

Alice's Farm

A RABBIT'S TALE

By Maryrose Wood

Rabbits and farmers are sworn enemies, always have been and always will be. So, when a new family moves into Prune Street Farm after two years of the place sitting empty, Alice and the other cottontails are perplexed. A garden to raid would be lovely, but what if the new farmers have a vicious, rabbit-chasing dog?

But the Harvey family, recently of Brooklyn, are not at all what the rabbits expect. Their dog's not a killer, which is good, but the well-meaning Harveys don't know the first thing about growing vegetables.

This farm's in trouble, and predators swoop in quick. When Alice and her brother Thistle overhear a plan by a developer to run the Harveys off and bulldoze the land, Alice resolves to save their shared farmland home. To succeed, she'll need to convince others that rabbits helping farmers isn't as crazy as it sounds, get help from the very animals who consider rabbits prey—and secretly teach the Harvey's homesick son Carl how to be a farmer himself.

Here is a stunning celebration of life on the beautiful planet we all call home. Alice is some rabbit—a character readers will love for generations to come.






QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



1. "The trouble between rabbits and farmers goes way back..." This is the opening line of the book, and Alice and the rest of her warren soon discover that a new family is moving into the empty farmhouse. Are all the rabbits scared of the new farmers? Why might some rabbits welcome the new arrivals, even though farmers are "sworn enemies" of rabbits?
2. The Harveys have left the city to pursue their dream of being farmers. Why is this idea appealing to them? Are they prepared for the move? Do all the members of the family feel the same way about this big change?
3. When Foxy, the Harveys' Shiba inu, meets Alice and her brother, Thistle, the dog's not aggressive – actually, she is quite polite (pp. 41-42). Why is Foxy so friendly? What makes her different from other dogs the rabbits might meet?

4. Carl Harvey doesn't want to start a new school (p. 140). What do you think about his reasoning? How do you think you learn best? Is the answer the same for everyone?
5. "Much like young Carl Harvey, John [Glenn, the American bald eagle] preferred to keep a low profile." (p. 152) Why is John Glenn asking the other animals for help? Why would scientists want to study him?
6. Carl wants to get coverage for the Harveys' Prune Street Farm in *Hipster Farmer* magazine. Why does he believe this will help his family? Why might his parents be hesitant to seek out this coverage on their own?
7. The Harveys' vegetable garden grows brilliantly. Going back to the opening line of the book, how are the rabbits and other animals helping the Harveys? Why do they decide to pitch in?
8. John Glenn takes Lester the old rabbit up in the air (pp. 303-304). List the reasons this is an important scene for these characters and for the plot of the book.
9. On page 330, Alice insists that the animals honor Worm, the weasel. Why? Why do the other animals feel he shouldn't be given such a farewell?
10. Farmer Janis loves her old tractor, Tin Can. But eventually she decides to replace it with a newer model (pp. 236-238). Why does she make this decision? Do you think she did the right thing?



IDEAS FOR STUDY

-  Alice is an Eastern cottontail. What kind of wild rabbits are common where you live? What do they eat and how do they live? Who are their predators? How do they defend themselves?
-  The dog Foxy is a Shiba inu. What are some of the physical and personality traits of this popular breed of dog? Where did it originate?
-  Vegetables, fruits, nuts, meat, grains, eggs, and dairy products—whether you buy them in a supermarket or from your local farmer's market, they all come from farms. The phrase "farm-to-table" describes the practice of sourcing food directly from local farms. What are the advantages of buying locally grown food? Are there any disadvantages? Do you know where your family's food comes from? Have you met the farmer who grows it? Do you grow it yourself?

-  The number of small family farms in the US is decreasing. Why is this? Do some research about the challenges facing today's small-scale farmers. You might visit a local farm or farmer's market and ask the farmers about their work. Based on what you learn, do you think family farms are important? Why or why not?
-  Rabbits and farmers think of each other as enemies, but in this story, they work together to save their shared home. What makes this cooperation possible? What would happen if they didn't cooperate? Can you think of a real-world problem that can only be solved by cooperation? If so, what do you think should be done about it?



MARYROSE WOOD is the author of *The Incorrigible Children of Ashton Place*, the critically acclaimed middle-grade series. *Alice's Farm* was a **2021 National Council of Teachers of English Charlotte Huck Recommended Book**, and called "a good read-aloud candidate for fans of *Charlotte's Web*" by *School Library Journal*. *Horn Book* called it "an excellent choice for a family or classroom read-aloud," and *ALA Booklist* wrote, "Wood crafts a tale of interspecies cooperation in a rural setting that is lit up with exhibitions of uncommon courage, loyalty, humor, and tolerance . . . Terrific." [starred]

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