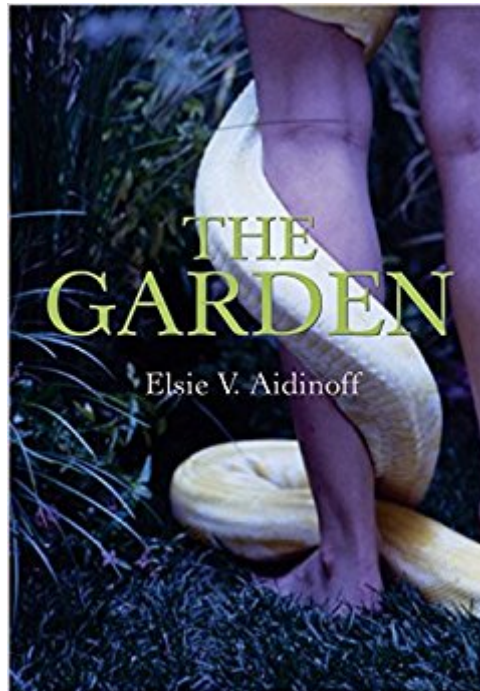




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The Garden



Synopsis

In the beginning ...There was the Serpent, there for Eve's awakening, and for all the days since. Teacher, mentor, companion, friend, and more. There was God. The Creator. Quick to anger. Dangerous. Majestic. There was Adam: as God said, a joy to behold. And there was Eve. These four hold the future in their hands. And only Eve -- or perhaps the Serpent, too -- wonders what lies outside the Garden of Eden. Passionate, witty, beautifully drawn, and utterly unforgettable, *The Garden*, a debut novel, remakes and offers insights into a story that forms a cornerstone of our understanding.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 11 Up
A revision of the Fall as written in Genesis, *The Garden* is told from the perspective of Eve, a quizzical woman who questions everything from her own "birth" to God's authority. Aloof and careless, Adam is the more physical of the two; he enjoys the paradise of Eden, running with the antelope each day, never paying attention to the lessons that his didactic God has to offer. The two other characters in the novel are God, an authoritarian who views his children as toys, and the Serpent, his close friend and Eve's kind and understanding mentor. By writing from Eve's point of view, Aidinoff proffers an alternate perspective on an old story, but, unfortunately, the book ends up reinforcing old ideas, that women are more "emotional" and men more "physical." In the climax of the story, God impulsively, in an effort to see the fruits of his creativity and labor, forces Adam upon Eve. This rape leads Eve to distrust God and eventually, with the Serpent's help, leave the Garden. The Genesis story has incredible revisionist possibilities,

but the characters here are flat and uninteresting, and the simplistic dialogue is not compelling. Ultimately, the author's effort to retell the "Fall" in a fresh way frankly falls, and fails to do just that. Kelly Berner Richards, St. George's School, Newport, RI Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

One of the world's oldest stories becomes new again in the hands of a 70-year-old first-time novelist. The setting is a lush, freshly formed Garden of Eden, where Eve is just awakening to the all-wise, feathered Serpent who is her guardian. Nearby, Adam is being raised by a cranky, white-bearded God intent on seeing that His creations adhere to His vision. But the Serpent has something far different in mind for its charge, and under the Serpent's painstaking tutelage, Eve begins to think and to question. Journeys with the Serpent outside the garden give Eve a breadth and depth of knowledge forbidden to Adam, who learns to fear a god who is both capricious and demanding. Despite the Serpent's strenuous objections, God insists that Adam and Eve mate, and the event turns into a rape, for which Eve is loath to forgive either God or Adam. Only later, when the Serpent changes form, becomes a man, and makes love to Eve, is she prepared to accept her central role as the mother of humankind. Even then, however, she's still not ready to forgo her independence. Although the Serpent explains all the hardship that will come to her if she eats the apple from the Tree of Knowledge, she accepts the challenge to become a fully realized human, as does Adam, who, though lacking Eve's strength, also yearns to be his own person. In an author's note, Aidinoff explains that she has drawn on lore that equates the Serpent to Wisdom, who is said to have been with God at the creation, and the smart, empathetic, even romantic Serpent will evoke the most response from teenagers (God is certainly one-dimensional by comparison). The story at times is overly descriptive. It is at its best during the dialogues between Eve and the Serpent, when age-old questions are asked and real answers are given--although not necessarily the answers that have been accepted for ages. For instance, when the Serpent asks Eve what she thinks of the songs of praise God has taught her and Adam, Eve wonders, "Why does God need to be adored all the time? We know he made the sea and the dry land and all the rest. Why does he have to hear it over and over again?" There's no doubt this book will upset some people, both in its depiction of God and because of its sexual scenes, which, though not salacious, are intense and uncompromising. Perhaps most disturbing is the scene in which God urges Adam to take Eve against her will. Some readers, however, will find the book liberating--a meditation on the role of humanity in the world and on the compromises people make when they choose freedom instead of obedience. Ilene Cooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This

text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I couldn't finish it.

I found it to have a very childish perspective on God and the garden in general.

In this provocative retelling of Genesis, modern values such as freedom, independence, and equality are juxtaposed with a definitively Old Testament God--petulant, controlling, jealous, and easily angered. God wants his creations to do as he says and is disturbed to find that they have minds of their own, minds more complex than he ever envisioned. He created human beings to amuse and worship him, not to go around questioning him. The story is told from the first-person perspective of Eve, who is a curious, artistic, and brave. She can't understand why God made her physically weaker than Adam and wants to run with the gazelles as he does. The serpent is recast as Eve's mentor, a wise being as ancient as God who recognizes the necessity for Adam and Eve to learn their own lessons and to think for themselves. He does not trick them into eating the apple but lets them know exactly what they will be gaining (freedom) and what they will be giving up (ease and safety). The book is written in simple but poetic prose that is easily gobbled up. I finished all 400 pages in a day. Despite the fact that I already knew the ending, I still wanted to keep reading. Eve is a well-realized and sympathetic character, particularly for young girls. Adam is not so well-developed, but this is really Eve's story. Furthermore, *The Garden* questions pertinent issues such as death, the soul, justice, free will, obedience, science vs. religion, and whether God is omnipotent. Some of the most interesting parts of the book concern Eve and the serpent's philosophical discussions. To many critics, this book is unsatisfactory merely because it calls into question the established religious dogma. To me, this kind of questioning is a good thing. I don't think Aidinoff is trying to start a new religion here, but merely to ask...what if?

One of my favourites. Very controversial.

Everything about this book is compelling. I loved the perspective of Eve, the unique take on the Serpent, and how the author portrays old testament God. I can see how some religious sticklers may not appreciate it, but I enjoyed the storytelling. The relationship between Eve and the Serpent was beautiful and I have read this book several times just because it's such a good story.

I loved this book. It gave a whole new perspective to the world's oldest story. The story was very engaging and thought provoking, and the text was so descriptive. I was able to picture everything the characters were experiencing quite vividly. The most fascinating aspect was my new perception of the serpent. This book allows the reader to really accept a new view of a story we have heard for years.

I use to own this book! It got mixed up with donated books last summer, I have been searching for it ever since. It was just a cheap book I picked up in a bin on sale, I read it. It is very unusual, and most interesting, I intended to add it to my collection. However this particular copy is written on terrible paper, and the cover, well it just isn't like the one I had and it cost me more than the first! If you are interested in reading this and don't care what it's written on then I suggest you go right ahead and buy..

I found this book my freshman year of high school tucked away on a forgotten shelf and decided to check it out. Honestly, it blew my mind. Most people reviewing this book seem to be complaining about what they consider to be "anti-Christian" views in this book and I can't see it. They complain that the portrayal of God is selfish, arrogant, etc, and how it's an improper and disrespectful portrayal of him... I think they're so wrapped up in the concept of God being all merciful and forgiving that they forget that not only does Biblical mythos not belong only to Christians (but also to the Jews, Muslims, and other Abrahamic religions) but also that the idea of a wholly merciful and forgiving God is predominantly a Western Christian concept. Not only that, but they seem to regularly ignore the fact that within the Bible itself God is very much portrayed as being capable of jealousy, pettiness, selfishness, etc. doubly so in the Old Testament wherein the story of the corruption of Eve in the Garden of Eden takes place. I don't think it's an unfair or inaccurate portrayal of God and I believe the book wonderfully illustrates how omniscience and omnipotence can easily become arrogance. Another thing I see people complaining about with this novel is that the characters are relatively one dimensional and there's little character growth. I do think I agree with this, but I feel like it suits the characters. I think that it's a part of the point and is on par with the original telling: that they were childlike in their innocence, knowing no better. But as Eve gains knowledge from the serpent, she begins to question and ask more, and I feel like that's not the character growth we're used to, but it still counts as character growth none-the-less. Anyways, I really did enjoy this book when I read it, and I feel it's far more on par with my own UPG of what happened in the Garden of Eden with the corruption of Eve. I definitely don't suggest it though if you're one easily offended by

no-traditional / alternative tellings of your religious mythos, however. For more of my reviews, see my Goodreads account here: (...)

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