

The Devil in Pew Number Seven: REBECCA NICHOLS ALONZO

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

4. Why did Rebecca include a history of Sellerstown in this chapter? Why do you think this information is significant?

Chapter 4: The Devil's in Pew Number Seven

1. What do you think was at the root of Mr. Watts's hatred for the Nichols?
2. If you were Robert, what would you have done after receiving the first telephone threat? Explain your answer.
3. Describe how Mr. Watts had amassed so much influence in his community.
4. How do you think you would react if you returned home to find that it had been broken into and that there was no heat, no water, and no phone? What would be your first thoughts?

Chapter 5: Under Siege

1. Despite Mr. Watts's incessant rage against the Nichols family, Rebecca writes that she still had a charmed childhood. Why do you think this is?
2. How would you describe Robert and Ramona Nichols's response to Mr. Watts's efforts to agitate and harass the Nichols family?
3. In what ways did the Nichols's experiences resemble life on a mission field?
4. Despite the fear of future attacks on his family, Robert was determined to stick it out and overcome the persecution. Why do you think he decided to stay in Sellerstown? If you were in his shoes, what do you think you would do?
5. Pastor Nichols relied heavily on Scripture for strength after Mr. Watts's attack on his home. How might Acts 20:24 have encouraged Pastor Nichols to continue his ministry in Sellerstown? How has Scripture helped you during difficult times? What verses have provided you with the strength you needed?
6. Ironically, attendance at the Free Welcome Holiness Church soared, almost as a by-product of the persecution the family faced. How might you explain this? Why do you think the growing church attendance infuriated Mr. Watts so much?

Chapter 6: Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

1. What does Robert's reaction to the second bombing say about the Christian mandate to love your enemies? Describe a time when you struggled to respond to an enemy with love.
2. Why did Ramona want to publish an article in the town newspaper? How do you think her article was received by the Sellerstown community?
3. Why was it so important that Ramona explained the value of forgiving one's enemies to Rebecca, even though she was only four years old? Were you surprised that Ramona prayed for Mr. Watts?
4. In what ways did Daniel's birth return joy into the Nichols' home?

Chapter 7: The Toughest Guy in Town

1. How did Rebecca's nightmares affect her?
2. In what ways were Robert and Ramona able to keep family life "normal" despite living



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Chapter 11: Unanswered Prayers

1. Discuss a time you saw your church community come together to support a family in need. How do you think it impacted the family?
2. How might Becky's story have been different had it not been for the help of Aunt Pat, Robert's sisters, church members, and the rest of the Sellerstown community?
3. At Ramona's funeral, assistant pastor Mitchell Smith said, "It would appear that we're here in defeat, but we're not; we're here in victory! (page 186)." Do you agree with this perspective? Why or why not?

Chapter 12: Eight Men and Four Women

1. Talk about the adjustments Rebecca and Daniel had to make after the shooting in their home.
2. Describe Rebecca's experiences just before, during, and after she testified in court. What made this experience bearable for her?
3. Imagine you were a member of the jury. What would you think when Harris's attorneys tried to make the case that Harris was intoxicated during the time of the shootings?
4. In what way did the jury's decision offer Robert a sense of closure? Do you think it had the same effect on Rebecca?

Chapter 13: Putting the Devil on Trial

1. Explain what the verses from Revelation 21:3-5 mean to you. What other verses offer an eternal perspective that give believers something to look forward to despite the pain and suffering we experience here on earth?
2. In spite of his ongoing physical and mental anguish, Robert never gave up on this faith in God. What can we learn from this?
3. Even though Mr. Watts was sent to prison, his sentence was seen as a hand slap on the wrist. What punishment do you think would have been appropriate for the crimes he committed against the Nichols?

Chapter 14: Life Is Hard, but God Is Good

1. Discuss what Rebecca meant when she said that after her father's funeral, she did not experience the same peace she had felt when her mother was laid to rest.
2. Was there ever a time you blamed God for a difficult, unexpected situation in your life? Explain. What are some ways to keep anger at God from making a permanent home in your heart?
3. What did Rebecca mean when she wrote, "I needed God more than I needed to blame God" (page 235)?
4. What can one learn from Aunt Dot's selfless love and dedication for Rebecca and Danny and her insistence that they depend on God?
5. Why do you think it took so long for Mr. Watts to express remorse for everything he put



