

GOD THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION

GOD THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION IS A PROVOCATIVE PHRASE THAT HAS SPARKED DEBATE, ANALYSIS, AND CONTROVERSY WITHIN LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL CIRCLES. THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES THE ORIGINS AND IMPACT OF THIS CHARACTERIZATION, DELVING INTO HOW THE DEPICTION OF GOD IN VARIOUS WORKS OF FICTION HAS LED TO SUCH AN ASSERTION. WE WILL EXAMINE THE NOTABLE SOURCE BEHIND THIS CLAIM, ANALYZE THE TRAITS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPUTATION, AND REVIEW THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERATURE, THEOLOGY, AND CULTURAL DISCUSSION. KEY THEMES INCLUDE THE LITERARY PORTRAYAL OF DIVINE FIGURES, THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE SURROUNDING MORALITY AND OMNIPOTENCE, AND THE INFLUENCE OF THESE NARRATIVES ON READERS AND SOCIETY. BY THE END OF THIS ARTICLE, READERS WILL GAIN A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF WHY GOD HAS BEEN LABELED AS THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LITERATURE AND CRITICAL THOUGHT.

- ORIGINS OF THE CLAIM: "GOD THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION"
- LITERARY ANALYSIS OF DIVINE PORTRAYALS
- KEY TRAITS LEADING TO THE UNPLEASANT CHARACTERIZATION
- PHILOSOPHICAL AND MORAL IMPLICATIONS
- IMPACT ON LITERATURE AND CULTURE
- READER RECEPTION AND CRITICISM

ORIGINS OF THE CLAIM: "GOD THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION"

RICHARD DAWKINS AND "THE GOD DELUSION"

THE PHRASE "GOD THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION" WAS NOTABLY POPULARIZED BY EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGIST RICHARD DAWKINS IN HIS WIDELY DISCUSSED BOOK, "THE GOD DELUSION." DAWKINS USED THIS DESCRIPTION TO HIGHLIGHT HIS CRITICAL VIEW OF THE DEPICTION OF THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, EMPHASIZING TRAITS SUCH AS JEALOUSY, WRATH, AND INTOLERANCE. HE ARGUED THAT MANY OF GOD'S ACTIONS, AS PORTRAYED IN RELIGIOUS TEXTS, ALIGN WITH CHARACTERISTICS THAT ARE TYPICALLY CONSIDERED MORALLY QUESTIONABLE OR OUTRIGHT UNPLEASANT IN FICTIONAL WORKS. THIS STATEMENT HAS SINCE BECOME A FOCAL POINT IN DEBATES ABOUT RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES AND THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DIVINE CHARACTERS IN LITERATURE.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND LITERARY TRADITION

THE DEPICTION OF GOD AS AN UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IS NOT LIMITED TO DAWKINS' CRITIQUE. THROUGHOUT LITERARY HISTORY, AUTHORS HAVE EXPLORED THE COMPLEXITIES AND AMBIGUITIES OF DIVINE FIGURES, OFTEN HIGHLIGHTING TRAITS THAT CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL NOTIONS OF BENEVOLENCE OR JUSTICE. FROM ANCIENT EPICS TO MODERN NOVELS, THE CHARACTERIZATION OF GOD HAS VARIED GREATLY, SOMETIMES PRESENTING A FIGURE THAT IS STERN, PUNITIVE, OR ENIGMATIC. THIS TRADITION CONTRIBUTES TO THE ONGOING DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW DIVINITY IS REPRESENTED AND UNDERSTOOD IN FICTION.

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF DIVINE PORTRAYALS

GOD IN RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR FICTION

IN BOTH RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR FICTION, THE PORTRAYAL OF GOD CAN DIFFER DRAMATICALLY. RELIGIOUS TEXTS OFTEN PRESENT GOD AS OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT, AND MORALLY PERFECT, BUT THEY ALSO INCLUDE NARRATIVES WHERE GOD DISPLAYS ANGER, JEALOUSY, AND HARSH JUDGMENT. SECULAR WORKS MAY REIMAGINE OR REINTERPRET THESE QUALITIES FOR THEMATIC OR CRITICAL PURPOSES, CASTING GOD AS A CHARACTER WHOSE ACTIONS PROVOKE DEBATE ABOUT MORALITY AND JUSTICE.

NOTABLE WORKS FEATURING DIVINE CHARACTERS

SEVERAL KEY WORKS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE REPUTATION OF GOD AS AN UNPLEASANT CHARACTER. THESE INCLUDE:

- THE OLD TESTAMENT, FEATURING STORIES OF DIVINE WRATH AND PUNISHMENT.
- "PARADISE LOST" BY JOHN MILTON, WHERE GOD'S DECISIONS ARE SCRUTINIZED BY OTHER CHARACTERS.
- "THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV" BY FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY, EXPLORING THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND DIVINE JUSTICE.
- "GOOD OMENS" BY TERRY PRATCHETT AND NEIL GAIMAN, WHICH SATIRIZES DIVINE INTERVENTION.
- MODERN NOVELS AND FILMS THAT QUESTION OR CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL DEPICTIONS OF GOD.

THESE WORKS OFTEN PRESENT GOD AS COMPLEX AND MULTIFACETED, BUT THE RECURRING THEME OF UNPLEASANT TRAITS HAS PROMPTED READERS AND CRITICS TO REFLECT ON THE NATURE OF DIVINITY IN FICTION.

KEY TRAITS LEADING TO THE UNPLEASANT CHARACTERIZATION

WRATH AND VENGEANCE

ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY CITED REASONS FOR LABELING GOD AS THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION IS THE PORTRAYAL OF DIVINE WRATH AND VENGEANCE. STORIES OF WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION, PUNISHMENT OF INNOCENTS, AND HARSH RETRIBUTION ARE PREVALENT IN MANY RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES. THESE TRAITS CONTRAST SHARPLY WITH THE IDEA OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND MERCY, RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MORAL FRAMEWORK ATTRIBUTED TO DIVINE FIGURES.

JEALOUSY AND CONTROL

ANOTHER PROMINENT CHARACTERISTIC IS THE DEPICTION OF GOD AS JEALOUS AND CONTROLLING. PHRASES SUCH AS "A JEALOUS GOD" APPEAR MULTIPLE TIMES IN RELIGIOUS TEXTS, SUGGESTING AN INTOLERANCE FOR DEVIATION OR DISOBEDIENCE. IN FICTION, THESE TRAITS ARE OFTEN CONSIDERED NEGATIVE, CONTRIBUTING TO THE PERCEPTION OF GOD AS AN AUTHORITARIAN AND SOMETIMES VINDICTIVE CHARACTER.

INDIFFERENCE AND AMBIGUITY

SOME WORKS OF FICTION PORTRAY GOD AS INDIFFERENT TO HUMAN SUFFERING OR AMBIGUOUS IN INTENTIONS. THIS LACK OF CLARITY OR EMPATHY CAN BE UNSETTLING FOR READERS, ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPARED TO MORE COMPASSIONATE OR RELATABLE FICTIONAL CHARACTERS. SUCH PORTRAYALS CHALLENGE THE ASSUMPTION THAT DIVINITY IS INHERENTLY GOOD OR JUST.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND MORAL IMPLICATIONS

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM OF EVIL IS CENTRAL TO THE DISCUSSION OF GOD'S UNPLEASANT CHARACTERIZATION. THIS DILEMMA QUESTIONS HOW AN OMNIPOTENT, OMNIBENEVOLENT DEITY CAN ALLOW SUFFERING AND INJUSTICE TO EXIST. LITERATURE THAT GRAPPLES WITH THIS ISSUE OFTEN PRESENTS GOD AS A CHARACTER WHOSE MOTIVES ARE INSCRUTABLE OR MORALLY AMBIGUOUS, FUELING DEBATE ABOUT THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF DIVINE POWER.

MORAL STANDARDS IN FICTION

WHEN ASSESSING THE MORALITY OF FICTIONAL CHARACTERS, READERS AND CRITICS APPLY STANDARDS BASED ON EMPATHY, FAIRNESS, AND JUSTICE. THE ACTIONS ATTRIBUTED TO GOD IN MANY NARRATIVES—RANGING FROM DEMANDING OBEDIENCE TO EXACTING PUNISHMENT—CAN APPEAR AT ODDS WITH THESE VALUES. THIS DISSONANCE IS A KEY FACTOR IN THE ARGUMENT THAT GOD IS THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION.

IMPACT ON LITERATURE AND CULTURE

INFLUENCE ON LITERARY GENRES

THE DEPICTION OF GOD AS AN UNPLEASANT CHARACTER HAS INFLUENCED A VARIETY OF LITERARY GENRES, INCLUDING SATIRE, DRAMA, AND SPECULATIVE FICTION. AUTHORS USE DIVINE FIGURES TO EXPLORE THEMES OF POWER, AUTHORITY, AND MORAL AMBIGUITY, SOMETIMES SUBVERTING TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES. THIS APPROACH ENCOURAGES READERS TO QUESTION AND REFLECT ON THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF DIVINITY IN FICTION.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REACTIONS

THE ASSERTION THAT GOD IS THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION HAS GENERATED STRONG REACTIONS ACROSS CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS. SOME VIEW IT AS A NECESSARY CRITIQUE OF PROBLEMATIC NARRATIVES, WHILE OTHERS SEE IT AS AN AFFRONT TO DEEPLY HELD BELIEFS. THIS TENSION UNDERSCORES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LITERARY ANALYSIS IN SHAPING PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS.

READER RECEPTION AND CRITICISM

CRITICAL RESPONSES

SCHOLARS AND CRITICS HAVE OFFERED VARIED RESPONSES TO THE PORTRAYAL OF GOD IN FICTION. SOME ARGUE THAT THESE DEPICTIONS SERVE AS IMPORTANT TOOLS FOR EXAMINING MORAL AND EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS, WHILE OTHERS CONTEND THAT THEY OVERSIMPLIFY OR MISREPRESENT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS. THE DEBATE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AS NEW WORKS CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS.

POPULAR PERSPECTIVES

AMONG GENERAL READERS, OPINIONS ARE DIVERSE. SOME APPRECIATE THE CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF DIVINE CHARACTERS AS A MEANS TO GRAPPLE WITH COMPLEX MORAL ISSUES, WHILE OTHERS PREFER MORE TRADITIONAL OR REVERENT PORTRAYALS. READER RECEPTION IS SHAPED BY PERSONAL BELIEFS, CULTURAL BACKGROUND, AND FAMILIARITY WITH LITERARY CONVENTIONS, MAKING THIS TOPIC A RICH AREA FOR ONGOING DISCUSSION.

TRENDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT GOD THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION

Q: WHO FIRST DESCRIBED GOD AS THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION?

A: THE PHRASE WAS POPULARIZED BY RICHARD DAWKINS IN HIS BOOK "THE GOD DELUSION," WHERE HE CRITICALLY EXAMINED THE CHARACTER OF THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Q: WHAT TRAITS CONTRIBUTE TO GOD'S UNPLEASANT REPUTATION IN FICTION?

A: COMMON TRAITS INCLUDE WRATH, JEALOUSY, VENGEANCE, CONTROL, AND INDIFFERENCE TO SUFFERING, AS DEPICTED IN VARIOUS LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS TEXTS.

Q: HOW DO LITERARY WORKS PORTRAY GOD AS AN UNPLEASANT CHARACTER?

A: MANY WORKS USE STORIES OF DIVINE PUNISHMENT, HARSH JUDGMENT, AND AMBIGUOUS MOTIVES TO HIGHLIGHT NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF GOD'S CHARACTER.

Q: WHY IS THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IMPORTANT TO THIS DISCUSSION?

A: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL QUESTIONS HOW A BENEVOLENT AND POWERFUL DEITY CAN ALLOW SUFFERING, WHICH CHALLENGES THE POSITIVE PORTRAYAL OF GOD IN FICTION.

Q: WHAT GENRES FREQUENTLY EXPLORE UNPLEASANT DIVINE CHARACTERS?

A: SATIRE, DRAMA, AND SPECULATIVE FICTION OFTEN FEATURE UNPLEASANT PORTRAYALS OF GOD TO CRITIQUE AUTHORITY AND EXPLORE MORAL AMBIGUITY.

Q: DO ALL READERS AGREE WITH THIS CHARACTERIZATION OF GOD?

A: NO, OPINIONS VARY WIDELY DEPENDING ON PERSONAL BELIEFS, CULTURAL BACKGROUND, AND LITERARY PREFERENCES.

Q: WHAT IMPACT HAS THIS PORTRAYAL HAD ON LITERATURE?

A: THE DEPICTION OF GOD AS AN UNPLEASANT CHARACTER HAS INSPIRED CRITICAL ANALYSIS, PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE, AND CREATIVE REINTERPRETATION IN VARIOUS GENRES.

Q: ARE THERE WORKS THAT PRESENT GOD IN A MORE POSITIVE LIGHT?

A: YES, MANY LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS TEXTS EMPHASIZE GOD'S MERCY, LOVE, AND JUSTICE, WHICH CONTRAST WITH THE UNPLEASANT TRAITS HIGHLIGHTED IN SOME NARRATIVES.

Q: HOW DO CRITICS RESPOND TO THE CLAIM THAT GOD IS THE MOST UNPLEASANT CHARACTER IN ALL FICTION?

A: RESPONSES RANGE FROM AGREEMENT AND FURTHER CRITIQUE TO DEFENSE OF TRADITIONAL PORTRAYALS AND ACCUSATIONS OF MISREPRESENTATION.

Q: WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANALYZING GOD'S CHARACTER IN FICTION?

A: EXAMINING GOD'S PORTRAYAL IN FICTION ALLOWS FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION OF MORAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND CULTURAL QUESTIONS CENTRAL TO HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

God The Most Unpleasant Character In All Fiction

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God: The Most Unpleasant Character in All Fiction?

Have you ever considered the divine figures in literature and mythology, not through the lens of reverence, but as complex, flawed characters within a narrative? While often portrayed as omnipotent and benevolent, a closer examination reveals a surprising number of instances where deities act with stunning cruelty, capriciousness, and a distinct lack of empathy. This post delves into the arguments for considering God, in various fictional portrayals and theological interpretations, as one of the most unpleasant characters in all of fiction. We'll explore instances of divine cruelty, arbitrary justice, and questionable morality, examining how these traits negatively impact narratives and challenge our conventional perceptions of the divine. Prepare to question your assumptions about the all-powerful, all-knowing, and supposedly all-good.

H2: The Problem of Divine Cruelty: A Catalogue of Cosmic Callousness

Many fictional depictions of God, and even interpretations within established religions, showcase actions that are, frankly, horrific. Consider the Old Testament flood, where God, seemingly without

remorse, wipes out almost all of humanity except for a chosen few. This isn't a targeted punishment for specific evil acts; it's a mass extermination based on a perceived general wickedness. Similarly, the numerous plagues inflicted upon Egypt, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and countless other instances of divinely-ordained violence paint a picture of a being far from benevolent. This isn't the gentle shepherd guiding his flock; this is a volatile, unpredictable tyrant wielding immense power without accountability.

H3: The Unjust Scales of Divine Justice

Even beyond outright acts of cruelty, the concept of divine justice often appears arbitrary and unfair. Why are certain individuals or groups chosen for divine favor while others suffer unjustly? This question underlies countless narratives, from the Book of Job to modern theological debates. The suffering inflicted upon innocent individuals, often justified by some inscrutable divine plan, raises serious questions about the morality of a being capable of such blatant disregard for human suffering. The seemingly capricious nature of divine reward and punishment reinforces the image of a being more interested in maintaining power than in upholding justice.

H4: The God of Silence and the Problem of Suffering

Perhaps the most damning critique of the divine character lies in the pervasive problem of suffering. If God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, why does evil exist? Why do innocent children suffer horrific diseases? Why are entire populations subjected to famine and war? The very existence of suffering, unanswered prayers, and widespread misery casts a long shadow over any claims of divine goodness. The silence in the face of such widespread pain often renders God a figure of indifference, even complicity, contributing to the perception of an unpleasant and uncaring character.

H2: Comparing God to Other Fictional Villains

To further solidify the argument, it's helpful to compare God's actions in various narratives to those of classic fictional villains. Many antagonists, however malevolent, operate within a defined code, however twisted. Their motivations, though often selfish, are at least understandable. However, God's actions, frequently explained away by concepts like "divine mystery" or "a greater plan," often lack the clear motivations and consistent logic that even the most complex villains possess. This lack of transparency makes God's actions all the more unsettling and ethically questionable.

H2: The Nuances of Interpretation and Context

It's crucial to acknowledge that different religious and literary interpretations of God differ significantly. Some portrayals emphasize love, compassion, and forgiveness, while others, as discussed, focus on judgment, wrath, and retribution. This diversity of interpretation doesn't negate the arguments presented here, but rather highlights the complexity and multifaceted nature of the divine character as it appears in fiction and theology. The very existence of these contrasting depictions underscores the inherent ambiguity and potential for unpleasantness within the concept of God.

H2: Beyond the Abrahamic God: Expanding the Scope

While the focus has primarily been on the Abrahamic God, many other mythologies feature deities with similarly problematic characteristics. Greek gods, for instance, are notorious for their flaws, jealousies, and cruelties. This broader perspective strengthens the argument that unpleasantness,

rather than benevolence, is a common feature in the portrayal of powerful divine beings throughout various cultures and narratives. The patterns of behavior are striking, regardless of specific religious or mythological context.

Conclusion:

The portrayal of God in various fictional and theological contexts presents a complex and often troubling figure. While often presented as the epitome of goodness, a closer look reveals actions and characteristics that, when viewed through a purely narrative lens, qualify God as one of the most unpleasant characters in all of fiction. The pervasive problem of suffering, arbitrary justice, and instances of outright cruelty challenge the traditional perception of the divine and force us to grapple with the uncomfortable truths embedded within these narratives. The ongoing debate surrounding the nature of God serves as a testament to the enduring power of these questions and the enduring impact of the divine character on human understanding.

FAQs:

1. Isn't it disrespectful to question God's actions? The purpose of this analysis is not to disrespect any religious belief but to explore the portrayal of God as a character within narratives and theological discussions. Examining fictional representations critically allows for a deeper understanding of complex themes within literature and religion.
2. Aren't these just interpretations, not necessarily reflective of reality? Precisely. This analysis focuses on how God is portrayed, not on making theological claims about God's actual nature. The argument centers on the impact of these portrayals on the reader's perception of the divine character.
3. Doesn't free will explain some of the suffering? The concept of free will doesn't fully account for the vast amount of suffering inflicted on individuals who seemingly have had little to no agency in their circumstances. The argument still stands that the divine response to or allowance of this suffering raises ethical questions.
4. What about the positive aspects of God's character? The existence of positive portrayals doesn't negate the presence of negative ones. This analysis focuses on the specific aspects that contribute to the perception of an unpleasant character, acknowledging the complex and multifaceted nature of the divine.
5. Could this analysis be applied to other powerful fictional characters? Absolutely. This analytical framework could be applied to other powerful, seemingly benevolent characters in fiction to explore the complexities of their moral ambiguity and the impact of their actions on the narrative.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: God Dan Barker, 2016 English ethologist, evolutionary biologist, and writer Richard Dawkins opens Chapter 2 of his bestseller *The God Delusion* by saying that the God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction and goes on to list nineteen negative character traits. Now in *God : the Most Unpleasant Character in All Fiction*, Dan Barker, a former ordained minister and current atheist, proves that Dawkins was right.--Jacket.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: God Dan Barker, 2018-03-06 What words come to mind when we think of God? Merciful? Just? Compassionate? Delving deep into the Bible, former evangelical preacher Dan Barker uncovers God's negative qualities: jealous, petty, unforgiving, bloodthirsty, vindictive--and worse! Witty and well researched, this unique atheist book explains exactly why the Scripture shouldn't govern our everyday lives. It makes a powerful argument for the separation of church and state.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Is God a Moral Monster? Paul Copan, 2011-01-01 A recent string of popular-level books written by the New Atheists have leveled the accusation that the God of the Old Testament is nothing but a bully, a murderer, and a cosmic child abuser. This viewpoint is even making inroads into the church. How are Christians to respond to such accusations? And how are we to reconcile the seemingly disconnected natures of God portrayed in the two testaments? In this timely and readable book, apologist Paul Copan takes on some of the most vexing accusations of our time, including: God is arrogant and jealous God punishes people too harshly God is guilty of ethnic cleansing God oppresses women God endorses slavery Christianity causes violence and more Copan not only answers God's critics, he also shows how to read both the Old and New Testaments faithfully, seeing an unchanging, righteous, and loving God in both.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: God is Good Martin G. Kuhrt, 2020-07-30 Is the God of the Bible the most unpleasant character in all fiction, as Richard Dawkins claims in *The God Delusion*? He is backed up by former preacher and now virulent atheist, Dan Barker, who has cited Scripture, seeking to justify every one of Dawkins's infamous character slurs about the God of the Old Testament. Dawkins says the biblical God is "jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully." Barker has added eight accusations of his own. Dawkins was too kind, he says. The God of the Bible is also "a pyromaniacal, angry, merciless, curse hurling, vaccicidal, aborticidal, cannibalistic slavemonger." Furthermore, Barker thoroughly implicates Jesus in the alleged crimes of his Father. *God is Good* seeks to answer every one of these twenty-seven accusations. Written for theological students, pastors, preachers, thoughtful laypeople who wince at some of what they read in the Bible, and those atheists who are honestly searching for truth, this book ducks none of the difficult questions and problematic passages.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The Dawkins Delusion? Alister McGrath, Joanna Collicutt McGrath, 2011-05-18 Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath present a reliable assessment of *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins, famed atheist and scientist, and the many questions this book raises--including, above all, the relevance of faith and the quest for meaning.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Answering the Music Man B. Kyle Keltz, Tricia Scribner, 2020-05-29 Dan Barker, ex-preacher and co-founder of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, travels widely, arguing in debates and speaking on his beliefs that Christianity is false, God does not exist, and the Bible is filled with errors and mythology. He has been touted as one of America's leading atheists. Yet close examination of his arguments shows that Barker's reasons for disbelief are poorly reasoned and miss the mark as they are aimed at a mistaken caricature of Christian theism. *Answering the Music Man* exposes Barker's misunderstandings of Christianity and provides compelling answers to Barker's arguments.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Godless Dan Barker, 2008-09 Uncover the truth about atheism in the book Oliver Sacks calls, a revelation. . . I don't think anyone can match the (devastating!) clarity, intensity, and honesty which Dan Barker brings to the journey—faith to reason, childhood to growing up, fantasy to reality, intoxication to sobriety. ADVANCE PRAISE FOR GODLESS "Valuable in the human story are the reflections of intelligent and ethical people who listen to the voice of reason and who allow it to vanquish bigotry and superstition. This book is a classic example." —CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS author of *God is Not Great* "The most eloquent witness of internal delusion that I know—a triumphantly smiling refugee from the zany, surreal

world of American fundamentalist Protestantism—is Dan Barker.” —RICHARD DAWKINS author of *The God Delusion* “Godless was a revelation to me. I don’t think anyone can match the (devastating!) clarity, intensity, and honesty which Dan Barker brings to the journey—faith to reason, childhood to growing up, fantasy to reality, intoxication to sobriety.” —OLIVER SACKS authors of *Musicophilia* In *Godless*, Barker recounts his journey from evangelical preacher to atheist activist, and along the way explains precisely why it is not only okay to be an atheist, it is something in which to be proud.” —MICHAEL SHERMER publisher of *Skeptic Magazine* “Godless is a fascinating memoir and a handbook for debunking theism. But most of all, it is a moving testimonial to one man’s emotional and intellectual rigor in acclaiming critical thinking.” —ROBERT SAPOLSKY author of *Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers*

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The Skeletons in God's Closet Joshua Ryan Butler, 2014-10-21 How can a loving God send people to hell? Isn’t it arrogant to believe Jesus is the only way to God? What is up with holy war in the Old Testament? Many of us fear God has some skeletons in the closet. Hell, judgment, and holy war are hot topics for the Christian faith that have a way of igniting fierce debate far and wide. These hard questions leave many wondering whether God is really good and can truly be trusted. *The Skeletons in God's Closet* confronts our popular caricatures of these difficult topics with the beauty and power of the real thing. Josh Butler reveals that these subjects are consistent with, rather than contradictory to, the goodness of God. He explores Scripture to reveal the plotlines that make sense of these tough topics in light of God’s goodness. From fresh angles, Josh deals powerfully with such difficult passages as: The Lake of Fire Lazarus and the Rich Man The Slaughter of Canaanites in the Old Testament Ultimately, *The Skeletons in God's Close* uses our toughest questions to provoke paradigm shifts in how we understand our faith as a whole. It pulls the “skeletons out of God’s closet” to reveal they were never really skeletons at all.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The Story of God Chris Matheson, 2015-09-01 Part Kurt Vonnegut, part Douglas Adams, but let's be honest, Matheson had me at 'Based on the Bible.' —Dana Gould, comedian and writer *The Bible* offers some clues to God's personality—he's alternately been called vindictive and just, bloodthirsty and caring, all-powerful and impotent, capricious and foresighted, and loving and hateful. But no one has ever fully explored why God might be such a figure of contrasts. Nor has anyone ever satisfactorily explained what guides his relationship not just with angels, the devil, and his son, but also with all of creation. Might he be completely misunderstood, a mystery even to himself? Might his behavior and actions toward humankind tell us much more about him than it does about us? Enter the mind of the creator of the universe, travel with him through the heavenly highs and hellish lows of his story, from Genesis to Revelation, to better understand his burdensome journey: being God isn't easy. After hearing his story—at times troubling and tragic but always hilarious in its absurdity and divine in its comedy—you'll never look at a miracle or catastrophe—or at our place in the universe, or God's—the same way again.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Foundational Falsehoods of Creationism Aron Ra, 2016-10-01 Religious fundamentalists and biblical literalists present any number of arguments that attempt to disprove evolution. Those with a sympathetic ear often fail to critically examine these creationist claims, leading to an ill-informed public and, perhaps more troubling, ill-advised public policy. As Aron Ra makes clear, however, every single argument deployed by creationists in their attacks on evolution is founded on fundamental scientific, religious, and historical falsehoods—all of them. Among their most popular claims is that evolution is a religion, that there are no transitional species, that there are no beneficial mutations, and that supposedly sacred scripture is the infallible word of God. Yet, as the evidence and data plainly show, each of these claims is demonstrably and unequivocally false. There is simply no truth to creationism whatsoever, and the entire enterprise rests on a foundation of falsehoods. This book explains and exposes the worst of these lies, and should be read by all who honestly care about following the evidence no matter where it might lead in pursuit of the truth.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Did God Really Command Genocide?

Paul Copan, Matt Flannagan, 2014-11-11 A common objection to belief in the God of the Bible is that a good, kind, and loving deity would never command the wholesale slaughter of nations. Even Christians have a hard time stomaching such a thought, and many avoid reading those difficult Old Testament passages that make us squeamish. Instead, we quickly jump to the enemy-loving, forgiving Jesus of the New Testament. And yet, the question doesn't go away. Did God really command genocide? Is the command to utterly destroy morally unjustifiable? Is it literal? Are the issues more complex and nuanced than we realize? In the tradition of his popular *Is God a Moral Monster?*, Paul Copan teams up with Matthew Flannagan to tackle some of the most confusing and uncomfortable passages of Scripture. Together they help the Christian and nonbeliever alike understand the biblical, theological, philosophical, and ethical implications of Old Testament warfare passages. Pastors, youth pastors, campus ministers, apologetics readers, and laypeople will find that this book both enlightens and equips them for serious discussion of troubling spiritual questions.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: I Know This Much Is True Wally Lamb,

1998-06-03 With his stunning debut novel, *She's Come Undone*, Wally Lamb won the adulation of critics and readers with his mesmerizing tale of one woman's painful yet triumphant journey of self-discovery. Now, this brilliantly talented writer returns with *I Know This Much Is True*, a heartbreaking and poignant multigenerational saga of the reproductive bonds of destruction and the powerful force of forgiveness. A masterpiece that breathtakingly tells a story of alienation and connection, power and abuse, devastation and renewal--this novel is a contemporary retelling of an ancient Hindu myth. A proud king must confront his demons to achieve salvation. Change yourself, the myth instructs, and you will inhabit a renovated world. When you're the same brother of a schizophrenic identical twin, the tricky thing about saving yourself is the blood it leaves on your hands--the little inconvenience of the look-alike corpse at your feet. And if you're into both survival of the fittest and being your brother's keeper--if you've promised your dying mother--then say so long to sleep and hello to the middle of the night. Grab a book or a beer. Get used to Letterman's gap-toothed smile of the absurd, or the view of the bedroom ceiling, or the influence of random selection. Take it from a godless insomniac. Take it from the uncrazy twin--the guy who beat the biochemical rap. Dominick Birdsey's entire life has been compromised and constricted by anger and fear, by the paranoid schizophrenic twin brother he both deeply loves and resents, and by the past they shared with their adoptive father, Ray, a spit-and-polish ex-Navy man (the five-foot-six-inch sleeping giant who snoozed upstairs weekdays in the spare room and built submarines at night), and their long-suffering mother, Concettina, a timid woman with a harelip that made her shy and self-conscious: She holds a loose fist to her face to cover her defective mouth--her perpetual apology to the world for a birth defect over which she'd had no control. Born in the waning moments of 1949 and the opening minutes of 1950, the twins are physical mirror images who grow into separate yet connected entities: the seemingly strong and protective yet fearful Dominick, his mother's watchful monkey; and the seemingly weak and sweet yet noble Thomas, his mother's gentle bunny. From childhood, Dominick fights for both separation and wholeness--and ultimately self-protection--in a house of fear dominated by Ray, a bully who abuses his power over these stepsons whose biological father is a mystery. I was still afraid of his anger but saw how he punished weakness--pounced on it. Out of self-preservation I hid my fear, Dominick confesses. As for Thomas, he just never knew how to play defense. He just didn't get it. But Dominick's talent for survival comes at an enormous cost, including the breakup of his marriage to the warm, beautiful Dessa, whom he still loves. And it will be put to the ultimate test when Thomas, a Bible-spouting zealot, commits an unthinkable act that threatens the tenuous balance of both his and Dominick's lives. To save himself, Dominick must confront not only the pain of his past but the dark secrets he has locked deep within himself, and the sins of his ancestors--a quest that will lead him beyond the confines of his blue-collar New England town to the volcanic foothills of Sicily's Mount Etna, where his ambitious and vengefully proud grandfather and a namesake Domenico Tempesta, the *sostegno del famiglia*, was born. Each of the stories Ma told us about Papa reinforced the message that he was the boss, that he ruled the roost,

that what he said went. Searching for answers, Dominick turns to the whispers of the dead, to the pages of his grandfather's handwritten memoir, *The History of Domenico Onofrio Tempesta, a Great Man from Humble Beginnings*. Rendered with touches of magic realism, Domenico's fablelike tale--in which monkeys enchant and religious statues weep--becomes the old man's confession--an unwitting legacy of contrition that reveals the truth's of Domenico's life, Dominick learns that power, wrongly used, defeats the oppressor as well as the oppressed, and now, picking through the humble shards of his deconstructed life, he will search for the courage and love to forgive, to expiate his and his ancestors' transgressions, and finally to rebuild himself beyond the haunted shadow of his twin. Set against the vivid panoply of twentieth-century America and filled with richly drawn, memorable characters, this deeply moving and thoroughly satisfying novel brings to light humanity's deepest needs and fears, our aloneness, our desire for love and acceptance, our struggle to survive at all costs. Joyous, mystical, and exquisitely written, *I Know This Much Is True* is an extraordinary reading experience that will leave no reader untouched.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The Bad Jesus: The Ethics of New Testament Ethics Hector Avalos, 2015-04-09 Did Jesus ever do anything wrong? Judging by the vast majority of books on New Testament ethics, the answer is a resounding No. Writers on New Testament ethics generally view Jesus as the paradigm of human standards and behaviour. But since the his-torical Jesus was a human being, must he not have had flaws, like everyone else? The notion of a flawless human Jesus is a paradoxical oddity in New Testament ethics. According to Avalos, it shows that New Testament ethics is still primarily an apologetic enterprise de-spite its claim to rest on critical and historical scholarship. *The Bad Jesus* is a powerful and challenging study, presenting de-tailed case studies of fundamental ethical principles enunciated or practised by Jesus but antithetical to what would be widely deemed 'acceptable' or 'good' today. Such topics include Jesus' supposedly innovative teachings on love, along with his views on hate, violence, imperialism, animal rights, environmental ethics, Judaism, women, disabled persons and biblical hermeneutics. After closely examining arguments offered by those unwilling to find any fault with the Jesus depicted in the Gospels, Avalos concludes that current treatments of New Testament ethics are permeated by a religiocentric, ethnocentric and imperialistic orientation. But if it is to be a credible historical and critical dis-cipline in modern academia, New Testament ethics needs to discover both a Good and a Bad Jesus.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: God Behaving Badly David T. Lamb, 2022-01-04 God has a bad reputation. Many think of God as wrathful and angry, smiting people for no apparent reason. But the story is more complicated than that. Without minimizing the sometimes harsh realities of the biblical record, David Lamb unpacks the complexity of the Old Testament and assembles an overall picture that gives coherence to our understanding of God in both Old and New Testaments.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The God Box Alex Sanchez, 2010-12-14 Paul, a religious teen living in a small conservative town, finds his world turned upside down when he meets Manuel—a young man who says he's both Christian and gay, two things that Paul didn't think could coexist in one person. Doesn't the Bible forbid homosexuality? As Paul struggles with Manuel's interpretation of the Bible, thoughts that Paul has long tried to bury begin to surface, and he finds himself re-examining his whole life. This is an unforgettable book on an extremely timely topic that strives to open minds on both ends of the spectrum.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Free Will Explained Dan Barker, 2018 Do we have free will? And if we don't, why do we think we do? Scientists and philosophers have been battling with this issue for years. In this book, a former Christian minister who is now an internationally recognized authority on atheism addresses these questions.--Page 2 of cover.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Losing Faith in Faith Dan Barker, 2006 *Losing Faith in Faith* records Dan Barker's dramatic journey from devout soul-winner to one of America's most prominent freethinkers. Following his calling at age 15, Dan Barker worked as a missionary, ordained minister, associate pastor, touring evangelist, Christian songwriter, performer

and record producer. After preaching for 19 years, Barker lost faith in faith. Throwing out the bath water, he discovered: There is no baby there! Today Barker, co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc., (www.ffrf.org) frequently represents freethought on the talkshow circuit and at personal appearances, concerts, and debates around the country, turning his experience as a former minister into ammunition against superstition and irrationality. In *Losing Faith in Faith*, Barker explains why he left the ministry. He also offers a definitive, compelling analysis of why he rejects belief in a god and the claims of religion. He explores the fallacies, inconsistencies, and harm of Christian doctrine and theistic dogma. In its place, he issues an appealing and compassionate invocation of freethought, reason, and humanism. *Losing Faith in Faith* is both a challenge to believers and an arsenal for skeptics.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *Evidence Unseen* James Rochford, 2013-05-20 *Evidence Unseen* is the most accessible and careful though through response to most current attacks against the Christian worldview.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *The Divine Mind* Michael Gellert, 2018-01-02 A Jungian psychoanalyst with a background in Judaism and Zen Buddhism explores the history of God concepts in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions. This book is about the Abrahamic God's inner journey, an epic that begins in the Hebrew Bible—the common source of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This God emerges as a living, textured personality as tormented as a Shakespearean character and as divided against humanity as the devil who personifies his dark side. Yet in heroic fashion, he embarks on a journey to greater consciousness, stretching into himself in the Talmud, New Testament, Qur'an, and Gnostic writings. Then finally, with and through the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic mystics, he discovers his true self as the absolute Godhead. He takes up residence in their psyches as their own Divine Mind or true self. The book suggests that what God learned from his journey might be something that we in turn could learn from and that could help us at the dawn of the twenty-first century. In this way, God's inner journey becomes a metaphor for our own. Michael Gellert, a Jungian psychoanalyst, treats this story and the sacred writings that convey it as psychological facts—as expressions of the human psyche—regardless of whether or not God actually exists. He shows how the Hebrew Bible presents God as a primitive, barbaric tribal war god while centuries later the mystics portray him as their innermost essence and emptied of all projected, external, anthropomorphic images. Thus, God's inner journey and the evolution of human consciousness—his story and ours—parallel each other and are integrally related. Rich in historical detail and psychological insights, this is a book that will be welcomed by seekers of every background and orientation.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *God Went Fishing* Dennis Shields, 2010-12 *God Went Fishing* tells the remarkable story of Sigmund, a handsome and kind young man who led an idyllic life until learning the woman he thought to be his mother had stolen him from the hospital where she'd just given birth, leaving her real child behind. This satirical novel follows Sigmund's adventures and catastrophes as he searches for his true identity. While enjoying this cross between *Candide* and *Family Guy*, readers see that a life filled with death, despair, and deceit can be fun. Perhaps the real reason Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden was because it was boring. *God Went Fishing* is often offensive, sometimes poignant, occasionally edifying and always funny. Readers will long remember the characters Sigmund encounters during his quest. What more can one ask from any work of fiction than to make you think and make you laugh? *God Went Fishing* accomplishes both.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *Core Christianity* Michael Horton, 2016-04-05 What beliefs are core to the Christian faith? This book is here to help you understand the reason for your hope as a Christian so that you can see it with fresh sight and invite others into the conversation. A lot of Christians take their story—the narratives that give rise to their beliefs—for granted. They pray, go to church, perhaps even read their Bible. But they might be stuck if a stranger asked them to explain what they believe and why they believe it. Author, pastor, and theologian Mike Horton unpacks the essential and basic beliefs that all Christians share in a way

that is easy to understand and applicable to our lives today. And in a way that will make you excited to be a Christian! Core Christianity covers topics like: Jesus as both fully God and fully man. The doctrine of the Trinity. The goodness of God despite a broken world. The ways God speaks. The meaning of salvation. What is the Christian calling? Includes discussion questions for individual or group use. This introduction to the basic doctrines of Christianity is perfect for those who are new to the faith, as well as those who have an interest in deepening their understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *Alpha God* Hector A. Garcia, 2015-03-10 This book uses evolutionary psychology as a lens to explain religious violence and oppression. The author, a clinical psychologist, examines religious scriptures, rituals, and canon law, highlighting the many ways in which our evolutionary legacy has shaped the development of religion and continues to profoundly influence its expression. The book focuses on the image of God as the dominant male in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This traditional God concept is seen as a reflection of the "dominant ape" paradigm so evident in the hierarchical social structures of primates, with whom we have a strong genetic connection. The author describes the main features of male-dominated primate social hierarchies— specifically, the role of the alpha male as the protector of the group; his sexual dominance and use of violence and oppression to attain food, females, and territory; in-group altruism vs. out-group hostility (us vs. them); and displays of dominance and submission to establish roles within the social hierarchy. The parallels between these features of primate society and human religious rituals and concepts make it clear that religion, especially its oppressive and violent tendencies, is rooted in the deep evolutionary past. This incisive analysis goes a long way toward explaining the historic and ongoing violence committed in the name of religion.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *Godless* Pete Hautman, 2008-06-23 Why mess around with Catholicism when you can have your own customized religion? Fed up with his parents' boring old religion, agnostic-going-on-atheist Jason Bock invents a new god -- the town's water tower. He recruits an unlikely group of worshippers: his snail-farming best friend, Shin, cute-as-a-button (whatever that means) Magda Price, and the violent and unpredictable Henry Stagg. As their religion grows, it takes on a life of its own. While Jason struggles to keep the faith pure, Shin obsesses over writing their bible, and the explosive Henry schemes to make the new faith even more exciting -- and dangerous. When the Chutengodians hold their first ceremony high atop the dome of the water tower, things quickly go from merely dangerous to terrifying and deadly. Jason soon realizes that inventing a religion is a lot easier than controlling it, but control it he must, before his creation destroys both his friends and himself.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *Ruthless Gods* Emily A. Duncan, 2020-04-07 The stunning sequel to instant New York Times bestseller, *Wicked Saints* Nadya doesn't trust her magic anymore. Serefin is fighting off a voice in his head that doesn't belong to him. Malachiasz is at war with who--and what--he's become. As their group is continually torn apart, the girl, the prince, and the monster find their fates irrevocably intertwined. Their paths are being orchestrated by someone...or something. The voices that Serefin hears in the darkness, the ones that Nadya believes are her gods, the ones that Malachiasz is desperate to meet—those voices want a stake in the world, and they refuse to stay quiet any longer. In their dramatic follow-up to *Wicked Saints*, the first book in their *Something Dark and Holy* trilogy, Emily A. Duncan paints a Gothic, icy world where shadows whisper, and no one is who they seem, with a shocking ending that will leave you breathless. This edition uses deckle edges; the uneven paper edge is intentional.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *God & the World of Insects* Josh Shoemaker, Gary Branness, 2017-07-15 Viewed through the eyes of entomologists and scientists who believe in a Creator God, the chapters discuss the design, nature, and purpose of insects in the world while at the same time showing the beauty and diversity of insects.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: *Books do Furnish a Life* Richard Dawkins, 2021-05-06 'A rich feast of his essays, reviews, forewords, squibs and conversations, in which talent and passion are married to deep knowledge.' Matt Ridley 'Enjoy the unfailing clarity of

his thought and prose, as well as the grandeur of his vision of life on Earth.' - Mark Cocker, Spectator 'Richard Dawkins is a thunderously gifted science writer.' Sunday Times Including conversations with Neil DeGrasse Tyson, Steven Pinker, Matt Ridley and more, this is an essential guide to the most exciting ideas of our time and their proponents from our most brilliant science communicator. Books Do Furnish a Life is divided by theme, including celebrating nature, exploring humanity, and interrogating faith. For the first time, it brings together Richard Dawkins' forewords, afterwords and introductions to the work of some of the leading thinkers of our age - Carl Sagan, Lawrence Krauss, Jacob Bronowski, Lewis Wolpert - with a selection of his reviews to provide an electrifying celebration of science writing, both fiction and non-fiction. It is also a sparkling addition to Dawkins' own remarkable canon of work. Plenty of other scientists write well, but no one writes like Dawkins... here is Dawkins the teacher, the scholar, the polemicist, the joker, the aesthete, the poet, the satirist, the man of compassion as well as indignation, the slayer of superstition and, above all, the scientist. - Areo Magazine

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: God's Problem Bart D. Ehrman, 2009-10-13 One Bible, Many Answers In God's Problem, the New York Times bestselling author of Misquoting Jesus challenges the contradictory biblical explanations for why an all-powerful God allows us to suffer.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Attack of the Theocrats Sean Faircloth, 2014-07-01 At no time in history has the United States had such a high percentage of theocratic members of Congress—those who expressly endorse religious bias in law. Just as ominously, especially for those who share the values and views of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, at no other time have religious fundamentalists effectively had veto power over one of the country's two major political parties. As Sean Faircloth argues in this deeply sobering yet highly engaging book, this has led to the crumbling of the country's most cherished founding principle—the wall of separation between church and state. While much of the public debate in the United States over church-state issues has focused on the construction of nativity scenes in town squares and the addition of under God to the Pledge of Allegiance, former politician and lobbyist Faircloth moves beyond the symbolism to explore the many ways federal and state legal codes privilege religion in law. He demonstrates in vivid detail how religious bias in law harms all Americans—financially, militarily, physically, socially, and educationally—and directs special attention to the outlandish words, views, and policy proposals of the most theocratic politicians. Sounding a much-needed alarm for all who care about the future direction of the country, Faircloth concludes by offering an inspiring 10-point vision of an America returned to its secular roots and by providing a specific and sensible plan for realizing this vision.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Dawkins' GOD Alister E. McGrath, 2013-06-05 Alister E. McGrath is one of the world's leading theologians, with a doctorate in the sciences. Richard Dawkins is one of the bestselling popular science writers, with outspoken and controversial views on religion. This fascinating and provoking work is the first book-length response to Dawkins' ideas, and offers an ideal introduction to the topical issues of science and religion. Addresses fundamental questions about Dawkins' approach to science and religion: Is the gene actually selfish? Is the blind watchmaker a suitable analogy? Are there other ways of looking at things? Tackles Dawkins' hostile and controversial views on religion, and examines the religious implications of his scientific ideas, making for a fascinating and provoking debate Written in a very engaging and accessible style, ideal to those approaching scientific and religious issues for the first time Alister McGrath is uniquely qualified to write this book. He is one of the world's best known and most respected theologians, with a strong research background in molecular biophysics A superb book by one of the world's leading theologians, which will attract wide interest in the growing popular science market, similar to Susan Blackmore's The Meme Machine (1999).

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Jesus David Fitzgerald, 2017-03-21 About the book: David Fitzgerald's award-winning 2010 book Nailed: Ten Christian Myths That Show Jesus Never Existed At All pointed out the top ten fatal flaws of Christianity's origin story. Now, Jesus:

Mything in Action presents the most compelling new findings in Jesus Myth theory and critically examines its controversial reception by biblical scholars, the extent and reliability of our sources for Jesus, and reveals the surprising history behind Jesus' evolution. In this volume: Mything in Action, vol. I (chapters 1 - 12) looks at the myths of Jesus Mythicism: what it is and isn't; what biblical scholars are saying about it (and why); and examines our oldest biographical source for Jesus - the allegorical story we know as the Gospel of Mark.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The Oxford Book of Modern Science Writing Richard Dawkins, 2009 Selected and introduced by Richard Dawkins, The Oxford Book of Modern Science Writing is a celebration of the finest writing by scientists for a wider audience - revealing that many of the best scientists have displayed as much imagination and skill with the pen as they have in the laboratory. This is a rich and vibrant collection that captures the poetry and excitement of communicating scientific understanding and scientific effort from 1900 to the present day. Professor Dawkins has included writing from a diverse range of scientists, some of whom need no introduction, and some of whose works have become modern classics, while others may be less familiar - but all convey the passion of great scientists writing about their science.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Why There Is No God Armin Navabi, 2014-10-06 Science can't explain the complexity and order of life; God must have designed it to be this way. God's existence is proven by scripture. There's no evidence that God doesn't exist. God has helped me so much. How could none of it be true? Atheism has killed more people than religion, so it must be wrong! How many times have you heard arguments like these for why God exists? Why There Is No God: Simple Responses to 20 Common Arguments for the Existence of God provides simple, easy-to-understand counterpoints to the most popular arguments made for the existence of God. Each chapter presents a concise explanation of the argument, followed by a response illustrating the problems and fallacies inherent in it. Whether you're an atheist, a believer or undecided, this book offers a solid foundation for building your own inquiry about the concept of God.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Why We Believe in God(s) J. Anderson Thomson, Clare Aukofer, 2014-07-01 In this groundbreaking volume, J. Anderson Thomson, Jr., MD, with Clare Aukofer, offers a succinct yet comprehensive study of how and why the human mind generates religious belief. Dr. Thomson, a highly respected practicing psychiatrist with credentials in forensic psychiatry and evolutionary psychology, methodically investigates the components and causes of religious belief in the same way any scientist would investigate the movement of astronomical bodies or the evolution of life over time—that is, as a purely natural phenomenon. Providing compelling evidence from psychology, the cognitive neurosciences, and related fields, he, with Ms. Aukofer, presents an easily accessible and exceptionally convincing case that god(s) were created by man—not vice versa. With this slim volume, Dr. Thomson establishes himself as a must-read thinker and leading voice on the primacy of reason and science over superstition and religion.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Beloved Toni Morrison, 2006-10-17 Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a spellbinding and dazzlingly innovative portrait of a woman haunted by the past. Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has borne the unthinkable and not gone mad, yet she is still held captive by memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. Meanwhile Sethe's house has long been troubled by the angry, destructive ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: *Beloved*. Sethe works at beating back the past, but it makes itself heard and felt incessantly in her memory and in the lives of those around her. When a mysterious teenage girl arrives, calling herself *Beloved*, Sethe's terrible secret explodes into the present. Combining the visionary power of legend with the unassailable truth of history, Morrison's unforgettable novel is one of the great and enduring works of American literature.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The Crucifixion of the Warrior God

Gregory A. Boyd, 2017-04-17 A dramatic tension confronts every Christian believer and interpreter of Scripture: on the one hand, we encounter images of God commanding and engaging in horrendous violence: on the other hand, we encounter the non-violent teachings and example of Jesus, whose loving, self-sacrificial death and resurrection is held up as the supreme revelation of God's character in the New Testament. How do we reconcile the tension between these seemingly disparate depictions? Are they even capable of reconciliation? Throughout Christian history, many different answers have been proposed, ranging from the long-rejected explanation that these contrasting depictions are of two entirely different 'gods' to recent social and cultural theories of metaphor and narrative representation. *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God* takes up this dramatic tension and the range of proposed answers in an epic constructive investigation. Over two volumes, renowned theologian and biblical scholar Gregory A. Boyd argues that we must take seriously the full range of Scripture as inspired, including its violent depictions of God. At the same time, we must take just as seriously the absolute centrality of the crucified and risen Christ as the supreme revelation of God. Developing a theological interpretation of Scripture that he labels a "cruciform hermeneutic," Boyd demonstrates how Scripture's violent images of God are completely reframed and their violence subverted when they are interpreted through the lens of the cross and resurrection. Indeed, when read through this lens, Boyd argues that these violent depictions can be shown to bear witness to the same self-sacrificial character of God that was supremely revealed on the cross.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Fahrenheit 451 Ray Bradbury, 1968 A fireman in charge of burning books meets a revolutionary school teacher who dares to read. Depicts a future world in which all printed reading material is burned.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: All the Ugly and Wonderful Things Bryn Greenwood, 2016-08-09 Struggling to raise her little brother Donal, eight-year-old Wavy is the only responsible adult around. Obsessed with the constellations, she finds peace in the starry night sky above the fields behind her house, until one night her star-gazing causes an accident. After witnessing his motorcycle wreck, she forms an unusual friendship with one of her father's thugs, Kellen, a tattooed ex-con with a heart of gold. By the time Wavy is a teenager, her relationship with Kellen is the only tender thing in a brutal world of addicts and debauchery--

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: The Old Testament Case for Nonviolence Matthew Curtis Fleischer, 2017-11-28 You've heard about the child sacrifice, forced cannibalism, and mass murder. Now get the rest of the story. Fleischer explains the Old Testament like never before, cutting through the popular misperceptions to provide a compelling, scripturally based, and highly readable case for a good, just, and loving God, one who hates violence--and always has. This book will strengthen your faith and equip you to defend it at the same time. End your struggle to appreciate the God of the Old Testament today. Discover a deity who is more beautiful than you have ever imagined. In the first six pages of his new book, Matthew Curtis Fleischer describes the problem of divine violence in the Old Testament as well as anyone ever has. In the following 200-plus pages, he offers Christians committed to biblical authority an intelligent and humane way of interpreting those passages, leading humanity from violence to nonviolence in the way of Jesus. Fleischer is an attorney, and he makes his case with clarity that would win over any unbiased jury. - Brian D. McLaren, author of *The Great Spiritual Migration*--Amazon.prime.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: Scent of Apples Bienvenido N. Santos, 2015 This collection of sixteen stories bring the work of a distinguished Filipino writer to an American audience. *Scent of Apples* contains work from the 1940s to the 1970s. Although many of Santos's writings have been published in the Philippines, *Scent of Apples* is his only book published in the United States. -- from back cover.

god the most unpleasant character in all fiction: One Big Damn Puzzle John Harding, 2007-03-27 On an island paradise somewhere in the South Pacific, Managua—the only native who can read or write—is busily translating Hamlet into pidgin English when a plane interrupts his noble work. Strapping on his false leg, he makes his way to the landing strip to greet the unexpected

arrival: William Hardt, a young American lawyer driven by his misguided ambition to win reparations for the island's inhabitants. Hardt is not the first white outsider to pay a visit; the British came earlier, bringing their language, the small pigs that run wild in the jungle, and Shakespeare . . . and the Americans followed with guns, land mines, and Coca-Cola. But in this place of riotously logical ritual, Hardt's determined quest to do good could make him the most devastating visitor of all. Profoundly moving and aching funny, *One Big Damn Puzzler* brilliantly explores the collision of the twenty-first century with unsullied pagan reality—and establishes John Harding as one of the most imaginative contemporary chroniclers of the human condition.

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