

Sample Query Letter

Agency Address

Dear Mr. or Ms. Agent,

I would like to introduce you to my second book and first novel entitled, *The Notebook*.

My first book, *Wokini*, in which I collaborated with Billy Mills, was published by Orion Books, a division of Random House in 1994. An inspirational work, it was characterized by Al Neuharth, a founder and former chairman of *USA TODAY*, as a "powerful picture of the meaning of life," while Peter Ueberroth called it "overwhelming and insightful." A moderate commercial success, by May, 1995, it had sold over 56,000 copies.

This novel, *The Notebook*, is a love story inspired by two special people that recently passed away after sixty years of marriage. They were no one you would know, but there was a grand romance between them, an underlying passion and understanding that had taken a lifetime to develop. In this day and age, the unconditional love they felt for one another makes for a wonderful story, one that is all too rare and much too beautiful to let die without being told.

Like *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Bridges of Madison County*, however, all great love stories need tragedy and separation, as well as love, to fully touch the reader, and their story was no exception. Alzheimer's became part of their lives during their final years together and my most vivid memories are those of my grandfather sitting by a bedside and reading to his wife of sixty years, a woman who no longer remembered him. Seeing them this way nearly broke my heart, but never once did he bemoan his plight. "In my mind," he used to tell me, "she's the young woman I married long ago and nothing will ever change that." This story is their story, a story of love, the most faithful love I've ever seen.

The Notebook is a tender novel set in the Deep South, a love story written in lyric prose. Like most Southern novels, *The Notebook* envelopes all that is special about the region and its people; tradition, loyalty, kindness, love and remembrance. Yet this novel stands alone in two important ways. First, it is one of the few passionate stories written about the elderly and it reveals a rare but dignified portrait of a couple struggling with the ultimate reality that their lives will be ending soon. Even more importantly however, *The Notebook* is the first novel that describes the heart-wrenching effects of Alzheimer's disease on two people who had loved each other all their lives. The result is a moving eulogy to old age itself -- a story of love and grief that pretty much sums up the notable context of most people's lives.

As a young writer in the South, I am looking for an agent based in New York City. Your experience as a lawyer is very impressive, and it would be an honor to work with you on this novel.

I have included a brief synopsis and biography for your review. The novel is 52,000 words and fully complete. May I send you a copy of the completed manuscript?

Sincerely,

Nicholas Sparks

P.S. Because 22% of the people in this country (40+ million) are over 52 years old and 4.5 million people suffer from Alzheimer's, this book is unique and marketable to a wide audience. In addition, at 52,000 words, it is short enough not to be cost-prohibitive to most publishing houses.