



Beware of God: Stories

By Shalom Auslander

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Shalom Auslander's stories in *Beware of God* have the mysterious punch of a dream. They are wide ranging and inventive: A young Jewish man's inexplicable transformation into a very large, blond, tattooed goy ends with an argument over whether or not his father can beat his unclean son with a copy of the Talmud. A pious man having a near-death experience discovers that God is actually a chicken, and he's forced to reconsider his life -- and his diet. At God's insistence, Leo Schwartzman searches Home Depot for supplies for an ark. And a young boy mistakes Holocaust Remembrance Day as emergency preparedness training for the future.

Auslander draws upon his upbringing in an Orthodox Jewish community in New York State to craft stories that are filled with shame, sex, God, and death, but also manage to be wickedly funny and poignant.

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Beware of God: Stories By Shalom Auslander Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The faithful look sharp or fall victim to a "surly, bossy, paranoid, violent" God in Auslander's satirical debut collection. The author, raised an Orthodox Jew, mercilessly spoofs the Old Testament deity: God suffers from migraines, stalks a modern-day prophet and appears as a large chicken, among other incarnations. Though harsh rabbinic voices echo throughout, and characters who engage in Talmudic-style debate usually arrive at absurd conclusions, Auslander's target isn't religious hypocrisy. Instead, he guns for sacred cows: literal interpretations of the Torah, strict adherence to Jewish law, and belief in an all-powerful deity who metes out punishment and reward according to man's fulfillment of God's commandments. At the heart of this satire, though, is the pain of true believers at the mercy of a capricious God. These are high-concept stories: a chimpanzee suddenly achieves "total conscious self-awareness.... God. Death. Shame. Guilt"—a burden he cannot bear. A yeshiva student wakes one morning with a brawny, goyishe body and is reviled by his community. A man enrages all major world religions with his discovery of original Old Testament tablets preceded by the disclaimer, "The following is a work of fiction." Occasionally, the Catskills-inflected comedy is corny, but for the most part, Auslander skillfully handles heavy subject matter with a droll tone. "Beautiful day," an adman says, making small talk at a pitch meeting with God. " 'I made it myself,' God answered loudly." (*Apr.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

This first short story collection is approachable and entertaining on many levels, because it includes a strange and either funny or disturbing cast of characters, all of whom explore, in one way or another, their connection to the universe and the Almighty. The first story, "The War of the Bernsteins," pits a technically pious man against his rebellious and frustrated wife, and the descriptions of their internal "spiritual mathematics" is reminiscent of some of Woody Allen's short pieces. "Holocaust Tips for Kids" is, as expected, chilling and maudlin but also somehow humbling, putting everything in an unusual perspective. Some of the other stories seem to verge on gimmicky, but for the most part, Auslander avoids cheap laughs, his point in these stories being that all of us, deeply observant of our faith or not, take the doctrine and ritualistic trappings of organized religion far too seriously. *Debi Lewis*

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Review

"It's a noble tradition that includes such luminaries as Groucho Marx, Fran Lebowitz and Jon Stewart, outsiders who mock society with a surgical scalpel of wit to reveal the ridiculous in sharp relief. To that illustrious group some may consider adding writer Shalom Auslander."

-- Ruth Andrew Ellenson, *Los Angeles Times*

"Hilarious, curious, possibly scandalous, keenly observed and bleeding fresh."

-- Augusten Burroughs, author of *Running with Scissors*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Judith Tate:

Now a day those who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by match the internet and the resources inside can be true or not call for people to be aware of each info they get. How a lot more to be smart in obtaining any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Studying a book can help people out of this uncertainty Information especially this Beware of God: Stories book since this book offers you rich details and knowledge. Of course the information in this book hundred per-cent guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

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