

The Last Thing He Told Me

Book Club Questions

1. As early as the prologue of the book, we learn that Owen disappears from Hannah's life. How does starting off the book that way change how you read it? What conclusions did your mind instantly jump to from the words "the week after Owen disappeared"?

2. We end the first chapter with a powerful image. "Owen's note is short. One line, its own puzzle. Protect her". Who did you think her might be? And if you knew already, what did you feel the note was implying (besides the obvious)?

3. Hannah's grandfather being a woodturner was a major influence on her life as she followed in his professional footsteps. He equally had an influence on her approach to life.

"Watching my grandfather work taught me that not everything was fluid. There were certain things that you hit from different angles, but you never gave up on. You did the work that was needed, wherever that work took you."

What kind of foreshadowing does that quote have for the rest of the book?

4. When a US Marshal and federal agents both show up at her home, Hannah starts to learn more about the pieces of Owen she was kept in the dark about.

How does there being conflicting government authority figures in the book heighten the sense of unease Hannah feels? What might Laura Dave be trying to do with these characters?

5. One of Hannah and Owen's friends doesn't believe Hannah when she claims to be in the dark about the goings-on with Owen's boss and his involvement in fraud at his company.

Why do you think people always assume that the spouse has to have known, even when shown proof of the things they are unaware of in their own lives? What does it imply if those we love most really can keep those kinds of secrets from us?

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6. In the course of her search, we learn Hannah was engaged before and he mistakenly thinks she left him because she feared she herself would one day be left.

“He never understood that I wasn’t scared of someone leaving me. I was scared that the wrong person would stay.”

What does this quote tell us about Hannah? Do you agree with her that the wrong person staying is worse? Why or why not?

7. Throughout the book Hannah is hit by the force of the situation she finds herself in: alone, trying to find answers for herself and her step-daughter, while coming to grips with the fact she may never see her beloved husband again.

“This is the terrible thing about a tragedy. It isn’t with you every minute. You forget it, and then you remember it again. And you see it with a stark quality: This is what is required of you now, just to get along.”

In what other ways does the book speak on the theme of grief and tragedy? What examples were the most impactful or relatable to you?

8. Laura Dave has a lot of memorable quotes in **The Last Thing He Told Me**, including this one.

“How do you explain it when you find in someone what you’ve been waiting for your whole life? Do you call it fate? It feels lazy to call it fate. It’s more like finding your way home—where home is a place you secretly hoped for, a place you imagined, but where you’d never before been. Home. When you weren’t sure you’d ever get to have one.”

How does this hit you as a description of love and finding the right person? Do you agree that summing it all up to “fate” feels lazy or incomplete? Why or why not?

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9. Owen's teenage daughter Bailey is left completely unmoored by her father's disappearance and only has Hannah to turn to. How does this dependence on each other start to heal the relationship between Bailey and her new stepmother? How does it drive them further apart?

10. When Hannah learns Owen's true identity (ie, he was born Ethan Young) and what he was running away from with Bailey, she realizes she might have walked Bailey into exactly what he was trying to protect her from: a relationship with Nicholas, her "evil" grandfather who spent his life defending members of a crime syndicate. Hannah sees it differently though.

"This is the thing about good and evil. They aren't so far apart - and they often start from the same valiant place of wanting something to be different."

Who do you think is right in their opinion of Nicholas? Is he an evil man? Or a man working for his family? Explain your thinking.

11. Read and discuss this quote.

"In one way or another, this is the deal we all sign when we love someone. For better or worse. It's the deal we have to sign again and again to keep that love. We don't turn away from the parts of someone we don't want to see. However quickly or long it takes to see them. We accept them if we are strong enough. Or we accept them enough to not let the bad parts become the entire story."

12. Hannah makes a huge sacrifice by giving up the love of her life to preserve what she knows her husband would care about most: his daughter's happiness and identity. Do you agree with Hannah's decision about witness protection? What might you have done differently to secure a new future?

13. In the last chapter, we see how it all turned out for Hannah and Bailey (as well as catch a glimpse of Owen himself). How do these small moments in the final part of the book help resolve any questions you have? What central details of their life do they leave out that you wish you knew?

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14. Does this story feel like it has a happy ending? Why or why not?

15. Does **The Last Thing He Ever Told Me** make you want to read other books by author Laura Dave? Why or why not?