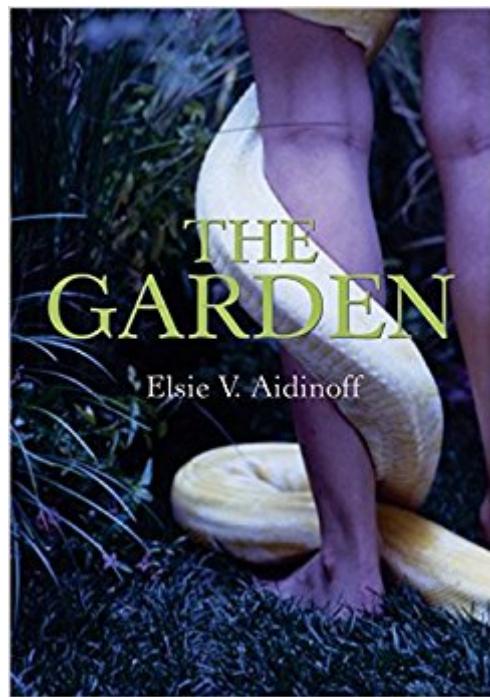


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# The Garden



## **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**

In the Afterword to this debut novel, author Aidinoff relates how the idea for it came to her in church. Specifically, she was studying one of the Old Testament creation stories - remember, there are two in the book of Genesis! -- and found herself unsatisfied with the cryptic telling of the story of Adam, Eve, and serpent. So she decided to embark on a retelling that lengthened and elucidated the text, as she saw it. This process of retelling is a longstanding tradition in Bible study and teaching, made popular by Diamant's *The Red Tent*. Aidinoff's efforts are considerable. The fruits, though, are mixed to say the least. The problem is a heavy-handed agenda. First on it is to paint God as an irredeemable corner and then hurl felonies at him. Aidinoff depicts God in her narrative specifically as she describes him in the Old Testament in her Afterword: choleric and impetuous. Within the text, Aidinoff does everything she can to underscore this characterization, even having God encourage Adam to rape the virgin Eve. This rape is Eve's first sexual experience. God, have you stopped

telling your son to rape your daughter? Andrea Dworkin must be applauding, someplace. Second, Aidinoff brings to the table a conception of the Almighty that matches how she sees the scientists at Los Alamos who developed the world's first operating nuclear weapon during the Second World War. That is, as she writes in her Afterword, "geniuses...that never considered the moral implication of the [atomic] bomb, or the suffering it would bring." Put aside for a moment that the author apparently is not a nuclear scientist, was not part of the Manhattan Project, and therefore would have no idea about what scientists talked about in their living rooms or in church.

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.

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