

# New novel, new movies in works for writer Sparks

By MARTHA WAGGONER, Associated Press Writer

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AP — FILE — In a Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2008 file photo, author Nicholas Sparks attends the 'Nights In Rodanthe' ...

RALEIGH, N.C. — So many projects, so much success.

That's the theme of the life of novelist Nicholas Sparks, whose latest novel, "The Last Song," (\$24.99, Hachette Book Group) will be in bookstores Tuesday. If the title sounds familiar, that's because Sparks wrote the screenplay first after Miley Cyrus specifically said she wanted him to pen a movie for her. She's been filming the movie by the same name in Georgia.

That movie and at least one more, maybe two, based on Sparks' books will be released in 2010. The movie version of "Dear John" is scheduled for a February 2010 release, and "The Lucky One" could be on the big screen by next year, although filming hasn't started.

His personal life is going well, too, with a private school he started near top capacity for and the high school track team he has coached winning championships. He's moving back into a new, larger home that he built on the site of his previous home

outside New Bern on the Trent River, some 110 miles southeast of Raleigh.

So, can he just humor the rest of us and give us a crumb about what's going wrong in his life? As it turns out, not really.

"All of these things are not straight-line-to-success things," he said in a phone interview. "You have all the downs that it takes to get there. There are frustrations and struggles with the track team, frustrations and struggles with the school, and frustrations and struggles with the house. We just keep trying and trying and do our best."

Although "The Last Song" began as a screenplay, Sparks says he wouldn't have agreed to write it unless he knew he could write a novel from the same idea.

AP: Did you like the process of writing the screenplay first, then the novel, instead of the other way around?

Sparks: The biggest disappointment was that, even though I knew what was going to happen, it didn't make writing the novel any easier. It was very disappointing to me. I wanted it to be easy. Writing a novel is always more difficult than writing a screenplay.

AP: The movie version of "The Last Song" was supposed to be filmed in North Carolina, but went to Georgia almost at the last minute. North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue was in Wilmington to announce the movie would be filmed there, but her news conference was canceled as Disney switched locations for the filming.

AP: What did you think of the change in location?

Sparks: I stay out of it. I spoke to the governor, and I did talk to the people at Disney. But in the end, they're the ones in control of the budget. I have to know my limits. It's not the first of my films to be filmed elsewhere.

AP: Do you just have to accept that lack of control?

Sparks: The only control is not to sell it in the first place.

AP: What did you think of the movie version of "Nights in Rodanthe"? (The movie, starring Richard Gere and Diane Lane, was filmed in North Carolina in 2007 and released last year).

Sparks: I loved it. I thought it was beautiful. The chemistry was terrific. And it did really well at the box office.

AP: Do you have a favorite movie based on a Nicholas Sparks' novel?

Sparks: I like all the movies that have been made from novels. I'm not putting anything out on that. I will say I have worked with Denise (producer Denise Di Novi) a lot — "Nights in Rodanthe," "Message in a Bottle," and "A Walk to Remember." And we're doing "The Lucky One" together.

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On the Net:

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