

# TEACHERS' NOTES

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## Kiwi Bites: Bones Maureen Crisp

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### Introduction

Nicki and her twin brother Danny are surprised when their dog Patch starts bringing home lots of bones to bury – the bones look like the human bones Nicki has just studied at school. The twins show the bones to their parents who call the police. Within hours a team of police officers are digging up the Coopers' back yard to see what else they can find, and following Patch to see where the bones are coming from. Is Patch a grave robber, or is there some other mystery behind the appearance of the bones?

### Plot tracking

#### Chapters 1–2

1. What makes Nicki curious about where Patch is getting his bones from?
2. What does Nicki mean when she says that the garden is 'her father's obsession' (p. 11)?
3. Why doesn't Nicki want Patch to dig too close to the roots of the lemon tree?
4. What is an archaeologist?
5. Why does Nicki suspect that Patch has a human bone?
6. What is a 'grave robber' and why does Danny think Patch might be one?

#### Chapters 3–4

1. What does Mrs Cooper mean when she says the bone the children show her is 'dense enough' to be a human bone (p.19)?
2. What is a warrant? And why do the police need to dig up the entire back garden?
3. Why didn't the different members of the Cooper family want to leave their home while the police were digging up their garden?
4. What would the police use the sieves and paintbrushes for?
5. What work does a pathologist do?
6. Why does Dr Smith think the femur probably belongs to a man aged over forty?

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## Chapters 5–8

1. Why does Patch have an awful day while the police are digging up the garden?
2. Why is Nicki confident that Patch will come home after he runs away from them in the park?
3. Why does Constable Reed collect up a bunch of lilies?
4. Why does Danny wave at all the neighbours when he is in the police car and why does Nicki slump down in the back seat? What does this tell us about the twins' different personalities?
5. Why does Mr Cooper threaten to give Patch away?
6. Explain what the phrase 'gossip buzzed around like blowflies' means.
7. Why is Danny more excited than Nicki about helping the police to track Patch?
8. Do you think the police enjoy following Patch? Why or why not? Look at what Constable Terris says at the end of Chapter 7.

## Chapters 9–12

1. Why is Nicki relieved to discover that Patch is not a grave robber?
2. Why was the shed so difficult to see?
3. How has Patch been getting into the shed?
4. How did the police get into the shed?
5. Why do you think the police allow Nicki and Danny to go into the shed before Dr Thom?

## Activities to do on your own or in a group

1. Write a newspaper article about Patch's discovery.
2. Design a Wanted poster for Patch.
3. Write a story explaining how the bones ended up in the shed.
4. Create an award certificate for Patch.
5. Write the police report Constable Terris would have written about her day following Patch.
6. Create a poster advertising the flower show competition.

## Research

1. Find out more about the work of archaeologists and pathologists by using the library or the internet.
2. Find a diagram of a human skeleton and label as many bones as you can.
3. Find out about the evolutionary theory of human development and the concept of 'the missing link'.