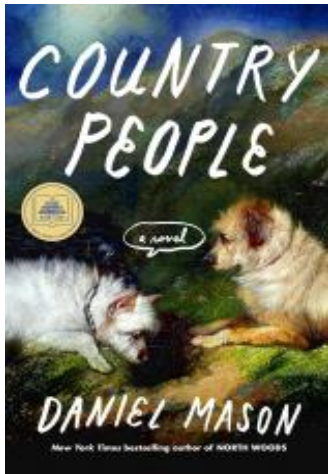


Country People

by Daniel Mason



About the Book

A year in the life of a family as they strike out into the unknown (aka Vermont) --- a witty and gorgeous (The Guardian) novel from Pulitzer Prize finalist Daniel Mason, the bestselling author of NORTH WOODS.

Miles Krzelewski is a devoted husband, a doting father beloved for his outlandish bedtime stories, and the proud owner of a truffle-hunting dog in a land with no truffles. He is also a bit lost, 12 years late with his PhD on Russian folktales and increasingly haunted by a sense that he's become a disappointment to his family. So when his wife, Kate, accepts a visiting professorship at a prestigious college in the faraway forests of Vermont, he decides that this will be the year to finally move forward with his life.

But Miles is a man of many enthusiasms, one who possesses, in Kate's words, a great capacity to fall in with anyone, anywhere. And no sooner does he arrive than he finds himself entangled with a cast of characters as colorful as those of any of his folktales --- from a ghostly tree surgeon to a scythe-mad biochemist, from a Shakespearean temptress to a photographer of snowflakes obsessed with chronicling, on thousands of index cards, the world's delusions in an Inventory of Wrong Ideas.

The new friends, the enchanted woods, the histories: sure, no PhD, but all good fun. Until Miles stumbles upon a bizarre --- perhaps ridiculous --- local legend, which, he soon suspects, might not be just a legend after all.

Joyous, absurd and life-affirming, COUNTRY PEOPLE is a luminous exploration of marriage and parenthood, the nature of belief and the power of stories, and the ways in which we find connection in an increasingly fragmented world.

Discussion Guide

1. How does Miles' struggle with his identity in this new community reflect broader themes of adaptation and belonging?
2. What role does childhood innocence play in contrasting the adult challenges depicted in the narrative? How do the various adults in the community interact with childhood experiences, and what tensions arise from this dynamic?
3. In what ways do community interactions shape the Krzelewski-Petrosian family's integration into Greensbury?
4. How does the setting itself act as a character in the narratives detailing the family's new life? How do environment and nature shape the story?
5. What insights does the narrative provide about balancing personal ambitions against familial responsibilities? How are Miles' and Kate's approaches to finding this balance different, and which do you think is more effective?
6. How does humor intertwine with the underlying themes of the narrative's exploration of rural life?
7. What role does storytelling and legend play in shaping the family's experiences and connections?
8. How do moments of crisis, such as Olive's disappearance, reshape characters' relationships?
9. What thematic significance does the animal companion Giuseppe serve in the family's journey? How do animals, as a whole, shape the novel?
10. Which characters in the novel did you find most enjoyable to read about, and why? Which did you identify with most?
11. What does the book have to say about community? How did it make you rethink or reflect on your own interactions with your community?
12. How does Miles' character grow or change throughout the novel?
13. How does Miles' relationship with Kate change by the end of the book? What changes are made in the Krzelewski-Petrosians' larger family dynamics?
14. What do you imagine the future holds for the Krzelewski-Petrosian family?

Author Bio

Daniel Mason was born and raised in Northern California. He studied biology at Harvard and medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. His first novel, THE PIANO TUNER, published in 2002, was a national bestseller and has since been published in 27 countries. His other works include A FAR COUNTRY, THE WINTER SOLDIER, A REGISTRY OF MY PASSAGE UPON EARTH, NORTH WOODS and COUNTRY PEOPLE, and his writing has appeared in *Harper's Magazine* and *Lapham's Quarterly*. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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