

Jodi Picoult tests morals, makes readers think

JENNIFER SITTON

Have you ever sat, staring and thought WOW after finishing a book? When was the last time you read a book that actually made you think? Jodi Picoult's books which incorporate drama, romance, legal trials and moral dilemmas will make you do so every time. The research is in-depth, the writing is immaculate and the many layers that exist in each story make each book unforgettable.

I believe Picoult is undeniably the best writer of our time.

Picoult has written 16 novels, producing one nearly every year since 1992. While each book is its own story, some of the books have repeating characters that play a major role in one book and a minor role in another. While it's impossible to cover every one of Picoult's novels, you can learn about a few of them from the following reviews.

In my opinion, Picoult's finest work is "Nineteen

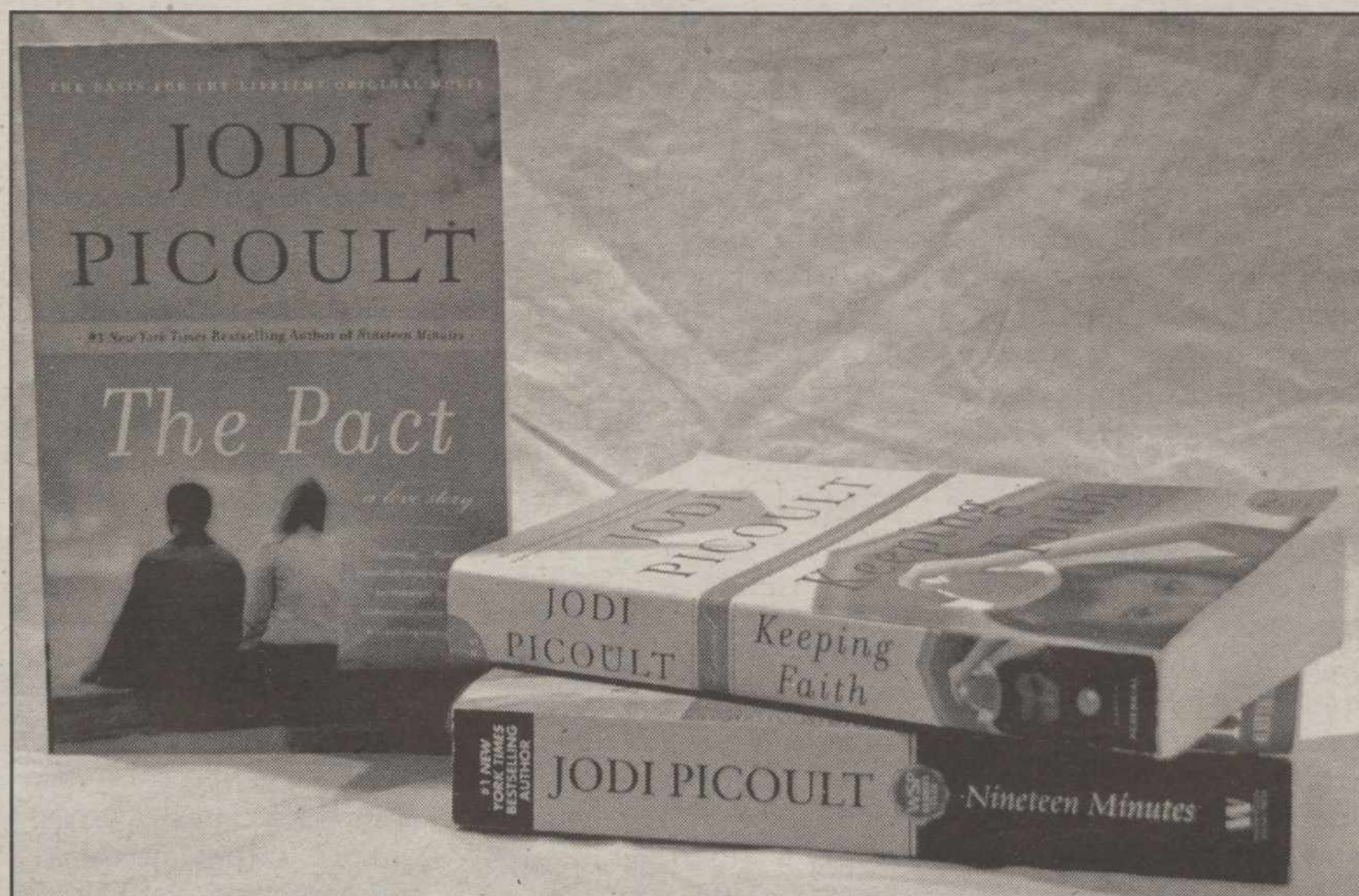


Photo by Libby Kara



lion in the Kitchen GINGER SNAP COOKIES

JAIMIE LORENZINI

November is the Oregon equivalent of "It's raining cats and dogs". Don't be deceived folks, the rain is here to stay, regardless of the hopeful optimism we hold for warmer days.

However, before you cave into the pre-winter blues, try this recipe. The simple taste of these ginger snaps will awaken your taste buds, and will leave you craving more. The first bite captures your attention. The second indelibly changes you.

These cookies embrace the essence of home; they invoke memories of baking with Grandma. Somehow, it is like the sun emerged from clouds in a moment of divine revelation.



Photo By Jaimie Lorenzini

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup shortening
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup dark molasses
- 1/3 cup cinnamon sugar

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C)
2. Sift the flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt into a mixing bowl. Stir the mixture to blend evenly, and sift a second time into another bowl.
3. Place the shortening into a mixing bowl and beat until creamy. Gradually beat in the white sugar. Beat in the egg and dark molasses. Sift 1/3 of the flour mixture into the shortening mixture; stir to thoroughly blend. Sift in the remaining flour mixture and mix together until a soft dough forms. Pinch off small amounts of dough and roll into 1 inch diameter balls between your hands. Roll each ball in cinnamon sugar, and place two inches apart on an ungreased baking sheet.
4. Bake in preheated oven until the tops are rounded and slightly cracked, about 10 minutes. Cool cookies on a wire rack. Store in an air tight container.

Minutes". Published in 2007, the book follows the story of a high school shooting. By rotating perspectives from the shooter, his childhood friend, the judge in his case, a detective and the shooter's mother, the book has unbelievable dimension. "Nineteen Minutes" is riveting

and will grab your attention from the first page until the last. It's 455 pages and I finished in three days! If you're thinking about reading a Picoult book, definitely

grab this off the shelf first.

"Vanishing Acts" has one of the most shocking plots of all Picoult's books. The main character, Delia Hopkins is engaged, the mother to a young daughter and lives with her father in New Hampshire. She had the perfect childhood with her single father and her life seems to be headed in the right direction. That is, until a policeman knocks on the door one day and arrests her father for kidnapping a girl named Bethany Matthews. When Delia inquires as to whom Bethany Mathews is, he looks at her and says, "You were." "Vanishing Acts" is chilling and awe-inspiring and makes you think about family relationships in a whole new

light.

"The Pact" was one of Picoult's earlier books, published in 1998. It is the story of the Hartes and the Golds, two families who lived next door to one another, but were so much more than neighbors. When their teenage son and daughter, Emily and

and her daughter, Faith. Faith, having no religious learning or knowledge, suddenly begins hearing voices, healing the sick and reciting biblical passages. "Keeping Faith" requires you to question your belief in God. It causes a conflict between logic and faith, with a touch of romance

thrown in on the side.

"Perfect Match", published in 2002, has one of the most gruesome, horrific plots, but makes you think about yourself and what you would do to protect those

you love. Nina Frost, the main character, is an attorney who works to keep child molesters and rapists behind bars, but when she learns of her five year old son's own sexual assault, she tosses aside all of her knowledge of and faith in the legal system and takes things into her own hands. Heartbreaking and contemplative, "Perfect Match" is definitely a worthwhile read.

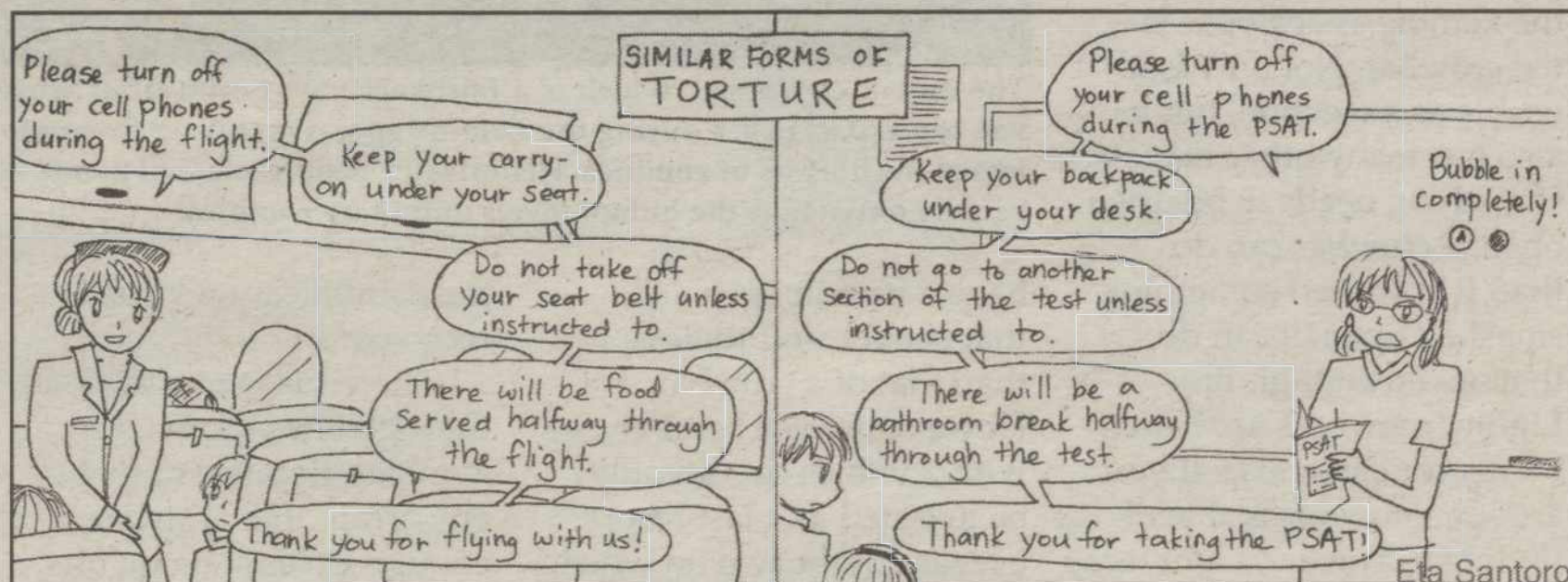
Her books may make you laugh, cry or yell out in anger, but all of them will make you think about life differently. They will change the way you look at yourself. After reading one, it's hard to read anything else because nothing else lives up to them. So head to the bookstore and pick one up!

"The right idea (for a book) is the one you can't stop thinking about, the one that's in your head first thing in the morning. The ideas choose me, not the other way around."

—Jodi Picoult, author

Chris, begin dating, the two families imagine marriage and children and a perfect future, but their lives change forever when they receive a phone call one night, learning that Emily is dead and Chris is injured in what appears to be a suicide pact gone astray. When Chris is named as a suspect in Emily's murder, the two families diverge and the reader is left struggling to learn why Emily is dead and if her beloved Chris could really have committed such a crime.

"Keeping Faith" is probably my second favorite Picoult book. It involves a bit more mystery than law, but it makes you think and keeps you guessing. The main characters are Mariah White



Ela Santoro