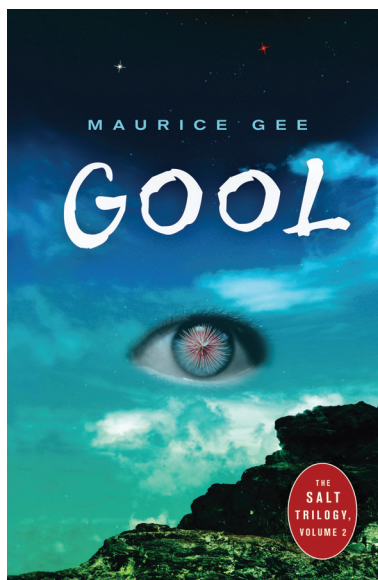


THE SALT TRILOGY



Gool

Maurice Gee

Ages 12+
 978-1-55469-214-9HC
 240 pages
 AR Quiz # 140580

In a Nutshell

In *Salt*, Hari and Pearl defeat tyrant leader Ottmar, and they escape Company lands to start life anew. Sixteen years later, Pearl and Hari have children of their own: Xantee and Lo, and the younger twins. All of them—along with many others in their community—are “speakers,” meaning they can communicate without speaking aloud. Life is much more pleasant than it was in *Belong*, and Pearl and Hari are happy.

But all is not well in their world. Strange, shape-shifting and deadly creatures have been causing trouble throughout the world, chewing up mountains and forests, killing people—and growing stronger. The forest people call the beast *gool*, or unbelonger. When Hari and some of the community children set out to find it in the forest, Hari ends up in a fight to save the lives of his nieces, Sal and Mond. Although he escapes alive, the *gool* leaves a remnant on Hari’s neck. Despite his children’s efforts to remove it, the remnant is slowly strangling Hari. Xantee and Lo must strike out on a quest to destroy the mother *gool* so that Hari—and the world—can be freed from its evil.

Following the wisdom of an old folk tale, Xantee, Lo and Duro, a strong boy who’s particularly skilled with a knife, set out on a dangerous mission. Injured early in the journey, Lo is taken in and tended to by the forest people. Left on their own, Xantee and Duro travel through jungles and over mountains to Ceebeedee, where the mother *gool* hides, strengthening her offspring and terrorizing the land with her hatred. They ask Hari’s father—Tarl, the Dog King—to guide them to the city. That’s where Keech and the Clerk battle for domination. It’s also exactly where they find the mother *gool*: at the heart of the Clerk and Keech’s cruelty-wracked, violent and hate-filled struggle for supremacy.

Aided by the Dwellers, the forest people and other familiar characters from *Salt*, Xantee and Duro locate and destroy the mother *gool*, freeing Hari from the *gool*’s clutches—and freeing the world from hatred.



THE SALT TRILOGY

About the Author

Maurice Gee is one of New Zealand's finest writers with more than forty books for adults and young adults to his credit. He has received several literary awards, including the New Zealand Children's Book of the Year Award and the *New Zealand Post* Book Award for Young Adult Fiction for *Salt*. *Gool* is the second volume of The Salt Trilogy

Before You Read

1. What can we learn from myths and legends?
2. Why do people hate?
3. Would it be a good thing if people's minds could work together? What are the positive and negative ramifications of such an ability?
4. Why do humans fear alien powers so much when their own mishandling of power creates so many problems?

Consider the following questions as you read *Gool*:

How powerful can a legend be?

What is the value in books?

Connecting to the Text

Text-to-text connections

- In *Gool*, we meet an evil that seeks to destroy everything. What other books or stories have you read where evil forces have this same intention? How are these books similar to *Gool*? How are they different?
- Xantee is often quick to judge—and her judgments are harsh. In chapter 6 she thinks to herself that the people are “stupid to live in the jungle” when they could live in the more pleasant forests just over the mountains. Yet she is often wrong. What other characters have you met who are too quick to judge?
- Keech leads by fear. What other characters have you read about that do the same? Evaluate the effectiveness of this style of leadership.

Text-to-self connections

- In chapter 1, Sal is angry when Xantee reads his thoughts. “Stay out of our heads,” she says. How would you feel if your friends and family could read your thoughts? What would change about your world?
- Xantee reflects that Blossom and Hubert are joined so closely that they have to push each other out of the way to gain privacy within their minds. Do you know any twins? How would your own life be different if you had a twin?
- As the group travels, they encounter small communities of the people with no name. These people form a network that helps the trio in their travels. As you see it, why are networks useful? How can a network help you in your own life?



THE SALT TRILOGY

- When Xantee and Duro come to the city of Belong, Xantee can't imagine music that would need a great hall to be played. Have you heard music from a symphony or a large band before? What do humans find so special about music?
- Duro gives Xantee strength when she finds herself weak or fearful. Do you have a special friend who does the same for you? Write about this person.
- When Xantee finally realizes she must kill the Clerk and Keech herself, she feels better because the decision—although difficult—has been made. Do you sometimes feel calmer after you've made a decision? Explain.

Text-to-world connections

- Xantee and Lo are stronger and can “hear” better when they put their minds to work together. How is this cooperative effort similar to the way things work in the real world? Give examples of how working together can make us more powerful.
- Hari and Pearl understand their children are stronger speakers than they are—and they're okay with that. What do you do better than your parents? Do you think that every generation is better at some things than their predecessors? Explain.
- In chapter 5, the twins tell Lo and Xantee that if Hari dies, Pearl will die. But Pearl isn't under the influence of the gool like Hari is. What do the twins mean? Have you ever heard of similar situations in the real world, where one person dies soon after his/her partner? Explain. Why do you think this is?
- There used to be galleries and libraries in the city of Belong. Why do humans create places like this? Why do we make art and write books? What is the value in these kinds of cultural storehouses?
- Compare and contrast the role of women now with the role of women in Keech Burrow after Company was overthrown.
- In *Gool*, we find different kinds of love. How is the love between Duro and Xantee different from the love between Sal and Mond? How is it different from the love between Dweller families? Are the same kinds of love apparent in our world?

The Language of Literature

Descriptive language

Gee uses vivid descriptions to create a picture in his readers' minds of a world that is unfamiliar to us. For example:

Hari heard a hissing, like a snake, and jumped aside as something—arm, rope, tentacle—whistled past his head. He threw himself backward, rolling in the air to land on his feet—Blood Burrow tactics—but the thing was quicker and he felt wet ropes, smoother than hemp, colder than winter streams, fasten around his legs, around his knife-arm and his throat.

- How does the language in this passage make it effective? Find other examples of descriptive language in *Gool* and explain how the author's choice of language makes them powerful.



THE SALT TRILOGY

Personification

Personification is a literary technique authors use to strengthen an idea or image. When an object is personified, it takes on human qualities. Here's an example from *Gool*, when Danatok leads Xantee and Duro toward Ceebeedee to find the Clerk: *The marble, pink in the sun, should be beautiful, the city opening like a flower; but the buildings gave the impression of having swallowed something and of waiting greedily for more.*

- We all know that buildings can't actually swallow things, right? So how does personifying the buildings in this way help the reader actually imagine what they look like? Can you find other examples of personification in *Gool*?

Simile

A simile is a comparison using the words *like* or *as*. It's a literary technique that gives the reader a compelling image to help broaden his or her understanding of the text. Here's an example of a simile from chapter 2, where the author explains the power of Lo and Xantee bringing their minds together to work in concert:

They felt it, simply, as a doubling of strength and knowledge, and an increase in quickness, like the leaping of a deer.

- As you read *Gool*, look for other similes. How do these comparisons help you get a better picture of what's being described?

Theme

The theme is the "big idea" or message in a book. Often, books can have more than one theme.

- Several themes run through *Gool*. One of them is that evil is destructive, and that goodness is intelligent. Another is that gentleness and compassion can overpower evil. Working with a partner, see if you can figure out some of the other themes in the book.

A Closer Look

Chapter by chapter

Chapter 1

1. There's an old saying: *Better the devil you know than the one you don't*. How does this apply to Hari's feelings about his new way of living, away from the relative predictability of Blood Burrow?
2. Contrast Hari's past world to his present life.
3. What does the creature remind you of? Make a list of words that describe its appearance.
4. Who are the Peeps?
5. Describe how Hari escapes the gool.
6. Create a character web for what you know about Xantee so far. Add to this web as you read *Gool*.



THE SALT TRILOGY

Chapter 2

1. Describe how Hari's family tries to treat the injury on his neck.
2. When Pearl tells Xantee and Lo that Tealeaf is coming to help Hari, and that she knows legends, Xantee seems impatient. "There are always legends," she says. How is she right in her thinking? How is she wrong?
3. The community in which Xantee and Lo live is very closely knit. Everyone is very concerned for the well-being of others. How does this compare to your community?
4. Illustrate some of the images from Xantee's childhood. Why does she feel even happier about her childhood now than she did when she was actually growing up?
5. Xantee reflects that Keech and the Clerk are more dangerous than beasts because their kind of hunger can never be satisfied. What does she mean?

Chapter 3

1. What do you imagine the thing on Hari's neck looks like? Draw it.
2. Sal and Mond will not let go of each other's hands. Why is this so? What do you think could make them let go?
3. Predict how you think the relationship between Duro and Xantee will develop as the book progresses. Why do you think this? Can you find any foreshadowing (hints) in this chapter, or in previous chapters?
4. In this chapter, Tealeaf tells of the villages that formed after Company was destroyed. The villages are like little kingdoms, battling each other, and no man or woman has shown him or herself to be strong enough to unite them. How would uniting these villages be beneficial?
5. How did the gool come to be?
6. In telling the myth about the fisherman, Barni, who learned how to stop the gool's power, Tealeaf tells Duro: "It's better to be part of a story than be a king." What does she mean? As you see it, is she correct?
7. Write the story of Barni as you would tell it to a young child. You may wish to add illustrations.

Chapter 4

1. Before they enter the jungle, the group anchors the boat for the night. Xantee and Duro discuss their fear of the gool. What other fears do you think they're struggling with?
2. Why did Lo, Xantee and Duro allow Sal and Mond to paddle away into the jungle, knowing as they did that the pair would probably die?
3. The traveling group decides to leave their canoe as a gift to the Peeps. Why is giving gifts so important?
4. When the Peeps first speak with Xantee, she asks them to show themselves. They flee, and Tealeaf calls her a stupid girl. For what reasons is Tealeaf so angry?



THE SALT TRILOGY

5. How is Xantee's apology to the people significant?
6. When she is sleeping in the jungle, Xantee feels how "ill-made" she is. What does this mean?

Chapter 5

1. What do you think the people of the jungle look like? Draw a picture or write a haiku that describes them.
2. Xantee and Lo can join their minds, but separating them is a painful process. As you see it, why do they bother joining together?
3. Create a character sketch of Duro. Add to it as you read *Gool*.
4. As Xantee, Lo and Duro leave the people with no name, Xantee reflects that what they have done for the travelers—protecting them, keeping them safe, guiding them—went beyond friendship. How so?
5. Why does it bother Xantee so much when Duro gets inside her head?
6. How do the people with no name show balance and respect between themselves and their environment? What could humans learn from this?
7. Xantee clings to the story of Barni, and how he freed the world from the gool. Duro is angry with her and says it's just a story. "Stories start in something real," she counters. What does she mean?

Chapter 6

1. For those who have the ability to "speak," why is talking out loud more intimate than speaking inside their minds?
2. Duro and Xantee must burn ticks from their legs in the jungle. What is the risk if they don't do this? Find out about Lyme disease. Make a list of symptoms. Make a similar list with tips for how to avoid infection.
3. As you see it, why does Tarl come to speak with Duro and Xantee if he hates people so much? What kind of risks is he taking to do so?
4. Why is Duro so quick to draw his knife and threaten Tarl?
5. Do you think Xantee was right to hold Tarl with her mind so soon after trying to communicate with him, especially since her parents told her not to do it unless it was a matter of life or death?
6. Why does it upset Tarl so much when Xantee mentions his scar?



THE SALT TRILOGY

Chapter 7

1. Do you think Duro is right not to trust Tarl initially?
2. Why did Hari never go back to find his father?
3. Xantee describes books to Tarl, so he can understand why they are important. Imagine that you had to explain what a book was to someone who had never seen one, let alone read one. How would you go about explaining it?
4. Tarl agrees to help Xantee because he understands that she is his family—and Hari, his son, is still alive. What does this kind of loyalty say about Tarl's character?
5. Imagine Xantee's frustration at being told she's not supposed to talk because she's female. If she was allowed to speak freely and say what she thinks about this cultural norm, what do you think she would say?

Chapter 8

1. Why does Tarl distrust "Dweller tricks" so much?
2. Why do you think the mother gool would choose to make her home in the city?
3. How does having Tarl with them benefit Duro and Xantee? What odds would they face on their quest if Tarl hadn't agreed to guide them?
4. What is the irony in the name of Company's initial sailing ship, *Open Hand*?

Chapter 9

1. How does Xantee and Duro's ability to sense other people confer an advantage while they're exploring the Burrows?
2. Why is Xantee so bent on finding the books? What does she hope to find there?
3. For what reasons does Tarl want to find Keech?
4. Draw what you think the Burrows look like after all these years of decay.
5. How must Hari have felt when he watched Company tie his father to a cart and haul him away to a life of deadly labor in Deep Salt?
6. When Keech finds out that Hans saw Duro and Xantee in the burrows, he declares him no longer a man, but a woman. Why is this such a shame? Do you think this would happen in our world? Why or why not?
7. Danatok helps Duro, Xantee and Tarl escape the burrows men. For what reasons is gratitude so difficult for Tarl?

Chapter 10

1. Why does Danatok fear the gool?
2. How do the constellations in Xantee's world differ from ours? Make a list of all the constellations you know about.
3. Why is it no longer necessary for Xantee to hear her name spoken aloud?



THE SALT TRILOGY

Chapter 11

1. Belong was once a great city. Name some of the greatest cities of ancient times. What made them so significant? Choose one to research. Share your findings with your class.
2. For what reasons did the Clerk and Keech's tribes allow the technology to die? Did it have to be this way?
3. Read Maurice Gee's description of the dead city of Belong. Decide whether you want to draw this city as it is now—or as it once was.
4. Xantee perseveres with trying to find the book when Duro wants to give up. Eventually, she meets with success. How is perseverance a positive trait? Find other examples from *Gool* where the characters persevere despite difficult circumstances.
5. Books used to be written by hand. Only the upper classes were able to read and write. Learn about how the printing press was invented. How did it change the way information was transmitted? How is information transmission changing again?

Chapter 12

1. Danatok and Duro know it's impossible to try to reason with the Clerk, like Xantee wants. Explain why they know he must be killed.
2. Xantee thinks Pearl and Hari faced a greater challenge when they took on Ottmar's empire. Do you think their risks were greater than hers and Duro's? Why or why not?
3. Xantee doesn't like Tarl—yet she loves him because he belongs to her family. Is it possible to love someone when you don't really even like them? Explain.
4. When Xantee meets the Clerk for the first time, she decides not to flatter him. As you see it, why does she make this decision?
5. Describe the Clerk. Why is he even harder and crueler than Keech?
6. Why is Xantee horrified when she realizes she could kill the Clerk if she wanted to?

Chapter 13

1. Xantee pities the Clerk for his pain and his cruelty. The Clerk, however, would be furious if he knew of her feelings. How is pity sometimes worse than anger or aggression?
2. Why doesn't the Clerk just kill Xantee outright?
3. What is the Clerk's motivation in offering Xantee to Keech as a gift?
4. The argument between Keech and the Clerk shows us some of the worst aspects of human prejudice. Can you find examples?

Chapter 14

1. Why did the gool choose Ottmar's mansion to be her home?
2. Duro feels uneasy with an enemy he can't see. Why is it easier to fight against a known enemy?



THE SALT TRILOGY

3. If you could have given Duro, Xantee and Danatok some advice before they went into the room where the mother gool lived, what would it be? Write a letter to these three characters, explaining what you think they should do to be better prepared to face the gool.
4. For what reasons do some societies burn their dead on pyres? Find out about a culture or religion that practices this. How does this differ from the way we handle death in North America?
5. Why was it important for the group to tend to the bodies of the dead, instead of just leaving them where they fell?

Chapter 15

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Xantee reflects that the gool has left a little bit of herself inside Xantee. What is the significance of this?
2. What was it about Lo's return that made Xantee able to love Duro again?
3. Imagine that you are Duro. Write about the voyage home from his perspective.

Extension activities

- Create a three-dimensional representation of a gool. Maybe it's a clay sculpture; maybe it's a puppet; maybe it's papier mâché. Look through the book for words that describe this creature. Use mixed media (and your imagination!) to create your gool. What would it look like? What would it feel like?
- Create a one- or two-minute podcast about the book. Your end goal should be to persuade people to buy the book. Consider "inviting" characters from the book to add interest and a different perspective to your discussion.
- Make a timeline map that charts Duro and Xantee's travels. At each location, include significant events that occurred there. Be sure to label significant features on your map, and include a scale, compass rose and a legend. You may choose to do this assignment with a computer or by hand.
- Write a top-ten list called: *Things I learned from reading this book*. Share your list with others in your class or group.
- With a partner or in a small group, create a board game based on *Gool*. See whether you can include cooperative elements where players must work together to overcome challenges on the journey. Include an instruction sheet and any other game pieces necessary to play your version of *Gool: The Game*.
- Write a critical review of *Gool*. Not sure how to write a review? Here's a link to to get you started: www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbookreporths.html.
- Design an app for *Gool*. Check out the interactive app for Alice in Wonderland here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RM_gwtbQXM&feature=related. Discuss with your class or in a group: how does reading in print compare to reading in a digital format? (Note to teachers: a full lesson plan can be found here: <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/28/print-vs-digital-analyzing-and-designing-book-apps-for-works-of-literature>)



THE SALT TRILOGY

- Create a cloze passage based on events in the book. Here's how:
 - ◆ Write a paragraph or two to summarize *Gool*.
 - ◆ Now go back through your passage and delete every sixth word. Replace these words with a blank (make sure all the blanks are the same length so you're not dropping hints about the word that actually belongs there).
 - ◆ Leave the first and last sentences intact. Don't change any of the punctuation either.
 - ◆ Exchange your cloze passage with a friend to see whether s/he can fill in the blanks!

Vocabulary activities

- Choose all or some of the following vocabulary words from *Gool*. Consult a print or online dictionary to help you create full definitions for each word you choose. Record these in your notebook. Be sure to include multiple definitions where applicable.
- Create a matching test with 10 of the vocabulary words. Write the words on one side of the page and the definitions on the other side. Make sure you mix them up a bit! Exchange your quiz with a partner to see who can match the most words correctly.
- Make a crossword puzzle using 10 of the words from the vocabulary list. You may wish to add other words from *Gool* to your puzzle too. Make your crossword by hand on graph paper, or with an online puzzle-generating tool. Here's one to get you started: <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>.

abrasion

brazier

caravan

chieftain

contours

etiquette

grub

husbandry

ice floes

inert

invulnerable

malevolence

melancholy

midwifery

parchment

schooner

scree

scroll

skein

spawn

tuber



THE SALT TRILOGY

Related Reading

- Beale, Fleur. *Juno of Taris*
Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*
— *Catching Fire*
— *Mockingjay*
Dashner, James. *The Maze Runner*
— *The Scorch Trials*
— *The Death Cure*
Fisher, Catherine. *Incarceron*
— *Sapphique*
LeGuin, Ursula. *A Wizard of Earthsea*
Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*
— *Gathering Blue*
— *Messenger*
Mahy, Margaret. *The Magician of Hoad*
Yovanoff, Brenna. *The Replacement*

