A Walk to Remember
by Nicholas Sparks
You Be the Judge
About the Author

★ Born on December 31, 1965
★ Started his first novel while recovering from a sports injury during college
★ Met his wife Catherine during spring break in 1988
★ Took up writing again after business setbacks, giving himself time to write three novels
  ○ If these failed, he would give up writing
★ Published his first hit, The Notebook, in 1995 (which was soon made into a movie)
★ Published A Walk to Remember in 1999 (amongst other novels)
★ Living in North Carolina, Sparks continues to write while also contributing to charity
Setting the Scene

★ **Setting**: the combination of place, historical time, and social circumstances that provides the general background for the characters and plot of a literary work
  ○ 1958 in Beaufort, North Carolina

★ **Narrator**: a speaker through whom an author presents a story (often but not always a character in the work)
  ○ **First person point of view**: the author tells the story through a character who speaks using “I”
  ○ 57-year-old Landon Carter narrates *A Walk to Remember*
  ○ How would the story be different if 17-year-old Landon was the narrator? (Would it be different at all?)
  ○ **Flashback**: a scene or story that interrupts the present action to depict some earlier event
Building Character

★ Main characters
  ○ Landon Carter
  ○ Mr. Worth Carter
  ○ Mrs. Carter
  ○ Jamie Sullivan
  ○ Hegbert Sullivan
  ○ Mrs. Sullivan (deceased)

★ Round character: a fully developed character with the complexity associated with real people

★ Flat character: a character that lacks depth and tends to be defined by a single idea or quality (can be summed up in one sentence)

ROUND: Elsa
FLAT: Crush
Gender Roles & Genre

★ **Genre**: the classification of literary works on the basis of their content, form, or technique
★ We often think of Nicholas Sparks as a romance writer.

★ What kinds of gender roles do we see in the novel? Are gender roles broken? Are they reinforced?

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PUT IT TOGETHER

★ Do you think that the genre has a part in enforcing these gender roles? Does it add to or take away from the novel? Do all romance novels need gender roles?
Illness & Death: Is it romanticized?

“...when we were finally ready, he pronounced us husband and wife. I kissed Jamie softly as my mother began to cry, and then held Jamie’s hand in mine. In front of God and everyone else, I’d promised my love and devotion, in sickness and in health, and I’d never felt so good about anything. It was, I remember, the most wonderful moment of my life.” (Sparks 239-240)

★ How did you feel about Jamie’s illness? What about Landon and Jamie’s romance despite her illness?
★ Do you think that the “happy ending” that comes from the novel makes us forget the true struggle (and ugly moments) that come with death, even while in a relationship?
★ Do you think that this ending is realistic, given the characters’ youth?
Illness & Death: A Comparison to *Feed*

*Feed* is a novel about a futuristic society in which one’s social media feed is implanted in one’s brain. At this point in *Feed*, Violet has been the victim of a hacker, who has stolen her feed, and has found out that she is dying. Here, her new boyfriend Titus finally confesses that he cannot cope with this.

“I’m sorry,” she said, “but I seem to be dying.”

“No— I can’t field this. You were, the whole time, you were just planning this whole eternal thing, and I was supposed to automatically love you always, but I didn’t even know. I was just thinking about going out with you, and we would have some fun for a few months...We’ve only been going out a couple of months. And I’m supposed to act like we’re married. A couple of months. It’s not some big eternal thing. We should’ve broken up weeks ago. I would’ve, if you hadn’t been...”

“If I hadn’t been what?”

“I didn’t sign up to go out with you forever when you’re dead. It’s been a couple of months. Okay? A couple of months.”

There was a silence. (Anderson 271-272)
Titus versus Landon: Boyfriend Material?

★ In a group, discuss your answers to the following questions.

○ How do you feel about Titus’ approach to a dying partner as opposed to Landon’s?
○ Do you think one is more realistic than the other?
○ Landon goes all in while Titus has to leave completely. Is there a third option?
○ Do you think time period has an influence? (1950s versus “the future”)
○ Why do you think we consider Landon and Jamie’s relationship to be romantic when it ends in death (at such a young age)?