

Закрытый клуб

Читаем вместе по-английски

'The Longest Ride' by Nickolas Sparks



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Lesson 43

The Longest Ride

Chapter 24, Part 2

Chapter 25,

Chapter 26, Part 1

The Longest Ride

Chapter 24, Part 2



The Longest Ride

Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- The bull came out hard, bucking, his **rear legs** pistoning into the air, his head **pitched** low to the ground. He half spun toward the left, **kicking hard** again, then **literally** jumped, all four legs **coming off the ground**, before suddenly beginning to spin in the opposite direction.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- By then, four seconds **had gone by** and Sophia heard the crowd **go berserk**.
- “He’s doing it!” one of the announcers shouted.
- It was at that instant that Sophia **saw Luke jerk forward**, his body **off balance**, just as the bull’s head **exploded** backward.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- The impact was **horrific**; Luke's head **rocketed in the opposite direction, as if devoid of** any muscle at all...
- "Oh, my!"
- Luke's body **went** suddenly **limp** as he **toppled off** the bull, his hand still **tethered** to the wrap.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- But the bull appeared **psychotic** with **rage**, an animal **out of control**, and the bucking continued, **fierce** and **unrelenting**. Luke **bobbed up and down** like a **rag doll, whipped in every direction**. When the bull began to spin again, Luke followed in **sickening** motion, his feet **skimming** the ground like a **whirligig**.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- By then the **bullfighters** and others had jumped into the ring, trying **desperately** to free Luke's **grip**, but the bull just wouldn't stop. He **stopped spinning** and **charged** at the new **intruders**, **swinging** his **horns wildly**, **tossing** one of the bullfighters **aside as if he were weightless**.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- Another **tried and failed to free** Luke's **wrist** from the wrap; another few seconds passed before a bullfighter **was able to jump up** and **hold on long enough**—while running with the bull—to free Luke's hand.
- **As soon as** it happened, Luke **toppled** to the dirt and lay on his stomach, his head to the side, **unmoving**, while the bullfighter **scurried away**.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- “He’s hurt! They **gotta** get **folks** in here now!”
- And still the bull wouldn’t stop. Instead, **as if** realizing he was free of his rider but angry that Luke **had even attempted to sit astride** him **in the first place**, the bull turned around, **oblivious** to the others who were trying to distract him.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- Lowering his head, he **charged** Luke, **gouging** his **horns** at Luke's **prone** figure with **murderous intent**. Two bullfighters **jumped in, slapping** and hitting, but the bull would not be denied. Instead, he **kept swinging** his massive horns at Luke's **inert** figure, then suddenly **lunged forward atop** Luke's body, where he began to buck again.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- No, not buck. **Trample.** And spin. In **speechless terror,** Sophia heard the announcer shout:
- “Get that bull off him!”
- Up and down, the **enraged** bull brought his **hooves** down with **furious** impact, **crushing** Luke beneath him. **Smashing** down on his back, his legs, his head.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- His head...
- Five people circled the bull by then, doing everything they could to stop the **rampage**, but Big Ugly Critter continued his **single-minded** attack.
- Up and down, crushing Luke over and over... The announcer saying:

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- “They **gotta** stop this!”
- The bull **seemingly possessed...**
- Until finally—finally!—he **moved off** of Luke and **skittered sideways** onto the dirt floor of the arena, still bucking wildly.

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Chapter 24 – Sophia – Part 2

- The camera followed the bull as he continued to **buck away** and then **zeroed in** on Luke's **prone** figure, his face **bloody** and **unrecognizable**, as others began to **attend to** him.
- But by then, Sophia had covered her face, **sobbing** in horror and shock.

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Chapter 25



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Chapter 25 – Luke

- **By** Wednesday, Luke's headache **had abated slightly**, but he feared he wouldn't be well enough to **compete** in Macon, Georgia, **over the coming weekend**. After that, the next event was in Florence, South Carolina, and he wondered whether he'd be in better condition by then.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- From there, the tour moved to Texas, and the last thing he wanted was to **head into** that **stretch** of the season with a serious **physical handicap**.
- **Beyond that**, he was beginning to worry about the **expenses**. Starting in February, the events required that he fly. **It meant** extra nights at the motels. Extra meals. **Rental cars**.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- In the past, when **pursuing** his dream, he'd viewed it as the **cost of doing business**. It still was, but now, with the **loan repayment** set to **triple in** six months, he'd **found himself scouring the Web** for the cheapest flights he could find, most of which **had to be booked weeks in advance**.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- As best as he could estimate, his **winnings** from the first event would **cover** the cost of travel to the next eight events. Which meant, of course, that not a **dime** would go toward **meeting the upcoming loan payments**. It wasn't about winning to **chase a dream** anymore. It was about winning **regularly** because he **had to**.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- Even as the thought entered his mind, however, he could hear Sophia's words, **contradicting** him. That it wasn't about the ranch, or even about his mom. That it was all about the **guilt** he wanted to avoid.
- **Was he being selfish?** Until she'd said it, he'd **never even considered the idea**. It wasn't about him. He'd be fine.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- It was about his mom, her **heritage**, her survival at an age at which her **options** were few. He didn't want to ride. He was doing it because his mom had risked everything to save him, and he **owed** her. He couldn't **watch her lose** everything **because of** him.
- **Otherwise** he'd **feel guilty**. Which made it all about him. Or did it?

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- He'd called Sophia three times on Sunday night, another three times on Monday. Twice on Tuesday. He'd texted, too, once each day, without receiving a response. He remembered how upset she'd been by Brian's **stalking**, which kept him from texting or calling on Wednesday. But by Thursday, he **could take the silence no longer.**

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- He climbed into his truck and drove to Wake Forest, **pulling to a stop** in front of the sorority house.
- Two **identically** dressed girls were sitting in the porch **rockers**, one of them talking on the phone, the other texting. Both **glanced up** briefly, then **did a double take** when they saw who was walking toward them.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- As he knocked, he could hear laughter drifting from inside. A moment later, the door was opened by a **pretty brunette** with two **piercings** in each ear.
- “I’ll tell Sophia you’re here,” was all she said, **moving aside to let him in.**

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- **Off to the side**, three girls sat on the couch, **craning their necks** to **get a glimpse of** him. He guessed they were the same girls he'd heard from outside the door, but now they simply **gawked at** him, the television **blaring** in the background as he stood in the **foyer, feeling out of place.**

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- It was a couple of minutes before Sophia appeared at the top of the stairs, her arms crossed. She **stared down** at him, **clearly debating** what to do. Then, **sighing**, she **approached reluctantly**. Noticing everyone's attention, she said nothing to him; instead, she **nodded toward** the door. Luke **followed her out**.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- She didn't stop at the porch but walked down the **sidewalk out of sight** of those in the house before turning to face him.
- "What do you want?" she asked, her **expression blank**.
- "I wanted to tell you that I'm sorry," Luke said, hands in his pockets. "For not telling you **sooner**."
- "Okay," she said.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- She **added nothing**, leaving him **unsure** what to say next. In the silence that followed, she **turned away**, studying the house across the street.
- “I watched the video of your ride,” she said. “On Big Ugly Critter.”
- He kicked at a few **pebbles lodged** in a **crack** in the sidewalk, afraid to face her. **“Like I said**, it was pretty bad.”

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- She shook her head. “It was more than just pretty bad...” She turned to look at him, searching his face for answers. “I knew it was dangerous, but I never thought that it was a **matter of life and death**. I guess I didn’t really understand how much you risk every time you step into the ring. And that bull and watching what he did to you. It was trying to kill you...”

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- She **swallowed, unable to** finish. Luke, too, had watched the video once, six months after his ride. Back when he'd **sworn** he'd never ride again. Back when he'd felt lucky simply to have survived.
- "You should have died, but you didn't," Sophia **stated**. "You were given a second chance."

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- Somehow, it was **ordained** that you should have the chance to live a normal life. And **no matter what you say**, I'll never understand why you'd want to risk that. **It doesn't make sense to me.** I told you once that I'd thought about killing myself but that I never really meant it. I knew I'd never **go through with** it. But you... it's like you want to do it. And **you'll keep going until you succeed."**

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- “I don’t want to die,” he **insisted**.
- “Then don’t ride,” she said. “Because if you do, then I can’t be part of your life. I’m **not going to be able to pretend** you’re not trying to **kill yourself**. Because I’d **feel like** I was **condoning** it somehow. I just can’t do that.”

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- Luke could feel his throat **close up, making it difficult** to speak. “Are you saying you don’t want to see me anymore?”
- With his question, Sophia thought again about how much the **tension had drained her**, and she realized there were **no tears left**. “I love you, Luke. But I can’t be part of this.”

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- I can't spend every minute that I'm with you wondering whether you'll live through the weekend. And I can't bear to imagine what **it's going to be like** if you don't."
- "So **it's over?**"
- "Yes," she said. "If you continue to ride, it's over."

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- The following day, Luke sat at his kitchen table, truck keys on the table. It was Friday afternoon, and if he left in the next few minutes, he'd reach the motel before midnight. His truck was already **loaded with the gear** he needed.
- His head still ached a little, but the real ache he felt was when he thought about Sophia.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- He **wasn't looking forward to** the drive or to the event; more than anything, he wanted to spend the weekend with Sophia. He wanted an **excuse** not to go. He wanted to take her horseback riding on the ranch, **envelop her in his arms** as they sat in front of the fire.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- Earlier, he'd seen his mom, but their **interaction** remained **strained**. Like Sophia, she didn't want to talk to him. When work made it necessary to speak to him, her anger was **palpable**. He could feel the weight of her worries—about him, about the ranch. About the future.

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Chapter 25 – Luke

- **Reaching for** the keys, he **heaved himself** out of the chair and started toward his truck, wondering if he'd be able to drive it back home.

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Chapter 26, Part 1



The Longest Ride

Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- “I thought you might be coming.” Linda stood in the doorway of the farmhouse, her expression as **weary** and **anxious** as Sophia’s own.
- “I didn’t know where else to go,” Sophia said. It was Saturday night, and they both knew that the man they adored would be in the ring tonight, risking his life, perhaps at this very moment.

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- Linda waved her in and **motioned** for her to sit at the kitchen table. “Would you like a cup of hot **cocoa?**” she asked. “I **was just about to make myself one.**” Sophia **nodded, unable to say anything** and noticing Linda’s **cell phone** lying on the table. Linda **must have noticed** Sophia staring at it.

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- “He texts me when he’s **finished,**” Linda said, **busying herself** at the stove. “He’s always done that. Well, actually, **he used to call.** He’d tell me how well he did, good or bad, and we’d talk for a while. But now he...” She shook her head. “He just texts to tell me that he’s okay. And I can’t do anything but sit here while I **wait for** it.”

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- **Meanwhile**, of course, **time just slows down**. Right now, I feel like I've **been awake for a week**. But even when I hear from him, I **won't be able to sleep**. Because I worry that even though he says he's okay, he's done something to further **damage his brain**."
- Sophia picked at the table with her **fingernail**. "He said he was in the **ICU** after the accident."

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- “He **was clinically dead** when he arrived at the hospital,” Linda said, **stirring the heating milk** slowly. “Even after they **revived** him, **no one thought** he’d survive. The back of his skull was just... **shattered**. Of course, I didn’t know any of this at the time. I didn’t get there until the following day, and when they **brought me in** to see him, I didn’t even recognize him.

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- The **impact** broke his nose and crushed his **eye socket** and his **cheekbone**—his face **was swollen** and just... **wrecked**. They couldn't do anything about it because of the other damage. His head **was wrapped up** and he was **bolted down** so he couldn't move at all."

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- Linda **took her time** pouring the hot milk into the **mugs**, then **spooned in** the cocoa. “He didn’t open his eyes for almost a week, and a few days after that, they had to **rush him back into surgery**. He **ended up spending almost a month** in the **ICU**.”
- Sophia accepted a mug from Linda and took a **tentative** sip. “He said he has a plate.”

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- “He does,” she said. “A small one. But the doctor said the bones in his skull might never heal completely because some of the pieces just couldn’t be **salvaged**. He said that it’s like a **stained glass window** back there, everything barely **holding together**. I’m sure it’s better now than it was even last summer, and he’s always been a strong rider, but...”

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- She **trailed off, unable to finish** the thought. Instead, she shook her head.
- “After he **was released from the ICU** and they thought he could handle the trip, he was transported to Duke University Hospital. By then, I felt like we’d **put the worst behind** us, because I knew he’d survive, maybe even **recover fully.**”

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- She **sighed**. “And then the bills **started coming in**, and I was looking at another three months at Duke, just to allow his body to heal, and all the **reconstructive surgery** on his face. Then, of course, he needed **lots of rehab...**”
- “He told me about the ranch,” Sophia said softly.

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Chapter 26 – Sophia – Part 1

- “I know,” she said. **“It’s how he justifies** what he’s doing.”
- “It still doesn’t justify it.”
- “No,” Linda said. “It doesn’t.”
- “Do you think he’s okay?”
- “I don’t know,” she said, **tapping** the phone. “I never know until he texts.”

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