

9781459827073

Discussion and Activity Guide

★ “A heartfelt and expertly written tale of loss, family, and friendship that will have readers blinking back their tears...Beautiful and sincere.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“Funny, moving, deeply-researched, deeply felt and, above all, hopeful. Deceptively simple and simply marvelous.”

—Adam Gidwitz, author of the Newbery Honoree
The Inquisitor’s Tale

“A heartfelt glimpse into Jewish family and mourning rituals written with empathy and, of course, humor.”

—Lisa Brown, bestselling author/illustrator of
The Phantom Twin and *The Airport Book*

About the book

Evie Walman is not obsessed with death. She does think about it a lot, though, because her family runs a Jewish funeral home. The kids at school call her “corpse girl” but they don’t get how important it is to have someone take care of things when your world is falling apart. Evie loves helping out—dusting caskets, polishing pews, and handing out tissues. She doesn’t normally interact with the grieving families directly, but one day she meets Oren, a boy overwhelmed by grief after a terrible accident. Oren hasn’t spoken a word since, but Evie is determined to help him deal with his loss and find his voice again.

Key Themes

Death and Dying
Funeral Practices
Grief
Friendships
Bullying
Judaism
Family

Read Aloud Suggestions

- p. 5 – “I am not obsessed with death. But it’s a bit hard to avoid thinking about death when your family owns a funeral home and everyone works there. Including me...”
The reader is introduced to Evie who works at her family’s funeral home.
- p. 30 – “Thankful that Mr. Silver had his back to me, I did a little wave to try to catch my dad’s eye. It worked. His eyebrows went up—he was asking me if everything was okay. I shook my head. No, everything was most definitely *not* okay.”
Oren has just slammed the door in Evie’s face and Evie turns to her father for help.
- p. 54 – “Our first stop was at the cemetery...”
Evie encounters Oren at the cemetery.

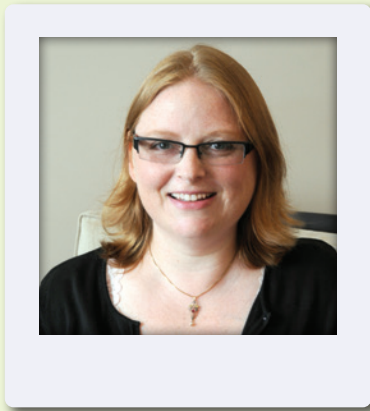
Discussion Questions

1. Evie’s family owns and manages a funeral home and Evie works there when she’s not at school. Do you think you would like to work at your family’s business if it was a funeral home? Why or why not?
2. What do you think Evie should have done differently upon meeting Oren?
3. Evie’s dad says, “Someone else’s grief is not for you to solve. Let Oren grieve in his own way.” What do you think that means?
4. When Oren finally explains why he stopped talking, Evie tells him that words can be for good. Discuss a situation when words are used for good and another when words can be used hurtfully.
5. After her experience at camp, Evie had decided she didn’t want to have friends anymore. Discuss her feelings around that decision.
6. Evie’s schoolmates call her names and go out of their way to be mean. Why do you think they act that way?
7. What do you think was the author’s purpose in writing this book? Do you think she was successful?
8. Oren complains that his old friends are weird around him since the accident. Why do you think that is?
9. Evie agonizes about what to write on Oren’s cast. What would you have written?
10. Evie is determined to be a funeral director when she grows up. Do you think she will be a good one?
11. Share a quote from the book. Why does it stand out to you?
12. Optional: Have you ever attended a funeral? If you feel comfortable, discuss how it made you feel to attend.

Activities

1. Create a new cover for *Sorry For Your Loss*.
2. Research beginner how-to books or video tutorials about paper quilling and give it a try.
3. Evie and her family are Jewish and power down (literally) on Shabbat. Research what that means, if you're not familiar, and then spend an entire 25 hours free of work and electronics. Write about your experience.
4. Jewish funerals are, by definition, eco-friendly. Research green funerals and how taking the environment into consideration when planning a funeral can make a difference to the planet.
5. Film a commercial for a funeral home.
6. Write or film your review of *Sorry For Your Loss*.

About the Author



Joanne Levy's love of books began at a very early age. Being the youngest among four children, she was often left to her own devices and could frequently be found sitting in a quiet corner with her nose in a book. Now that she's a grown up, Joanne is most often at her computer, channeling her younger self into the books she writes for kids who enjoy reading in quiet corners. Joanne lives in Ontario, Canada with her husband and kids of the furred and feathered variety.

To contact Joanne or for more details about her research and inspiration for *Sorry For Your Loss* plus other resources, visit joannelevy.com.



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