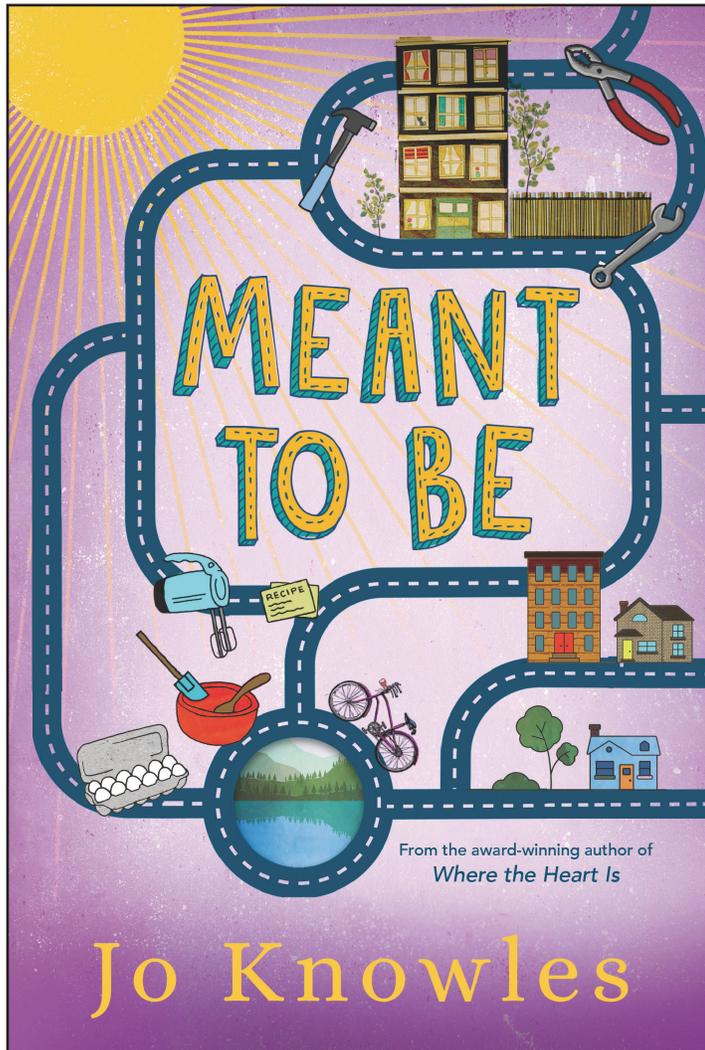


MEANT TO BE

JO KNOWLES



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Ivy loves living in Applewood Heights after her family lost their house to foreclosure. Her older sister finds the apartment cramped, but Ivy thinks it's cozy. And for the first time, Ivy has friends, Lucas and Alice, who live close by. Every week they watch their favorite cooking show and bake together. But Ivy is a worrier, and this summer there's plenty to be anxious about. Her parents can't wait to move to a bigger, nicer place, which is the last thing Ivy wants. Then Alice receives painful news, and Ivy says the wrong thing to her friend. Will Alice ever forgive her?

When the building's maintenance person teaches her how to fix things, Ivy turns out to be a natural and gains self-confidence. But some things—like hurt feelings—are harder to fix. Ivy fields the joys and pitfalls of new friendship, hones her passion for baking, and resists the idea of change in this honest, hopeful companion novel to *Where the Heart Is*.

JO KNOWLES is the award-winning author of the middle-grade novels *Where the Heart Is*, *Still a Work in Progress*, and *See You at Harry's*. Her young adult novels include *Jumping Off Swings* and *Read Between the Lines*, among others. She lives in Vermont.

Common Core Connections

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some reasons that Ivy likes living in the apartment building better than in their former farmhouse? What does Ivy's sister, Rachel, miss about living in the farmhouse and dislike about the apartment building? How do Ivy's parents feel about the two places?
2. Discuss the relationship between Ivy and Rachel. How are they alike? How are they different? Describe some times that they get along and other times when they don't.
3. What are some of the things Alice, Ivy, and Lucas each worry about? How do they try to help one another?
4. What positive qualities does Ivy show in how she interacts with other people? Give examples from the story that demonstrate those strengths. What do Alice and Lucas like about her? What does Donnalyn like about her? How do other people in the apartment building react to Ivy?
5. When Ivy tells Alice, who's feeling sad about her mother, that there's a "bright side," Alice yells at Ivy, "That was a really insensitive thing to say!" (p. 94). Lucas also says to Ivy, "Sometimes you are a little too pushy and don't think before you speak" (p. 142). Do you agree with Lucas and Alice? Later, Ivy reflects that she has been "pretty selfish" (p. 188). Do you think this is true? Does Ivy learn to be more sensitive?
6. One of Ivy's strengths is that she's inventive and can figure out new ways to use materials. When does this come up during their baking projects? How is she inventive when fixing up a bike for Alice? Give other examples from the story.
7. What is Lucas like? Describe his relationship with his father.
8. Describe Alice's personality. Why is she always looking through the keyhole of her apartment door?
9. Why does Ivy get upset when Alice says that living at Applewood Heights "means you failed" (p. 19)?
10. Who is Becca? What is Ivy's reaction to the news that Becca is moving away? Why do Alice and Lucas say that everyone moves? How does that make Ivy feel?
11. What do the three friends like about the *Bake It to Make It!* television show? Describe some of the baking challenges they try. What strengths does each of them bring to their baking projects? What do they put in their notebooks?
12. Who is Miss Beverly? How does she become involved with their baking, and how does she help them?



13. Explain how Ivy helps Donnalyn in the workshop and around the building. Why does Ivy enjoy fixing things in Donnalyn's workshop? What is Donnalyn like? How does she treat Ivy? What advice does she give Ivy about dealing with other people?
14. Ivy's upset to find her parents and sister looking at photographs of houses they dream of moving to one day. Her mother then apologizes for the "emotional roller coaster we've put you on" (p. 187). What does her mother mean? What aspects of Ivy's life have been like an emotional roller coaster? How does Ivy handle stress? What is Ivy's reaction to her mother's apology?
15. Describe the scene in which Ivy gives Alice the bicycle. Why is Ivy worried about how Alice will react? How does Alice react? Explain how Ivy managed to fix up the bike and how much work it took.
16. People around Ivy use sayings like "Where there's a will there's a way" (p. 101) and "The customer is always right" (p. 177). Discuss the meaning of these sayings and others in the book. Why do you think people use old sayings like this? Do they offer useful advice? Use examples to make your points.
17. Even though Ivy is annoyed by some of the sayings, at the end of the book she finds one she likes about "living in the moment" (p. 215). What does it mean to her? What has she learned during the story that makes her think living in the moment is important?
18. The story explores the question of what makes a place a "home." Ivy quotes Rachel as saying, "A house doesn't make a home; people do" (p. 18). What does that mean? Why does Ivy say she likes that idea? How is this idea important in the novel?
19. Talk about the book's title and look at places where it comes up in the narrative. Why does Alice's grandmother say that if Stevie comes back, it was "meant to be" (p. 52)? Discuss how Rachel explains a related saying and then observes, "I don't think you're supposed to apply that saying to people" (p. 126). How is the phrase used on the last page of the book?

These questions were prepared by Kathleen Odean, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who now gives professional development workshops for educators about new books for children and teens. She chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and served on earlier Caldecott and Newbery Award Committees.

