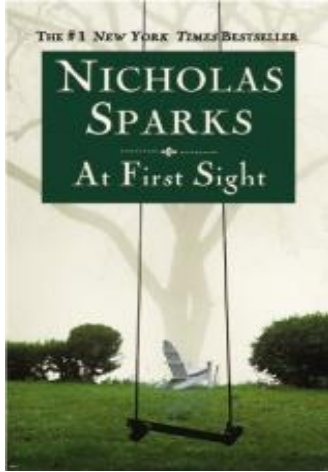


At First Sight

by Nicholas Sparks



About the Book

There are a few things Jeremy Marsh was sure he'd never do: he'd never leave New York City; never give his heart away again after barely surviving one failed marriage; and most of all, never become a parent. Now, Jeremy is living in the tiny town of Boone Creek, North Carolina, married to Lexie Darnell, the love of his life, and anticipating the birth of their daughter. But just as his life seems to be settling into a blissful pattern, an unsettling and mysterious message re-opens old wounds and sets off a chain of events that will forever change the course of this young couple's marriage.

Discussion Guide

1. This novel picks up a few weeks after **True Believer** left off, where we learn that Jeremy and Lexie are engaged. By this point, Jeremy and Lexie have known each other less than a month. How did Lexie and Jeremy know so quickly? What role, if any, did her pregnancy play into the decision? Do you know any couples personally who got engaged so quickly? How long did it take you to realize that you wanted to marry your spouse? In his biography, Nicholas says that he told Cathy that they would get married one day, within 24 hours of meeting her. She laughed, but they've been married since 1989. Did this factor into the author's decision to open the novel in this manner?
2. Alvin thinks Jeremy is making a mistake and feels free to tell him so. If you were Jeremy's friend, what would you have said? Lexie is nervous about meeting Jeremy's family, and though they were referenced quite a bit in both **True Believer** and **At First Sight**, they are minor characters, in that the reader never even learns the names of Jeremy's parents. Why did the author do this? Should the characters have been developed further? Why or why not?
3. The story largely takes place during the forty week period while Lexie is pregnant, which always changes a relationship. Yet, during this time, Jeremy and Lexie are still getting to know each other. How does the pregnancy affect the development of the relationship? Are the developments more positive or negative? At the same time, Jeremy and Lexie are remodeling a house, and Jeremy struggles with writer's block. It seems, to Jeremy anyway, that when it rains it

pours. Describe how these challenges affect Jeremy? How do they affect Lexie?

4. Mayor Gherkin plays a lesser role in this novel than in **True Believer**. The town, too, plays a lesser role. Doris, Jed, Rachel and Alvin, on the other hand, play more prominent roles in **At First Sight**. Who was the most important of the minor characters? Who was the least important? Why did the author choose to "switch" the prominence of the characters in the sequel?

5. Describe the symbolism of the mysterious lights in the cemetery. In what ways does this symbolism portrayed in the relationship between Lexie and Jeremy?

6. Working late one night, Jeremy receives an e-mail that calls into question whether the child is actually his. At first he dismisses it; later, however, he begins to wonder how well he really knows Lexie. Should Jeremy have told Lexie about the e-mail right away? Would he have believed her? How might the relationship have played out differently had Jeremy been less secretive? In what ways was Lexie secretive? Who was more at fault when the problems in their relationship began to arise?

7. After Jeremy and Lexie are married, Jeremy takes a walk on the beach, where he spies some wild horses grazing on the dunes. This paragraph is one of the author's favorite passages in the novel. Were there any passages that you found particularly insightful, well-written or interesting?

8. Doris tells Lexie that a happy marriage means meeting your spouse's needs, while they do the same for you. If your spouse could meet only one of your needs, what would it be? What would your spouse's be? (The Ten Needs, from the book, **His Needs, Her Needs**, are: Communication, Affection, Honesty, Family commitment, Financial Support, Sex, Recreational companionship, domestic support, physical attractiveness, and admiration)

9. Toward the end of the novel, just as Lexie and Jeremy are settling into life as a married couple, new tension is suddenly added to the relationship. How would you react had this happened in your marriage?

10. This is the first of Nicholas's novels in which life after the characters fell in love is described in detail. It's also the first novel in which the characters were in love when the book began. In what other ways was this novel different than the author's previous work? Can this novel still be described as a love story? Why or why not?

Author Bio

Nicholas Sparks is the author of 23 books, all of which have been *New York Times* bestsellers. His books have been published across more than 50 languages with over 150 million copies sold worldwide, and 11 have been adapted into films. He is also the founder of the Nicholas Sparks Foundation, a nonprofit committed to improving cultural and international understanding through global education experiences. He lives in North Carolina.

Critical Praise

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