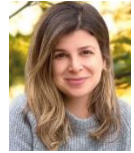


The Last Thing He Told Me Discussion Questions

by Laura Dave

Author Bio: (from Fantastic Fiction & Authors Website)

Laura Dave is a *New York Times* bestselling author. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Glamour*, *Self*, *Redbook*, *ESPN the Magazine*, and *The New York Observer*. Laura graduated from The University of Pennsylvania. *Cosmopolitan Magazine* named her as one of the eight "Fun and Fearless Phenoms" of 2008. She lives in California.



The Last Thing He Told Me was chosen as the Goodreads Mystery & Thriller of the Year for 2021. It is also a limited series on Apple TV+.

Characters:

- **Hannah Hall** – Woodturner and furniture maker. Raised mostly by her grandfather. Parents are Jack and Carol. Hannah’s husband of 1 year is Owen Michaels. They live in a houseboat.
- **Bailey Michaels** – (16) – Owen’s daughter. Lives with Owen and Hannah. Mother died when Bailey was 4. Bailey does not get along with her stepmother, Hannah.
- **Owen Michaels** – Chief coder at “The Shop”, a tech firm. Has a 16-year-old daughter, Bailey. Been married a year to wife, Hannah Hall. The Shop is under investigation. First wife was Olivia Nelson Michaels.
- **Jake Bradley Anderson** – Lawyer. Hannah’s former fiancé.
- **Nicholas Bell** – Austin defense attorney “The Good Lawyer” who ended up working for a drug and crime syndicate. Daughter, Kate, is killed in a hit and run. Granddaughter is Kristin. Son-in-law is Ethan Young.
- **Bobby** – Bailey’s “somewhat” boyfriend. Senior. Nerdy.
- **Deputy Grady Bradford** – US Marshal. Works from the office in Austin, Texas.
- **Carl Conrad** – Owen’s best friend in Sausalito. Lawyer. Married to Patricia.
- **Jules (Julia) Nichols** – Newspaper photo editor for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Hannah’s best friend. Friends since high school.
- **Special Agent Jeremy O’Mackey & Special Agent Naomi Wu** – FBI Agents on The Shop case.
- **Charlie Smith** – Owner of the tavern, Never Dry, in Austin, Texas.
- **Avett Thompson** – CEO of The Shop. His wife is Belle.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. The story is told from multiple timelines – with Hannah looking back on her life with Owen. Did you like the way the story was set up or did you find it confusing?
3. Hannah is the main narrator of this story. How does the narrator shape our understanding of the contours of this story? How might the book be different if the narration switched off between Bailey and Hannah? Or even added in chapters from Owen?
4. One of the main criticisms of this book is the pacing – many people thought it was too slow. Did you find the pacing of the story slow or did you like the pacing of the book?
5. In the prologue of the book, Hannah recalls that on their second date, Owen grilled her about the “could-have-been boys” of her past, “the men I’d left behind, the men who had left me.” In what ways is Owen one of those “could-have-been boys”?
6. Discuss the message that Owen sends to Hannah before he disappears. What does Owen mean by “Protect her”? How does Hannah interpret Owen’s request? How would a different message have changed Owen’s intent and Hannah’s actions?
7. We learn early on that Hannah’s mother left her when she was young. How is this similar to and different from the absence of Bailey’s mother? How does it compare to the way Owen leaves Hannah and Bailey?
8. Owen’s note to Bailey says, “You know what matters about me.” What do you think this means? What would you hope that your loved ones would say are the things that matter about you?
9. In Austin, Hannah tells Bailey that she’s trying to protect her, to which Bailey responds, “But you can’t. That’s the thing. No one can protect me from this. So how about you agree to be the person who tells me the truth?” (Ch 14) What’s the relationship between the truth and protecting those we love? Can we do both, or are they mutually exclusive?
10. Hannah realizes that Owen isn’t running for just any reason, but that he’s running from something he’s terrified of. Did you have any theories about what Owen was running from, and did the real answer surprise you?
11. What are some things that might make you drop everything and run the same way Owen did?
12. How would you feel if you were asked to take care of someone else’s child? In what circumstances might you say yes, or no?
13. At one point, Jules chooses to say “be careful” instead of “I love you,” and Hannah realizes that under the circumstances, they mean essentially the same thing. What other phrases can you think of that can mean the same thing as “I love you”? How do we communicate love in our daily lives through words and deeds?

14. “This is the thing about good and evil. They aren’t so far apart – and the often start from the same valiant place of wanting something to be different.” (Ch. 36) What do you think about that line. Is it true or false? Why do you think that? Can you think of any historical examples of good and evil being closer than we would think?
15. “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... We accept them if we are strong enough. Or we accept them enough to not let the bad parts become the entire story.” (Ch. 36) What do you think about that line. Is it true or false? Why do you think that?
16. Did you know what was going on with Owen before it was revealed? What clues were given?
17. Do you think Owen made the right decision? Is that a decision you could have made?
18. Do you think Hannah made the right decision? Is that a decision you could have made?
19. What did you think about the ending? What do you think is next for Hannah and Bailey?
20. Laura Dave has written other books. Will you read any of them?

References:

- Laura Dave’s Website – <https://lauradave.com/>
- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/d/laura-dave/>
- GoodReads – <https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/54981009>
- Novelist – <https://web-p-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.clevnet.org/novp/detail?vid=2&sid=cc3f5fba-5799-4785-8261-3c6ccce7bd77%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92cC1saXZl#UI=10954658&db=neh>

Laura Dave’s Books

Stand-Alone Novels

- London Is the Best City in America (2006)
 - The Divorce Party (2008)
 - The First Husband (2011)
- Eight Hundred Grapes (2015)
 - Hello, Sunshine (2017)
- The Last Thing He Told Me (2021)

If you liked **The Last Thing He Told Me**, try...

- The Soulmate – Sally Hepworth
 - My Darling Husband – Kimberly Belle
 - Two Nights in Lisbon – Chris Pavone
 - Watch Me Disappear – Janelle Brown
 - Happiness Falls – Angie Kim
-