



Evolving in Monkey Town: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions

By Rachel Held Evans

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Eighty years after the Scopes Monkey Trial made a spectacle of Christian fundamentalism and brought national attention to her hometown, Rachel Held Evans faced a trial of her own when she began to have doubts about her faith. Growing up in a culture obsessed with apologetics, Evans asks questions she never thought she would ask. She learns that in order for her faith to survive in a postmodern context, it must adapt to change and evolve. Using as an illustration her own spiritual journey from certainty, through doubt, to faith, Evans adds a unique perspective to the ongoing dialogue about postmodernism and the church that has so captivated the Christian community in recent years. In a changing cultural environment where new ideas threaten the safety and security of the faith, *Evolving in Monkey Town* is a fearlessly honest story of survival.

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Evolving in Monkey Town: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions By Rachel Held Evans Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #667877 in Books
- Brand: HarperCollins Christian Pub.
- Published on: 2010-06-26
- Released on: 2010-06-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.99" h x .63" w x 5.47" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"These days the stories I love to read are the ones that ask questions, that live in the tension, that allow me to bring my doubt and uncertainty and join the conversation. Rachel Held Evans' *Evolving in Monkey Town* is one of those stories." -- Shauna Niequist| "This book is an argument---Rachel argues with herself, God, the Bible, and Southern fundamentalism. Somehow, though, we are the winners in this argument because we learn and watch as a young woman emerges into a maturing faith that lets the kingdom vision of Jesus reshape her life. I found myself cheering her on." -- Scot McKnight| "Rachel Held Evans is brilliant, gutsy, real, and hilarious, and *Evolving in Monkey Town* impacted my spiritual journey in ways I never imagined. I can't remember a book that I enjoyed reading more, partly because Rachel is a great writer, and partly because she so fearlessly examines the conflict between her inherited beliefs about God and the truth of her own spiritual experience. There's a certain weight to *Evolving in Monkey Town* that distinguishes it from the other spiritual memoir books out there." -- Jim Palmer| "Can I tell you how much I admire Rachel Held Evans? She is smart, compassionate, funny, and relentlessly inquisitive. It is the questions she asks, not the answers she uncovers, that make *Evolving in Monkey Town* such a compelling read. There are many good books worth reading, but a truly remarkable book will leave you pondering matters long after the cover is closed. I loved this book. That Evans wrote a remarkable debut at such a young age makes me want to slap her, bless her heart." -- Karen Spears Zacharias| "Rachel's humorous yet humble memoir of growing up in the evangelical world serves as an encouraging guide for anyone looking to navigate through that particular subculture. As I saw my own journey reflected in its pages, I appreciated Rachel's honesty in revealing the doubts and questions that arose when she confronted the cracks in the evangelical facade. The story told here is both faith and doubt affirming, a beautiful reflection of a heart earnestly seeking to follow God fully." -- Julie Clawson| "A whole generation of evangelicalism's brightest young people, based upon a common misunderstanding of 1 Peter 3:15, was taught that vital, living faith is established by a 'worldview' that one can explain and defend. Rachel Held Evans, a bright and talented young writer with obvious courage, challenges this 'sacred cow.' Her discovery is surely right---we need a faith that obeys, not a worldview rooted in absolute certainty. She will help you embrace the questions without losing the reality of faith." -- John H. Armstrong

From the Publisher

"With *Evolving in Monkey Town*, Rachel Held Evans steps onto the stage as a gifted writer, an honest storyteller, and a compelling voice in the Christian community. She represents what is most hopeful and promising in a new generation of articulate, intelligent, and faithful young leaders.

"These days the stories I love to read are the ones that ask questions, that live in the tension, that allow me to bring my doubt and uncertainty and join the conversation. Rachel Held Evans' *Evolving in Monkey Town* is one of those stories." -- Shauna Niequist, author of *Cold Tangerines* and *Bittersweet*

"This book is an argument--Rachel argues with herself, God, the Bible, and Southern fundamentalism. Somehow, though, we are the winners in this argument because we learn and watch as a young woman emerges into a maturing faith that lets the kingdom vision of Jesus reshape her life. I found myself cheering her on." -- Scot McKnight, Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies, North Park University

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"It's not every day that a book with the word 'monkey' in the title challenges and encourages me like Rachel Held Evans' debut. She adds a fresh, courageous voice to the faith-and-doubt discussion, and it's a voice all of us need to hear." -- Jason Boyett, Author, of *O Me of Little Faith: True Confessions of a Spiritual Weakling*

"*Evolving in Monkey Town* is the kind of book I'll pass along. Rachel Held Evans so accurately highlights her struggles to have a genuine, life-changing, world-beautifying faith. I love her heart, her journey, her questions, and her tentative understanding of Jesus. I'll be thinking about this book and its message for months and years to come. An important read." -- Mary DeMuth, author of *Thin Places: A Memoir*

"When we find ourselves asking tough questions, sometimes we want answers, but many times we just want a friend who is asking the same questions we are. Written with refreshing honesty, Rachel Held Evans' new book *Evolving in Monkey Town* is going to be that friend for many people." -- Chad Gibbs, Author, of *God and Football: Faith and Fanaticism in the SEC*

"Rachel's humorous yet humble memoir of growing up in the evangelical world serves as an encouraging guide for anyone looking to navigate through that particular subculture. The story told here is both faith and doubt affirming, a beautiful reflection of a heart earnestly seeking to follow God fully." -- Julie Clawson, author of *Everyday Justice: The Global Impact of Our Daily Choices*

About the Author

Rachel Held Evans is a *New York Times* bestselling author who has been featured by many national media outlets including NPR, Slate, BBC, The Washington Post, NBC's Today show, People, and The Atlantic. Find out more at rachelheldevans.com

Users Review

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Ricky Streeter:

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