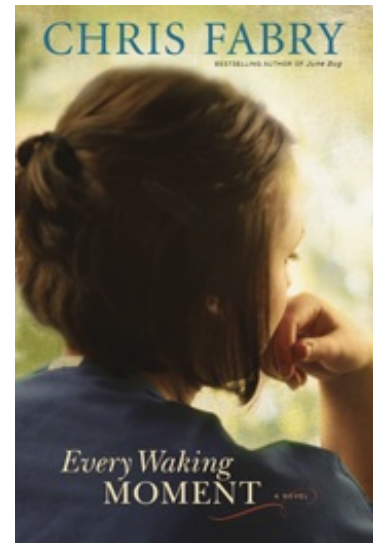


Every Waking Moment

Chris Fabry

1. Every Waking Moment begins with a vivid scene between Treha and her mother—a scene we later learn Treha has “borrowed.” Why do you think she takes other people’s stories as her own? Have you ever been tempted to change your story or to live vicariously through the stories of others?
2. When characters first encounter Treha, they’re often uncomfortable or even disturbed. What was your impression of Treha early in the story? Did your perspective change as you got to know her?
3. Devin frequently runs into tension between following his creative vision and trying to make a living. Do you identify more with Devin in his artistic idealism or with those like Charlie, Jeffrey Whitman at the bank, and even Jonah who encourage him to think more realistically? Can a balance be struck between creativity and practicality?
4. How did you react to Treha’s gift for calling people back to awareness and mental clarity? Do you think such awakenings are possible? Miriam tells Treha, “I think what you offer is safety. . . . You listen. You validate.” What does this story suggest about the value of listening? Are there aspects of Treha’s gift you could apply?
5. Miriam approaches her retirement with sadness and anxiety about this new chapter in her life. Have you ever had to face a change that wasn’t your choice? How do you respond to new phases in your life? With dread? Fear? Excitement?
6. Why do you think Dr. Crenshaw searched for Treha? Do you agree with the way he approached helping her? What eventually changed his mind about telling her the truth? If Devin could have had one more interview, what do you think Dr. Crenshaw would have said?
7. Early in the story, Miriam expresses her regret that she and Charlie never had children. How do you think this influences her desire to help Treha? Does Miriam find what she’s looking for in their relationship?
8. Do you think Treha was right to stand her ground against the three men in the Laundromat? Why wasn’t she afraid of them? If you were a bystander in that scene, what would you have done?
9. Elsie says that “[God] lets us go through deeper waters so that we cling to him; that’s the whole point of having faith. If we could handle everything, there would be no reason for us to need God.” Do you agree or disagree? Has there been a time in your own life when it felt as though God was giving you more than you could handle? If so, what was the result?
10. What was your reaction to Miriam’s attitude about Charlie and their marriage? At one point, she confesses that “it is hard to see the good in a person when all you can see is what isn’t there.” Have you experienced this yourself?



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11. In the search for Treha's story, we meet people like Vivian Hansen and Kara Praytor, who each played a brief role in Treha's past but continued to care and pray for her even once she was gone from their lives. Looking back, can you think of similar people God placed along your path? Or are there people from your past you still wonder about and pray for, even if they're long out of your life?

12. Devin believes that "a good film draws you in because it feels like life." Do you agree? Would Devin's documentary appeal to you? Why or why not?

13. When Du'Relle tells Miriam about his father's death, she wonders, "Was it enough to listen? Was there a response required?" What do you think is the answer to those questions? If you've been in a situation similar to Du'Relle and his mother, what acts of kindness did you find to be particularly helpful?

14. What did you think of Treha's decision to confront Ezra Hollingsworth, the Phutura vice president? Was justice served in the Phutura case? If not, what do you think would've been a better outcome?

15. We don't know much about Jillian Millstone before she came to Desert Gardens. What life events do you think might have precipitated her arrival and caused her to manage things the way she did? Were any of her criticisms of Miriam's management valid? What do you imagine Millstone went on to do after leaving?

16. This story shows several perspectives on how the elderly are treated in today's society. How do you feel about facilities like Desert Gardens? Do you think Devin's vision to preserve the stories of previous generations is an important one? How else could society better value the elderly?

17. By the end of the story we learn the truth about Treha's biological mother. If for some reason you had to give a child up, what requests would you make of his or her adoptive parents? Would you want to sever contact forever or be open to the possibility of meeting your child sometime in the future? Why?

18. Both Treha and Miriam contemplate whether they're content with their lives as they are or if they want something more. What does each woman ultimately decide? How do you see other characters in *Every Waking Moment* asking similar questions? Look back at Chaplain Calhoun's description of contentment on pages 80–81. Can you look at your own life and say, "If this is as good as it gets, I'm okay with that"? Do you see this as giving up on life or embracing it?

