



All the Lasting Things

David Hopson

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The Fisher family of Alluvia, New York, is coming undone. Evelyn spends her days tending to her husband, Henry—an acclaimed and reclusive novelist slowly losing his battle with Alzheimer's. Their son, Benji, onetime star of an '80s sitcom called *Prodigy*, sinks deeper into drunken obscurity, railing against the bit roles he's forced to take in uncelebrated regional theater. His sister, Claudia, tries her best to shore up her family even as she deals with the consequences of a remarkable, decades-old secret that's come to light. When the Fishers mistake one of Benji's drug-induced accidents for a suicidal cry for help, Benji commits to playing a role he hopes will reverse his fortune and stall his family's decline. Into this mix comes Max Davis, a twentysomething cello virtuoso and real-life prodigy, whose appearance spurs the entire family to examine whether the secrets they thought were holding them all together may actually be what's tearing them apart.

David Hopson's *All the Lasting Things* is a beautiful, moving family portrait that explores the legacy we all stand to leave—in our lives, in our work—and asks what those legacies mean in a world where all the lasting things do not last.

All the Lasting Things Details

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From Reader Review All the Lasting Things for online ebook

Brittany Barnes Deeg says

This Kindle First book ebbs and flows like waves. slow to begin, it crescendos somewhere in the middle, before a somewhat disappointing and disjointed ending. The Best moments are fleshed out in character relationships- more of which I hoped to see towards the end- but was only left wanting. Not a terrible read, but a once is enough novel for me.

Kelly ... says

I love stubborn, flawed, real characters and this book is replete with them. But, for some reason I didn't find them to be stirring, absorbing or interesting. I found myself rewinding more than once because my imagination drifted elsewhere -- outside of the book. The story wasn't complicated or rounded. The people weren't very likable, which is a deal-breaker for me. I want to have sympathy for the characters. I want to find them complex, flawed and imperfect, but completely likable. I want them to inspire me to feel and think and dream. Unfortunately I didn't experience these things.

I didn't dislike the book enough to stop listening... so I guess I would call it completely average.

Nick Podehl did a good job of giving the various characters distinct and unique voices. I was always aware of whose story was at play. I think given better material he would be excellent.

Joel says

I honestly don't remember why I picked up this book. Maybe it was a Kindle Firsts selection. Or maybe it was when I was going through my phase of wanting to read more about people dealing with Alzheimer's. All I know is it turned out to be a poor decision.

Speaking of poor decisions: this book is riddled with them. Not just in the lives of the fictional characters, but in the choices made by the author as well. This is the second novel dealing with Alzheimer's I've read this year and I feel like this can't be stated enough: if you, as an author, intend on making the reader care about the fictional person slowly losing their memories, their autonomy, and their life, please stop making the character an unrepentant asshole. Please.

It was really difficult to find any likable characters in this story, which is the primary reason for the low rating. But the writing was all over the place. The only consistent thing was the characters' ability to make poor decisions. Their motivations were iffy at best, and some of them just vanished from the plot at vital moments for no apparent reason.

I almost DNFed the book at 50 pages, but I thought I would give it a chance and see if maybe this was a redemption story, if maybe the author deliberately made the characters unlikable so he could later reform them, but the farther I got into the book I wondered whether the author would have the skill to extricate the characters from their messes and be able to redeem them.

In my opinion, he did not.

On top of the characterization issues, the ending was one of the worst I've ever encountered. It almost felt like the author was as tired of writing about these people as I was with reading about them, and he just decided to end it as fast as possible.

I would not recommend this book to or for anyone. Definitely one of my least favorite reads of the year.

1 out of 5 stars.

Nancy says

I loved the first 90% of this book. The writing was good, the characters had substance, the family dynamics were very interesting and I was looking forward to a book I could read more than once. However, the last 10% was a big disappointment.

Russell Sanders says

David Hopson's novel *All the Lasting Things* is a literary novel. Since I spent many years teaching literature, that should be a good thing, for I recognize fine literature when I read it. But this novel was, for me, not a great one. It was one that aimed for greatness, and that was the problem. It was as if Hopson was not content to write a good plot (and it was) with interesting characters (and they were,) but rather, he strived to make it a lofty treatise on life and family. And that's where he lost me. I felt I read into so much of it a desire to impress me. I loved his characters, flawed as they were. I loved what he did with them. I particularly loved the character of Max and his journey. The description of how Max writes his opera is appealing and beguiling. But, by the end, I simply did not get it. The ending left me cold. I was baffled as to how Hopson got there and what he wanted me to know. *All the Lasting Things* wanted to be more than it was. And that's death to a novel.

Larry H says

I'd rate this 3.5 stars.

I was able to read this book through Amazon's Kindle First program. Thanks to Amazon and Little A for making it available!

"'Life will always be disappointing,' he said with pressing emotion. 'Even if everything looked exactly as you thought it would, even then, there would be disappointments. Deep, even ruinous disappointments. Compromises we think we can't possibly live with. But we do. We do because we must. It's the contract we sign for being here. We have to treat life like it's precious. Even when we think it's not. Especially then. Because then we see how easily it can be thrown away.'"

The Fisher family has had more than its share of ups and downs, and more than anything, now seems to be a time of more downs than ups. Henry, the family patriarch, is a famous writer who is in the throes of

Alzheimer's disease. His condition is becoming more of a burden on everyone, especially his wife, Evelyn, but she isn't ready to seek full-time care for him or move him to a nursing home, even as she suffers emotionally and physically.

Their son, Benji, was a child actor famous for his stint in a 1980s sitcom, but he's never quite gotten back to that level ever again. He spends his days pitting his ego and his desire for fame against his increasingly self-destructive behavior. In the midst of a less-than-glamorous regional theater production of *Hamlet*, Benji hits rock bottom—although not quite as rock bottom as his family is led to believe. It's up to his older sister, Claudia, usually the stable one, to keep her family together through Benji's recovery and Henry's continued decline.

Then a more-than-20-year-old secret is revealed, and suddenly the stable one has her life rocked to the core. And while this secret shakes up the entire family in different ways, it also sets into motion a chain of events which will further knock the family for a loop, and confront the question about whether hiding the truth from someone is the same thing as lying.

David Hopson has created a compelling look at a family dealing with more than its share of crises. Benji and Claudia are the most fleshed-out characters (along with a third), but they're not always sympathetic, so it's difficult at times to get fully engrossed in their stories, and I didn't really understand what made them do many of the things they did. Hopson has a vivid ear for language and emotion, even if he sometimes uses three metaphors when one would suffice.

Although I didn't like how the bulk of the story was resolved (even though I anticipated that was how things might end), and I felt the epilogue was completely tacked on and didn't really flow with the rest of the book, I still enjoyed *All the Lasting Things*. It made me feel and it made me think, and I look forward to seeing what Hopson's career has in store.

See all of my reviews at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blo....>

Karen Thompson says

Outstanding!

If I could give this book a 4 1/2 rating I would. The story is written so you can see into the characters thoughts so vividly it is maddening. At times I wanted to scream at them not to feel the way they did. The characters are flawed, as we humans are, and I grew to root for each one of them. Truly interesting and human. Outstanding!

Lynda Kotis says

Dreary and Verbous

Sadly, I wanted to like this book. I'm a fan of new authors and first books. It's the English teacher in me that tries to encourage the young minds in my classes to stretch and persevere. Unfortunately, this book was hard to read; overwritten and depressing. The only likable character in the book was Cat and she was obscure, under developed, and of questionable taste in men. The story seemed to switch paths and splinter - not in an intriguing or suspenseful way, but rather leaving the reader hesitant to continue; wondering if there could be a prize at the end of the maze. Indeed there was no prize. These lives continued to disintegrate into the darkness of despair in spite of the occasional glimpse of light along the way. The epilogue being the final nail in the coffin.

Karin says

This book almost brought me to tears on more than one occasion. It brings forth the complicated dimensions of family including aging parents, children, siblings, etc and captures it in a mesmerizing and thought provoking way. The characters are complex and could very well be any member of ones own family. I absolutely loved this book. Highly recommend!

R.G. Phelps says

Story of a dysfunctional family

I regret that my review will be a negative one but that happens. David's storyline of a dysfunctional family was laced throughout with profanities and sexual references that to me went way beyond what was necessary. Normally I would have stopped reading it, but I was hopeful that something was going to happen that would bring about solutions to their many problems. My advice to the potential readers is not to bother, you will just find out in the end that you have totally wasted your time! Sorry David, but your book has gained the notoriety of being one of the worst books I have ever read with a rating of 1 star.

Jean says

Human Life

A myriad of questions about human life are asked in All the Lasting Things: from how to design living space that is both architecturally appealing and appropriate for a world of diminishing resources to how to live authentically. Hopson tells a compelling story of a human family that delves into such h issues as Ambition; Chemical abuse; Ego; Celebrity; Family secrets; Self-deception; Suicide; Parenthood, etc.

I recommend this book with the following comment. Don't take too long to read it. I found the epilogue to be puzzling and I suspect that is because this novel came at a time when I was busy and I have forgotten some significant information . Also, I think I would find this a difficult book to listen to rather than read. You might be easily confused by the paragraphs at the beginning of each chapter.

Beth says

A very well-drawn picture of a dysfunctional family. All successful in their own ways but flawed and/or ill in their own ways. I wish at least one of the characters could have caught a break, but then the author could not have delivered his thoughts on the futility of life. Did not like the italicized flashbacks which I sort of figured out, but which were never really connected enough to support themselves. And setting a happy gay expectant couple down as an epilogue seemed a little reaching - were these the only character types the author hadn't worked into the main story?

Overall I enjoyed it, I agree with other reviewers that the author tries a bit hard at some times: more adjectives! More metaphors! But it held me and I did not hate any of the characters!

Cindy says

Interesting. That's about the only word I can find to describe this book. The Fishers are a dysfunctional family surviving in Alluvia, New York. Henry is a writer who sinks deeper into Alzheimer's. His wife, Evelyn, struggles to take care of him while harboring a family secret. Daughter Claudia has a secret of her own which keeps her away from her family. Son, Benji, is an aspiring actor who wants fame and fortune but can't seem to attain the star status he hungers for. Then there is Max, a prodigy, who enters the scene and throws this dysfunctional family into turmoil. The story is about secrets and when and if they should be revealed. For me the book started really slow. It took a long time to get into it. I even skimmed through a few pages. Eventually the paced picked up and I thought what a good book. Unfortunately the story came to a grinding halt and I became confused and even irritated with the plot and characters. Hated the ending and confused with the epilogue. I noticed that the reviews were all over the place and I can see why! Depressing story from beginning to end!

I won this book from Goodreads Giveaway!

Joan says

Promising premise, well developed characters, but the language drew too much attention to itself and the conclusion was disappointing.

Julie Bye says

This book is beautifully written and the story of a high-functioning, but dysfunctional family is poignant and heart wrenching. I found the book difficult to concentrate on and wonder if in places the author is trying to hard to be clever. The novel is as much about the nature of fame as it is about the characters and their relationships.

The characters are well drawn and decidedly tortured by a novelist determined to put them through the emotional wringer and us along with them. It jumps between different character viewpoints and might have been easier to follow if a single viewpoint had been maintained, however it wouldn't have allowed us to suffer along with all of them.

I will possibly reread it in the future to see if i can sort out in my mind what the author was trying to say as I read it amongst distractions. You do need to concentrate to appreciate the full impact of this book.
