

Summary of Elizabeth Gilbert > 150

Elizabeth Gilbert is an award winning writer and author. During her early years living in New York, she worked as a journalist for publications such as The New York Times Magazine, Spin, and GQ. She was a three-time finalist for The National Magazine Award for her work. She even had an article she wrote in GQ about her experiences bartending turned into the feature length film “Coyote Ugly”. She has written many award winning novels, including the immensely popular memoir “Eat, Pray, Love” which became a feature length film in 2010. Time Magazine even named her as one of the 100 most influential people in the world because of her work.

Summary of ted talk: Your Elusive Creative Genius < 150

In her immensely popular TED Talk, “Your Elusive Creative Genius”, Gilbert discusses the incredibly outrageous expectations we put on those who are creatively gifted. How creativity and suffering have collectively been bundled together throughout the ages, and that it will ultimately lead to anguish in the end. She talks about the radical idea of instead of there being a rare person out there who is a creative “genius”, we instead think of everyone “having” genius inside of them.

This TED Talk has garnered over 16 million views, making it one of the most watched TED Talks of all time.

Summary of ted talk: Success, Failure, and the Drive to Keep Creating < 150

Gilbert comes to the stage for another TED Talk in 2014, “Success, Failure, and the Drive to Keep Creating” to talk about her story of starting as an ‘unpublished diner waitress’ and making her way up to one of the bestselling authors of all time. She talks about how success can sometimes set you up for failure, using her own book “Eat, Pray, Love” as an example. That as immensely popular as it was, anything she wrote after would be set up for failure, as those who loved her previous book would be disappointed that it wasn’t that book, and those who didn’t like her previous book would confirm they didn’t like her as an author. In this in depth look at creativity, she talks about how creativity can survive it’s own success, as well as it’s own failures.

While not as popular as her first TED Talk, this discussion as still gathered a respective current view count of over 4.5 million views.

Summary of books: >150 words

1: City of Girls

A story filled with true love, female sexuality, and promiscuity, “City of Girls” follows Vivian as she recalls her tale. The now 95 year old woman tells the story of her youth; from being kicked out of Vassar College, to meeting her Aunt Peg’s colorful cast of characters at her midtown theater, to a scandal that rocks her entire world. Gilbert tells a love story unlike any other, through wisdom about desire and trying to find that unique connection with another person.

2: Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear

Unlike some of her more creative works of fiction, Gilbert digs deep to share with readers her own wisdom and perspectives. She discusses at length just what a creative process she has, and the nature of inspiration. Addressing the issue that creativity isn't targeted at just one thing, like writing books, but that it can be used in so many different aspects of our lives. In "Big Magic", Gilbert offers readers the ability to challenge themselves in order to put that creativity into their own lives.

How would you describe your creativity? Do you think it's something that you would want to challenge?

3: Eat Pray Love

The book heard around the world, "Eat, Pray, Love," is the worldwide phenomenon of a woman trying to find herself. That woman is Gilbert herself, as she talks about period of her life in which she was experiencing a 'midlife crisis' and decided to take a stand for herself. She left her husband, her career, and her life behind in order to travel the world, hoping to find something deeper in herself. She eats in Italy to find pleasure and joy, she prays in India to find her spirituality, and she falls in love in Bali. This book is one that put Gilbert on the worldwide map, and has even been turned into a feature-length film with the likes of Julia Roberts portraying Gilbert. This bestselling novel spent 57 consecutive weeks in the number one spot on the New York Times paperback bestseller list. It has sold over 6 million copies and has been published in over thirty languages.

Have you read the book version of "Eat, Pray, Love", or did you see the movie?

4: The Signature of All Things

Returning to her fiction roots, Gilbert gives readers a story of love, adventure, and discovery in the fictional lives of the Whittaker family. Led by Henry Whittaker, the story spans over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the family grows and expands across the world. "The Signature of All Things" tells the captivating story of how one family comes about through the ages, from Henry Whittaker making his great fortune to his daughter becoming a gifted botanist. This well thought out, and well researched, book is bold and intriguing with a slew of interesting characters. From missionaries, to adventurers, to sea captains, and more.

5: Eat Pray Love Made Me Do It

Following the success of her groundbreaking book "Eat, Pray, Love", Gilbert found that it had such an empowering effect on countless women around the world. She decided that she would share just some of those readers stories. "Eat, Pray, Love Made Me Do It" is the collection of those individual stories. It shows not only how powerful her own words are, but the significant power that each of us hold if we were to embrace who we really are and follow our own paths. It celebrates the strengths that these readers have found in themselves, all because Gilbert decided to share her own. This book immediately shot to the New York Times bestseller's list.

6: Committed: A Skeptic Makes Peace with Marriage

This memoir picks up where “Eat, Pray, Love” finishes, with Gilbert falling in love with Felipe in Indonesia. The two had decided that because of their prior failed marriages, that they would stay forever committed to one another, but would never marry. Fate intervenes, however, when they are faced with Felipe unable to stay in the United States. They are left with a choice; either they get married, or Felipe will never be able to enter the country. Faced with this obstacle, Gilbert throws herself into researching marriage, and tries to understand the complexities of the dynamic. In “Committed”, she goes through the practical real-life realities of marriage, as well as what it means in the world of love.

7: The Last American Man

In “The Last American Man”, Gilbert takes a look at the interesting true story of Eustace Conway, the man who left his suburban life to move to the Appalachian Mountains. Using this unique man’s story of trying to become closer with nature, Gilbert explores the dynamic of what it is to be a modern man in society today. What is that defines male identity in the modern world. She talks about how Conway is the symbol many use to describe how we should feel a man should be, but rarely is.

8: Stern Men

In Gilbert’s debut novel, “Stern Men” follows the story of Ruth Thomas. When her mother abandons her, she bounces from place to place until she is whisked away by the wealthy Ellises. The story follows her through her life as she is sent to a fancy boarding school in Delaware and her eventual return back home. This slow-paced story gives readers a glimpse into the life of Ruth with her crazy adventures, friends, and relationships.

9: Pilgrims

This short story collection tells the unique stories of misunderstandings, wrong paths, and sketchy characters. “Pilgrims” is the first short story collection from Gilbert, appearing in 1997 with her signature touch of humor and wisdom. This collection was even a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway award.