

*Beware of God: stories by Shalom Auslander.  
Picador, 2007.*

*This is a small book with only 14 short stories in its pages but it packs a mighty punch. No one who is po-faced about faith, let alone about God, should dream of opening it, for the shock could do them serious damage!*

*As is always the case with a collection of short stories, the quality varies, but here the variation is slight as each one has a message that makes it worth reading. Every reader is likely to have their favourites: mine include Bobo the Self-Hating Chimp and Smite the Heathens, Charlie Brown, the latter a modern midrash that will stay in the mind for a long time. But the best one for me is Somebody Up There Likes You, portraying the Deity as the capo de tutti capi before whom the nastiest mafia don would have quailed with terror!*

*Beware of God is both huge fun and deeply thought-provoking, and I eagerly await Shalom Auslander's next book,*

*Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh*