Nicholas Charles Sparks (born December 31, 1965) is an internationally bestselling American novelist and screenwriter. He has 16 published novels, with themes including cancer, death, pirates, and love. Seven have been adapted to film, including Message in a Bottle, A Walk to Remember, The Notebook, Nights in Rodanthe, Dear John, The Last Song and The Lucky One.

Nicholas Sparks was born on December 31, 1965, in Omaha, Nebraska. His father is Patrick Michael Sparks, a professor. His mother is Jill Emma Marie (née Thoene) Sparks, a homemaker and an optometrist's assistant. He was the middle of three children, with an older brother Michael Earl "Micah" Sparks (1964–) and a younger sister, Danielle "Dana" Sparks (1966–2000), who died at
the age of 33. Sparks has said that she is the inspiration for the main character in his novel *A Walk to Remember*.

Sparks was raised Roman Catholic and is of German, Czech, English and Irish ancestry. He and his wife are devout Catholics, and are raising their children in the Catholic faith. "I was raised Catholic, baptized, confirmed, Sunday School, went to Notre Dame, go to confession, go to church weekly," the author says. "My oldest son is an altar boy. All my children go to the Catholic school. My wife Catherine was raised Catholic. We were married in the Catholic Church. God is the most important thing in our lives. I suppose that's true of everybody's lives, whether or not they want to believe it."

His father was pursuing graduate studies, and the family moved a great deal, so by the time Sparks was 8, he had lived in Watertown, Minnesota, Los Angeles, and Grand Island, Nebraska. In 1974 his family settled in Fair Oaks, California, and remained there through Nicholas's high school days. He graduated in 1984 as valedictorian from Bella Vista High School, then enrolling at the University of Notre Dame, having received a full track and field scholarship. In his freshman year, his team set a record for the 4 x 800 relay. Sparks majored in business finance and graduated with honors in 1988. He also met his future wife that year, Cathy Cote from New Hampshire, while they were both on spring break. They married on July 22, 1989 and moved to Sacramento, California.

While still in school in 1985, Sparks had penned his first (never published) novel, *The Passing*, while home for the summer between freshman and
sophomore years at Notre Dame. He wrote another novel in 1989, also unpublished, *The Royal Murders*.

After college, Sparks sought work with publishers or to attend law school, but was rejected in both attempts. He then spent the next three years trying other careers, including real estate appraisal, waiting tables, selling dental products by phone and starting his own manufacturing business. In 1990, Sparks co-wrote with Billy Mills *Wokini: A Lakota Journey to Happiness and Self-Understanding*. The book was published by Feather Publishing, Random House, and Hay House. Sales for this book approximated 50,000 copies in its first year after release.

In 1992, Sparks began selling pharmaceuticals and in 1993 was transferred to Greenville, SC. It was there that he wrote another novel in his spare time, *The Notebook*. Two years later, he was discovered by literary agent Theresa Park, who picked *The Notebook* out of her agency’s slush pile, liked it, and offered to represent him. In October 1995, Park secured a $1 million advance for *The Notebook* from Time Warner Book Group. The novel was published in October 1996 and made the *New York Times* best-seller list in its first week of release.

According to his website, he has also sold the screenplay adaptations of *True Believer* and *At First Sight*, though it is uncertain whether either film will be made. His latest screenplay turned novel, *The Last Song*, has been turned into a film produced by Offspring Entertainment for Touchstone Pictures featuring Miley Cyrus.

Sparks began his 16th novel, *Safe Haven*, on February 17, 2010, and it was published on September 14, 2010. Film producers asked Sparks on August 4 for rights to release a movie adaptation of this new novel and the deal was closed the next day. On June 17, 2011 Nicholas Sparks stated on his official website that Warner Bros. had bought the movie rights to his new book *The Best of Me*, which is coming out October 11, 2011. The production date for the movie has not been verified, although Sparks believes that filming of the movie will start in 2012. On August 2, 2011, Nicholas Sparks stated via his Twitter page that *Safe Haven* should begin production some time in October 2011. *The Lucky One*, starring Zac Efron, will be in theaters on April 20, 2012.

Sparks resides in North Carolina with his wife, Cathy; their three sons, Miles, Ryan, and Landon; and twin daughters, Lexie and Savannah. Sparks has donated a track to New Bern High School and contributes to local and national charities. He contributes to the Creative Writing Program (MFA) at the University of Notre Dame by funding scholarships, internships and annual fellowships. In 2008, *Entertainment Weekly* reported that Sparks and his wife had donated "close to $10 million" to start a Christian, international, college-prep private school, The Epiphany School, which emphasizes travel and life long learning.
SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

The film stars, Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams as a young couple who fall in love during the early 1940s. Their story is narrated from the present day by an elderly man played by James Garner, telling the tale to a fellow nursing home resident, played by Gena Rowlands.

A modern-day nursing home, an elderly man named Noah (James Garner) begins to read a love story from his notebook to a female fellow patient (Gena Rowlands). The story begins in 1940. At a carnival in Seabrook Island, South Carolina, local country boy Noah Calhoun (Ryan Gosling) sees seventeen-year-old heiress Allie Hamilton (Rachel McAdams) for the first time and is immediately smitten. She continuously refuses his persistent advances until their well-meaning friends lure them together; they then get to know each other on a midnight walk through empty Seabrook.

Noah and Allie spend an idyllic summer together. One night, a week before Allie is to leave town, she and Noah go up to an abandoned house called Windsor Plantation. Noah tells her that he hopes to buy the house, and Allie makes him promise that the house will be white, with blue shutters, a walk-around porch, and a room that overlooks the creek so she can paint. They intend to make love for the first time, but are interrupted by Noah's friend Fin (Kevin Connolly) with the news that Allie's parents have the police out looking for her. When Allie returns home, her disapproving parents ban her from seeing Noah again. Allie fights with Noah outside and the two decide to break up. Allie immediately regrets the decision but Noah drives away. The next morning, Allie's mother
reveals that they are going home that morning. Allie frantically tries to find Noah, but is forced to leave without saying good-bye. The Hamiltons then send Allie to New York, where she begins attending Sarah Lawrence College. Noah, devastated by his separation from Allie, writes her one letter a day for a year, only to get no reply as Allie's mother keeps the letters from her. Noah and Allie have no choice but to move on with their lives. Allie continues to attend school, while Noah and Fin enlist to fight in World War II. Fin is killed in battle.

Allie becomes a nurse for wounded soldiers. There, she meets the wealthy Lon Hammond, Jr. (James Marsden), a well-connected young lawyer who is handsome, sophisticated, charming and comes from old Southern money. The two eventually become engaged, to the joy of Allie's parents, although Allie sees Noah's face when Lon asks her to marry him. When Noah returns home, he discovers his father has sold their home so that Noah can go ahead and buy the Windsor Plantation. While visiting Charleston to file some paper work, Noah witnesses Allie and Lon kissing at a restaurant, causing Noah to go a little crazy, convincing himself that if he fixes up the house, Allie will come back to him. While trying on her wedding dress in the 1940s, Allie is startled to read about Noah completing the house in the style section of a Raleigh newspaper and faints. She visits Noah in Seabrook and he invites her to dinner, during which Allie tells Noah about her engagement. Noah questions whether Allie's future husband is a good man and she reassures Noah that he is. Later in the evening, Noah invites Allie to come back tomorrow.
In the present, it is made clear that the elderly woman is Allie suffering from dementia, which has stolen her memories, and also that Noah is her husband. Allie does not recognize their grown children and grandchildren, who beg Noah to come home with them. He insists on staying with Allie.

The next day, Allie's mother appears on Noah's doorstep, telling Allie that Lon has followed her to Seabrook after Allie's father told him about Noah. Her mother takes Allie out for a drive to show her that there had been a time in her life when she could relate to Allie's present situation. On returning to Noah's, she hands her daughter the bundle of 365 letters that Noah had written to her. When alone, Noah asks Allie what she is going to do; Allie is confused and confesses that she doesn't know. Noah asks her to just stay with him, admitting it is going to be really hard, but he is willing to go through anything because he wants to be with her. Confused as ever, Allie drives off.

Allie drives to the hotel and confesses to Lon, who is angry but admits that he still loves her. He tells her that he does not want to convince his fiancée that she should be with him, but Allie tells him he does not have to, because she already knows she should be with him. The film goes back to the elderly couple, and Duke asks Allie who she chose. She soon realizes the answer herself; young Allie appears at Noah's doorstep, having left Lon at the hotel and chosen Noah. They embrace in reunion. Elderly Allie suddenly remembers her past before she and Noah/Duke joyfully spend a brief intimate moment together; after originally finding out about her illness, she had herself written their story in the notebook with the instructions for Noah to "Read this to me, and I'll come back to you." But
soon Allie relapses, losing her memories of Noah yet again. She panics, and has to be sedated by the attending physician. This proves to be too difficult for Noah to watch and he breaks down. The next morning, Noah is found unconscious in bed and he is rushed to the hospital; he later returns to the nursing home's intensive care ward. He goes to Allie's room later that night, and Allie remembers again. The next morning, a nurse finds them in bed together, having both died peacefully holding each other's hands. The last scene shows a flock of birds flying away.