.

Discuss how the blackbird's song makes Annie feel.

Task 6

Read Chapters 18, 19, 20 & 21

Why does Annie take her music school application form to use for the bird's nest? Does it make her feel better?

Why doesn't she go and see the birds or Noah the next day? If you could talk to Annie at this point in the story, what would you say?

Task 7

Read Chapters 22, 23 & 24

Read to the end of Chapter 22. What do you think has happened? Justify your answer using evidence from the text.

'It's then that I notice what's different. It's silent. the blackbirds aren't gathering their song.' (page 68)

How do you feel at the end of Chapter 23 and why?

Why does Noah have more hope than Annie on page 69?

How is the joy in Chapter 24 quickly turned to sadness? Which sentence suggests that the female blackbird is sad? How does this make you feel?

Task 8

Read Chapters 25, 26 & 27

What does Annie realise is the reason that she cannot play the flute anymore in Chapter 25?

What does she realise in Chapter 26? How does Mum react and why?

Annie shows perseverance in Chapter 27. What makes her persevere? How is she rewarded at the end of the chapter?

Task 9

Read Chapters 28, 29 & 30

On page 85, the mother blackbird is described as 'fierce'. In what ways is she fierce and why? What has made her 'fierce'? What effect does this have on Annie?

How do Annie and the female blackbird 'make a symphony'? (page 88).

Read Chapters 31, 32 & 33

Reflect on the whole story.

How was meeting Noah and the blackbirds a turning point for Annie?

How did Annie change from the beginning of the story to the end?

How did you feel at the end of the story? Why?

Be ready to write a book review during our guided reading workshops in school.