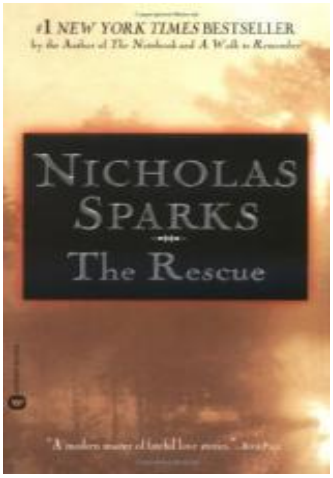
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The Rescue

by Nicholas Sparks



About the Book

When confronted by raging fires or deadly accidents, volunteer fireman Taylor McAden feels compelled to take terrifying risks -- risks no one else in the department would ever take -- to save lives. But there is one leap of faith Taylor can't bring himself to make: He can't fall in love. For all his adult years, Taylor has sought out women who need to be rescued, women he leaves as soon as their crisis is over, as soon as the relationship starts to become truly intimate.

Then, one day, a raging, record-breaking storm hits his small Southern town. Denise Holton, a young single mother, is driving through it when her car skids off the road. With her is her four-year old son, Kyle, a boy with severe learning disabilities and for whom she has sacrificed everything. Unconscious and bleeding, she -- but not Kyle -- will be found by Taylor McAden. And when she wakes, the chilling truth becomes clear to both of them: Kyle is gone.

During the search for Kyle, the connection, the lifeline, between Taylor and Denise takes root. Taylor doesn't know that this rescue will be different from all the others, demanding far more than raw physical courage. That it will lead him to the possibility of his own rescue from a life lived without love. That it will require him to open doors to his past that were slammed shut by pain. That it will dare him to live life to the fullest by daring to love.

Discussion Guide

1. Edenton is the setting for the novel. How does this setting help the relationship between Taylor and Denise? How does it hinder it? Would their relationship have been possible in a larger city? What is the symbolic meaning behind the name of the town? What role does this symbolic meaning play in the relationship between Taylor and Denise?

2. In the beginning of the novel, Denise has given up nearly everything in her life to take care of her son. Is this realistic? Would this have been more or less likely in the past? Does she work with Kyle simply because she loves him or are there other forces involved? How does the fact that Kyle was the result of a one-night-stand affect her reasoning?

3. Because of his past, Taylor is unwilling to commit to another. At the end of the novel, however, he does just that. What role do past events play in other areas of Taylor's life? How does it affect his relationship with Kyle? With Mitch? With Melissa? Can people really change that suddenly? Why or why not?

4. How does Judy, Taylor's mother, see Denise? Likewise, how does Ray see Denise? Do these two take the role of Denise's parents? Why were their characters necessary to the story?

5. Think about the memories that Taylor has of his father. What is Taylor's vision of the kind of man his father was?

6. Mitch and Melissa play crucial roles in the novel. How does their relationship affect the way Taylor and Denise feel about each other? About Kyle?

7. Were you at all surprised when Denise broke it off with Taylor after he didn't show up for Kyle's birthday? What does this say about Denise?

8. Mitch's death was instrumental in forcing Taylor to come to grips with his past. Is there anything else that could have forced Taylor to do so?

9. Toward the end of the novel, Judy tells Taylor that she doesn't feel she was a good mother in the past. Was she right? How does that affect the way she treats him now? Had she always felt that way?

10. The theme of the novel is love as rescue. Who is saved by love in the novel? How is this manifested in the story?

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

"A romantic page-turner. . . Sparks's fans won't be disappointed."

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