



EVE & ADAM

Teacher's Notes

Written by Michael Grant and Katherine Applegate
Published by Hardie Grant Egmont

Summary

Set in San Francisco, perhaps in the present or the near future, this story of the implications of a car accident for one of the central characters, takes the reader into areas that are clearly extrapolated from some aspects of contemporary society: the emphasis on beauty and good looks; the power (including destructive power) of money; science without moral checks and balances, and the need for the balance between art and science.

Evening (also known as E.V and Eve) Spiker is seventeen years old, and in the dramatic opening pages of the book, loses concentration when she (like her biblical namesake) has an encounter with an apple and is horribly injured in a car crash. Her injuries include a severed leg which is re-attached during a long surgery. Her powerful, prickly mother arrives at the hospital and arranges for her daughter to be removed to her Biopharmaceuticals establishment. And from there the plot thickens considerably.

Style of telling

A gripping opening plunges the reader into a fast-paced story, told in alternating chapters by Eve and Solo, a young man apparently employed by Eve's mother. Readers need to tolerate uncertainty, postpone understanding as they are carried along by events given to them incompletely by Evening's fuzzy awareness, and Solo's cryptic comments. There are also exciting action sequences with sufficient tension to keep the reader turning the pages.

Another powerful device to keep us reading is the use of foreshadowing (such as on page 13). Readers might like to find other examples of where this is used and what predictions they make about what is to come.

Another appealing feature of the way this story is told is the clever humour, mostly expressed through witty repartee. It's worth talking about the function of such humour in revealing character, relieving tension and providing the reader with a critical distance. It also provides excellent opportunities for Readers' Theatre, such as pages 99-111.

Before Reading:

This book has an intriguing and engaging premise: being able to create your own human being, body and mind. As an invitation into the book, it would be valuable to ask students to hypothesise about where this idea might have come from. What is happening in contemporary society that might prompt such a scenario?



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During Reading:

This story has many twists and turns to keep readers guessing and to prompt predictions about what is likely to be happening. It also maintains a fast pace so readers are likely to want to keep reading. However, there are important stages in the plot where it would be fruitful to pause and chart predictions, and examine the basis for the various viewpoints. Some are provided below under **Elements of the Plot**.

Characters:

Evening/ E. V./Eve

- Despite being badly injured in the opening pages of the story, she maintains her sense of irony and quick wit.
- She is a lively, individual, sassy, funny seventeen-year-old.
- P9 her friend, Aislin says she is a control freak.
- She enjoys genetics and drawing, exhibiting characteristics from both her parents. Her father was a sculptor before his untimely death.
- P15 She is ambitious, wants good grades, and wants to get away from her mother.
- She has an ambivalent relationship with her controlling mother.
- P65 she heals remarkably quickly.
- P167 is a list of all the boys she wouldn't date – are these all superficial reasons, or do you agree with her?
- She is a loyal friend to Aislin, always coming to her aid.
- Do you like her? Do you think you have to like her? Would you like her as a friend/girlfriend?

Terra Spiker: her mother:

- Students could consider the importance of names and the connotations of we make from them. David Lodge in *The Art of Fiction* says how important names of characters are even if they only signify ordinariness.
- What do the names suggest to you about each of the characters?
- We don't get to see any of the events from Terra's point of view, only through what Eve and Solo say about her.
- According to them she always gets her own way, and is stylish and has expensive tastes (p6).
- P10 Solo calls her an 'ice queen bitch'. On what evidence does he base this?
- P56 Solo says Terra has broken laws, but doesn't tell us how or why.



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Solo Plissken

- P21-22 He lives in the Spiker building, and considers himself to be 'tolerated' by Terra because of his parents who are both dead, but we are not clear why she only tolerates him, or why he feels he must stay there.
- On page 21 is more foreshadowing p21: if Terra knew what about him?
- P32 He runs, calls himself a geek, likes boxing.
- P36 He says Solo isn't just a name it, it's a description. He has no friends, has never had a girlfriend, and has only on-line 'friends'. What does this tell us about him?
- P37 He calls the Spikers the 'enemies' – why do you think? How do you think this will play out in the story?
- P50 Evening realises that Solo hates her mother, but we are not clear why he has such strong feelings against her. Does this influence how we feel about him? Do we see him as strong, or irrational or peevish?
- P56 He studies on line (does he prefer not to have face-to-face contact with people?) and also works for the Spiker corporation, as it gives him access (p59) – to what we wonder?
- He finds out that project 88715 is probably not all that it appears to be.
- P73 He spies on what is happening in the research and steals data. Do you think his motives are pure?
- P76 The Adam project. His parents were business partners and were 'screwed' out of it according to Solo. So are his motives purely ones of personal revenge?
- P106 He says 'the rat who runs the maze every day develops some moves'. Is that how he sees himself – as a rat in a maze?
- P171 Why does he want Eve to see what he has discovered? Does he see her as an ally or does her knowing deepen his revenge? What are his motives?
- P175 He says Eve 'deserves to know everything'. Why does she deserve this?
- P234-5 Solo begins to examine his motives in a more balanced way. He interrogates how personal they are. Is this a sign of greater self-awareness and maturity?

Aislin

- Eve's friend and her opposite – tall, voluptuous, bold.
- Why is she so taken in by Maddox? Is it her distant parents?
- Is it that she needs to feel connected and needed?
- What do you see her and her relationship with Maddox contributing to the overall plot and ideas in the book?
- Did you expect that she and Adam would end up together? Do you think it is a good match?



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Adam

- He is so good looking that everyone wants to be near him
- He is too idealised. However, we know from research that attractive people get better jobs, are viewed more positively etc. and it is clear that the writers are extrapolating from this – and having some fun with it too!
- However it is clear that looks aren't everything, as Adam (pp271) misses parents, a family name, a sense of identity. He has been *given* all that he knows.
- P282 In a funny moment it becomes apparent that Mr Perfect is not quite perfect – at least for Eve.

The Research Centre - the science

- 'Orphan Disease Research Division' – what do readers know about orphan disease research?
- P21 This research is about unpopular diseases in which there is little interest because there are few profits. Invite students to research such diseases in current society and the reasons why some get a lot of money (eg cancer) and others very little (eg TB). Discuss issues around profit making as a motive for pharmaceutical companies; rich people's diseases versus poor people's diseases; western societies' diseases versus developing countries'.
- P24 There is very high security surrounding the company. Is this for commercial reasons, or do readers suspect something different?
- P24 Why does this company have such a bad reputation, as Solo suggests?
- P28 Eve is clearly in a very luxurious hospital. Where does the money come from?

Elements of the plot

- This story has elements of mystery (Solo's intimate knowledge of the Centre his plans) thriller (evil, ruthless scientists) and romance (the relationship between Solo and EV is classic hostile-to-falling-in-love scenario). Some pivotal stages in the plot are indicated below, but readers will want to identify those that seem important/puzzling/thought-provoking to them.
- Consider the significance of the Aislin/Maddox subplot. How does it reflect aspects of the central narrative?
- Creation of Adam creates the centre piece of the plot
- P96 Why does Solo say 'escape'?
- P99 An exciting sequence involving Solo saving Maddox. Why does Solo do this? His motives are often unclear aren't they? What do you think this event tells us about him?
- Consider that at the heart of the story are moral dilemmas: for individuals, for society, for research.
- P124 Solo is startled by a feeling 'like an arrow's been shot into my chest'. We know what it is, don't we?
- P126 Aislin is badly hurt.



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Elements of the plot

- P130 Why does Solo say it will take Aislin longer to heal than Eve? What does he know that she doesn't, that we don't?
- P135 Eve finds out she is genetically modified. That is why she heals so easily and quickly. She has been injected with Logan Serum a medication not approved by the government.
- P159 Solo is up to something; spills coffee so genius, Tommy, has to change his clothes.
- P161 Clearly he finds genetic experiments, and is determined to bring Terra Spiker down. What are his motives? Revenge? Public conscience?
- P188 The moment happens: they kiss.
- P190 The narrative shifts into thriller/chase mode. The tension is relieved a little because we know that Solo knows his way around the building.
- P203 They make it to San Francisco.
- P212 Then a shock. A third voice comes into that narrative: Adam, as he reacts to his consciousness. Did Eve implant this attraction for her in him? It appears that Terra has even this in her control.
- The plot complicates more: Maddox is shot and the thugs demand more money.
- P263 Solo is captured by Dr Chen and Dr Anapura
- P267 Solo discovers his parents were the genetic engineers and that Terra destroyed their work. Discuss whether any readers have predicted this turn of events.
- P286 – The revelation that his parents were the monsters. What does that now make Terra Spiker?
- P300 A very dramatic ending with more of the story to be told.

Eve's 'Adam' project

- P 44 To design the perfect boy, through a genetic simulation on a giant screen, apparently to allow non-scientists to understand what makes humans human.
- P52 The writers are extrapolating from genetic engineering currently, to the possibility of designing a complete human being, including the brain.
- Eve's choices: male or female – class could plot their own preferences.
- P79 Describes Eve's beginning to build the boy and the choices she makes. This is a good place for discussion about her choices and what they reveal about her.
- P81 The eyes she has created look real: is this another example of foreshadowing?
- P115 Talk about Eve's thoughts about how to decide on the face: the associations she makes with hair colour, people, actors etc.
- P144 Eve's choices about characteristics: genius, average, the arts/science, humanitarian, reckless/cautious. What would class members choose for most desirable characteristics?



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Eve's 'Adam' project

- P149 Being kind is the most important attribute for Aislin.
- P178 Eve realizes her creation is not a simulation.
- P307 Eve clearly didn't give Adam courage or bravery, but to Aislin, that is immaterial: being kind and gentle are more important to her. What do readers think are the more important character traits?

Ideas:

There are plenty of provocative ideas to be examined and responded to in the book. Below are some, but readers no doubt will find their own too.

- p 80 'Everyone should have flaws. Isn't that what makes us interesting? Isn't that what keeps us from being carbon copies of each other?' What do readers think about this? Is it too simplistic? What does she mean by 'flaws'?
- P137 The moral issue of breaking the law to save Eve's life. Her parents made this decision as a last resort to save her life. Wouldn't most people do the same thing? Currently, there are people arguing against what neuroscience says about the causes and treatments for Multiple Sclerosis, as an example.
- Australian Barry Marshall won a Nobel Prize for proving that bacteria caused ulcers, and injected himself with the bacteria to finally establish the link.
- As indicated earlier this story has several moral dilemmas: P148 Should Eve give money to Aislin? Should she risk being 'bought' by her mother for the sake of her friend?
- It is clear that money is the motivation for most people – from the security guards, to Maddox's mobster gang, to the scientists. Why is money so important in the story, and in society?
- P211 'Just because I'm her daughter doesn't make me responsible for what she's done.' Discuss this in terms of the book, and in terms of life generally.
- P217 Should Eve expose her mother and then lose the good side of her research? Another moral dilemma: few things are clear cut. How do we make what we think are the right decisions? Ask students what they would do in Eve's circumstances
- P235 Discuss the Shakespearean quote. Does Solo convince you with his reasons for not sending the files?
- P241 'He is a work of art' – how does this fit with other ideas of science versus art in the book – they are in her father's studio.
- P245 Eve asks 'In what mad unholy universe could this work of art – my work of art – be a crime?' How would you answer her?
- P277 Eve's argument has shifted. Couldn't her mother have done the good science without the bad?



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Activities

- Most readers will want to take up Eve's challenge: to create the perfect boy – or girl. This can be done in a small group or individually; on computer or drawn/painted/collage. Then there could be a short presentation and justification of each group's choice and a class vote on the best creation.
- Imagine encountering the perfect being you have created. Write about it, act it out.
- P86 Eve describes the food she wants: translate these into Australian equivalents.
- Students might be invited to talk about the symbolism of the apple at the beginning and the apple in the Biblical creation story; the names of Adam & Eve.
- Students could innovate on this story and respond to the twists and turns in the plot by rewriting the story (or parts there of) as a choose-your-own adventure, and to write in possibilities other than the ones Eve chose to see where the story might take her.

Related reading

Peter Dickinson *Eva*

Kazuo Ishiguro *Never Let Me Go* and the film starring Keira Knightley

Gary Crew *Inventing Anthony West*