



Chapter 1

EVE

I jumped at the loud “Caw-caw!” behind me. My head spun back. It was just Crow. *Why did his song suddenly send shivers up my spine?*

I turned back to the tree, wiped the juice from my chin (*Why did this juice bother me so much?*) and swatted Fly, who buzzed around my piece of fruit. As my hand smacked him, he froze and fell to the ground.

What had I done?

I squatted to rouse Fly, but he wouldn't get up. He wouldn't fly.

"What's the matter with Fly?" I asked Serpent.

But as I stood to face him, Serpent thrust his tongue forward and hissed at me. I stepped back slowly.

Why hadn't I noticed the thick ripple of muscle as he wrapped himself through the gnarled limbs of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Why hadn't I ever before wondered if he would squeeze *me* like that?

I took another step back and readied to run, but then remembered: *Adam!*

He'd taken his fruit around the other side of the thick, twisting tree. Adam crouched under the branches, devouring the fruit as though he'd never eaten, as though we hadn't spent our whole lives enjoying the ripest peaches and pears, the crunchiest carrots and cucumbers, the plumpest blueberries and raspberries. The way Adam tore at and sucked the fruit, you'd think we hadn't learned to pound corn and wheat into flour, adding fresh water from the stream and baking cakes (?) over sparking fires.

"Adam," I whispered. "We've got to get to get out of here."

As Adam looked around the trunk of the tree, I drew my hands to my chest.

I was naked! How had I not realized this? I ran to the nearest fig tree and grabbed leaf after leaf, desperate to cover myself.

What was going on?

Adam stood up. I rushed behind the tree.

"Wait," I said. "Don't come any closer." And I threw fig leaves at him. "Cover yourself!"

I wasn't sure what was scarier—being naked in front of Adam or realizing the serpent was sliding his way down the trunk toward Adam.

"Never mind," I yelled. "Run!"

Adam and I took off running, swatting gnats and mosquitoes, tossing aside limbs and kicking past wild flowers that scratched our bare legs.

I motioned to a tangle of grapevines and we dove into them, our shoulders heaving as we breathed deep and heavy. My chest tightened, water dripped down my face. Where once we had run through this garden, racing up its hills, splashing through its streams and ponds, climbing its trees without effort, now our muscles shook with exhaustion, our knees and ankles creaked under us.



Who Knew?

- ◇ The Bible says Adam lived 930 years. No mention of how long Eve lived.
- ◇ "Eden" is thought to mean "fruitful, well-watered."
- ◇ The Bible's stories of creation are not at odds with science. Both use the information the authors had at the time. Both pictures point to a Creator God.
- ◇ The Bible includes two back-to-back creation stories. The first, in Genesis 1, doesn't mention the forbidden fruit incident at all. That shows up in the second creation story in Genesis 2 and 3. Eve doesn't get her name until the end of the story. Until then, she's just called "the woman."



As we hid, I pulled off vines and knotted them around the fig leaves I'd managed to carry with me. Somehow I created clothes to cover Adam. To cover me. To cover us.

But no matter how many vines we wrapped around our trembling bodies, no matter how deep we hid among the grapes that now rotted and dripped on the vine, we were exposed.

We'd done something awful. We'd disobeyed God. And now we were paying the price.



I've replayed the moment a million times in my head. It all happened so quickly. Or, so I thought.

Serpent had asked me one question: "Did God *really* say you couldn't eat from all the trees in this garden?"

I laughed. "No. God said we could eat from *every* tree in the garden. Except—" I pointed to the tree just beyond us—"that one."

"And why not that one?" Serpent asked, as he slithered across the grass to the very tree.

"God said we'll die if we eat from it. If we *touch* it even."

"Is that right?" Serpent asked as he slithered up the tree's trunk. "If you touch it?"

And he hugged the tree's trunk tighter, reaching the tip of his tail toward a branch. Then toward a leaf. Then a piece of fruit.

"I'm not dead," Serpent said.

I took a step closer. Serpent did look fine.

"You want to know the *real* reason you can't eat the fruit?" Serpent asked.

I nodded.

"Because if you eat this fruit, you'll know as much as God."

Serpent plucked a piece of fruit from the tree and crunched into it.

The sound was better than anything I'd ever heard. The bright red skin of the fruit sparkled in the sunlight. With each crunch Serpent took, juice sprayed off the milky white interior.

"Go ahead," Serpent said. "Try it. You won't die. In fact, you'll be more alive than ever—your eyes will be wide open."

And so I reached forward and plucked a piece of fruit. I paused for a moment, wondering if I would drop dead. But I didn't. I closed my eyes and held the fruit to my nose. It smelled like a rose with a lemony twist.

I took a bite. And I did not die.

It was delicious. Better than anything I'd tasted. Adam came up beside me. I plucked another piece and handed it to him.

"You won't believe how good this is," I said.

"But we're not supposed to," he said.

"Yeah, well, I didn't die," I said as Adam crunched into the fruit—again and again—grabbing another piece before diving behind the tree when Crow cawed.



Get the Full Story

Genesis 1-4

The memory of what we'd done was interrupted by rustling. Adam and I turned to it at the same time.

My heart sank.

In my terror of running from Serpent, in my fear over what we'd done, I'd forgotten the One who'd walked through this garden with us, who created us, the One who'd given us command over this perfect place, the One who'd been present as we'd played and named and cooked and laughed and loved each other and the world around us. I'd forgotten God.

But God didn't forget us. We could hear the rustle of God moving closer.

"Keep still," Adam whispered.

I nodded.

The rustling stopped.

"Adam," God said.

Adam didn't answer. I held my breath.

"Adam, where are you?" God asked again.

This time, Adam scrambled from the bushes. I

followed him. Slowly.

"I'm here, God," he said.

"Why were you hiding?" God asked.

"Because we were naked," Adam said. He grabbed my hand and helped me out from the bushes.

God looked at us with soft eyes and spoke with sadness. I adjusted my leaves.

"Who told you that you were naked?" God said. "Did you eat from the tree I told you not to eat from?"

Adam's eyes grew dark and he turned toward me, long finger pointed my way.

"This woman," Adam hissed. "The one you put here with me—she gave me the fruit."

I stepped forward, toward God. Tears filled my eyes. I longed to feel God's warm nearness as I once had. Instead, I shivered.

"Serpent lied to me and I ate it," I said.

Adam had blamed God and me. I blamed Serpent—and me.

Moment of Grit

Moment of Grace

But God blamed us all. Though every wrong of the world would be placed on my shoulders, God saw it differently. Serpent had tricked us (and would bear the ultimate blame), but Adam and me? We had *both* disobeyed God. We had both forgotten who we were. We had both brought darkness and shame into the world. And we both paid the price.

The life I had known—a life without pain or heartache, a life where God and Adam and I lived in peace and wholeness, a life where we worked side by side—was over. God was hurt and angry. We had broken God’s heart.

Now we would live outside the Garden—away from the immediate, touchable presence of God—and now we would now die.

But God, in God’s great mercy, didn’t leave us alone. God sent us out of the Garden, but God’s love, God’s spirit, God’s grace and goodness went with us.

We felt God with us in the clothes God made us from animal skins.

We felt God with us in the laughter of our first sons, as they took first steps through our vegetable garden, as they learned to speak the names of the animals *we’d* named before everything changed.

We felt God with us as we told our sons the story of a Good, Good Creation—of how Adam had been alone, how I was created to be an *ezer*, or “warrior helper”, and how our togetherness, our partnership made the world *good*. We told them God had been so near, of how we’d

forgotten God, but how God had never forgotten us.

And we felt God with us on a day as dark as the day we were cast from the Garden: the day my boy Cain killed my boy Abel. I never felt the Curse more strongly. I had never felt such grief, such regret. It was my fault.

But I also remembered God’s promise—in the middle of the curse—that this was not the end. That Serpent had not won—and all was not lost. God promised that one day Serpent’s power would be shut off—his head would be crushed!—by a Savior, who would once again make this world Good. And one day Adam and I would walk through the Garden we’d left—with our boys—all of us alive, no longer fighting, or hating, or living under the Curse.

God was good.



Noodle While You Doodle

Draw or write about anything this story makes you think about.

How have you noticed God in nature?

How do you typically respond when someone blames you for something? How do you wish you responded?

Before they were thrown out of the Garden, God gave Eve and Adam clothes. What does that tell you about God?

Prayer Prompt

What do you need to help you make good decisions? Wisdom maybe? Patience? Trust? Whatever it is, ask God to help you develop a bit more of this.