



Ninety-Nine Stories of God

by Joy Williams

A collection of short stories from an author heralded for her “one-of-a-kind gift for capturing both the absurdity and the darkness of everyday life,” these stories are challenging and interesting, and will not leave you soon.

1. After reading #1, what was your first impression of the book?
2. In #3, the humanist believes the “ability to appreciate the symphony seemed to him quite as important as the actual composition.” Where is God in our ability to appreciate?
3. How are the author’s stories connected? Do you believe all 99 have a common thread – or particular sections?
4. Discuss the capitalized words at the end of each story. How do they compare to our current use of hashtags in social media? How do they add to the stories?
5. Which one of these stories made you laugh?
6. Which one of the stories did you struggle with?
7. Were there any stories you read more than once? Which ones and why?
8. Which story stayed with you?
9. In #9, what point do you think the author was trying to communicate?
10. Some of the stories were dark. Where is God when life for us is dark?
11. What did you take away from #18?
12. While some of the stories feature well-known people, many are anonymous in nature. Does this approach help or hinder your reading?
13. Many of the stories focus on themes – animals, the arts, etc. How do you experience God more clearly in these themes?
14. What do you enjoy about reading a collection of short stories? What challenges you?
15. In #36, Penny is irritated by her renters “because they had found happiness in a simple place where she had not.” How have you experienced this truth?
16. Why do you think the author included the O.J. Simpson story (#45) in a book titled “Ninety-Nine Stories of God”?
17. The description of equality among nursing home residents is compelling. How does age connect us?
18. Discuss #49.
19. #50 lists what the author refers to as ‘usual questions’. What other questions would you add to this list?
20. How many of these stories do you believe are a re-telling – stories the author heard or researched - as opposed to original?
21. In #68, the image of God is expressed as)(. Why? Do you agree that it’s sad?

NEXT MONTH



Small Great Things

by Jodi Picoult

Picoult's novel is inspired by a Flint, Mich., event in which a white supremacist father refused to allow an experienced African-American labor and delivery nurse to touch his newborn. The story, told from three viewpoints, offers a compelling conversation about race and prejudice in America.

22. Re-read #79. Do you think the author herself is one of these people?
23. Do you find truth in #89?
24. Do you think these are actually stories of God? If not, what are they stories of?
25. Why do you think #99 is the last story?

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