

Закрытый клуб

Читаем вместе по-английски

'The Longest Ride' by Nickolas Sparks



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Lesson 19

The Longest Ride

Chapter 8, Part 2

The Longest Ride

Chapter 8, Part 2



The Longest Ride

Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- "You are crying," Ruth says to me.
- In another place, at another time, I would **wipe the tears from my face with the back of my hand**. But **here and now**, the **task seems impossible**.
- "I didn't realize it," I say.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “You often cried in your sleep,” Ruth **says to** me. “When we were first married. I **would hear** you at night and the sound **would break my heart**. I **would rub your back** and **hush** you and sometimes you would **roll over** and **become silent**. But **other times**, it **would continue through the night**, and in the mornings, you **would tell me** that you could not remember the reason.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “Sometimes I didn’t.”
- She **stares at** me. “But sometimes you did,” she finishes.
- I **squint at** her, thinking her form is almost like liquid, as if I’m staring at her through **shimmering heat waves** that rise from the asphalt in summer. She wears a **navy** dress and a white **hair band**, and her voice sounds older. It takes a moment, but I realize she is twenty-three, her age when I returned from the war.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “I was thinking about Joe Torrey,” I said.
- “Your friend”—she nods—“the one who ate five hot dogs in San Francisco. The one who bought you your first beer.”
- I never told her about the cigarettes, for I know she **would have disapproved**. Ruth always hated their smell. It is a **lie of omission**, but I **long ago** convinced myself that it was the right thing to do. “Yes,” I say.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- The morning light surrounds Ruth in a **halo**.
- **"I wish I could have met** him," she says.
- "You **would have liked** him."
- Ruth **clears her throat**, considering this, before turning away. She faces the snow-caked window, her thoughts **her own**. This car, I think, has become my **tomb**.

The Longest Ride

Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “You were also thinking about the hospital,” she **murmurs**.
- When I nod, she **emits a weary sigh**.
- “Did you not hear what I told you?” she says, turning to me again. “That it **did not matter to** me? I would not lie to you about this.”
- “Not **on purpose**,” I answer. “But I think that maybe, you sometimes lied to yourself.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- She is surprised by my words, **if only** because I have never spoken so directly **on this matter**. But I know I am right.
- “This is why you **stopped writing** me,” she observes. “After you had been sent back to California, your letters became less frequent until they finally stopped coming at all. I did not hear from you for six months.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “I stopped writing because I remembered what you’d told me.”
- “Because you wanted to end it between us.” There is an **undercurrent** of anger in her voice, and I can’t meet her eyes.
- “I wanted you to be happy.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “I was not happy,” she **snaps**. “I was confused and **heartbroken** and I did not understand what had happened. And I **prayed for** you every day, hoping you would **let me help** you. But instead, I would go to the mailbox and find it empty, **no matter** how many letters I sent.”
- “I’m sorry. It was wrong of me to do that.”
- “Did you even read my letters?”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “Every one. I read them **over and over**, and **more than once**, I tried to write so you could know what happened. But I could never find the right words.”
- She shakes her head. “You did not even tell me when you **were to arrive** home. It was your mother who told me, and I thought about meeting you at the station, like you **used to do** when I came home.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- "But you didn't."
- "I wanted to see **if** you **would come** to me. But days **passed** and then a week, and when I did not see you at the synagogue, I understood that you were trying to **avoid** me. So I finally marched over to your shop and told you that I needed to speak to you. And do you remember what you said to me?"

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- Of all the things I've said in my life, these are the words I regret the most. But Ruth is waiting, her **tense** expression **fixed on** my face. There is a **fierce** challenge **in the way** she waits.
- "I told you that the **engagement was off**, and that it **was over between** us."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- She **arches an eyebrow**. "Yes," she says, "that is what you told me."
- "I couldn't talk to you then. I was..."
- When I **trail off**, she finishes for me. "Angry." She nods. "I could see it in your eyes, but even then, I knew you **were still in love with** me."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “Yes,” I admit. “I was.”
- “But your words were still **hurtful,**” she says. “I went home and cried like I had not **since I was a child.** And my mother finally came in and held me and neither of us knew what to do. I had lost so much already. I could not bear to lose you, too.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- **By this**, she means her family, the family that had **stayed behind** in Vienna. At the time, I didn't realize how selfish my actions were or how Ruth **might have perceived** them. This memory, too, has stayed with me, and in the car, I feel an **age-old** shame.
- Ruth, my dream, knows what I am feeling. When she speaks, it is with a new **tenderness**.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “But if it **was really over**, I wanted to understand the reason, so the next day, I went to the **drugstore** across from your shop and ordered a chocolate soda. I sat next to the window and watched you as you worked. I know you saw me, but you **did not come over**. So I went back the next day and the day after that, and only then did you finally **cross the street** to see me.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “My mother **made me go,**” I admit. “She told me that you **deserved** an explanation.”
- “That is what you have always said. But I think you also wanted to come, because you missed me. And because you knew that only I could **help you heal.**”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I close my eyes at her words. She is right, of course, right about all of it. Ruth always did know me better than I knew myself.
- "I **took a seat across from** you," I say. "And then, a moment later, a chocolate soda arrived for me."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “You were so **skinny**. I thought you needed my help to **get fat** again. Like you were when we met.”
- “I was never fat,” I **protest**. “I barely **made weight** when I **joined the army**.”
- “Yes, but when you got back, you **were all bones**. Your suit hung from your frame like it was two sizes too big.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I thought you would **blow away** as you crossed the street, and it made me wonder whether you would ever be yourself again. I was not sure you would ever again be the man I once loved."
- "And yet you **still gave me a chance.**"
- She **shrugs.** "I had no choice," she says, her eyes **glittering.**
- "**By then,** David Epstein was married."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I laugh **despite myself**, and my body spasms, neurons **blazing, nausea** coming at me. I breathe through **gritted teeth** and **gradually feel the wave begin** to **recede**. Ruth waits for my breathing to **steady before going on**.
- “I admit that I was frightened about this. I wanted things between us to be **the way** they had been before, so I simply pretended that nothing had changed.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I **chattered** about college and my friends and how much I had studied, and that my parents had surprised me by **showing up** at my graduation. I talked about my work as a **substitute teacher** at a school around the corner from the synagogue, but also mentioned that I was interviewing for a full-time position that **fall** at a **rural elementary school on the outskirts of** town.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I told you also that my father was meeting with the **dean** of the Art History Department at Duke **for the third time**, and that my parents might have to move to Durham. And then I wondered **aloud** whether I would have to **give up** my new job and move to Durham, too."
- "And I suddenly **knew** I didn't want you to go."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- **"That is why** I said it." She smiles. "I wanted to see your expression, and **for just an instant**, the old Ira was back. And then I was no longer frightened that you **were gone** forever."
- "But you didn't ask me to walk you home."
- "You were not ready. There was still too much anger inside you. That is why I suggested that we meet once a week for chocolate sodas, just like we **used to**. You needed time, and I **was willing to** wait."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- **"For a while.** Not forever."
- "No, not forever. **By the end of** February, I had begun to wonder whether you would ever kiss me again."
- "I wanted to," I say. "Every time I was with you, I wanted to kiss you."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “I knew that, too, and that was why it was so confusing to me. I could not understand what was wrong. I could not understand what **was holding you back**, why you did not trust me.
- You should have known that I would love you **no matter what.**”
- “I did know,” I say. “And that was why I couldn’t tell you.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I did eventually tell her, of course, on a cold evening **in early March**. I had called her at home, asking her to meet me in the park, where we **had strolled together** a hundred times. At the time, I wasn't planning to tell her. Instead, I convinced myself that I simply needed a friend to talk to, as the atmosphere at home had become **oppressive**.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- My father **had done well** financially during the war, and **as soon as it was over**, he **went back into business** as a **haberdasher**. **Gone were** the sewing machines; in their place were **racks** of suits, and to someone walking past the shop, it probably **looked the same as** it did before the war. But inside, it was different. My father was different.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- **Instead of greeting** customers at the door as he used to, he would spend his afternoons in the back room, listening to the news on the radio, trying to understand the **madness** that had caused the deaths of so many **innocent** people. It was all he wanted to talk about; the Holocaust became the subject of every **mealtime** conversation and every spare moment.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- **By contrast**, the more he talked, the more my mother concentrated on her sewing, because she couldn't **bear to think about** it. For my father, after all, it was an abstract horror; for my mother—who, like Ruth, had lost friends and family—it was deeply personal. And in their **divergent** reactions to these **shattering** events, my parents gradually **set in motion** the largely separate lives they would lead **from that point on**.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- As their son, I tried not to **take sides**. With my father I would listen and with my mother I would say nothing, but when the three of us were together, **it** sometimes **struck me** that we'd forgotten **what it meant to be** a family. Nor did it help that my father now accompanied my mother and me to synagogue; my **intimate talks** with my mother became a **thing of the past**.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- When my father informed me that he was **bringing me in** as a partner in the business—meaning the three of us would be together all the time—I **despaired**, sure that there would be no escaping the **gloom** that **had infiltrated** our lives.
- “You are thinking about your parents,” Ruth says to me.
- “You were always kind to them,” I say.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- "I loved your mother very much," Ruth says. "**Despite** the difference in our ages, she was the first real **friend I made** in this country."
- "And my father?"
- "I loved him, too. How could I not? He was family."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I smile, recalling that **in later years** she was always more patient with him than I was.
- "Can I ask you a question?"
- "You can ask me anything."
- "Why did you **wait for** me? Even after I **stopped writing**? I know you say that you loved me, but..."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “We **are back to** this? You wonder why I loved you?”
- “You could have had anyone.”
- She **leans closer to** me, her voice soft. “This has always been your problem, Ira,” she says. “You do not see in yourself what others see in you. You think you are not **handsome enough**, but you were very handsome when you were young.”

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- You think you are not interesting or smart enough, but you are these things, too, and that you **are not aware of** your best qualities is part of your charm. You always see so much in others—as you did in me. You made me feel special.”
- “But you are special,” I **insist**.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- She raises her hands in **delight**. "This is what I am talking about," she says, laughing. "You are a man of deep feelings, who has always **cared about** others, and I am not alone in recognizing that. Your friend Joe Torrey **sensed** it. I am sure that is why he spent his free time with you. And my mother sensed it **as well**, which was why she held me when I thought I had lost you. Because we both knew that men like you are rare."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- “I’m glad you came that night,” I say. “I needed you.”
- “And you also knew, as soon as we **fell into step** at the park, that you were finally ready to tell me the truth. All of it.”
- I nod. In one of my final letters, I’d briefly told her about the **bombing run** over Schweinfurt and Joe Torrey.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- I mentioned the **wounds** I'd received and the infection that had followed, but I hadn't told her everything. On that night, however, I started at the beginning. I **related every detail** and I **held nothing back**. On the bench, she listened to my **outpouring of words** without speaking.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- Afterward, she slipped her arms around me and I **leaned into** her. The emotions washed over me in waves, her whispered words of comfort **unleashing** memories I had tried too long to bury.
- I don't know **how long it took for the storm inside me to subside**, but by that point, I **was exhausted**. Yet there was one thing remaining that I had not revealed, something that not even my parents knew.

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- In the car, Ruth is silent. I know she is replaying what I said to her that night.
- "I told you that I got the **mumps** while I was in the hospital – the worst case the doctor had ever seen. And I told you what the doctor said to me."

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Chapter 8 – Ira – Part 2

- Ruth remains **quiet**, but her eyes start to **glisten**.
- “He said that mumps can cause **sterility**,” I say. “That’s why I tried to end it between us. Because I knew that if you ever married me, there was a good chance that we would never have children.”

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