

## APPENDIX I

### BIOGRAPHY OF NICHOLAS SPARKS

Nicholas Sparks, in full Nicholas Charles Sparks was born on December 31, 1965 in Omaha, Nebraska, United States. The American novelist known for his best-selling tales of romance and heartbreak. Sparks grew up mainly in north-central California, where his family moved when he was eight. He attended the University of Notre Dame on a track scholarship, but an injury ended his budding athletic career and induced him to write his first (unpublished) novel. He graduated in 1988 with a major in business and held a variety of jobs, including pharmaceutical salesman. In the early 1990s he and his wife settled in New Bern, North Carolina, which later provided a setting for his novels.

While working his day job, Sparks continued to write. He began a collaboration with former Olympic runner Billy Mills on *Wokini: A Lakota Journey to Happiness and Self-Understanding*. The book which was inspired by a Native American legend that published in 1990. Determined to become a professional writer, Sparks spent several months working on *The Notebook*, his first published novel, which hit the New York Times best-seller list immediately after it reached the public in 1996.

By the time the film adaptation was released in 2004. Sparks had published seven more novels, two of which are *Message in a Bottle* (1998) and *A Walk to Remember* (1999) that had already arrived in cinemas in 1999 and 2002. Sparks saw six other novels adapted for the screen, they are *Nights in Rodanthe* (2002; film 2008), *Dear John* (2006; film 2010), *The Last Song* (2009; film 2010), *The Lucky One* (2008; film 2012), *The Best of Me* (2011; film 2014) and *The Longest Ride* (2013; film 2015). In 2015 he released the novel *See Me*, about a pair of lovers with troubled pasts.

Although Sparks' fiction usually involved love stories, he rejected the suggestion that he was a "romance novelist." His supporters agreed that although romance played a role in his works, Sparks explored more-serious subject matter such as loneliness, grief, obsession, and loss, and that many of his books featured poignant, less than happy endings. That was also evident in his only nonfiction work, *Three Weeks with My Brother* (2004) in which he and his

brother, Micah, shared their own emotional responses to the deaths of their parents and sister. Sparks, a devout Roman Catholic, devoted much of his time and literary profits to writing programs at Notre Dame and to charitable causes, most notably the Nicholas Sparks Foundation, which he and his wife established in 2011. The related Epiphany School for Global Studies, a coeducational college preparatory school “rooted in the Christian faith,” opened in 2006 in New Bern.

## APPENDIX II

### SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

This romance novel is written by Nicholas Sparks and published by Warner Books. Weary of alcohol, meaningless relationships and a lack of direction, John Tyree joins the Army. He is on leave for a few weeks in his hometown of Wilmington, North Carolina when he meets Savannah Lynn Curtis on a beach. Savannah, a college student, is leading a group of coeds in building Habitat for Humanity homes. She and her group have rented a beach house to use during their stay. John and Savannah come from different backgrounds. Savannah grows up in a Christian home with two devoted parents, while John raised by a quiet, meticulous father with a passion for coin collecting.

Nevertheless, they feel an instant connection and begin to spend every free moment together. John leaves for the military, leaving Savannah behind but they decide to maintain a long-distance relationship as he loves her more than anything, looking forward to seeing her again, and promise to married her when he is discharged. While on leave, they remain in touch and keep sending each other letters to keep up with each other's lives.

The novel follows the ups and downs of their long-distance relationship, including their joyful moments and arguments during John's short Army leaves. When John's time in the army is nearly complete, September 11 rocks the nation. He decides it is his patriotic duty to reenlist. Savannah understands but cannot hide her disappointment. Time and distance begin to take their toll, and Savannah sends John a letter saying that she is in love with someone else.

John tries to deal with his emotions by burying himself in his military career, and he spends his leaves with his ailing father. When Savannah met John's dad years earlier, she suggested he might have Asperger's syndrome, a disorder resembling autism. As John begins to understand the disorder, he learns to relate to his father and comes to deeply appreciate the man who raised him. When his father's health finally fails, John learns his dad has left him a coin collection worth a small fortune.

John grieves his dad's death. John visits Savannah's hometown. He finds her at the farmhouse. She and her husband, and he learns that she married her childhood best friend Tim who John had become friends with when dating

Savannah the summer they first met. Tim is always kind and respectful to John. Eventhough John knows Tim loves Savannah too. Savannah seems unhappy with life, and John learns it is because Tim is in the hospital battling Melanoma, a skin cancer that he is going to die. She believes an expensive experimental treatment may help Tim, but they cannot afford it. She bares herself emotionally and physically to John in the midst of her pain. Though it is heartbreaking, John declines her advances and leaves town. John sells his father's coin collection and anonymously funds the treatment Tim needs. Later, he returns in secret to Savannah's farm. The treatment has worked, and she and Tim are happily resuming their lives.