

## Allison's Book Corner May 2021

***Beautiful Things: A Memoir*** by Hunter Biden  
(Gallery Books 2021)

**THIS IS NOT A POLITICAL MEMOIR.** This is a memoir about a recovering alcoholic and drug addict whose father happens to be the President of the United States.



If you pay any attention to the news, you have heard Hunter Biden's name a lot over the past year. You know how the former President attacked him constantly regarding his ties to the Ukrainian company Burisma. Many Republicans picked up this purported weapon and wielded it against Hunter. What many did not know is that Hunter was struggling with alcohol and drug abuse at the time. Compared to those struggles, the questions surrounding his involvement with Burisma really did not scare him.

Readers, I was shocked by this memoir. I really did not know that Hunter Biden had been addicted to crack cocaine. His honest, detailed descriptions of the daily life of an addict are terrifying. For a moment, I thought I was reading about the travails of Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown. Certainly, the behaviors are similar. Searching for drugs twenty four hours a day, living for that first drag off of a crack pipe, on hands and knees searching for pieces of crack and inhaling anything that looked like crack, wasting entire days just sitting and smoking crack and then desperately buying more.

The waste and excess he describes is alarming. The amount of money both spent by and stolen from Hunter Biden was just incredible. All

of it was supporting an insatiable need for drugs. I knew of him as an alcoholic but the drug addiction seemed to surpass the drinking. For anyone who has never lived this type of life (thankfully, I have not), you are left shaking your head. It is clear that President Joe Biden almost lost both of his grown sons within months of each other.

There is a foundation of strong faith in this memoir. We all know that President Biden is a devout Catholic. He certainly passed on his faith to his sons. The familiar saying "there are no atheists in foxholes" crosses the reader's mind regarding crack dens. At one of Hunter Biden's lowest points -- and there are many -- seeking crack in the darkest places, light can be found. A tiny little mustard seed of hope and grace followed Hunter around. For Christians, this is easy for us to see as we read about his life. I am not sure how those who do not believe in a higher power would regard those moments. Pure common sense tells me that Joe Biden knew where his only son was at all times. I just firmly believe that. He could not stop him from taking drugs, but must have known where he was. If I ever meet the President, I plan to ask him about this.

It is hard to believe, but not everything in this memoir is depressing. The most beautiful thing revealed is the sibling relationship between Hunter and his brother Beau. They really were two sides of the same coin. The Biden brothers were not twins, but the early tragedy of losing their birth mother and sister bound them together in a very special way. President Joe Biden completed that triangle as a single Dad at the time. Hunter and Beau spoke daily as adults, ending each conversation with an "I love you." Imagine losing a relationship like that in your life -- if indeed you are lucky enough to have one. Considering Hunter's life spent in and out of rehab, it was understandable that Beau's death would push Hunter over the edge and back to his addictions.

Here I want to point out that Hunter was a high-functioning alcoholic. He could go to work, and to meetings, and complete projects - all while drinking. Crack was a separate matter. His life became completely turned over to that drug and was leading toward certain death. This memoir really is a page-turner. Not easy to put down. I will leave it for you to read how Hunter eluded death.

For anyone who ever doubted that soap operas derive from real life, you have not met Hunter Biden. He goes where you think he will not go.

We find out about the stripper he impregnated during one of his many drug binges, the collapse of his 20-year marriage, the doomed romantic relationship with Beau's widow, and finally his new marriage and baby boy Beau, after fathering three girls with his first wife.

The title of this memoir comes from Beau Biden. Beau felt very strongly about noticing the beautiful things in our lives and in our world. These things are not material items; they are nature, sunsets, sitting in comfortable silence with someone you love. The last words he said to Hunter were "beautiful things." This memoir lives up to the title, because after all of the self-inflicted suffering to his own body and mind, Hunter Biden is still alive and breathing, able to be a husband and father. This is truly the most beautiful and miraculous thing.