

Nicholas Sparks	
(AUTHOR)	
Counting Miracles	
(BOOK TITLE)	
DATE	TIME
NOV 19 2024	8:00PM ET

Book Club

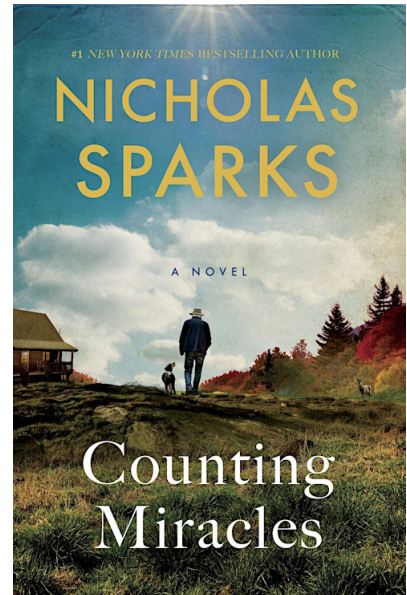
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicholas Sparks is one of the world's most beloved storytellers. All of his books have been New York Times bestsellers, with over 130 million copies sold worldwide, in more than 50 languages, including over 92 million copies in the United States alone.

Sparks lives in North Carolina. He contributes to a variety of local and national charities, and is a major contributor to the Creative Writing Program (MFA) at the University of Notre Dame, where he provides scholarships, internships, and a fellowship annually. He co-founded The Epiphany School in New Bern, North Carolina in 2006. As a former full scholarship athlete (he still holds a track and field record at the University of Notre Dame) he also spent four years coaching track and field athletes at the local public high school. In 2009, the team he coached at New Bern High School set a World Junior Indoor Record in the 4×400 meters, as well as US High School National Records in the 800 Medley and 1600 Medley.

The Nicholas Sparks Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was founded in 2011, to provide scholarships and fund educational programs for underprivileged and disadvantaged youth. Between the foundation, and the personal gifts of the Sparks family, more than \$15 million dollars have been distributed to deserving charities, scholarship programs, and projects. Because the Sparks family covers all operational expenses of the foundation, 100% of donations are devoted to programs.

BOOK OVERVIEW

From the acclaimed author of *The Longest Ride* and *The Notebook* comes an emotional, powerful novel about wondering if we can change—or even make our peace with—the path we've taken.

Tanner Hughes was raised by his grandparents, following in his grandfather's military footsteps to become an Army Ranger. His whole life has been spent abroad, and he is the proverbial rolling stone . . . happiest when off on his next adventure, zero desire to settle down. But when his grandmother passes away, her last words to him are: find where you belong. She also drops a bombshell, telling him the name of the father he never knew—and where he might be found.

Tanner is due at his next posting soon, but his curiosity is piqued, and he sets out for Asheboro, North Carolina, to ask around. He's been in town less than twenty-four hours when he meets Kaitlyn Cooper, a doctor and single mom. They both feel an immediate connection; Tanner knows Kaitlyn has a story to tell, and he wants to hear it. For Kaitlyn, Tanner is mysterious, exciting—and possibly leaving in just a few weeks.

Meanwhile, nearby, eighty-three-year-old Jasper lives alone in a cabin bordering a national forest. With only his old dog Arlo for company, he lives quietly, haunted by a tragic accident that took place decades before. When he hears rumors that a white deer has been spotted in the forest—a creature of legend that inspired his father and grandfather—he becomes obsessed with protecting the deer from poachers.

As these characters' fates orbit closer together, none of them is expecting a miracle... but that may be exactly what is about to alter their futures forever.

SETTING

- Asheboro, NC
 - Uwharrie National Forest

CHARACTERS

- Jasper Johnson - Main Character, elderly, embodies story of Job
 - Audrey Johnson - Jasper's wife
 - David Johnson - Jasper's first child, Tanner's dad
 - Mary Johnson - Jasper's second child
 - Deborah Johnson - Jasper's third child
 - Paul Johnson - Jasper's youngest son who started the fire and committed suicide
- Tanner Hughes - Main Character, searching for father, former army ranger
 - Monica Hughes - Tanner's mother, David's girlfriend
- Kaitlyn Cooper - Main Character, doctor, single mom
 - Casey Cooper - Kaitlyn's 17-year-old daughter
 - Mitch Cooper - Kaitlyn's 9-year-old son

- Josh Littleton - consistent antagonist, from prominent family, trying to poach the white deer, was threatening towards Casey, Jasper, etc
- White deer - a prominent symbol that Jasper saw as a sign and sought to protect
- Arlo - Jasper's dog

THINGS I LOVED ABOUT THIS BOOK

- I loved Jasper. One of my favorite things in a book is when you have a character that you are rooting for and typically that is not an elderly man at the end of his life.
- I loved the pace of the book. That is one of my favorite things about Nicholas Sparks' book. It is always more than just will they get together in the end.
- I enjoyed the dual timelines.
- Job 5:8-9 he has performed miracles that cannot be counted

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS/FAVORITE MOMENTS IN THE BOOK

- Was there a character that you related to most?
 - The single mom? The mom of a teenager? The working mom?
 - Jasper who seemed to have suffering around every corner of his life?
- How much did we love the dog Arlo?
- Did you agree with the grandparents not telling Tanner about his birth father?
- At what point did you realize how Tanner was connected to Jasper?
- If you were going to recommend one other Nicholas Sparks book to a friend, you wanted to get them hooked on the author, which one would you say?

MEMORABLE SCENES

- Tanner looking for his birth father in Asheboro after his grandmother's deathbed confession (pg 10)
- Tanner's car gets hit by Casey, meets Kaitlyn, pg 19 (pg 14)
- Kaitlyn goes for drinks with Tanner against her better judgment (pg 35)
- Jasper confronts Josh's parents about his poaching (pg 124)
- Casey asks Tanner about his intentions with her mom (pg 133)
- Jasper to protect deer from Josh Littleton (pg 180)
- Tanner and Kaitlyn's house date, where she confronts him (pg 232)
- Josh discovers Jasper after fall, leaves for dead (pg 260)
- Tanner talks to Glen about Kaitlyn (pg 268)
- Arlo goes to Mitch when Jasper is stuck in the woods, returns pg 281, 295 (pg 271)
- Casey asks Tanner for help finding Jasper (pg 295)
- Tanner finds Jasper (pg 305)
- Tanner talks to Sheriff about Jasper's sons, finds out one is named David (pg 322)

- Kaitlyn tells Jasper about Tanner being his grandson (pg 331)

MEMORABLE QUOTES

““Sometimes I just wish I could take everything I’ve learned, all my accumulated wisdom, and just dump it in her head. Instead, she’s regularly being forced to learn from own her mistakes, and that’s hard for a parent to watch.””(pg 39)

“I was just thinking that Monday is the perfect day to start being the best version of yourself, since you’ve got six more days to practice. Or, Every week should begin with generosity, don’t you think? Wouldn’t the world be a better place?” (pg 87)

“he’d lived long enough to know that hope and doubt could coexist,” (pg 121)

“What you have to figure out first, though, is who you are and what you really want,” (pg 270)

“It didn’t mention rain, but nonetheless Jasper thought he understood what his father had been trying to tell him. All that happened in the world, the good and the bad, offers believers the chance to praise God.” (pg 274)

“Despite his desire to live a life of meaning, his decisions always seemed to reflect the conviction that his real life was going to be found elsewhere, just beyond the next horizon. Kaitlyn, he knew, embraced a different philosophy. In words and in actions, she subscribed to the notion that life is less about the what and where than about the who.” (pg 279)

“Then I remind myself that my broken heart also means that there was a time when it wasn’t broken, when my heart was light and full.” (pg 337)

“However, as Jasper reread the story, he realized he’d forgotten about the ending [of the story of Job].” (pg 343)