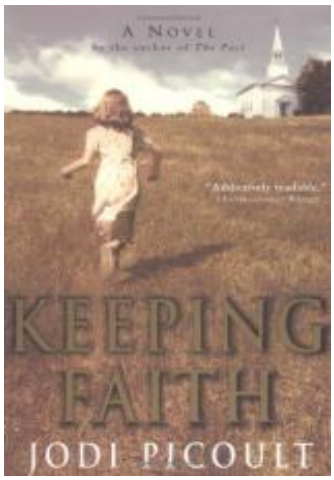
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Keeping Faith: A Novel

by Jodi Picoult



About the Book

For the second time in her marriage, Mariah White catches her husband with another woman, and Faith, their seven-year-old daughter, witnesses every painful minute. In the aftermath of a sudden divorce, Mariah struggles with depression and Faith begins to confide in an imaginary friend. At first, Mariah dismisses these exchanges as a child's imagination. But when Faith starts reciting passages from the Bible, develops stigmata, and begins to perform miraculous healings, Mariah wonders if her daughter--a girl with no religious background-might actually be seeing God. As word spreads and controversy flares, Mariah and Faith are besieged by believers and disbelievers alike, caught in a media circus that threatens what little stability they have left. Building inexorably to a climactic battle for custody, **Keeping Faith** explores a family plagued by the media, the medical profession, and organized religion in a world where everyone has an opinion but no one knows the truth. Fascinating, thoughtful, and suspenseful, this extraordinary novel is Jodi Picoult at her best: controversial and compelling.

Discussion Guide

1. Much is said in the story about Mariah not being a good mother. Do you think this criticism is valid? Does Faith think Mariah is a good mother? Is motherhood truly a "work in progress," as Millie describes it?

2. Mariah describes her marriage as perfect, yet moments after she and Faith discover Colin with another woman, Mariah says, "Oh God, it is happening again." Are there other indications in the story that Mariah refuses to see the truth that is right in front of her?

3. Do you think there is a psychological basis for the appearance of Faith's "Guard?" Why do you think Faith was "chosen?"

4. At what moment does Mariah begin to believe in Faith? How about Millie? Ian? Dr. Keller? Who must take the

greatest leap of faith?

5. Mariah says, "You can't be a mother, can you, if your child is taken away." As you read, who did you want to win custody of Faith?

6. There are two mother-daughter sets in this book: Faith and Mariah, and Mariah and Millie. Discuss Millie. What are some of the good things Mariah learned from her? Some of the bad things? In the beginning of the story they seem to be very different people. Is this true at the end?

7. Kenzie says: "The issue in this custody hearing is where the best home is for Faith. That doesn't leave a lot of room for God." Do you agree?

8. Do you think the Catholic Church had the right to examine Faith, a Jewish girl? Why is religion so difficult for some people to discuss? Would this story be different if it took place in the South or any other part of the country?

9. Toward the end of the story, Mariah is tugged across the yard by an exuberant Faith, "following in her daughter's footsteps." Whom did you learn the most from in the story? Who is the main character of the book: Mariah? Faith? God?

Author Bio

Jodi Picoult is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of over 30 novels, including HOLLOW BONES, BY ANY OTHER NAME, MAD HONEY (co-authored with Jennifer Finney Boylan), WISH YOU WERE HERE, THE BOOK OF TWO WAYS, A SPARK OF LIGHT, SMALL GREAT THINGS, LEAVING TIME and MY SISTER'S KEEPER, and, with daughter Samantha van Leer, two young adult novels, BETWEEN THE LINES and OFF THE PAGE. She lives in New Hampshire with her husband.

Critical Praise

"Picoult does a spectacular job weaving in all sorts of spiritual elements.... The story makes you wonder about God. And that's a rare moment in modern fiction." "

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