

NICHOLAS SPARKS

Counting Miracles

BOOK CLUB KIT



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Tanner avoids settling down and prefers life on the road? Have there been times in your life where you've felt a similar restlessness? How did you handle it?
2. When Tanner meets Kaitlyn for the first time, he feels strongly that she has a story to tell—and that he needs to hear it. What do you think sparks this feeling for him? Have you ever met someone you instantly needed to know more about? Discuss what drew you to them—and what you learned.
3. What does the white deer come to symbolize for Jasper? In what ways does his obsession with protecting the deer help him? In what ways does it hurt him?
4. Discuss the ways in which respect for nature and the land are central to the book, especially to Jasper.
5. The theme of community and finding where one belongs are central to this novel. What does belonging mean to each of the main characters?
6. The devastating tragedies Jasper has endured in his life have caused him to identify with the Biblical character of Job. Do you have experience in your life with people for whom bad things always seem to happen?
7. *Counting Miracles* explores themes about justice, punishment, fairness—do you think it's fair that Jasper has suffered so much? Is it fair that the Littleton boys don't seem to face consequences for their actions?
8. What storylines or action in the book would you categorize as miracles? What, in your own life, do you consider a miracle?
9. Several characters in the book think that they've closed the book on love and the possibility of new relationships (Tanner, Kaitlyn, Jasper). Discuss what happens to change their outlook—both internally and in the story. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? What surprised you or inspired you in your journey?
10. Jasper and Audrey seem to embody the idea that it's better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all. Do you agree with the saying? Why or why not?
11. What did you think of the ending of the novel? Where do you imagine the characters will be in five years?

MEET THE CHARACTERS OF Counting Miracles



TANNER HUGHES

A former Army Ranger who sets off for Asheboro, North Carolina to find the father he never knew after the death of his beloved grandmother who raised him.



KAITLYN COOPER

A doctor and a single mom in Asheboro, struggling to balance her work and two children, when she unexpectedly meets Tanner—and the electricity between them is undeniable from the start.



JASPER

Kaitlyn's elderly neighbor, haunted by a tragic accident from his past, who lives alone in a cabin with his lovable dog, when the spotting of a mythical white deer in the forest nearby sets him on a journey that will change his life forever.

RECIPES: TANNER & KAITLYN'S DATE NIGHT MENU

Appetizer: Crab-Stuffed Mushrooms

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons minced green onion
- 1 cup cooked crabmeat, finely chopped
- ½ cup dry breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon dried dill weed
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 1 ½ pounds fresh button mushrooms, stems removed
- ½ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- ¼ cup dry white wine

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°F).
2. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a skillet; cook and stir green onion until softened, about 2 minutes. Transfer green onion to a bowl. Stir in crabmeat, breadcrumbs, 1/4 cup Monterey Jack cheese, egg, lemon juice, and dill weed until well mixed.
3. Pour 1/2 cup melted butter in a 9x13-inch baking dish; turn mushroom caps in butter to coat. Fill mushroom caps with the crab mixture and sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup Monterey Jack cheese. Pour white wine into baking dish.
4. Bake in preheated oven until cheese is melted and lightly brown, 15 to 20 minutes.



RECIPES: TANNER & KAITLYN'S DATE NIGHT MENU

Roasted Chicken with Fennel and Lemon

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (4-pound) whole roasting chicken
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano plus 1 sprig fresh oregano
- 2 sprigs fresh marjoram
- 2 garlic cloves, minced, plus 2 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 lemon, cut in half
- 1 large fennel bulb, trimmed and cut into 8 wedges, plus some of the fronds
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- Herb Pan Gravy



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Rinse chicken inside and out, removing all inside parts; cut off any excess fat, and pat dry.
3. Combine chopped oregano, marjoram, minced garlic, and 1 teaspoon olive oil in a small bowl. Place chicken in a large roasting pan on a roasting rack, breast side up. Starting at neck cavity, loosen skin from breast and drumsticks by inserting fingers and gently pushing between the skin and meat. Place oregano mixture beneath skin on breasts and drumsticks.
4. Pour wine over chicken and into the pan. Rub the inside cavity of chicken with lemon, squeezing juice over and around outside of chicken. Place lemon halves, 2 fennel pieces, smashed garlic cloves, and sprig of oregano in cavity of chicken. Add 1 cup water to pan. Add remaining fennel and fronds to bottom of pan. Pour remaining 2 teaspoons olive oil over breast, and add salt and pepper.
5. Insert meat thermometer into meaty part of thigh, making sure not to touch bone. Roast at 400° for 1 hour or until thermometer registers 175°, basting every 20 minutes with pan liquid.
6. Remove chicken from oven, and let rest 15 minutes. Transfer chicken to a serving platter. Place a zip-top plastic bag inside a 2-cup glass measure. Pour drippings from pan into bag; let stand 10 minutes. (Fat will rise to top.) Seal bag, and carefully snip off a bottom corner of bag. Drain drippings into a small bowl, stopping before fat layer reaches opening; discard fat. Reserve drippings for Herb Pan Gravy. Serve chicken, fennel, and lemons with Herb Pan Gravy.

Counting Miracles

PLAYLIST

NO RAIN

Blind Melon

TAKE IT EASY

The Eagles

SOMEONE NEW

Hozier

COMING HOME

Leon Bridges

SCARED TO START

Michael Marcagi

HOMEGROWN

Zac Brown Band

TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Chris Stapleton

BREATHE AGAIN

Joy Oladokun

BRIGHTER DAYS

Blessing Offor

SUNDAY MORNING

Maroon 5

MISSING PIECE

Vance Joy

DAYS LIKE THIS

Van Morrison

WELCOME TO Asheboro

Welcome to Asheboro, NC! This vibrant town in the Piedmont Triad is home to the unforgettable characters in Nicholas Sparks's new book Counting Miracles. Filled with beautiful descriptions of the area's natural beauty and destinations, Asheboro is the perfect setting for the powerful story that unfolds. The town's motto of "Asheboro is Exactly Where You Want to Be!" could not be truer for Jasper, Tanner and Kaitlyn. Now it's your turn to enjoy all that Asheboro has to offer!

UNIQUE PLACES TO STAY

Reserve The Olde Home Farmhouse in Asheboro and relive Tanner and Kaitlyn's date night in Sophia at this fully renovated farmhouse, 10 minutes from downtown Asheboro.

O. Henry Hotel in nearby Greensboro offers a luxurious and historic experience.

RECREATION

UHWAHRIE NATIONAL FOREST

This stunning 50,000 acre forest is truly one of the main characters in *Counting Miracles*. No visit to Asheboro is complete without visiting. Various outdoor activities are permitted in the forest, including hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, camping and water activities. Free. Fee for camping and off-road vehicle permits, ATV trails. Bonus: want to see the scenic foothills of the Uwharrie Mountains from above? check out Richland Creek Zip Line Canopy Tours for the thrill of a lifetime!

NORTH CAROLINA ZOO

Asheboro is the proud home of the North Carolina Zoo, one of the world's largest natural habitat zoos and home to over one thousand animals representing the continents of North America and Africa. It's also the site of Tanner and Kaitlyn's first outing together. Bonus: See the zoo in a whole new light and check out their overnight Snorin' Safari packages (family and adults only options).

BICENTENNIAL PARK

This green space in the center of downtown Asheboro is a great place to unwind and hosts seasonal concerts and events throughout the year. It's where Tanner and Kaitlyn's son Mitch threw around a frisbee.

SHOPPING, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

SUNSET THEATER

This historic theater is a cultural hub for the Asheboro community and regularly hosts concerts, plays, as well as movies.

WELCOME TO Asheboro

SEAGROVE POTTERY

15 minutes outside Asheboro, in nearby Seagrove, you will find the largest concentration of working potters in the United States. Within a 20 mile radius there are over 50 pottery shops to visit. And don't miss the annual Celebration of Seagrove Potters every November.

COLLECTOR'S ANTIQUE MALL

Founded in 1933, the Collector's Antique Mall is features nearly 100 dealers selling antiques and collectibles, ranging from toys to primitives to fine wood furniture, as well as mid-century housewares, books, linens, costume and fine jewelry, and other vintage goodies. You're certain to uncover treasures here!

FOOD & DRINK

ZIMMERMAN VINEYARDS

If you're a Kaitlyn and love wine, don't miss Zimmerman's Vineyards. Nestled among the Uwharrie Mountains, this family owned winery offers beautiful views of the vines, gardens and surrounding mountainside. Live music is also on offer throughout the year

FOUR SAINTS BREWING COMPANY

If you're a Tanner and love beer, don't miss Four Saints Brewing Company, Asheboro's very first brewery. Located in the historic downtown area, it features a seven-barrel brewhouse and taproom focusing on traditional and non-traditional award-winning beer styles. Plus a full calendar of events.

DOWNTOWN ASHEBORO FARMER'S MARKET

The Asheboro Downtown Farmers' Market is a growers only market where you will find local, homegrown and home processed products. The market is open May–October.

THE TABLE ASHEBORO

The Table is a located in the heart of historic downtown Asheboro within a historic 1925 mill office building. The Table proudly serves traditional American cuisine with a twist; baked pastries, pies and cakes in small batches; hand-crafted, and curated teas as well as retail goods.

MAGNOLIA 23 SOUTHERN RESTAURANT

This award-winning, family-owned restaurant, specializing in authentic southern cuisine. Enjoy classic family recipes passed down from several generations, including: fried chicken, collard greens, candied yams, mac and cheese, chicken and dumplings, catfish, pintos, cornbread, and so much more.