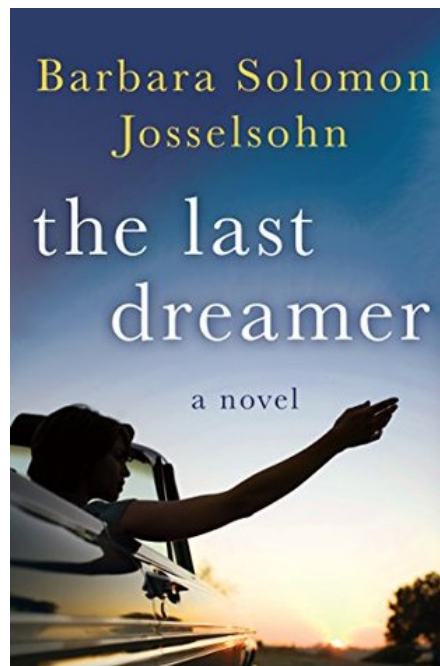




The Last Dreamer

Barbara Solomon Josselsohn

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Iliana Passing—wife, mother, and former acclaimed journalist—gave up her career to start a family. Almost fifteen years later, despite how much she loves her husband and kids, she can't help wondering how she ended up with a life spent carpooling and running errands.

Ready to get back into the journalism game, Iliana searches for an exciting lead. When she discovers that Jeff Downs, the heartthrob star of an old TV show and her girlhood crush, now owns a nearby textile company, she thinks she's found her story: teen celebrity and its aftermath. But as Iliana gets to know Jeff, the two grow closer than she ever could've imagined. Now that her teenage dream has walked into her present-day reality, how far will she go to entertain an old fantasy?

The Last Dreamer Details

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Author : Barbara Solomon Josselsohn

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From Reader Review The Last Dreamer for online ebook

Petra says

The Last Dreamer is Barbara Solomon Josselson's engaging debut novel and provides a poignant study of the role of women and an interesting look at our mad celebrity culture.

The main character, Iliana, is going through a bit of an identity crisis. She put her career as a journalist on hold when she got married and had two children. Fifteen years later, she seems to be defined as the supporting wife to a career-minded lawyer and as her children's taxi driver and servant. She thinks she may have found her way to get back into publishing when she discovers a former TV crush from her teenage years now operates a business close by, so she decides to set up an interview with him.

I really enjoyed the author's writing, and found the story interesting and quite unique. I think anybody who has stayed at home with children while their partner concentrated on their career would be able to relate to Iliana and the issues she was facing. The characters created by the author were very real. Not exactly a feel-good book, but rather sad and depressing at times, but quite a realistic look at relationships, responsibilities, expectations, hopes and dreams. It stays with you. I still kept thinking about this book for some time after I had finished it. That has to be a good indicator that it was an evocative book. I will certainly keep an eye out for any further publications by this promising new author.

Thanks to Lake Union Publishing for my copy via Netgalley in exchange for an unbiased review.

Robin says

I really enjoyed this book. It's a story about a writer, Iliana, who's been raising her children over the last decade or so and wants to get back into writing for the New York Times. She has the idea to interview one of four of her teenage idols, now grown and running a successful company not far from where she lives.

As the story unfolds she begins to realize her misconceived notions and matures as a result. I loved watching her grow as a person, professional, mother and wife. The author did a lovely job describing her characters and their motivations. I was interested throughout the story.

This story will interest women in particular and those who follow Hollywood stars.

Thank you to Netgalley for providing me with a digital copy of this book in exchange for my honest opinion.

Cheryl says

This is a charming read from a first time author. What a dream come true for Iliana to meet her celebrity crush in person. The more I got to know Jeff, as the person and not the celebrity, the more I did fall for him. It was easy to see how Iliana fell for Jeff. Although, I did feel bad for her family (the children). Not so much her husband. This is only because he came off as a bit of strong arming Iliana and at the point that Iliana met Jeff, there were some bumps in Iliana and Matt's marriage. Although when it did come to the romance between Jeff and Iliana, it was mild. There was some flirting and a kiss but again not something that would steam up my glasses. This book is a good summer fling read.

Megan Johnson says

I was provided this book pre-official release in order to review. I read the description provided by the publisher and I couldn't wait to actually read it. But for some reason it sat on my "to read" list for about a month before I finally decided to get to it.

It's like I knew that it wouldn't be as great as I wanted it to be.

The Last Dreamer is about a writer who has given up her career in order to raise her children. Her husband, a lawyer, is working hard to gain a promotion but has put a lot of pressure on his wife to make them look worthy. Not her job? Not her job, but nonetheless, they are finding that it's bringing a lot of stress to their relationship. As a writer, she wants to get back into publishing but isn't sure how. Fast forward to a day where she sees her teen celebrity crush on tv and decides that she is going to interview him and that will be her big break.

But it's never that easy, is it?

I really wanted to like this book. But, honestly, I had a really hard time getting through it. The characters were annoying (at least to me), the story was very surface level, and it never felt fully developed like I wanted it to. I can tell the idea was great, but I just didn't find it to be an enjoyable read. Maybe it was better than I'm giving it credit for because I did finish the book in order to ultimately see what happens, but it's not one that I see myself recommending to others in the future.

I was provided with a free copy of this book in order to conduct this review.

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Loraine Oliver says

The Last Dreamer is a really awesome book and I am so glad I was able to read it. This book was about something I am sure so many people have often wondered about. The difference is in this story the heroine Iliana had in my opinion absolute bravery to actually see what could have been, in her opinion, or what she missed out on.

Iliana, like so many people gave up a career for a husband, a home, and children. This is what she thought would be for her. For fifteen years, she may have thought about it but did not really delve in it. Her career was now raising children, car pooling said children, running a household, we all know about that; making sure your kids are well dressed, eating good food and great menu planning, and cooking, and on top of that be her husband's number one means of support in what he was doing, and encourage him in his career.

Iliana always told herself that when the time was right and she was not needed so much she could always go back to her career-but it has been fifteen years! Iliana even reaches out to past people she knew in the field but all for nothing. She quickly realizes there is no place for her in this field and she will have to fight for her

way into it.

So one night while drinking at home she sees her old high school crush, an actor, on television, on an old show and she wonders what ever happened to him and so she does a little snooping. Iliana figures if she finds him, she can interview him and then she will have something to offer a magazine, an interview with a movie star!

This is Iliana's story about what happens when she does find him and it takes a flash of Jeff Daniel's infamous shy smile to melt her heart. Even though they both know that this is to be a business venture, you will have to read and find out what happens to a normal everyday housewife when she crossed the carefully erected boundaries that have been made. Iliana finds it hard to separate fact from fiction! What happens is what you will find out when you read this.

This book was well written and the author had me from the first page! Ms Josselsohn tells this story with compassion and humor at times, and her insight into this subject is really amazing. I really enjoyed this book and the way the author turned this age old problem into a book well worth reading and I know that from time to time I will read it again.

On a personal note, I am now 63 and about ready to celebrate another birthday in 12 days. I too, when I was younger had my life picked out and I was going to be an archaeologist with a major in anthropology and minor in archaeology, and I too gave up my dream to have a family , 3 children and a husband. Now I have 3 almost grown grandchildren and I never did get a job or finish going to school for what I loved so I can really relate to this story. But in my case I am happy and content with life, but I absolutely remember with certainty when I too, questioned whether this was what I wanted -to be a mom and grandma, and give up my love of old things and the ability to devote my life to this field. The decision is a hard one and not easily made, but I personally believe that in my case anyway, I had to make a choice and find my happiness where I wound up.

I'd like to thank Ms. Barbara Solomon Josselsohn for writing such a wonderful book and to Lake Union Publishing for graciously giving me an ARC of this wonderful book. I gave this author 5***** wonderful stars for this book and look forward to reading more by her!

Rebecca Marks says

I loved this book. I completely expected the main character to do something that she did not do, and that was actually a much more honest and unexpected outcome. The writing grabs, and I couldn't put the book down. Highly recommend for anyone who wants an enjoyable, thought provoking, well written book.

Bobbie says

This is the first book I've read by this author Barbara Josselsohn, but it definitely won't be the last. The book is wonderful literary fiction. The Last Dreamer I love her characters especially the protagonist Ilana Passing former journalist. And it was such an interesting plot. A mother after years of raising her children and taking her of husband, decides to take off on her own and experience the excitement of new places and follow her dreams. She wants to get back into journalism, which was her former career. Check this out for an

entertaining read. I highly recommend it to the reading community.

Judith Abelow Shemtob says

The Last Dreamer is a delightful read. Barbara Solomon Josselson's descriptions of family life are rich with humor and emotion. Now that her children are older, the main character Iliana yearns to return to her professional life and write that special story. She wants to accomplish more than just dropping off her son's forgotten violin at school. While her lawyer husband expects Iliana to help him in his career path, a company party sets the stage for her reluctance to keep things as they are. She is not just "passing" through as her last name implies. The author creates tension throughout the story when the main character tells a lie, deceives her husband, and flies to California to write a story on a has been entertainer. As a result she tries to forget life's obligations for small moments and considers potential consequences. I like the detailed settings of Iliana's home, the hotel room, and Jeff's office as well as reflections on Iliana's own teenage years. Hats off for providing a satisfying ending and relating the sacrifices, compromises, and conversations of marriage! I look forward to reading Ms. Josselson's past magazine articles and her next novel.

Stephanie says

The Last Dreamer was a fun read with heart. While traveling many hours, the book was my companion, giving me an interesting place to consider. This book has many dreamers, not just one. For anyone whose life has changed considerably over time, who looks back and says "What happened to me? But ... I'm still here!", you'll have some empathy for the main character -- this is a book written with that feeling in mind. Are the characters flawed? Yes, just as in life. Is the ending all neatly tied up in a bow? No, just as in life. Writing more will give too much away -- simply, I really enjoyed the book.

Deanna Sletten says

Iliana Passing gave up her journalist career fifteen years ago to become a full-time mother and wife and to support her husband's career. But now she is eager to go back to being a journalist. The problem is she's been out of the game so long that no one is interested in her. One night a rerun of an old television series she loved as a teen sparks an idea. She researches where the then teen idol – Jeff Downs – is now, and is thrilled to find he owns a textile company nearby. She believes she's found her golden idea for an article that will restart her career. But as she pursues it, a web of lies begins from her first meeting with Jeff to her husband at home and she can't seem to squash them. Will her marriage survive her quest to follow her dream of writing again?

This was an interesting read. After all, what wife and mother who has given up her dreams to raise a family hasn't wanted to break away and relive the past, even for just a short time? But the web of lies she finds herself in begins to grow bigger and bigger. I understood her need to find a balance between family and restarting her career, but it's how she did it that was a little off balance. Sure, her husband was basically self-centered and expected too much of her, but he didn't deserve to be lied to in the pursuit of her working again. And there is one conversation between her and her husband that becomes so intense, it actually makes the reader uncomfortable. Couples argue all the time, but an argument like that – with the words that were thrown at her – is a hard one to come back from for any couple. But I won't tell you what happened – you'll have to read it for yourself.

It's a well-written novel and an interesting twist on the stay-at-home-mom-tries-to-go-back-to-work-story. The characters are interesting and the set-up is very good. Plus – it kept me reading until the end, so I can't say I wasn't entertained. I do look forward to future novels by this author.

(Note: I received an advance copy of this novel from the publisher and NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.)

Susan says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this debut novel by Barbara Solomon Josselsohn! I brought The Last Dreamer with me on a beach vacation and could not put it down. The book brought back memories of my teenage years and time spent dreaming of David Cassidy and Bobby Sherman! Although I am not a stay-at-home mom, I found the characters very relatable. Like Iliana, I have made a choices in my life. Yet I always wonder how different life would be if I pursued other paths. Congratulations on this great read! I look forward to the next novel.

Bhebear says

The Last Dreamer was a very enjoyable read and once I started reading it I really didn't want to put it down. Everyone can relate to the struggle of wanting to live life authentically while doing what seems to be the "right" thing. Throughout life, we all have to make choices that can determine the course of our lives. Barbara Solomon Josselsohn does an excellent job of developing her characters, and exploring their efforts to deal with real-life struggles. I found it compelling, and thought-provoking on many levels. I'm really looking forward to reading the next novel by this author!

Susan Schild says

Engrossing novel about one woman's attempt to shore up her identity after leaving her challenging professional life and becoming immersed in the roles of a wife and a stay at home mom. Look forward to the next book by this author.

Sara says

Originally reviewed for Chick Lit Central (www.chicklitcentral.com)

Most of us have heard the expression, "When one door closes, another one opens." We rely on that analogy when pursuing opportunities in life. But, what if it's not real? What if, in reality, there's only one chance, and once it's gone, it's gone forever?

That's what Iliana Passing asks herself nearly every day of her life. She gave up an incredible journalism career to start a family and become the #1 support system for her husband, Marc. She planned on going back

to work when her children and her husband wouldn't need to rely on her as much, yet she finds out the hard way that there really aren't any open doors available to her. It's not for lack of trying. She's sent out multiple queries, to editors at various magazines. She even sends one to a former colleague, a man who began his career under her tutelage. He's got a lot of nerve, rejecting her ideas! Iliana can't help but feel like a washed-up has been.

One night, while licking her wounds and surfing the boob tube, she discovers an old tv show she used to watch when she was a teen. Jeff Downs, known as the shy guy on the show, was the hottest guy on the planet, back in the day. Whatever happened to him? Once his show went south, where did he end up? Illiana soon devises a plan to find Jeff and get his backstory. Maybe with a celebrity in her pocket, someone will notice her and allow her to pursue her journalistic dreams once again.

What starts out as a simple interview turns into so much more than Iliana could have ever bargained for. She's having a hard time separating the woman she is now from the girl who fell head over heels in love with a tv personality. It's hard not to, when Jeff gives her that signature shy smile. Safe boundaries have been drawn, yet she crosses the line and never looks back. She's a lot more involved in his life than she'd ever intended, but it's for her career, isn't it?

It's hard not to identify with Iliana, and her story in *The Last Dreamer*. So many of us have dreams, passions in life we've wanted to pursue, yet never got around to it. Life tends to get in the way, sometimes. Can we ever go back and try again? Or, do we try to find happiness in where we're at, regardless? That's the central theme, here. It's a constant struggle between doing what's best for others, vs. doing what's best for your soul, and trying really hard to find a happy medium between the two.

Jacqueline Goldstein says

All of life is ahead of you. You are a young dreamer, intelligent, educated, with meaningful work and a man who wants to marry you. But what happens when a woman puts her own dreams on the back burner, perhaps forever? Barbara Solomon Josselsohn tells us in her debut novel, *The Last Dreamer*.

As the story begins, former journalist Iliana Passing's life consists of meeting everyone's needs but her own. She adores her family, but something within her rebels at spending her days dropping off her son's forgotten violin and sending her husband a file he needs for work. She has no interest in attending a "lunch-and-learn" for flower arranging, given by the wife of her husband's boss. No, Iliana is ready, more than ready, to go back to work. But no one will hire her, not even a man she once mentored. She is a has-been. Her husband even implies that she never was really successful. So it is understandable that Iliana seizes the opportunity to resume her journalistic career by snagging an interview with Jeff Downs, once a teen idol. Iliana had a terrific crush on him in middle school. Iliana forges ahead, blind to consequences. And there are consequences.

Many working mothers may envy Iliana's situation, wishing they could afford to quit. After reading this novel, their feelings may change. Equally, women who have opted to stay home with their kids may feel validated in their choice as they read the last chapter. I recommend this book to anyone who still dreams of self-actualization in middle age. Barbara Josselsohn writes with authority about marriage, motherhood, and the temptations that occur when youthful dreams fade away.
