

# Joseph's Reviews



## Old Friends

*"How terribly strange to be 70... Preserve your memories. They're all that's left you."* - Paul Simon ("Old Friends")

**The Last Perfect Summer: A Novel by Ed Prence** (Windy City Publishers, \$12.99, 166 pages)

*Then I paused for a minute. "Harry," I said finally, "do you remember who you were?"*

*"I was a baseball player."*

That passage right there from page 36 of Ed Prence's sparse 166-page novel *The Last Perfect Summer* is the essence of the story.

In the story, Ted Tresh visits former Little League teammate Harry Kirkland in a care facility in which Harry is essentially condemned to die. Having lived for over a decade with other patients in similar but varying states of need and/or dementia, he's had less than a handful of visitors. Harry lives in his own world of despair and confusion. When childhood friend Ted shows up for an extended visit, memories of the grand old game rekindle a semblance of life in the former cocksure Little League superstar.

As Ted reminisces with Harry about the good times from their banner Little League season, he detects sparks of humanity within Harry's tortured being. Ted enjoys the afternoon, and, believing he is doing some good, stays for an extended period of time. In the end, Ted leaves the once-hopeful encounter disillusioned.

The structure of the book alternates episodes from the story of their childhood and championship run and Ted and Harry's visit. The relationship between the two characters is not only central to the story but the strength of the book. While the specific tales that bind them together are necessary, there might be a better way to get at them than alternating which disrupts the flow of the most powerful aspects of the tale. There are highlights in which certain points are made to great effect, but this is not consistently true.

*The Last Perfect Summer* may not be a great “book,” but it’s a darn good story. Give me a good story any day. Rekindle a memory any time. Where would we be without either? Remember while you can.

**Well recommended.**

- Joseph’s Reviews, April 27, 2013

*The Last Perfect Summer* is available on Amazon.com, Barnes&Noble.com, Kindle, Nook, and is in stock at Barnes & Noble (Cranberry, PA) and Penguin Bookstore (Sewickley, PA).