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The Paper Bag Christmas

by Kevin Alan Milne



About the Book

Dr. Christopher Ringle is the last person you'd expect to find moonlighting as Santa Claus at the mall on the day after Thanksgiving. But it is there that he meets a young man named Molar Alan, who desperately needs a new perspective on the underlying value of Christmas. Dr. Ringle recruits Mo and his older brother as volunteers at a nearby children's hospital for the holiday season. At the hospital, Mo is tasked to help bring holiday cheer to the young cancer patients on the fifth floor. His biggest challenge is befriending a decidedly angry girl who is so embarrassed by her scarred appearance that she hides her face behind the safety of a paper bag. Almost in spite of himself, Mo finds that Christmas joy emanates from a source far greater than the North Pole, while the young girl learns that she is more beautiful than she had ever imagined.

Discussion Guide

1. Molar and Aaron volunteer at the hospital to help the kids there, but in what way did those kids help the brothers?

2. What role does volunteering play in your life?

3. Through Madhu?s persistence, Molar and Aaron are forced to question not only the origins of Santa Claus, but also the underlying purpose and meaning of Christmas. What does Christmas mean to you?

4. Did this book change the way you think about Christmas?

5. If you could ask for only one thing for Christmas, what would it be?

6. Do you think Dr. Ringle really was Santa Claus?

7. How are Katrina and Madhu different (or the same) in terms of how they cope with personal adversity? Are you more like Katrina or Madhu?

8. Which character changes or evolves the most through the course of the story? What triggered the change?

9. What are the most prominent themes throughout the novel? If you could boil the author?s message down to one word, what would it be?

10. Katrina tries hard to hide her appearance from others. What eventually motivates her to remove the bag? Do any other characters try to hide parts of themselves (flaws, habits, beliefs, etc.) from others?

Author Bio

Kevin Milne was born in Portland, Oregon on June 13, 1973. As with the main character of his book, **The Paper Bag Christmas**, Kevin?s father, Robert Milne, was in the middle of his final examination of dental school when he was notified that Kevin?s entrance into the world was imminent. Robert left his exam, ran over to the nearby delivery room just in time to see his son born, and then raced back to finish the test. Robert and his wife, Diana, toyed for a full week with the idea of naming their child Molar in honor of Robert?s favorite tooth, but reason eventually won out and baby Kevin was taken home from the hospital.

Eighteen years later Kevin graduated from Sherwood High School in Sherwood, Oregon, a small country town outside of Portland. In college, Mr. Milne studied anything and everything that caught his interest. In his first two years as an undergraduate student he changed majors nearly a dozen times, studying such varied fields as film, journalism, communications, philosophy, pre-dentistry, advertising, pre-law, pre-medicine, political science, and German, then finally earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. Just about the only thing he didn?t study was business, which, ironically, is what he chose to pursue in graduate school, earning an MBA at Pennsylvania State University in 2000.

Today, Kevin is a business professional by day, an author by night, and a husband and father around the clock. He and his wife Rebecca were married in Washington D.C. in 1995. They now reside in Kevin?s hometown of Sherwood, Oregon, where they are the proud parents of five children: Mikayla, Kamry, Mary, Emma, & Kyler (aka "the boy").

Chief among Kevin?s personal interests is international travel. To date he has spent time in Austria, Bermuda, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

Mr. Milne has also lived in many diverse places since his dental-exam birth in 1973, including Oregon, Washington DC, California, Hawaii, Utah, Austria, Croatia, Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont.

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