

BRIN AND MELLY

BOOK TWO THE SECRET CAVE

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

Curiosity, teamwork, wisdom, courage, and family stories

GRADES K TO 3	CLASSROOMS	COUNSELING GROUPS	FAMILIES
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**Every friend brings a different strength. Courage, curiosity,
and wisdom help us solve problems and step into the
unknown together.**

Created for teachers, counselors, librarians, caregivers, and families

Story by Aaron Chavez

About the Story

Brin and Melly, Book Two, The Secret Cave

Brin and Melly discover a hidden cave behind a waterfall, but a locked wooden door blocks the way. Their search introduces them to Ari, a thoughtful raven who notices details and treasures stories. Together, the three friends follow clues, find an ancient key, and enter a glowing cavern where family stories may be more truthful than Ari once believed.

SEL Learning Goals

- Identify courage, curiosity, and wisdom as different but equally valuable strengths.
- Explain how friends can combine their abilities to solve a problem.
- Practice slowing down, noticing details, and thinking before acting.
- Explore how family stories connect people across generations.
- Describe healthy ways to respond when an answer is uncertain or a situation feels unfamiliar.

Educator Note	The story ends with uncertainty and a new challenge. Let children wonder. Emphasize that good readers can make predictions using evidence without needing to know the final answer yet.
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Before and During Reading

Use the questions that best fit your students and setting.

Before Reading

- What makes a mystery exciting?
- What can you do when a problem has no obvious answer?
- Why do people save objects that remind them of important stories?
- What is the difference between being curious and being careless?
- What stories have older family members shared with you?

During Reading, Stop and Talk

AT THE HIDDEN DOOR

What do Brin and Melly notice? What information do they still need before they can enter?

WHEN ARI ARRIVES

How is Ari different from Melly? Why might taking time to notice details be useful?

FOLLOWING THE CLUES

How does each friend help? Which challenge would be hardest if one friend were missing?

ARI REMEMBERS HIS GRANDMOTHER

Why did Ari stop believing the stories? What makes him begin to reconsider?

INSIDE THE CAVE

How do the characters respond to uncertainty? What clues suggest what may happen next?

After Reading Discussion

Invite students to explain their thinking and connect the story to their own lives.

Different Strengths

- Brin brings courage, Melly brings curiosity, and Ari brings wisdom. What does each strength look like in the story?
- Can one person show all three strengths?
- Which strength would you use first when solving a mystery? Why?

Teamwork and Problem Solving

- How did the friends divide the work without making a formal plan?
- When did slowing down help the group?
- What should friends do when they disagree about the next step?

Stories, Memory, and Belief

- Why were Ari's grandmother's stories important?
- Can a story teach something even when it contains mystery?
- What family story would you want to remember and pass along?

Courage and Uncertainty

- Why did the friends enter the cave even though they did not know what was inside?
- What is the difference between a thoughtful risk and an unsafe choice?
- How can friends help one another when the next step feels uncertain?

Key Message

Every friend brings a different strength. Courage, curiosity, and wisdom help us solve problems and step into the unknown together.

Classroom Activities

Choose one activity or build a short learning sequence.

1. Strengths of the Three	Create three columns labeled Courage, Curiosity, and Wisdom. Add one action from the story under each heading, then invite students to add examples from their own lives.
2. Clue Detectives	Place several safe classroom objects in view. Let students observe silently, then hide one object or change its location. Discuss which details helped them notice the change.
3. Build a Mystery Map	Pairs draw a map with a starting point, three clues, one obstacle, and a destination. Partners explain how different strengths help travelers complete the journey.
4. Every Treasure Has a Story	Students draw or describe an object that matters to them. They explain the memory, person, place, or lesson connected to it.
5. The Next Brave Step	Read the final scene again. Students predict what happens next and identify evidence from the words or illustrations that supports the prediction.

Extend the Learning

Ideas for counseling groups, writing, and home conversations.

School Counselor or Small Group

- Which character's way of solving problems feels most like you?
- What helps you slow down when you feel excited or worried?
- Tell about a time a friend noticed something you missed.
- How can you stay curious while also making safe choices?
- Who is a wise person you trust when you need help?

Optional Writing and Drawing Prompts

Kindergarten and Grade 1	Draw Brin, Melly, and Ari solving a problem together. Finish the sentence, "I help my friends by..."
Grades 2 and 3	Write about a problem that became easier when people used different strengths.
Creative Extension	Write or draw the next scene after the giant shadow steps into the crystal light. Include one clue from the story.

Family Connection

Invite a family member to share a story told by a parent, grandparent, or elder. Ask what lesson, memory, or value the family hopes will be remembered.

Teacher Reflection and Student Exit Ticket

Use this page to notice learning and plan the next conversation.

How did students describe courage, curiosity, and wisdom?

What did students notice about teamwork and careful thinking?

Who may benefit from another conversation about uncertainty or asking for help?

Student Exit Ticket

One strength I bring to a group is...

One way I can slow down and notice details is...

One family story I would like to remember is...

Continue the Journey

Keep the conversation growing across the Brin and Melly series.

About Brin and Melly

Brin and Melly is a children’s adventure series by Aaron Chavez about unlikely friends learning to face challenges together. In The Secret Cave, Ari the raven joins Brin and Melly, bringing careful observation, family stories, and a new kind of wisdom to the journey.

Use the Guides Together	After completing this guide, invite students to compare the characters, challenges, and strengths across the series. Keep student drawings, reflections, and exit tickets in a Brin and Melly learning portfolio.
More Free Resources	Visit BrinandMelly.com for classroom read aloud resources, printable activities, author information, and future social emotional learning guides.

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