

LET'S
DISCUSS...



THE PUZZLING FATE OF MILLICENT GRAVES

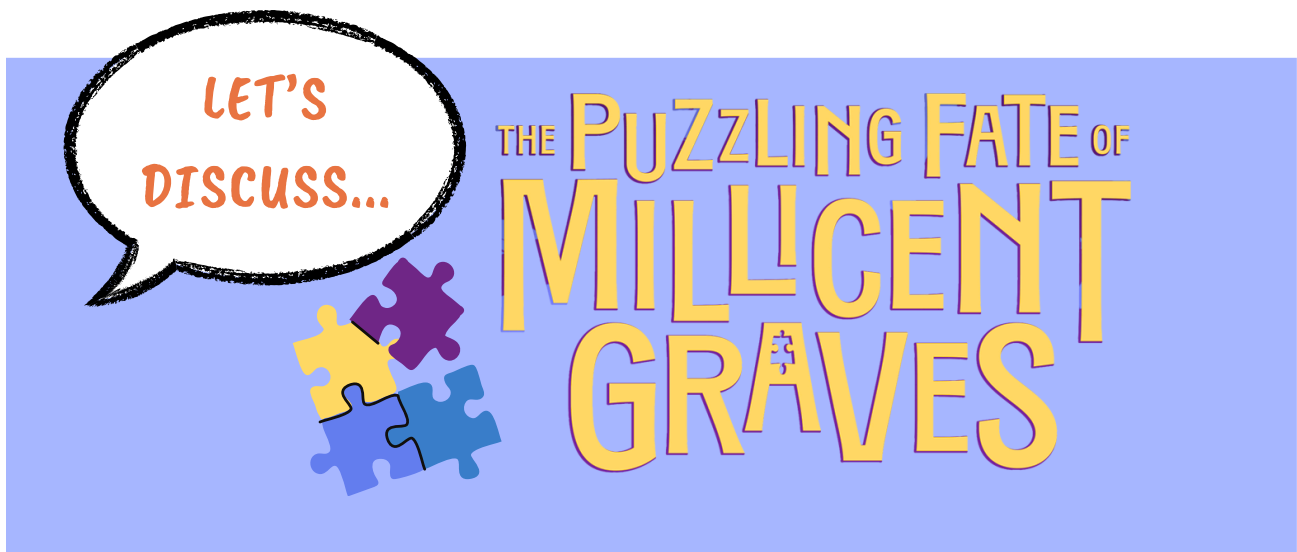
This discussion guide is designed to help parents, teachers, librarians, and booksellers explore the story's ideas, themes, and meaning with middle-grade readers.

Themes for discussion: Perfectionism, Controlling vs. Helping, Learning Acceptance, Identity and Change

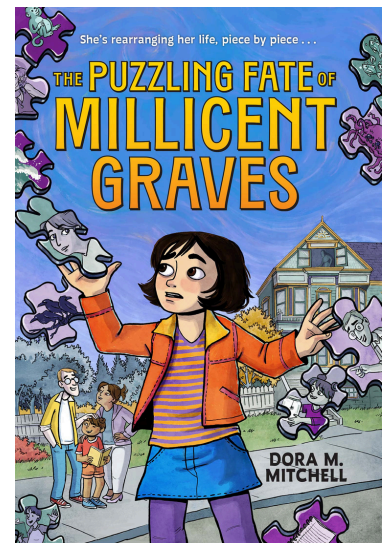


- Why do you think Millie is so determined to “fix” her family? Do you think she has any good reasons for her actions?
- Millie makes changes to four characters in the story: Mom, Dad, Gilly, and Sam. What are some personality traits these characters have in common? How are they different?
- How do you feel about the changes Millie makes? How important is it to be messy vs. tidy, serious vs. silly, or doing what makes you happy vs. making more money?
- Millie tells herself her actions are meant to help her family, because they would truly be happier and more secure if they acted the way she wants. Do you think she really believes this? Why or why not?
- If you had a magical way to change someone you know, would you try it? Why or why not?
- Is there a difference between helping someone and controlling them? If so, what makes the difference? How does the book explore this idea?







- At first, Millie thinks Sam wants to annoy her by giving her nicknames and narrating for her like she's a character in an adventure story. Eventually, she learns he was just trying to be more interesting than “boring regular ol’ Sam Smolt.” What do you think about trying to act different to impress someone? Are there any similarities between Sam trying to act like a different person and Millie trying to change other people’s personalities?
- As Millie’s changes get out of control, Mrs. Morrigan refuses to help, saying that if it wasn’t meant to happen, it wouldn’t have. How do you feel about this? Should Morrigan have helped her? Or **did** she help her in some way?



Creative Extension Ideas

-  Have students design their own puzzle that represents them. What images or symbols could show key traits? What pieces would they be tempted to switch—and why?
-  Inspired by Millie’s notebook, have students create a “Story of Me” page: a mini-autobiography with sections like “Things That Make Me Me,” “Important People in My Life,” “Dreams and Goals,” and “If My Life Were a Puzzle...” Use different colored markers, stickers, and drawings to create a fun and interesting layout.