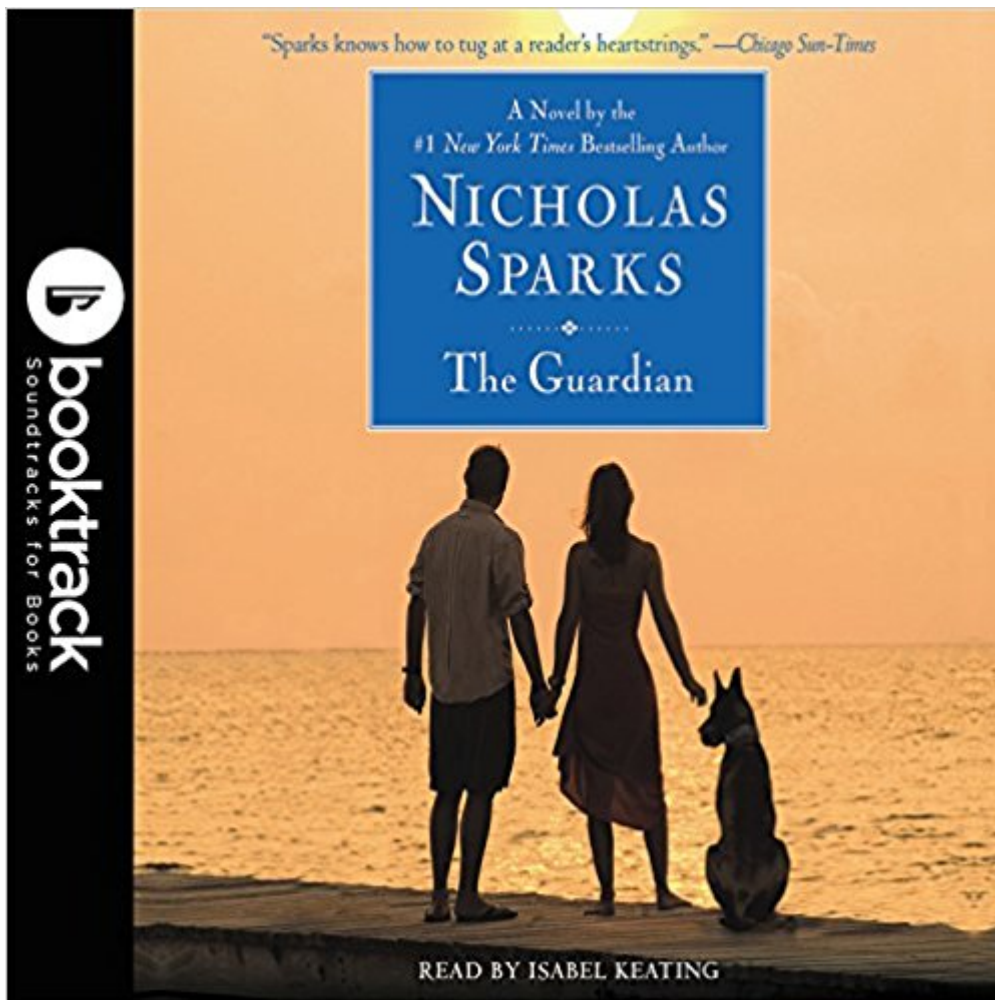




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The Guardian



Synopsis

Julie Barensen's young husband left her two unexpected gifts before he died - a Great Dane puppy named Singer and the promise that he would always be watching over her. Now four years have passed. Still living in the small town of Swansboro, North Carolina, twenty-nine-year-old Julie is emotionally ready to make a commitment to someone again. But who? Should it be Richard Franklin, the handsome, sophisticated engineer who treats her like a queen? Or Mike Harris, the down-to-earth nice guy who was her husband's best friend? Choosing one of them should bring her more happiness than she's had in years. Instead, Julie is soon fighting for her life in a nightmare spawned by a chilling deception and jealousy so poisonous that it has become a murderous desire...

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Customer Reviews

On Christmas Eve, Julie Barensen, 25 years old and newly widowed, finds an unexpected present—a Great Dane pup that her late husband, Jim, had arranged for her to receive after he died from a brain tumor. On that melodramatic note, bestselling author Sparks (*Nights in Rodanthe*) begins his latest love story, one in which he combines elements of romance with those of a thriller. Julie's new dog, Singer, turns out to be a better judge of character than she, which is unfortunate because the dog nearly gives away the book's ending when he growls warily at Richard Franklin, the new man in Julie's life. On the other hand, the pooch loves to be around Mike Harris, Jim's best friend, who has grown to love Julie. Richard's increasingly bizarre behavior causes Julie to break up with him, and his subsequent stalker tactics make for compelling action, especially when he plots to destroy the

budding romance between Julie and Mike. But the writing is lax at best, with multiple point-of-view shifts in the course of one page or even one paragraph. Secondary characters are two-dimensional, such as Pete, the dumb cop who is taken in by the scheming Richard, and Andrea, Julie's co-worker at the local hair salon, a low-class broad from the wrong side of the tracks who might as well have "next victim" tattooed on her forehead. Yet Sparks fans clamor for his brand of love story, and, with the added punch of suspense, this one will be another bestseller. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In his newest, the ever-popular Sparks, known for his romantic tales, combines an involving love story with the creepiness of an unpredictable thriller. Julie Barensen survived a negligent mother and is now trying to survive the loss of a loving husband. The man who rescued her by offering her in the small town of Swansboro, North Carolina, died far too young, leaving Julie with a Great Dane puppy she names Singer and a promise to look out for her. Now 29, Julie is starting to date again after four years of mourning and Singer is acting very strangely. He becomes possessive, and especially dislikes her new beau, Richard Franklin. Richard is the perfect gentleman, bringing gifts and always being thoughtful, but something isn't quite right and after three dates, each more lavish and exciting than the last, Julie reaches a decision about her dream man. In the background is Mike Harris, her late husband's best friend. Good old Mike has always been there for her, but she has to decide to risk a great friendship for the possibility of more. After Julie makes her decision, she finds true love and happiness, but ominous things start to happen and she soon realizes that she's being stalked by a deranged sociopath. Sparks' tricky tale of romantic suspense starts off slowly but builds steadily to an edge-of-your-seat conclusion that is well worth the wait. Patty Engelmann Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This author writes well and does a pretty good job of keeping you interested. In terms of the story and plot, it is chick flick meeting a psycho movie. Not to forget the dutiful dog. No surprises at all, most readers should be able to tell what's going to happen once Julie starts falling for Mike. But good writing, low rating for the story. No twist, nothing as linear as they come. Writer used his brain cells in writing well, didn't really focus on coming up with a great story.

Saddest book, with a plot of serial killer very obvious. Very unlike love story. The dog was so cool but didn't survive. Leaves a horrible feeling from this book. I like positive endings but the dog didn't

need to suffer like it did.

With a sentimental start, Nicholas Sparks crafts a heartfelt, suspenseful story. Julie Barensen is a young widowed woman. Her beloved husband, Jim, left her a note in which he made a promise to her that he would always be watching out for her. She continued on with her life and time passed. Four years later she is still residing in the same town with Singer, her exceptional dog that Jim had bought for her before he died. Julie is now seeking a new relationship. But, as in life, love is confusing. Enter Mike Harris, a great guy who's solid, but, also her late husband's best friend. Then there's Richard Franklin, a man who's sophisticated, intelligent and wants to give her the world. She finds a connection with one of the men and not so much with the other. As the pages turn, we find out that something may be amiss and so the suspense begins. In true Sparks' fashion, there is a twist and a mystery. Although, not my favorite from this author, he does a good job bringing this story to life.

This book had it all, love story, villain, hero, heroine and even a hero dog. The story takes place in a small North Carolina town. Julie (our heroine) is a widow who has started dating 4 years after her husband dies. She's had a couple of so-so dates and then meets Richard (our villain). Things go well the first couple of dates but then Julie realizes there is something off about Richard so she doesn't date him again. That's when things start getting tense and Mike (our hero) comes along. This was a great read and as I said I couldn't put it down, but, although it did have a happy ending it wasn't the ending that I had hoped for, hence the 3 stars. That being said I would recommend this book and I will continue to read Nicholas Sparks books

I've been searching high and low for great books to read. I feel as though Nicholas Sparks' books are either a hit or a miss. The Guardian is definitely a great book to read. Sparks is big on sweet romance novels, which is in this book, but the great thing about this novel is that there is suspense as well. A nice touch.

This is supposed to be a thriller rather than Nicholas Sparks' usual romance and it was okay. He still tugs at your heartstrings, but I thought there were a lot of flaws in his law enforcement scenarios and not up to his usual novels.

This book made me laugh and cry. The story really shows how life is short and can change in a

second. Enjoy each day and laugh and tell the people in your life how much you love them. That dogs love us more then they love themselves.

I attempted to read this book 3 different times. I just couldn't get into the book. Finally on the 3rd try, I managed to keep pushing myself to read it. I love Sparks' books he has written (A Walk to Remember, Dear John, The Rescue, The Lucky One, etc) but this one was so slow for at least the first 1/3 of the book. It was predictable and I felt too long for what happened. I also knew immediately what would happen in the end. By the end of the book, I found myself rolling my eyes a lot. *****SPOILERS*****

*****Maybe I misread in the beginning, but it seemed like Julie was a little annoyed that she knew Mike had a crush on her since she only saw him as a friend (there's a time when he runs into her on the street), yet all of a sudden he comes to fix her sink and she starts seeing him in a different light and wants him? It was obvious how Richard was going to turn out. And I knew that he wasn't really going to be Richard, but someone else. The police were way too slow. The male officer annoyed me so much about how he thought he was a hot shot. I liked the female for a while until the end when she decided to go where they were hiding out. Why would she think it was better to talk in person instead of on the phone?! They HAD to know he was in hiding, waiting to be taken to her! And then questioning "How is he getting around?" Why wasn't the first thing to pop into her (or anyone's) head "He stole a car"? Singer seemed to always be able to smell Richard and know when he was nearby. How come when the hamburger part comes, he wasn't able to sense/smell that Richard was nearby hiding and watching? It said when he was outside Julie's house he would pace and growl and want out, but not at the beach? I hated how they ended it. I thought it was dumb no one realized what happened to Singer until Richard said he was responsible. If you were in hiding from someone, knowing he is stalking you and have been warned how dangerous he is, and you see there is something wrong with your dog, are you really going to send everyone back to the house so you're alone in the dark? And as horrible as this sounds, I much rather would have had Mike die in the end and had Singer live. He was the only real interesting character in the book.*****

*****The reason I gave this book 2 stars was because I really liked the dog, but I felt as the Mike/Julie relationship formed, it didn't have enough of him like it did in the beginning of the book.

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