



Five Years in Heaven: The Unlikely Friendship That Answered Life's Greatest Questions

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What is heaven on earth? The answer lies in this true story of one young man's journey to find hope and purpose with the help of an unlikely teacher--a compassionate and wise old nun, whom the world had long-forgotten.

By the time Harvard-educated John Schlimm turned 31 years old, he had worked with some of the biggest superstars in Nashville and served under the most powerful people in the White House. But something was missing. His life had come to a standstill, lost in a whirl of questions about belonging, faith, rejection, and purpose. He soon decides to return to his small-town roots in search of a new beginning.

Returning home, John meets 87-year-old Sister Augustine, the beguiling self-taught artist-in-residence at the ceramic shop on the sprawling grounds of the local 150-year-old convent. John is instantly bowled over by Sister's quiet grace and vision. Before long, his weekly visits to Sister's shop become a master's class in the meaning of life, love, humility, and second chances. As she directed him on the road to self-discovery and salvation, John returned the favor by putting Sister Augustine on the front page of newspapers and showing his friend that her life still had one very important and unexpected final chapter yet to go.

In *Five Years in Heaven*, John shares the wisdom, humor, grace, and inspiration he experienced during his hundreds of visits with Sister Augustine. *Five Years in Heaven* reminds us that we can find love and joy in the most unlikely of places, and that the building blocks of peace and happiness are always within our reach.

Five Years in Heaven: The Unlikely Friendship That Answered Life's Greatest Questions Details

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From Reader Review Five Years in Heaven: The Unlikely Friendship That Answered Life's Greatest Questions for online ebook

Elizabeth says

Five Years in Heaven by John Schlimm was like spending five hours in heaven.

I received the book in the mail today and immediately flipped it open to read the prelude. It sucked me in and before I knew it I had finished the book within five hours (I have children so was not able to read straight through...supper, bath time, and the like happened in between the chapters!).

"FIVE YEARS IN HEAVEN is an inspirational memoir about a young man at a crossroads in his life who returns to his small hometown and forms an unlikely and mutually enriching friendship with an 87-year-old nun and artist."

I'm rarely ever as focused on a non-fiction book as I was with this one. I could not put it down. I almost wish I had, as I could have prolonged the "visits" with John and Sister Augustine and had something to look forward to reading tomorrow!

Sister Augustine reminds me so much of my Grandma who passed away 5 years ago. The wisdom, the truth, the goodness that she showered upon others. While it is obviously a very Christian book, it is not preachy at all and I feel that anyone, from any walk of faith, would find this sweet woman enduring and this friendship meant to be. So much wisdom can be gleaned from this book.

I wish I could have met Sister Augustine. Yet Schlimm makes it seem as though I have. He brings her whole personality, her whole soul, out through the pages. Sometimes while reading I felt as though I was actually observing their conversation from a corner of the room they were in.

This is a story of friendship. Of faith. Of love. Of hope. Of life. If only we could all be so lucky to have a Sister Augustine in our life.

This will be a book that I will read again, especially on a day that I need some encouragement and wisdom. Another book that makes it to my bookshelves (a rare occurrence, it must be a five star book for me to keep it!).

This book was given to me by Blogging for Books in exchange for my honest review. See my complete review at <http://www.trenchesofmommyhood.blogsp...>

diann bryan says

Five years in Heaven ! This unlikely friendship was a Wonderful read. Sister Augustine & John Schlimm had a unique friendship that started with the love of art. And through out this 5yr. Journey. Many discussions of faith, art, Patience, forgiveness, joys and sorrows were shared. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who loves a sweet story.

Kathleen A. Yeager says

I had such a hard time putting down this book. I can't even begin to say how much I enjoyed this book. My only regret, that I never had the blessing of meeting Sister Augustine. But, even with that being the case, John brought her alive to me on each and every page. I could just sit and picture the two of them together along with Blitzen.... Definitely a book everyone should read.

Mary Kenyon says

"God never gives us more than we can handle. When we see each joy and, yes, sorrow that comes to us as a gift, and we greet both with gratitude, that's what makes us stronger people. That gratitude is what helps us build our faith and gives us purpose while we're here. Otherwise, so much would be unbearable." (page 31) That is just one of the nuggets of wisdom I jotted down as I read this beautiful book. "I want one," I thought as I read the author's story. "I want an old nun friend who can teach me with her wise words and gentle tone." And then I realized I'd had that in my mother, if only I'd taken more time to really listen to her, hadn't been so busy chasing babies around her house when I'd visited. Like Sister Augustine, my mother was an artist and devout in her faith. Sister Augustine was a rare old soul, open and loving. To think that a young man such as Schlimm could connect and learn from her says something about his soul as well. This was more than a friendship~ it was two quiet souls connecting in a world that sometimes seems to have gone mad. This will be a story that stays with me for a long time. I will be purchasing a copy for my library, encouraging my patrons to read it. I expect to make it one of our Book Club selections, as well.

"These days, people are so caught up in a world that's competitive and full of temptations. Everyone wants something bigger or more than their neighbor has. A bigger house, a bigger job, more money, more clothes, more gadgets, more popularity, more things. Everyone tries to outdo one another. It's rare to hear of someone who wants a bigger heart, a bigger faith, or a bigger sense of gratitude for what they already have." (page 77) This book makes you want that bigger heart, bigger faith, bigger sense of gratitude.

Jackie says

Perfect title for this beautiful story!

Naoise Nickolay says

I have no idea why it took me so long to finish this book. I think I actually read it 5 or 6 times going back over passages or chapters to reread them. It is not moving off my bedside table as I will probably continue to pick it up and put down. It's just that type of book. Full off good stuff, anecdotes and thought provoking. I did receive a complimentary copy but this has not influenced my review. (It took me 3 years to the day... how coincidentalto get it out so barely supporting the author, but I do appreciate his talent)

Judy Smith says

What a wonderful book! This one will be read over and over.

Trisha Owens says

This was a charming true story of a relationship between Sister Augustine, a self-taught artist and potter, and the author, John Schlimm a Harvard-educated young man who returns to his hometown, after having worked with many superstars and even in the White House. John meets Sister Augustine at a local convent, where she has been working for years on her own style of pottery and mixtures of paints, glazes, and unique firings in the kiln. (Think Raku) The two form a very special relationship, where they discuss the meaning of life and self-discovery. This book will stay with you a while after you finish it, leaving you with the idea that one can always find peace and happiness, as they are within reach if you only open your eyes to them. Enjoy! Sister Augustine's grace and vision are unforgettable.

Megidy-Meg (can I decide another day?) says

This book was given to me by Blogging for Books in exchange for an honest review. So it's gonna be a long one.

TL;DR: Maybe it was just the wrong point in my life to read this book. I wanted to be touched by the lessons from Sister Augustine, but never felt close enough to any of the characters to take what they were saying to heart. We only got limited peeks into the lives of the characters outside of the ceramics shop, which I really struggled with because I wanted to like this book.

I didn't overly enjoy this book. I finished it on principle. I wasn't so riveted at any point that I couldn't stop reading, which is always disappointing. After seeing the summary that a man in his 30s befriends a nun in her late 80s, I was thinking that his book would be similar to Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom, which I loved. A friend brings John, the main character, to the local convent's ceramics shop one day and John meets Sister Augustine. Due to his ~~unhealthy obsession with ceramics~~ love of art he decides to visit again and eventually befriends the nun after several visits.

The reader is told over and over and over and over of the same details. The quaintness of the ceramics shop, how adorable the shop was, how splendid the shop was. How Sister's eyes were always twinkling, always. Maybe she had cataracts? I'm not sure, but her eyes were ALWAYS twinkling or sparkling or shining or light was reflecting from them in a way that needed to be pointed out. Within the ceramics shop, we were told of the different paint color names, the strokes of the paintbrushes, the process of painting forget-me-nots, details that weren't always necessary to be repeated. John's secrets, his life, his art, his cookbook, his dog. Everything was overly described. Not always in the amount of detail (but sometimes), but in repetition. Each time John visited the ceramics shop, it was described. Each time there was an intimate conversation, John would point out that he was withholding information from his "friend."

If they were so close, why were there so many things he didn't share with her? Especially after so many years of being friends? Also, who peer pressures a 90 year old nun into working harder than she already does? This

conversation actually happened at one point during the book where John admitted he felt like he was pushing Sister into doing more things and she said it was ok. I just wanted to shake John and ask him what was wrong with him, why was he so selfish?

His instance that she take credit for everything she created, while I understood it, it also felt forced. So little of the conversations were fleshed out, which would have really made the story feel more genuine and would have taken the place of ALL those details that were repeated over and over. For instance, for many instances when John swiped the wind chimes we are reminded of WHY he swiped the wind chimes.

I just never felt the closeness that the author claimed to have had with Sister Augustine. It felt more like he was visiting a nursing home and chatting with the residents, except he was going to a ceramics shop where he purchased items from a nun. I didn't walk away feeling like I knew the characters very well at all, which was a serious struggle for me.

The prelude was entirely pointless. Honestly, I'd completely forgotten about it until I was writing the review looking for how many different ways the ceramics shop was described. A book about a 90 year old nun is only going to end one way, so I wasn't surprised when the end came. Sadly, irritation over so many aspects of this book stopped Sister Augustine's lessons from touching my heart like I think Schlimm had intended.

Frankly Frank says

What a wonderful book with multiple positive messages spread throughout!!!

Megan says

An eye-opening, great read, especially for those looking to expand their minds, hearts, and faith. Amen!

June Stoyer says

Recently, I had the pleasure of welcoming John Schlimm back to The Organic View Radio Show which has a global audience of over 3 million listeners. John has always been loved for his efforts as an animal advocate as well as a talented vegan chef. Every time he is a guest on the show, we receive so many emails and messages throughout social media about how his life has inspired so many people to live a healthier life. It is quite fitting that he has written Five Years In Heaven, which is an amazing collection of stories that are uplifting, thought provoking and meaningful. It is a great book for people of all ages. John Schlimm is a gifted writer who understands symbolism and conveys these messages brilliantly to his readers! - June Stoyer

Winthrop Public says

We read this book for our book club and it was a big hit. Made for some interesting discussion.

Joann says

Thank you for sharing

Through this book Mr Schlimm shares the many lessons we all need to learn and be reminded of, from Sister Augustine, a woman of rare beauty of spirit, soul and understanding of life. Sisters words of constant learning, faith and thankfulness are all inspiring. Her message of remembering it is in "God's time," needs to be remembered and lived daily.

Peggy says

I was given this book by a friend. I had not heard of the book but trusted that it must be a good one. I was right. This is the story of friendship between a thirty something young man and an elderly nun. They share a love of art. She makes ceramics to help support her convent and he does folk art. They become fast friends and are very good for each other.

This is an easy read but full of life lessons. I liked it so much that I bought 5 copies to give to friends. It is a book that I know I will read again.
