

Teacher's Guide for *The Garden of Eve*, by K.L. Going

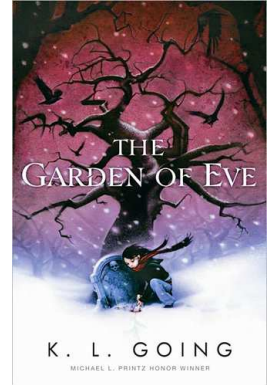
Note to Teachers

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 now find a way to bring life into their own barren landscapes, began to form. I hope the questions I've come up with below 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 do you think this book is 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 do you think Evie's father spends so much time in the apple orchard?
- 5) Why doesn't Evie want to move 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? (For 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) When Evie says, "Home was a ghost" in chapter six, what does she mean?
 - 9) Why does Evie's mom say that she would like the whole entire world to be her garden? (pg 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 that what happens to Evie and Alex is real or is it all in their imaginations?
 - 14) In chapter 28, 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?
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Activities

1) Evie mentions many different plants. Find pictures of the following plants found in the story, and see if kids can identify them. Play a game to match the pictures to the plant names, to match the names to the plants' leaves, or 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!

Are all apples alike? Bring in many different kinds of apples and do a taste test. Some are sweet and some are sour. How can apples be used aside from eating? Bring in apple cider and apple muffins.

How do apples grow? Is there an orchard nearby where you can book a field trip? If not, here's a web site where you can learn more about apples and interview a grower: www.nyapplecountry.com

Where do apples normally grow? Find those areas on a map of the USA.

What is the journey a seed takes to becoming an apple? Make a flow chart.

3) Ask kids 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, near 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 kids if they know any elderly people. Have them interview someone and share their story with the class.

5) Evie's mom makes homemade paper. Find a recipe on-line and make paper with the kids. Talk about how the paper they normally use is made and how that's different from making homemade paper. Discuss recycling.

6) The garden of Eden is part of a creation story found in the Christian tradition. Find other creation stories to share with the kids. Do any of the stories have things in common? Have the kids 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 book form.)*

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