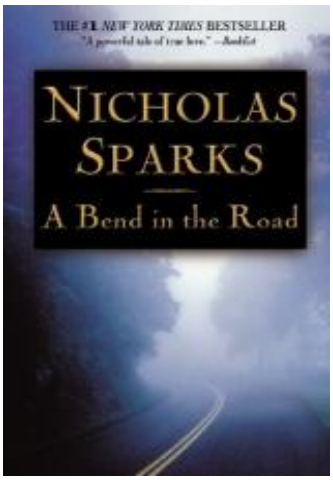
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

A Bend in the Road

by Nicholas Sparks



About the Book

Miles Ryan's life seemed to end the day his wife was killed in a hit-and-run accident two years ago. Missy had been his first love, and Miles fervently believes she will be his last. As a deputy in the North Carolina town of New Bern, Miles Ryan not only grieves for Missy, but also longs to bring the unknown driver to justice.

Then Miles meets Sarah Andrews. The second grade teacher of his son, Jonah, Sarah had left Baltimore after a difficult divorce to start over in the gentler surroundings of New Bern. Perhaps its her own emotional wounds that make her sensitive to the hurt she first sees in Jonah's eyes, and then his father's. Tentatively, Sarah and Miles reach out to each other. Soon they are both laughing for the first time in years. . . and falling in love.

Neither will be able to guess how closely linked they are to a shocking secret -- one that will force them to question everything they ever believed in. . . and make a heartbreaking choice that will change their lives forever.

In **A Bend In The Road**, Nicholas Sparks writes with a luminous intensity about life's bitter turns and incomparable sweetness. His affirming message carries a powerful lesson about the imperfections of being human, the mistakes we all make, and the joy that comes when we give ourselves to love.

Discussion Guide

1. In the opening scene, an unknown narrator makes his first appearance. Were you surprised that his story wove throughout the rest of the narrative? How would the novel have been different had this not happened? Did you know who the narrator was? When did you know?

2. The novel deals with the theme of love and forgiveness. How were the major characters -- Miles, Sarah, Brian, Charlie, and Jonah -- forgiven? How did love play a role? What else played a role? Is forgiveness and act, or is

forgiveness and on-going process? Explain.

3. New Bern is described in detail. How does the setting play a role in the story? Could this story have occurred in a larger city? Why or why not?

4. Miles lost his first love and yet he's ready to move on by the time he meets Sarah. Does Miles believe in the idea of eternal love?

5. Sarah is a wounded character when the novel opens because she can't have children. How does Jonah influence the relationship between Miles and Sarah? Would they still have fallen in love had Jonah not been around?

6. In this novel, as in A Walk to Remember, there are scenes that take place in the cemetery. What is the significance of the cemetery in this story? How does it play into the theme of the novel?

7. Miles watches family home videos in the privacy of his home but refuses to share them with Jonah. Think about the memories that Miles has of Missy. What is Miles's vision of Missy and how does that play a role in how he views Sarah?

8. Charlie plays a central role in the investigation and is Miles's boss. He also plays a central role in Miles's life as a father figure. What is there relationship like? How does Charlie view Miles? How does Miles view Charlie? Is this typical of father/son relationships?

9. Describe Jonah's character. Is he believable as a young child?

Author Bio

Nicholas Sparks is the author of 23 books, all of which have been *New York Times* bestsellers. His books have been published across more than 50 languages with over 150 million copies sold worldwide, and 11 have been adapted into films. He is also the founder of the Nicholas Sparks Foundation, a nonprofit committed to improving cultural and international understanding through global education experiences. He lives in North Carolina.

Critical Praise

Sweet, accessible and uplifting, the latest love story from Sparks (The Notebook) leaves the reader with one burning question: Why is this consummate beach book being published in the fall?. . . expect instant best-sellerdom.

?*Publisher's Weekly*

Love and death are constant companions in Sparks's books and this one is no exception. . . Once again, Sparks brings a tale of true love to fruition, proving that love stories can be sweet without being cloying.

?*Booklist*

A charming and thoughtful love story... Don't miss it; this book is a book that's light on the surface but with subtle

depths.

?*Bookloons Contemporary Books*

Love and death are constant companions in Spark's books, but**A Bend In The Road** is a cut different... in that it gives a story that not only includes love and tragedy, but one filled with guilt and a longing for justice... Sparks includes mystery into his mix of emotions ... **A Bend In The Road** is like a safe harbor compared to the roiling seas that threaten to swamp our daily lives.

?*Tulsa World*

A Bend in the Road

by Nicholas Sparks

Publication Date: April 1, 2005
Paperback: 352 pages
Publisher: Grand Central Publishing
ISBN-10: 0446696137
ISBN-13: 9780446696135