

Закр́тый клуб

Читаем вместе по-английски

'The Longest Ride' by Nickolas Sparks



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Lesson 51

The Longest Ride

Chapter 31, Part 2

Chapter 32, Part 1

The Longest Ride

Chapter 31, Part 2



The Longest Ride

Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- “Okay, so about this Friday.” Sophia **rolled over in bed** to face him. **“Keep in mind** that it’s an art auction.” It was only two days away, and he tried to **come across** as **properly attentive**.
- “Yes. You told me.”
- **“Lots of** rich people there. Important people.”
- “Okay.”

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- “I just wanted to make sure you weren’t planning to wear your hat and boots.”
- **“I figured.”**
- **“You’re going to need** a suit.”
- “I have a suit,” he said. “A nice one, **in fact.**”
- “You have a suit?” Her eyebrows **shot up.**
- “Why do you so sound so surprised?”

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- “Because I can’t imagine you in a suit. I’ve only ever seen you in jeans.”
- “Not true.” He **winked**. “I’m not wearing any jeans now.”
- “**Get your mind out of the gutter,**” she said, not wanting even to acknowledge his comment. “That’s not what I’m talking about and you know it.”

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- He laughed. "I bought a suit two years ago. And a tie and a shirt and shoes, **if you must know. I had to go** to a wedding."
- "And **let me guess. That's the only time** you've ever worn it, right?"
- "No," he said, shaking his head. "I wore it again."
- "Another wedding?" she asked.

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- “A funeral,” he said. **“A friend of my mom’s.”**
- “That was my **second guess,**” she said, **hopping out of bed.** She grabbed the **throw blanket, wound it around** herself, and **tucked in the corner** like a towel. “I want to see it. Is it in your closet?”
- “Hanging on the right...” He pointed, admiring her shape in the **makeshift** toga.

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- She opened the closet door and **pulled out** the **hanger**, **taking a moment to inspect** it. “You’re right,” she said. “It’s a nice suit.”
- **“There you go,** sounding all surprised again.”
- Still holding the suit, she **looked over** at him. “Wouldn’t you be?”

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- In the morning, Sophia returned to campus while Luke **rode off** to inspect the herd. They'd **made plans** for him to **pick her up the following day. To his surprise,** he found her sitting on his porch when he got home later that afternoon.
- She **was clutching** a newspaper, and when she faced him, there was something **haunted** in her expression.

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- “What’s wrong?” he asked.
- “It about Ira,” she said. “Ira Levinson.”
- It took a second for the name to come back to him. “You mean the guy we **rescued** from his car?”
- She **held out** the newspaper. “Read this.”

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- He took the paper from her and **scanned** the headline, which described the auction that **was to take place the next day.**
- Luke **furrowed his brow, puzzled.** “This is an article about the auction.”
- “The collection is Ira’s,” she said.

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- It was all there in the article. Or a lot of it was, anyway. There were fewer personal details than he would have expected, but he learned a bit about Ira's shop, and the article noted the date of his marriage to Ruth. It mentioned that Ruth had been a schoolteacher and that they'd begun to collect modern art together after the end of World War II. They'd never had children.

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- **The remainder of the article** concerned the auction and the pieces that were going to be offered, most of which **meant nothing to** Luke. **It concluded,** however, **with a line** that **gave him pause, affecting him the same way** it had Sophia.
- Sophia **brought her lips together** as he reached the end of the article.

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- “He never **made it out of the hospital,**” she said, her voice soft. “He died from his **injuries** the day after we found him.”
- Luke raised his eyes to the sky, closing them for a moment. There was nothing really to say.

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- “We were the last people to see him,” she said. “It doesn’t say that, but I know it’s true. His wife was dead, they had no kids, and he’d **pretty much** become a **hermit**. He died alone, and the thought of that just **breaks my heart**. Because...”

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Chapter 31 – Luke – Part 2

- When she **trailed off**, Luke drew her near, thinking about the letter Ira had written to his wife.
- “I know why,” Luke said. “Because it **kind of breaks my heart**, too.”

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Chapter 32, Part 1



The Longest Ride

Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Sophia had just finished **putting in** her **earrings** on the day of the auction when she saw Luke's truck come to a stop in front of the house. Though she'd **teased** Luke earlier about having only a single suit, **in truth** she owned only two, both with **midlength** skirts and **matching jackets**.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- And she'd purchased those only because she'd needed something **classy** and professional to wear to interviews. At the time, she'd worried that two wouldn't **suffice**, what with all the interviews she'd **no doubt line up**. Which **made her think about that old saying...** how did it go? **People plan, God laughs**, or **something like that?**

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- **As it was**, she'd worn each of them once. Knowing that Luke's suit was dark, she'd **opted for** the lighter of the two. **Despite** her early enthusiasm, she now felt strangely **ambivalent** about going to the auction. Discovering that it was Ira's collection made it more personal somehow, and she feared that with every painting, she'd **recall** how he'd appeared as she'd read his letter in the hospital.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Yet to not go seemed **disrespectful**, since the collection obviously meant so much to him and his wife. Still feeling conflicted, she left her room and went downstairs.
- Luke was waiting just inside **the foyer**. "Are you ready for this?"
- "I guess," she **temporized**. "It's different now."

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- “I know. I thought about Ira most of the night.”
- “Me too.”
- He **forced a smile**, though there wasn't a lot of energy behind it. “You **look terrific, by the way. You're all grown up.**”
- “You too,” she said, meaning it. But...
- “Why do I feel like we're going to a funeral?” she asked him.
- “Because,” he said, **“in a way, we are.”**

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- They entered **one of the enormous exhibition rooms** at the **convention center** an hour before noon. It was nothing like she'd expected. **At the far end of** the room was a stage, surrounded by curtains on three sides; on the right were two long tables on **elevated daises**, each bearing ten telephones; on the other side stood the **podium, no doubt** for the **auctioneer**.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- A large screen formed the **backdrop** on the stage, and at the very front stood an empty **easel**. Approximately three hundred chairs faced the stage in stadium formation, allowing the **bidder**s an **unobstructed view**.
- Though the room was crowded, only a few of the seats were taken. Instead, most of the people **wandered the room**, examining photographs of some of the **most valuable art**.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- The photographs stood on easels along the walls, together with information about the artist, prices of the artist's work achieved in other auctions, **along with estimated values.** Other visitors **clustered around** the four podiums on either side of the entrance, **piled** high with catalogs that described the entire collection.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Sophia moved through the room, Luke **by her side**, feeling slightly **stunned**. Not just because this was once all Ira's, but **because of** the collection itself. There were works by Picasso and Warhol, Johns and Pollock, Rauschenberg and de Kooning, **exhibited side by side**. Some were pieces that she'd never read or even heard about.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Nor **had** the **rumors** of their value **been exaggerated**; she **gasped** at some of the estimates, only to discover that the next set of paintings was worth even more. Through it all, she **found herself trying** to **reconcile** those numbers with Ira, the sweet old man who'd written about nothing but the love he still felt for his wife.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Luke's thoughts **seemed to mirror** her own, **for** he reached for her hand and **murmured**, "There was nothing in his letter about this."
- "Maybe none of this **mattered to** him," she said, **baffled**. "But really, how could it not?" When Luke **failed to answer**, she **squeezed his hand**. "I wish we could have helped him more."

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- “I don’t know that there was any more that we could have done.”
- “Still...”
- His blue eyes searched hers. “You read the letter,” he said. “That’s what he wanted. And I think that’s why you and I **were meant to** find him. Who else **would have waited around?”**

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- When the announcement was made for people to take their seats, Luke and Sophia found a couple of empty ones in the back row. From there, it was almost impossible to see the easel, which **disappointed** Sophia.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- It **would have been great to be able to see** some of the paintings **up close**, but she knew those seats should go to **prospective buyers**, and the last thing she wanted was for someone to **tap her on the shoulder** and ask her to move later.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- A few minutes after that, men and women in suits began to take their seats behind the phones on the elevated tables, and **slowly but surely**, the **overhead lights** began to **dim** as **a series of spotlights beamed down** to illuminate the stage.
- Sophia scanned the crowd, spotting her two art history professors, **including** her adviser.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- As the clock approached one, the room slowly **grew quieter**, the **hushed murmur** gradually **fading out** completely when a **silver-haired** gentleman in an **exquisitely tailored suit strolled** to the podium. In his hands, he held a **folder** and he **spread it wide** before reaching into his **breast pocket for his reading glasses**. He **propped** them on his nose, adjusting the pages as he did so.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- “Ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to thank all of you for coming to the auction of the extraordinary collection of Ira and Ruth Levinson. As you know, it’s unusual for our firm to host **such an event** in **venues** other than our own, but **in this case**, Mr. Levinson didn’t leave us much choice. It’s also rather **unorthodox** for the particulars of today’s auction to have remained somewhat **vague**.”

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- **To begin, I'd like to explain** the rules **regarding** this particular auction. Beneath each of the seats is a numbered **paddle**, and..."
- He **went on to describe** the bidding process, but with her thoughts drifting to Ira again, Sophia **tuned it out.**

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Only **vaguely** did she hear the list of those who'd chosen to **attend** the auction— curators from the Whitney and MoMA, the Tate, and **countless** others from cities overseas. She guessed that most of the people in the room were representatives of either private collectors or galleries, no doubt hoping to **acquire** something **extremely rare**.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- After the rules **were outlined** and certain individuals and institutions thanked, the silver-haired gentleman focused the attention of the audience again. “At this time, it is my pleasure to introduce to you Howie Sanders. Mr. Sanders served as Ira Levinson’s attorney for many years, and has prepared some **remarks he’d like to share with you as well.**”

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Sanders appeared then, a **bent, elderly figure** whose dark wool suit hung off his bony frame. Slowly, he **made his way to** the podium. There, he **cleared his throat** before **launching into** his speech in a voice that was **remarkably vigorous** and clear.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- “We’re gathered here today to participate in an extraordinary event. After all, it is very unusual for a collection of this size and significance to **go unnoticed** and **unremarked** upon for so many years. Until six years ago, I suspect that very few in this room even knew of the existence of this collection.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- The circumstances of its creation—the how, **so to speak**—were described in a magazine article, and yet I admit that even I, the man who served as Ira Levinson’s attorney for the past forty years, **have been astounded** by the cultural importance and value of this collection.”

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- He paused to **look up** at the audience **before going on**.
“But that is not why I’m here. I’m here because Ira was **explicit** in his instructions regarding this auction, and he asked me to say a few words to all of you. I **confess** that this is something I would rather not have been asked to do.”

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- Though I am comfortable in a **courtroom** or **in the confines of** my office, I am rarely required to face an audience of this nature, where many of you **have been charged with the responsibility** of securing a specific piece of art for a client or an institution at a price that even I **have difficulty comprehending**. And yet, because my friend Ira asked me to speak, I now **find myself in this unenviable position.**”

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- A few **good-natured chuckles were audible** from the audience.
- “What can I tell you about Ira? That he was a good man? An honest, **conscientious** man? That he was a man who **adored** his wife? Or should I tell you about his business, or the quiet wisdom he **exuded** whenever we were together?”

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- I asked myself all these questions **in an effort** to **discern** what it was that Ira really wanted me to say to all of you. What would he have said if he, not I, had been standing before you? Ira, I think, would have said this to you: ‘I want all of you to understand.’ ”
- He let the comment hang, making sure he had their attention.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- “There is a wonderful quote I **came across,**” he **went on.** “It’s **attributed to** Pablo Picasso, and as most of you probably realize, he’s the only non-American artist whose work will be featured in today’s auction. Years ago, Picasso was quoted as saying, ‘We all know that art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, **at least** the truth that is given us to understand.’ ”

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- He faced the audience again, his voice softening.
- “Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand,” he repeated. “I want you to think about that.” He scanned the auditorium, searching the faces of the **hushed** audience. “I find that statement profound **on a number of levels**. Obviously, **it speaks to the way** in which you might view the art that you will examine here today.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- **Upon reflection,** however, I began to wonder whether Picasso was speaking simply about art, or whether he wanted us to view our own lives through that prism **as well**. What was Picasso suggesting? To me, he was saying that our reality is shaped by **our perceptions**. That something is good or bad only because we–you and I–believe it to be so, based on our own experiences.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- And yet, Picasso is also saying that it's a lie. **In other words,** our opinions and our thoughts and feelings – anything we experience – need not define us forever. I realize that to some of you, it may seem that I've **strayed into** a speech about **moral relativism**, while the rest of you probably think I'm just an old man who's **gone completely off the rails** here..."
- Again, the audience laughed.

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Chapter 32 – Sophia – Part 1

- “But I’m here to tell you that Ira would have been pleased by my selection of this quote. Ira **believed in good and evil**, right and wrong, love and hate. He’d grown up in a world, in a time, where destruction and hate **were evident on a worldwide scale**. And yet, Ira never let it define him or the man he **strove** daily to be. Today, I want you to view this auction as a **memorial** of sorts to all that he found important. But most of all, I hope you understand.”

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