



Last Lovers

William Wharton

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This love story, by the author of *Birdy* and *Dad*, is set in Paris in 1975. Jack, 49, and American, has walked out on his fast-lane corporate career and troubled marriage to return to his first love, painting. He lives a hand-to-mouth existence in Paris, struggling to express his long-suppressed feelings through his art. While painting in the park (and blocking the sidewalk), an elderly blind woman walks into him, knocking him off his feet and getting herself smeared with paint. Mirabelle, 71, is small, elegant, and radiant. They fall slowly, carefully, and improbably in love, and into a tender physically passionate affair. While Mirabelle's tremendous sense of life inspires Jack to paint with new vision and freedom, he shares with her the mysteries of passion, and frees her from the traumatic event that blinded her in childhood.

Last Lovers Details

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Author : William Wharton

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Charles Bechtel says

I have always had an affinity for the positive, gentle and humanitarian textures of William Wharton's books. I have found few novelists who grant as much nobility to living humans. This book is like the others in these, and possibly by too great a degree.

This was his last fictional enterprise, though he did write two more books. Last novels of authors fascinate me, because they frequently seem almost an apologia for the artist as he or she has lived, and that's what this novel seems. Wharton, like his main character Jacques, was a painter who — like the author — rediscovered his artistic self later in life, after "suffering" a "professional" business career. Much of the book contains explanations of the consequences to discovering his muse, and therefore his *raison d'être*, which had cured him of the bourgeois need for society determined commercial, economic and social success.

In an ironic — and I am not sure planned — twist, Wharton's narrator brings about the death of his muse by bringing her into acceptance of the "real" world, to which she had been blind. (*This may seem a spoiler, but this book, being the metaphor it is, telegraphs all of its upcoming points a lot. It is not a surprise ending.*) At the end, as Jacques reaches his epiphany, I feel the writing gets up to express The Grand Idea but never delivers it. While I read his final chat with his muse, as she lay cold, he talks about the Big Idea behind Art, but the talk never got there. I felt like a finger pressed a somewhat deflated balloon. Never broke through, never could. What he was getting at will always be, for other artists, like Jazz: unnecessary to explain. And for those not artists, it'll never make sense.

The actual mechanics of the story bother me a lot, and I wish he'd made other choices. This is why two stars only. He writes in present tense, a difficult tense (*think of Mina writing in her diary at the same time Dracula is, essentially, raping her.*) But since all of the dialog is present tense, as dialog ought to be, those first-person passages desalinated the tension. At least for me.

Furthermore, whenever the woman spoke he employed a flowery script that annoyed the pee out of me. Variation in type is used to indicate something that differs from what is inherent or explicit. That's why **bold** urges on us an emphasis the text does not. But nothing here was added by the florid script; it underscores that Mirabelle is speaking, and yet by the both the context and the scene structure, we already know it. Had he reserved the font for her reveries, maybe. But it became truly annoying.

And, lastly, the sometimes explained French and the sometimes not served up an inconsistency that said here is an author not at the top of his game.

I would, however, love to film this. Meryl Street, in ten years, maybe I'll look you up. I promise Dennis Quaid will be your man.

Sorry, Mr. Wharton, but you most consistent fan was disappointed.

?????? says

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Compelling love story between a blind old lady and a drop-out American executive. Set in the beautiful surroundings of Paris' St Germain district, these scarred individuals help each other look at life differently. Whimsical and unusual, with a surprising end that makes the book even more memorable.

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Teodora says

EXQUISITE!!!

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[illegible]

Alexandra says

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Desislava says

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Kaloyana says

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M. says

ההתאמה הזו היא לא רק תרגום, אלא גם עיבוד, והיא מביאה לידי ביטוי את התבונה והחוכמה של המתרגמת. ההתאמה הזו היא לא רק תרגום, אלא גם עיבוד, והיא מביאה לידי ביטוי את התבונה והחוכמה של המתרגמת. ההתאמה הזו היא לא רק תרגום, אלא גם עיבוד, והיא מביאה לידי ביטוי את התבונה והחוכמה של המתרגמת.

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Carmen says

An unconventional romance beautifully written, set in Paris in the 1970's. It is about two people who are looking for themselves and find each other in the process. The protagonist is a painter which adds an unusual element to the story. More importantly, the book resonates with the voice of the 70's. It is quite easy to believe that the author lived during that time and maybe the story is a bit autobiographical, or parts may have happened to someone whom he knew. Really liked the development of the characters. Easy read, easy to follow.

Zoya Dimitrova says

ההתאמה הזו היא לא רק תרגום, אלא גם עיבוד, והיא מביאה לידי ביטוי את התבונה והחוכמה של המתרגמת.

Night~light says

ההתאמה הזו היא לא רק תרגום, אלא גם עיבוד, והיא מביאה לידי ביטוי את התבונה והחוכמה של המתרגמת.

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