

## **Teacher Guide**

The Garden of Eve

By K. L. Going

Note to Teachers:

The idea for *The Garden of Eve* came about in two parts. The first was when my young cousin, Kyle, said “You should write a book about an apple tree.” His suggestion came out of the blue and it intrigued me. I began to think about all that apple trees have represented in literature, and I started to come up with story ideas that might feature a magical tree.

Unfortunately, several months after that my husband’s brother was killed in a car accident. As the family struggled to come to terms with this loss, I thought about the way children view death, and all the questions they have about it. I thought about death as a barren landscape. A dark, twisted tree without blossoms.

Gradually, the story of a girl and a boy, both dealing with losses, who must find a way to bring life into their own barren landscapes, began to form. I hope the questions I’ve come up with will help you discuss this book with the kids you teach.

KL

### **Questions for Discussion**

1) *The Garden of Eve* uses many of the same story ideas found in fairy tales. Have you ever read a fairy tale that featured an apple or a plant that grows from a magical seed? How is this book similar to a fairy tale? How is it different?

2) What is the difference between a fairy tale and a myth?

3) Define *foreshadowing*. What are some examples of foreshadowing in *The Garden of Eve*? Are there any clues that Alex is not who he says he is?

4) Why does Evie’s father spend so much time in the apple orchard?

5) Why doesn’t Evie want to move into a house next to a cemetery? Why didn’t her father tell her about the cemetery ahead of time?

6) Do you believe that Alex is really dead? (chapter 5)

7) Evie’s father says, “There’s almost always some truth in every story.” But Evie’s mother said, “Sometimes the story is true.” What do their statements tell us about these characters?

8) In chapter six, Evie says, “Home was a ghost.” What does she mean?

9) Why does Evie’s mom say that she would like the whole entire world to be her garden? (page 108)

- 10) On page 119, Alex tells Evie not to look with her eyes. What does he mean?
- 11) Why doesn't Evie find her mother waiting for her after she and Alex plant the seed?
- 12) Father says, "There's a time for birth and a time for death. Life moves in cycles, Evie. That's the way things are meant to be." Do you think this is true? What are some cycles that we see in the world around us?
- 13) Father struggles to believe Evie's story. Do you think what happens to Evie and Alex is real, or is it all in their imaginations?
- 14) In chapter twenty-eight, Evie realizes that her mom isn't just outside of her, she is also part of Evie. Do you look like any of your family members? Do you have any of their habits or mannerisms? How might others become part of who we are?
- 15) Do you think the apple orchard will come back to life? Why or why not?

### **Activities**

1) Find pictures of the many plants Evie mentions in the story, and see if kids can identify them. You can make this into a game in which students match pictures of the plants to the names or match the names to the leaves. See if you can grow one of the plants in the classroom.

*Plant list: apple tree, cherry tree, fig tree, olive tree, orange tree, oak tree, maple tree, willow tree, lilies, sunflowers, tulips, daffodils, morning glories, spider plants, ivy, raspberry bushes.*

2) Let's learn more about apples! Not all apples are alike; some are sweet and others are sour.

a) Bring in many different kinds of apples and do a taste test. How can apples be used aside from eating? You can have a party and serve food and drinks made from apples, such as cider or muffins.

b) How do apples grow? Is there an orchard nearby where you can book a field trip? If not, here's a Web site you can use to learn more about apples and interview a grower: [www.nyapplecountry.com](http://www.nyapplecountry.com).

c) Where do apples typically grow? Find those areas on a map of the United States. What are the stages from seed to apple? Have students detail the various stages.

3) Ask the students if they believe in ghosts. Find some great ghost stories to read aloud, especially if you're reading *The Garden of Eve* in the fall, at the time of Halloween.

4) In this story seventy-five-year-old Maggie and eleven-year-old Evie become friends. Evie learns that Maggie has had a long and interesting life. Ask the students if they know any elderly people. Have them interview their elderly acquaintances, then share the stories with the class.

5) Evie's mom makes homemade paper. Find an article online about papermaking and make some with your class. Talk about how the paper the students typically use is made and how that technique is different from making homemade paper. You can also use the papermaking talk to launch a discussion about recycling.

6) The Garden of Eden is part of a creation story found in the Christian tradition. Find other creation stories to share with your class. Do any of the stories share common elements? Have the students make a diorama that illustrates a scene from a creation story of their choice. (*Note to teachers: In researching this book, I found many wonderful resources about creation stories, both on the Web and in books.*)

### **About the Author**

K. L. GOING is the author of *Fat Kid Rules the World*, a Michael L. Printz Honor Book; *Saint Iggy*; and *The Liberation of Gabriel King*. She lives and writes full-time in Glen Spey, New York.

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Discussion questions written by K. L. Going