

SR Staley, *St. Nic, Inc.*

(Southern Yellow Pine Publishing, 2014)

www.srstaley.com; www.syppublishing.com

General Discussion Questions

1. Why is the myth of Santa Claus so powerful in today's culture? In which ways to *St. Nic, Inc.* respect these values or traditions? In which ways does to challenge them?
2. How would the Christmas holiday change if the North Pole existed as it is described in *St. Nic, Inc.*?
3. Identify three elements of the story in *St. Nic., Inc.* that are consistent with modern myth. Identify three elements of the story that are inconsistent or otherwise contrary to myth? Do these points of consistency/challenge strengthen or weaken the story?
4. Can you identify the key points where the major characters transform (the "peak" of their character arc)?
5. *St. Nic, Inc.* is not marketed as a children's book. Why? What parts of the story would have to change to make it suitable for children? How does this challenge the conventional myth of Santa Claus?
6. The head of NP Enterprises is a woman. To what extent does this challenge conventional ideas about the role of Santa Claus? To what extent does gender play no role at all?
7. Why is Nicole reluctant to fully embrace her role as president of NP Enterprises? How does this contrast with Getko's role in the DEA?
8. Is Miles Getko evil? What drives his actions in the story? Can you think of an example in real life where someone made similar decisions?
9. To what extent does redemption figure as important motives for the characters of Peter, Nicole, Jeff, and Getko? What about salvation?
10. How do the main characters move on from their past? Are they emotionally stronger? If not, why? If so, what actions and decisions give them the confidence to move forward?
11. How do the relationships between little people and average sized people change throughout the story? How does the attitude toward little people change for Peter? For Nicole?

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12. How does the obligation that Nicole feels to carry on the family business influence her decisions about her life in the real world? How does this impact her sense of happiness and self worth?
13. Are little people “elves” in *St. Nic., Inc.*? How is their way of life different from many stereotypes in contemporary society? Did the story change your perception of little people?
14. How is the meaning of Christmas different for Nicole compared to a more “typical” person in the U.S. or someone else living in a high-income nation?
15. Does Christmas in *St. Nic, Inc.* have a spiritual connotation or meaning?