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Welcome to Heaven, Inc., the grossly mismanaged corporation in the sky. For as long as anyone can remember, the founder and CEO (known in some circles as "God") has been phoning it in. Lately, he's been spending most of his time on the golf course. And when he does show up at work, it's not to resolve wars or end famines, but to Google himself and read what humans have been blogging about him.

When God decides to retire (to pursue his lifelong dream of opening an Asian Fusion restaurant), he also decides to destroy Earth. His employees take the news in stride, except for Craig and Eliza, two underpaid angels in the lowly Department of Miracles. Unlike their boss, Craig and Eliza love their jobs - uncapping city fire hydrants on hot days, revealing lost keys in snow banks - and they refuse to accept that earth is going under.

The angels manage to strike a deal with their boss. He'll call off his Armageddon, if they can solve their toughest miracle yet: getting the two most socially awkward humans on the planet to fall in love. With doomsday fast approaching, and the humans ignoring every chance for happiness thrown their way, Craig and Eliza must move heaven and earth to rescue them - and the rest of us, too.

What in God's Name Details

Date : Published August 7th 2012 by Reagan Arthur Books (first published 2012)


ISBN : 9780316133739

Author : Simon Rich

Format : Hardcover 240 pages

Genre : Fiction, Humor, Fantasy, Comedy, Funny, Religion

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From Reader Review What in God's Name for online ebook

Aharon says

You know that rom com that's in heavy rotation on that basic cable channel? The one with the "charming" pratfalls and reheated Simpsons jokes and magical ethnic secondary characters who have amusing grammar and exist to help out the hapless leads? But you watch it to the end because it's super short? Yeah, this is that.

Malene says

Celestial powers trying to influence earthly events...an amusing read.

Charles H says

I first read this book because I was reading all of Simon Rich's short story books. I did not realize this was a novel when I picked it up and it did surprise me. In a lot of his books he wrights hilarious short stories about God and heaven. This novel was almost his nod to all of those. He takes a lot of small things from his stories. There is one small point about an arc angle who was responsible for a sextuplet birth.

Overall the story told was funny and original. Some parts were told through the the perspectives of the angles trying to stop the end of the world by making two humans fall in love, such was no small feat. The rest was told through the eyes of two desperate awkward humans who were both too afraid to make the first move. This book was neat perfect except for the fact that it made it hard to tell past, present, and future from one another.

I recommend this book to anyone who needs something to laugh at and be intrigued with for a long period of time. Although if you have strong religious ideologies and are easily offended read with caution. This book definitely portrays God in a way not everyone will agree with.

Isis says

I had high hopes for this one. I love books about angels, and this one had a really cool concept. Heaven is a corporation and God is sort of an egotistical, self-centered dick. It was shocking, offensive, and funny at times.

The reason why I'm giving it such a low rating is because there was so much fat-shaming at one point. The angels decided to give a man food poisoning to get him to lose weight. It was horrible. I know this book isn't serious and it's all for comedy value, but it just took it too far at times.

Other than that, I guess it was okay.

Jeremy says

The best fictional depiction of God I've come across since Alanis Morissette was in that Kevin Smith movie. I laughed out loud, which I almost never do, being old and somewhat bitter and stuff. Amazing. I even stopped watching Pawn Stars so I could finish this. Which never happens.

Marsha says

Drink up. The world's about to come to an end.

When a story starts off with a God bored by real-world events and favoring a kind of spiritual porn, then you know you're in for a ripping good time. The end of the world has never seemed so funny as God decides to cash in his chips and leave the table while two Angels bank everything on one last desperate throw of the dice. The scramble to save the world by getting two socially inept losers to exchange a kiss gets ever more frantic as the clock ticks down; the pacing gets faster and the story never flags as the reader flips through each page, reading about the awkward, fat Sam and the nondescript Laura who couldn't manage to be the smart one, the brainy one, the athletic one or the artistic one, to the despair of her well-meaning but frustrated parents.

I found myself racing through this book as I wondered whether the Angels would get these two together, laughing as God tried to get his Asian-fusion restaurant running and rolling my eyes at the antics of God's chosen prophet, a tin-foil wrapped, crazy-looking ranting hobo with a sign, just the type of nutso that human beings never heed. This was such an excellent novel that I read it in one day and instantly wanted to start again *In the Beginning*.

Ro says

I read this book because my book club voted for it. I would not have picked it up otherwise, knowing from the synopsis that it wasn't for me. But that's part of the beauty of book club, right? To perhaps get out of your element? At any rate, this turned out to be a very light book - a fast read with characters that were not particularly well developed. The premise is clever enough, but to me it reads with a very "jock," slapstick, frat house sense of humor that I don't really enjoy. As some sort of office comedy with a twist it is a mildly amusing read. Very predictable.

However, the portrayal of the god character in this book bothers me a lot. I understand that it is fiction and sardonic, but it made me cringe to read this incredibly unflattering, inaccurate interpretation. Imagine your own mother is famous and happens to be really wonderful but someone write all these awful things about her that aren't true, just as an attempt at humor. Again, this is why I would not have read this book if my book club hadn't chosen it.

Ran says

God decides he wants to open an Asian fusion restaurant. He plans to bring the human experiment to an end within a month. Two angels in the Miracles department make a bet with God that if they make a miracle of their choosing happen (get two people who already like each other to go on a date and kiss), God will postpone the apocalypse. However, the angels can't defy God's laws in order to make these two hapless individuals get to it. It's quirky in tone, even at times self-mocking with regards to Rich's other works. It was recommended to me - otherwise, I don't think I would have given it a single glance.

MisterHobgoblin says

Heaven Inc is a big company and God is its CEO. He's an ideas man who spends most of his day in his swanky office watching baseball and NASCAR. His Angels spend their time arranging miracles where they nudge small details of life to try to make humans end up with happy results. They are able to watch any episode of history from multiple angles and therefore spend their time fascinated by the love lives of Americans. Africa gets two mentions - Nigerian e-mail scammers and a Tanzanian farmer whose horse explodes (no cities and tractors in Africa), and Asia is a type of food. The Angels all speak English but no worries if they want to look at someone in Europe - there are subtitles available. The technology available to the Angels is that of the present day, although there is a mention that before e-mails Heaven ran on faxes. So nothing terribly eternal here. And God and Heaven are venal.

At first, this really grates. It feels as though Simon Rich believes he lives in the ultimate country with the ultimate culture and the ultimate technology. Sure, he mocks his own society by making God look superficial, but at heart it is still as sense of mocking perfection. But bear with it and there is a story underneath of trying to use miracles to get two humans to love each other. OK, it's not much but it is better than nothing. And because the novel is so short, it doesn't particularly outstay its welcome. It's light, it's fluff and it passes the time. But there's nothing deep. No real hidden message - although if you wanted to stretch a point you might try to say it shows how miraculous it can be to find a life partner. There are no real insights into humankind or spirituality. And it is gratingly mono-cultural.

kari says

Fun book.

Definitely something different and refreshingly so.

What if God just decided he wanted to do something else instead of taking care of humans any longer? And what if an Angel made a bet that if he could get two socially awkward, shy people to kiss then God would not destroy the world?

The characters were entertaining, from bored God to his mostly naked prophet Raoul to the Angels, Craig and Eliza, and my favorites, the Archangel Vince and the human, Raj. They will all attempt to save the world, some knowingly and some not. Will any of them succeed? Well, that would be telling now, wouldn't it?

There are two storylines, the angels trying to bring the two humans together and their own interactions. Each plot is developed just enough to care about the characters and who doesn't care about the end of the world?

The Angels have various computer programs that allow them to measure compatibility, revisit any moment in history or just a single person's life. The world of Heaven, Inc is well crafted.

This isn't laugh out loud funny(although there were a few of those moments), but more thoughtfully funny. It

just works.

There is also a subtle message of not letting time go by because who knows when your last day will be. This is not a "message book" though so don't think it is preachy or trying to convince you of anything. It is just thoughtful.

Great change-of-pace read.

MatthewP says

In the past couple of months, I had read a variety of different genre. One genre that I hadn't got to read was humor. Looking for a book in the humor section seemed easy at first, but later would prove to be quiet difficult. Trying to find an interesting, yet funny book was hard. Very hard. So let me stop wasting your time and just cut to the chase. After reading the first couple of pages of What in Gods Name, I fell in love. The book had everything you want in a humorous book. The book for sure will make you crack up a time or two.

Heaven Inc is the corporation that two sub-angles work for. Craig one of the sub-angles has been working at the miracle department for years. Eliza was just recently promoted to the miracle department. They both love working for the company and the department they're in. The CEO of the company god is not too interested in the company anymore. He usually shows up late or decides to go golfing. He rarely ever resolves problems on earth and just googles himself to see what people on earth think about him. One day God decides that he doesn't want to run earth anymore in pursuit of other dreams. So he decides that he is going to destroy the earth. As God makes the announcement of his plans two workers Eliza and Craig take offense to this. They love what they do and don't want to see the earth get destroyed. The angles manage to strike a deal with God. If they can make the two most awkward people in the world fall in love then God won't destroy the earth. This would be the toughest miracle that Craig and Eliza would ever face.

This book was absolutely hilarious. I think that I had cracked up well over a dozen times throughout the book. In the book, the author does use profanity, but the profanity in the book is used appropriately. The profanity in the book actually is one of the main reason I liked this book. I haven't read many books where profanity was included. So to see it in this book was not only hilarious but different too. I also liked the setting of the book. The book setting being in heaven was unique and I liked really liked it. This was actually why I choose the book in the first place.

Honestly, there's not much bad to say about this book. I really did enjoy reading every page of it. One thing I didn't like is how they portrayed God in the book. I know it was for comical purposes but I didn't enjoy it and at times made me a little uneasy reading the book. After getting past that part there was nothing else I didn't like about the book. I would totally recommend it if you're trying to get a laugh in. Or if you just trying to read something unique and different.

Heather says

After running Heaven for millenia, God has grown bored and spends his days golfing, micromanaging NASCAR, and bugging his angels to get the remaining members of Lynyrd Skynyrd back together. When a lower level angel in the Miracles department named Eliza calls God out on not answering the prayers that she had spent several years painstakingly color coding and sorting, he decides to fold the business and pull the plug on humanity. After all, it's xenon that's the money maker for God, not humans.

When Craig, who is one of the highest producing angels in the miracles department, tries to talk God out of bringing on the Armageddon, he's only able to get God to agree to a contest of sorts: if Craig and Eliza can pull off a seemingly impossible miracle within thirty days, only then will he not destroy the Earth and all of humanity. They have to bring together two of the most socially inept humans, Sam and Laura, who have been circling around each other since the early weeks of college. To cancel the end of the world, these two shut-ins simply have to kiss. But getting them to that point isn't as easy as Craig and Eliza thought it would be.

What In God's Name was a very quick book, full of sarcasm, the corporate grind that most of us or so familiar with and have grown to hate, a good deal of angels cussing, and laugh out loud funny. Craig is your typical over achieving workaholic with no life outside of the office while Eliza's trying so hard to adjust to her dream position in the Miracles Department. The idea of angels toiling in rows of cubicles to manage humans' daily lives on Earth often paralleled our lives here, but the way that they could review any date in history on video was neat.

Sam and Laura were pretty cringe-worthy as humans. As Craig and Eliza reviewed every interaction the two humans had since they first met in New York City, I couldn't help but feel their awkwardness and shyness. When you moved further into the present day, the desperation and loneliness that pervaded each of their souls was so bone deep and sad, you just can't help but root for Sam and Laura to finally get together even though you know it's not going to be pretty at all when it happens.

While the end game was predictable, the journey and the details to get there were so weird and quirky that I didn't mind the formulaic and nail biting down-to-the-wire ending. I give What In God's Name a five out of five. It's a fast paced, fun filled, sarcastic look into what heaven might be like if God just didn't care to manage anything. And when you look a little deeper, this is a story about how two people can manage to push each other away even when they want nothing more than to be with each other. This is definitely a fun book if you're looking for a quick, entertaining, quirky read.

I listened to the audiobook provided by Hachette Audio in exchange for an honest review.

While this book didn't take all that long to listen to—just four hours and twenty-one minutes—I enjoyed every minutes of author Simon Rich's narration. His pacing was just right, and his voices for each of the characters was distinct enough to tell who was speaking without being completely distracting. I enjoyed listening to this so much, I've had the urge to listen to it again, and I will definitely do it soon.

Also on Bewitched Bookworms

Lucas Lanza says

Livro divertidíssimo que trata com muita leveza questões como livre arbítrio, casualidade e as infinitas variáveis que regem nossas vidas humanas. É sátira social, é comédia de erros (e acertos), é reflexão existencialista - tudo isso dentro de uma narrativa leve e que te faz virar as páginas até o final. Recomendo!

Amy Warrick says

Somebody owes me. I read about this book SOMEWHERE and based on the description, actually BOUGHT it, which means that I seriously wasted whatever the Kindle price was.

The premise of this book is good - God as CEO, angels as cubicle-bound salarymen, all supposed to be funny - and the description I read compared the author to Terry Pratchett. Not quite.

The writing is clunky and amateur. It is BAD. This is a book which lacks character development, realistic dialogue, and any sort of common sense.

Don't read it.

Oh, for full disclosure, I didn't finish it, nor did I feel the need to flip the pages (figuratively) to look at the end. It was that lousy.

Peter Derk says

Okay, the premise of this book might sound a little cheesy. Let's face it, we live in a world where some dopey 4 year-old gets brainwashed by his even dopier dad regarding his experience in heaven, and all of a sudden we've got a runaway bestseller. Or some jackoff gets hit by an 18-wheeler and then lets us know what heaven is like, and we decide to buy that one too.

It seems a little odd to me that the only people who seem to glimpse heaven are those who have lost 90% of their vital fluids or haven't been breathing for the last couple hours. I mean, I get less than 9 hours of sleep in a night and I have all kinds of side effects, but you don't see me writing a book about them. Granted, a book about having to crap twice as frequently and getting inexplicable midday boners might not be a page-turner, but goddamnit at least it's honest.

What In God's Name is about some angels who have a few days to make a miracle happen, otherwise God is planning to destroy the Earth. Mostly because he's kind of over it, but also because he's moved on to the idea of running a really kickass Asian-Fusion restaurant.

This book probably contains my favorite portrayal of God ever. Not only because he spends an inordinate amount of resources getting Lynyrd Skynyrd back together, a project that, if successful, would definitely go a long way towards proving the existence of this Free-Bird-Loving Atheist. He's not malicious. He just sort of seems like the upper-upper boss of most big companies, fairly detached from the day-to-day in a way that's sort of shocking but also HAS to be the only way his existence makes any sense whatsoever.

The book reads like a romcom that, if made into a movie, I could handle. The characters aren't overly attractive so much as they are compatible, the funny parts are actually funny and not based on some ridiculous machinations that result a father in law walking in on a guy who is trying to feed a dog worm medicine, but when the father-in-law walks in it somehow looks like the guy is fucking the dog. And there are even a couple nice moments.

In fact, this would make an excellent movie. However, I would like to make a short list of actors I'd like to ban from participating in any major roles:

Katherine Heigl: Enough already. I'll admit, I was fooled by her...assets. By which I mean boobsets. But no

more. I've grown up.

Reese Witherspoon: The prettier but unfunny Amy Poehler? No thanks.

Gerard Butler: The more shitty movies this guy makes, the harder it is for me to enjoy the homoeroticism of 300 in a completely hetero way.

Bradley Cooper: I like how he did a movie about doing a drug that made him a better person in every way. That's the guy who needs it, the one who's going from a 9.8 to a 9.9.

Sandra Bullock: Am I the only one who remembers the Net? Fondly?

Jennifer Aniston: I blame her for the stupid fliptop on Smart Water. That thing is dumb. I don't want to drink from a baby bottle. I want to drink from an adult bottle, which is made of glass and usable as a stabbing implement in a pinch.
