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Loveable thirteen-year-old geek Milo Cruikshank finds reasons for frustrations at every turn, like the way his neighbor carves her pumpkin way too early to last until Halloween, or the fact that Summer Goodman won't look twice at him while Hillary Alpert keeps leaving notes in his locker. The truth is, ever since Milo's mother died, nothing has gone right. Now, instead of the kitchen being full of music, his whole house has been filled with Fog. Nothing's the same. Not his Dad. Not his sister. And definitely not him. Ideal for any reader who has endured the loss of a loved one, *Milo* achieves a rare and easy balance of poignancy and awkward, natural humor, making it deeply accessible to every reader—this is the kind of book that can change lives.

## Milo: Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze Details

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Author : Alan Silberberg

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# From Reader Review Milo: Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze for online ebook

## Stacey Cross says

Being a new student once again, at a new school and as a 7th grader, is causing Milo to question everything he knows to be true. One thing he knows for sure is that HE LOVES a girl named Summer and he really misses his mom. Milo has been through a lot in his short 13 years and lives in a constant 'fog' which affects almost everything he does. He is unsure about a lot of things, the most important being his relationship with his dad. Milo is a hilarious character with an amazing creative spirit( i.e. his alter ego Dabney St Claire)Despite his sadness, he has learned how to cope with his feelings by using humor. He is an amazing friend who enjoys spending time with Hillary and Marshall. Milo begins to discover a lot of new things about himself and tackles life head on.

'Milo- Sticky Notes & Brain Freeze' is an easy read and contains pictures and comic strips for text support. Being that Milo is in 7th grade but the text is written at a lower level, this book would be appropriate for students in grades 3-8. I would also assume that a struggling reader in the high school might be successful with it as well due to its themes of death, sickness, depression, friendship, family, and having your first crush.

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## Angela says

I kind of started weeping on the train while reading this. Luckily, I live close enough to the end of the line that there weren't many people sitting around me.

Because being the new kid in middle school isn't bad enough, Milo also has to deal with the death of his mother. There are times that it's familiar and witty, the trials of being in middle school, and times you don't want to revisit if you've ever suffered the loss of a loved one. He tries to cope with his loss and be a "normal" kid, neither of which are easy tasks.

The voice is believable—like reading a geeky kid's diary—and the illustrations are adorable. They help to cope with the underlying theme of loss, making the scenario more genuine.

It's geared toward kids, but teaches adults a little about coping, too.

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## Eric says

This book is filled with a variety of emotions of a middle school kid Milo who has a great imagination. Some parts made me laugh out loud, others deeply saddened me. I was surprised by how much Milo matured over the course of the story. He starts as shy child who seems to be just another person in a giant crowd. By the end of the story, I feel Milo developed a new personality and confidence from his time spent with Hillary, Marshall, and Sylvia. The part of the story that drew me in the most was his crush on Summer. Every interaction with her amused me and I was hoping as I flipped every page that she would be involved more and more. My only critique is that Summer was never mentioned in the end of the story. I felt it should have been as it was an important part of the story throughout. At the same time, I did enjoy the ending as it

focused on the mother and the family bringing her back to life. A book such as this makes me feel more compassion for middle schoolers in their awkward stages. More importantly, it makes me appreciate my mom!

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### **Alyson says**

I laughed through the first chapter and cried through the second. Great book!

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### **Roger Eschbacher says**

"Milo: Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze" chronicles 13-yr-old Milo Cruikshank's struggle to clear the fog and get his life back on track after his mom dies. Author Silberberg does a great job balancing the weight of a life-changing tragedy with an uplifting, comedic tone that keeps the reader moving along and rooting for Milo. The illustrations are charming and add greatly to the overall comedy and hopeful feeling of the book. Highly recommended.

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### **Giro17505 says**

Milo Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze is a very nice book it talks about a boy that is around 12 years old and has just moved into a new house and a new school.

I enjoyed this book a lot because it made me laugh, but also made me cry and it is very nicely written.

It's a very sentimental book because after three chapters we understand that Milo's mom died not too long ago so in some passages he remembers some moments that he spent with his mom and it is so well written that the author makes you feel like if you are inside the book with the characters yourself.

He has two new friends one that he calls 'one eyed jack' but his real name is Marshall Hickler and Milo thinks he is the best friend he could ever have because he was so cool and so nice to hang out with, and another called Hillary Alpert that he thinks is a real weirdo because she always leaves purple sticky notes on his locker telling him every thing she's going to do.

Through the story he is going to try to find old things that belonged to his mother and just live a normal teenager life.

This book is a little bit like an autobiography because it talks about his life and what happened and is going to happen to him.

My two favorite chapters:

Chapter 2:

Because it's a very funny chapter. In this chapter he talks about the five different houses he moved into and how one was named the 'Simple. Sweet. Satellite TV' house because while they were living there his mother was still alive the second house was called the 'Apartment of endless stairs', why? well the name gives away the whole story of why they gave it that name but in short they gave it that name because they lived on the fifth floor and there was NO elevator! The third was called the 'Stink-Hole (The mystery smell was never found)', the fourth was the 'Fog House' which is the most important house because it is in that house where it all went wrong; it was there that his mother got sick and when he moved out of the house his mother did not come along. The fifth one is the one he is living in now and he is enjoying it. This chapter gets funny when he talks about when he first saw the girl he likes which is a really sweet part of the book.

#### Chapter 7:

I like the seventh chapter because it's a very emotional chapter. In this chapter he talks about how since his mother's death his dad has changed. He remembers the day when his father told him that his mother didn't make it and how since then he was changed. And also remembers how when his parents told him that his mother was sick he went to a fortune teller that told him every thing was going to be fine and that he didn't have to worry...

The book is written well but it isn't big literature it's more of an easy book to read than a real novel. I think it will touch a lot of my class mates because it also talks about how a boy our age feels about moving and changing schools every two years or so.

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#### Charon says

This book made me cry. Five times.

It is very real, and the characters are real, too. It isn't one of those books that just throws sad situations at you and expects you to cry, but it actually adds in a ton of emotion and depth into it.

I don't really have much of anything else to say... When I saw the cover(s) of this book, I thought that it would be a funny book, not one that would make me cry. (Five times.) This book must have been one of the biggest 'don't judge a book by its cover' lessons for me.

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#### Suzanne says

Milo has all the typical middle school problems - he's the new kid at school, he has an odd name (Milo Cruiikshank), he has a secret crush on a girl who doesn't even speak to him, he's failing math and has to have tutoring sessions 2 afternoons a week, and he and his friend Marshall can't beat Warfighter 4 on the XBox. So, as you begin reading, you think this will be another story written as journal entries about funny things that happen to the main character. But as you read, you find out that Milo is dealing with another problem - something much more serious, something everyone is trying to ignore. I can't really say more without it being a spoiler, so I'll stop there. I can tell you that it does have a lot of funny moments and there are also some sad scenes, but it is worth reading to the end so you can see how Milo works everything out.

If you like books like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Big Nate*, *Dear Dumb Diary*, or *Dork Diaries* - this book is written in a similar style.

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#### AutumnBoening says

This book is a heart breaking, sad to tell, but happy tale. There's this kid Milo and he moves A LOT! But something along the way something happened to his mom. He misses things about her. He sometimes wishes life had a reset button like a reset button on a game. Milo's dad seems to be distant from his kids never really

engaging in conversation about their day. Milo's mom had passed away and have no memories of mom really because dad got rid of all mom's things. Milo sometimes dreams of his mom wishing for her to be alive and and to go back to the hospital and say goodbye. Now along the way Milo becomes friends with Hilary Albert and One -Eyed- Jack. Milo then falls in love with the one and only Summer Goodman. Milo tells Hilary about mom and relieved moment when he tells the story of Milo's mom. Milo had also become friends with his neighbor Sylvia Poole. Milo's dad has stopped really getting to know what his kids' life is like. Milo also lets his ego in the of his friendship with Hilary and bullied her. Milo went to the dentist and saw Summer Goodman and found out that she likes the thinks he likes like video games. Milo and his sister think it's a good idea to celebrate Mother's Day even without their mom. Even hang up pictures of family back in the good old days. I recommend this book for 6-10 graders it's not to hard but not to easy. But a good book to chill with and just read.

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### **Kristi says**

If you flip through the pages of this book or even just glance at the cover, you'll think this is just another Diary of a Wimpy Kid kind of read. BUT they don't say not to judge a book by it's cover for nothin'!

MILO is a deceptively simple and light-hearted book that actually will make you weep (yes, weep-- not shed a tear or two) and the simple writing still manages to break your heart and rip it to shreds.

I LOVED this book. I loved Milo and Marshal and Hillary. Well done, Alan Silberberg! Amazing book. Very touching, very funny and very well written.

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### **Betsy says**

"It's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* if the mom died." BAM! Now that's grabby, ain't it? If I were a Hollywood executive I suppose that might be how I'd sell Alan Silberberg's newest novel about a boy and his issues. It's not how I'd sell it to an actual kid, though. Alan Silberberg has managed something that I would have deemed near impossible. He's penned a funny novel that deals with the very real issue of how a family copes when one of its family members passes on and he's done it with a combo of art and prose. *Milo: Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze* combines interstitial comics with a fun text and a gripping story to come up with a book that manages to be all things for all readers. Humor fans will like it, but so too will those kids who need a little extra meat in their fiction. This is a book that isn't afraid to get a little sad and serious once in a while. A dead mom book that kids will really gravitate towards.

Once again, Milo has become the new kid at school. Ever since his mom died his dad has been moving both him and his older sister into different homes. Everything from the "Apartment of Endless Stairs" to the appropriately dubbed "Stink Hole (The mystery smell was never found!)". Milo has found that his dad just sleepwalks through his days, and our hero's not doing so hot himself. There's this weird girl at school that keeps bugging him, and then there's gorgeous Summer Goodman. The kind of gal who would never give a boy like Milo the time of day. However, once he makes a new best friend in a kid called Marshall and finds that the strange girl isn't that strange after all, Milo discovers that there might be a way to come to terms with his mom being gone, and maybe find a way to remember her too.

Comparisons to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (as I've done in the very first sentence of this review) are inevitable.

It's never really all that fair to compare illustrated novels to Kinney's books, though, since with the exception of *Big Nate* by Lincoln Peirce most novels are like *Milo*. They use the illustrations in the book the same way a good musical uses songs. The comics are there to highlight and advance the plot, while offering a bit of color to the narrative. Silberberg is clearly comfortable with this style of writing... and then he takes it a step farther. We're dealing with some pretty heavy issues in this book, and it would jar with the readers' senses if you were hearing about a particularly dark point in Milo's life only to find that emotion alleviated by a sappy cartoon. Yet that's a trap Silberberg miraculously manages to avoid time and time again. He always knows the best possible time to include a little cartoon or illustrated piece. He even manages to complement serious scenes with a drawing, once in a while. There's one image of Milo seriously telling his problems to Hilary's rescued doll collection that is just as serious as any moment of prose.

And the book handles the question of how a kid comes to terms with the death of his mom with great skill. It creeps into the narrative slowly, and then takes it over by the end. Milo's vast dislike of men who shave their heads is explained when his narrative voice suddenly launches into a talk about how "some" people go bald because they can't help it. Later he starts thinking about Hilary's dolls and says, "I picture doll family funerals and the sad dollhouses where now a doll dad has to deal with his doll kids and the doll mom who isn't coming home." Silberberg gets so very close to overplaying his hand. He could go smarmy in an instant, but he holds off. The emotions are raw and very real for a children's book, and somehow he manages to offer comfort without becoming schmaltzy. No mean feat.

Which isn't to say that the man hasn't a sense of humor worth noting. Sometimes you turn to the first page of a book and you instantly know that you're going to want to read it through to the end. That's how *Milo* was for me. The first two sentences of the book are, "Summer Goodman never knew what hit her. That's because it was me, and as soon as I collided with her in the hallway – scattering every one of her perfectly indexed index cards – I disappeared into the mob of kids who'd arrived to help realphabetize her life." These lines are accompanied by an image of Milo running hell-for-leather down the hall as a now airborne Summer Goodman finds herself unexpectedly horizontal. And while you're not going to find that the book is the joke-a-page kind of title some kids have been trained to expect, when it's on it's on. For example, one of my favorite moments is when Milo complains that his neighbor has carved her pumpkin way too early in the season. By his reasoning, that pumpkin will be decaying squash by the time Halloween finally comes around. This is accompanied with a picture of said pumpkin, thinking to itself "I'm toast". And honestly, Silberberg's got a great talent for one-liners. I was particularly fond of "Apparently, my teeth, which no one was paying attention to while my mom was dead, have kind of gone their separate ways and finally it's time to rein them in before they migrate into someone else's mouth."

When you read a book where a new kid with issues moves to town and suddenly the "weird" girl wants to befriend him you have to ask yourself one question: Why does this girl want to be friends with this boy in the first place? Well, in the case of *Milo* you can make the argument that Hilary is hanging around Milo because she feels sorry for him. I mean the guy lost his mom, after all. That might explain her initial overtures of friendship, anyway. Now I'm reviewing this book off of a galley, so maybe this problem I've noticed won't show up in the final copy. Whatever the case, let's talk about the character of Hilary. On the cover you can see that she's pictured with straight black hair. She may even be Asian American. Look inside the book, however, and her hair appears to be as blond as Summer Goodman's golden locks. Which is it then? Inquiring minds want to know. This is our heroine, after all.

A word on Summer Goodman. It would have been so easy for Silberberg to have written the girl off as a stuck up popular girl. And certainly there are elements of that to her personality when Milo is humiliated by her on Valentine's Day. But as you read the book you sort of come to realize that Summer's a great example of how people only want what they want. So when Milo meets Summer again at the end of the story (I won't

ruin how) she sloughs off any fantasies Milo may have harbored about her. She's not a bad person, just one that's more interested in herself than in Milo. Is that a crime? Is it even all that unsympathetic?

There's a great deal of debate out there as to whether or not "bibliotherapy" works. Which is to say, if you encounter a kid with a dead mother, would you hand them *Milo: Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze*? I'm not usually a real bibliotherapy proponent, but *Milo* may prove to be the exception that proves the rule. I've rarely encountered a book that understands grief and grieving as well as this title. One person already wrote me about the book saying, "My husband suffered the same loss that both Milo and Alan [the author:] did, and reading this book was healing for him like nothing I've ever seen, even all these years later." Some books for kids that talk about grief and closure feel manipulative in how they chose to tug at the heartstrings. *Milo*, in contrast, is an honest, original, and effectively moving title. Silly packaging on the outside. Big heart and emotional core inside.

For ages 9-12.

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### **Jen says**

12 year-old Milo Cruikshank has a lot to deal with. He's just moved into a new house in a new town – the 5th place he's lived- the girl he has a crush on doesn't know he exists, yet Hillary keeps leaving annoying notes in his locker; and the weird old lady across the street keeps waving at him. But the biggest issue Milo has to deal with is the fact that his mom died two years ago. And that's changed everything at home, with Milo's family, and in himself. Silberberg handles this heavy topic with both heart and humor, and in doing so, shows that while graphic novel/chapter book hybrids are great for a laugh, that doesn't mean they can't handle deeper issues as well.

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### **Paul Hankins says**

I'm so happy to have picked up *Milo* today. It's been on the shelf for sometime with the recommendation of some Centurion friends at Facebook. And then, Alan posted a comment on a thread I was working on over at Facebook and I thought. . .I am going to read that book today.

Sometimes, in the all of the darkness and grief cited by those looking into the MG/YA fishbowl, something gets missed. There is a lot of hurt piled upon the awkwardness that is the MG years (let's sit down sometime and I will share with you my MG years; I can only assume there will be parts of the story you will find familiar).

Milo is a 7th-grader who has moved no fewer than five times in his own lifetime. After moving from "the fog house (this is revealed in the book)," he finds himself in a new home with his Dad, sister. . .well. . .his Dad and his sister. His mother has died two years prior to our meeting Milo of cancer. Milo is in a state of latent grief, living in a vacuum of a home with a depressed father and an otherwise occupied sister.

But somehow Milo motors on and finds his way into yet another new school, following the routines and falling in love with the object of his desire, Summer Goodman (we meet Summer in the opening lines of the book). With a good friend like Marshall, who shares a taste for bad Freezes and even worse films, and a



mysterious neighbor lady who Milo criticizes for the incorrect, indiscreet purchase of pumpkins, maybe a kid can find their way to healing and self-discovery.

The winner of the 2011 Sid Fleischman Award, Silberberg's book is poised to find itself on a ladder with the Wimpy Kid books, but sets itself apart with Silberberg's ability to capture a moment, an emotion in what might otherwise be seen as a complimentary image carrying the story. Milo might also find itself on a ladder with John Gosselink's THE DEFENSE OF THADDEUS A. LEDBETTER.

A wonderful read for your MG readers. But on more than one page turn, I found myself thinking of my own maternal losses. Don't write off Milo as just an MG title. Milo is moving. . .and essential. I want to thank the person who recommended it to me. . .

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### **Beth says**

Well...that was a complete shock! I don't read the inside of the book, so I usually go in blind. Judging by the cover, I expected this to be a fun, funny book...and it was with a lot of feels. Milo made me tear up more than once. I did not realize that this book was going to be about a boy trying to cope with the death of his mother. It's done in such a sweet, funny, and very touching way. I honestly think this book would be good for anyone coping with grief. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to find a tissue. Soooo good...you need to read this!!!

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### **Heather says**

I picked this up expecting a light *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*-type read. It's true that there were funny comic-type illustrations throughout this book about a middle school boy who is a few rungs down on the social ladder, but that's about where the similarity ends. Don't get me wrong--I love Wimpy Kid--but there's about as much depth to those books as the kiddie wading pool at the park. For Milo, though, you better be prepared with some diving gear. There's no shortage of books out there on children with dead mothers, and the temptation to succumb to sentimentality is great. Silberberg not only avoids that, he manages to deliver a moving narrative about one boy's (and his family's) struggle to return to life (or as Milo describes it "escape the fog") after the untimely death of a parent. There are some awesome characters who help Milo on his journey, including a couple of loyal friends and a quirky neighbor. Milo's growth goes beyond coming to terms with death, however. It's also about changing his perspective on how he sees himself and others.

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