



# The Girl on the Swing

*Ali Cooper*

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## **The Girl on the Swing** Ali Cooper

Julia believes she has lived before.

Suspended from her job and grieving for her lost son, Julia's past lives become an escape from her troubles in the present. For the first time, she meets someone in this life whom she recognises from a previous existence. But this man is a murderer, convicted of killing his wife. As Julia seeks to find out more, past and present entwine, culminating in a dramatic conclusion.

101K words (approx).

For a more detailed description of the story, I recommend the review by D Figueroa in the US store.

Other books by this author:

Cave. A gripping tale of friendships and relationships, set in Wales at the turn of the millennium.

The Cat and the Cathedral. The first of a YA/adult trilogy with a slightly supernatural premise. Set in modern day Exeter.

Bloody Scared. A humorous vampire spoof.

Editing a Better Book. A comprehensive guide to all aspects of editing.

## **The Girl on the Swing Details**

Date : Published April 23rd 2010 by Standing Stone Press (first published February 8th 2010)

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Author : Ali Cooper

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Genre : Fiction, Contemporary

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## **From Reader Review The Girl on the Swing for online ebook**

### **Pamela says**

I bought this book through a Kindle sale, and my experience with low-priced or free kindle books have not been that great. But I was pleasantly surprised by this one. The pace is slow and relaxed, especially in the first half, but while this may put off some, I found it a perfect choice for my first week of summer. Towards the end, there was an incident that I felt was not really in keeping with what the book had set up, but all in all, it was a good read. The writing was poetic with lovely descriptions. I have already bought her other book, Cave, and look forward to reading that one as well.

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### **Val says**

There is a lot happening in Julia's life, too much for one woman's lifetime, so it just as well she has lived before.

Ali Cooper interweaves all the different strands of her story with Julia's thoughts and the whole makes a rich tapestry.

Her son is dead, her husband is distant and unsupportive, her best friend thinks she is cracking-up, she is caught in a class-divide. Add to that a pending prosecution for medical negligence, a convicted murderer who may also have killed Julia in a previous life and a big secret kept from her by her parents and it is no wonder that Julia feels she is losing control of her current life. Those are a few of the many threads. The book could easily have become messy, as though the cat got in the embroidery basket, rather than a tapestry. It is to the author's credit that it doesn't.

It is not all 'one woman against the world'. Julia has some good friends as well, even some she didn't expect.

Why not five stars then?

I found the pace of the book a little rushed. Julia sometimes strolls or ambles, but the book hardly ever does. If she had slowed down a little more, say in the descriptive passages set in the Peak District, it would have been an even better book than it is. This would also have moved the book firmly into the realm of literary fiction.

I like literary fiction. A lot of people prefer page-turners, so would prefer the book as it is. I am probably in a minority, but this is my review and my opinion.

It is worth pointing out, since this is self-published, that the execution and presentation of the book are in no way second-rate.

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### **Debra Slonek says**

A well written book that caught my interest and attention, right from the start. It tells the story of Julia and Richard, successful surgeons who are married to each other. They endured the tragedy of losing their only child. Coming from extremely different backgrounds, each dealt with their grief separately and in unique

ways. Hurting slowly changed into healing. Secrets were uncovered and truth was revealed. Very satisfying read!

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### **Tracey says**

This started off a bit slow for me and I was truly ready to put it aside. Then suddenly the story line picked up and got interesting and I found myself powering through the rest of the book, but then it ended rather abruptly.

I gave it 3 stars instead of 4 stars purely because of the slow beginning and abrupt ending.

When I turned the last page I found myself feeling a bit let down as you really don't find out about The Girl on the Swing. Although this may be an interpretation thing.

I wouldn't not recommend reading this book, if you like the idea of past lives, give it a go.

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### **Pauline Ross says**

I actually bought this book by accident - I downloaded the sample to my Kindle, and in the process of filing it away in one of my collections I clicked the 'Buy now' button by mistake. But luckily I found it an enjoyable read.

This is not at all my usual type of book, but the premise of a woman experiencing flashes of a previous life was intriguing. It is well written and easy to read, although the choice of first person present tense is an unusual one, which grated occasionally. It would have seemed more logical to use the more conventional past tense, dropping into the present tense for the flashes. But no matter.

The story develops quite slowly, and the single point of view means that there is a great deal of introspection and description of the most mundane details of Julia's life. This does mean, however, that we get to know her and her family, friends and life very intimately.

The plot is well developed, such that everything feels logically derived from what went before, and from the characters themselves. There is a nicely created sense of building tension during the weekend with Frank, when we guess something is going to happen, but when it does it is a total surprise.

The ending feels very slightly contrived - particularly Richard's response, which seemed a little too convenient. Nevertheless, the story is nicely rounded off.

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### **J.A. Clement says**

I downloaded the sample of this book after seeing Ali on the forums, where several of the others had praised

it greatly. I dithered a bit because it really didn't sound like my sort of thing, but downloaded the sample out of curiosity and by two paragraphs in had bought the book.

The first thing I noticed about "Girl on a Swing" is the intricate, almost poetic use of words (this was what sold me on it). If you want a taste of the writing style, definitely have a look at the sample but bear in mind that while the sample covers the beginning which is quite still and slow, the action gets more intense and exciting later in the book.

The story is told in the first person, mostly in the present; the heroine, Julia, lives a very isolated life, emotionally speaking, and this is communicated with the barest minimum of implications but permeates everything else. In some ways her life seems much less real than her remembered lives - at the beginning of the book I had a good idea of what was going to happen, and then it baffled my expectations at every turn, which is always gratifying!

It is very atmospheric; very gripping; and very unusual. The only reason for which I gave it four stars rather than five is that when the action comes to its climax, I would have liked to have heard a little more from Frank about what / how much he remembered, just to give the ending a little more symmetry and definition. (That said, you don't notice at the time because you're so into it; only when savouring the aftertaste of the book, so to speak.)

It's such an unusual book, with such a fresh use of words; it's very powerful. Julia isn't cheerful, and yet she's leavened with enough cheerfulness from other characters that you're certainly not left in a cloud of depression. The development of Julia from her grief and isolation in the beginning of the book to the better, happier, more fulfilled self as she finds relief from various sadnesses at the end works quite naturally and is ultimately rather uplifting.

Should you try it yourself? Absolutely yes. And bear in mind, if it's not your sort of thing - it's not my sort of thing either! But excellent things are, and this is excellent.  
JAC.

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## **Aunty Janet says**

I found this book absorbing and enjoyed the story. The past life regression worked well in my opinion; the central theme without being too 'new agey'. The author builds tension beautifully.

"Julia believes she has lived before.

Suspended from her job and grieving for her lost son, Julia's past lives become an escape from her troubles in the present. For the first time, she meets someone in this life whom she recognises from a previous existence. But this man is a murderer, convicted of killing his wife. As Julia seeks to find out more, past and present entwine, culminating in a dramatic conclusion."

Not all of the questions are answered, one big one remains in my mind, but I am not frustrated by this as I normally would be because it does not affect the conclusion, and I quite like that I can decide what the answer is. (either that or I turned two pages together and missed it!)

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## Kitty says

I sort of had a "love/hate" relationship with this book. Parts of it I really enjoyed, and other parts really bothered me. The main character believes she has lived before, and occasionally gets small bits of memories from these past lives. That part of the story was fascinating to me. However, her life in the "here and now" is pretty messed up - and that part bothered me, from time to time. On the whole, this isn't an overly happy book. It's not meant to be, but in general, I prefer happy stories. However, it definitely held my attention, and I liked how the author wrapped things up at the end. I'm glad I read it.

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## Yassemin says

I'll start off by being honest. Before now, when I think of the words "self published" or "independent" in regard to authors, I think talentless people who can't get a book deal through the proper and traditional way, namely, a publishing house. Actually that was an extremely prejudiced and very **wrong** view.

I picked this book up after just getting my kindle, I wanted something reasonable but that also sounded like something I would enjoy. The girl on the swing was that book. So I bought it. What a great book it was. This book has absolutely *everything* that would keep you reading in a book. **Bit of a romantic element, a mystery of some kind/ intrigue and action of course .**

The story centers around Julia who believes she has lived before, currently going through a difficult time through marital problems, the death of her son and an ensuing legal case against her, she seeks refuge in these past lives of hers that she sees through visions and then later, through regression. The characters are all fully developed, and I found Julia to be an extremely likeable character who managed to gain my sympathy for the hard hand that she had been dealt at in life.

The writing of the book was not juvenile in any sense which I would expect from most authors writing their debut novel, this was impressive and captured my attention as effectively as though Ms Cooper had been a well seasoned pro at writing books and this definitely didn't show as being a first novel.

All in all I would even go so far as to that I would include this as one of my favourite books, its so different to all the other cliched books and genres that exist out there and the moment and I would strongly recommend it be read.

I have also learnt something valuable. Not to prejudge before experiencing....I shall be now actively supporting independant and self published authors and more willing to buy from them because the reality is, bad authors exist, but this is irrelevant of the fact as to being self published, to the contrary, many authors I don't like are published the traditional way. Anyway I would strongly advise people to pick up this book. Its great! I look forward to reading more of this authors work!

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## Alicia says

A very understated - yes, that means slow moving - story about a British physician with past life memories. I kept thinking the story was ramping up into something interesting...then it went back to idling in 2nd gear.

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### **Justine M Dunn says**

Very enjoyable this book - even stayed up late to finish it last night. I thought it was beautifully written and had a really interesting plot line, not at all spooky despite its past lives theme. I did find that the descriptions and details were a little drawn out at times, otherwise I would have given it 5\*. Would definitely recommend.

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### **Sharon Tillotson says**

Though this book insinuated itself onto my Kindle – nudging aside a couple of others ahead of it on my to-be-read pile - at a very busy time, it engaged me from the beginning and I could barely put it down.

Largely narrative and written in first person present tense, the writing was beautiful, the settings well rendered and the protagonist believable and real.

While there is an underlying theme of reincarnation in the book, it is rather a story of one woman's struggle to find meaning in life again after the tragic loss of her only child. She feels estranged from her husband and very alone in her grief.

Julia is an obstetrician from a middle class background; her ambitious husband from a stiff-upper-lip aristocratic family. She is finally getting ready to return to work when a wrongful death lawsuit is brought against her and she is forced to take an extended leave from her profession. This sends her spiralling down again. She begins to have unsettling visions of a past life. She dares not mention these to her husband and when she does so to her psychologist friend, it is suggested she keep busy doing volunteer work.

Julia decides to try it out and through a twist of fate ends up visiting a prisoner who is in jail for murder. There is an eerie connection with this man and the story begins to take some skillfully written, surprising twists and turns.

There were a few loose threads around minor characters that could have been tidied up, but we come to know and like most of them well enough for the story. Near the ending there is an unexpected twist that stirs Julia out of her fog a bit and helps her face the uncertainty of her future, and a further lovely bittersweet turn that offers promise of resolution and hope.

The Girl on the Swing is literary fiction with a compelling storyline. A most enjoyable read with a touch of suspense and mystery, and one I will remember for a very long time...

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### **Kate says**

Julia Spencer is enchanted by a child on a swing through a knothole in a fence. In spite of it being winter, the garden Julia sees is in the full bloom of summer. Julia has been on sick leave from her work as a surgeon after the death of her son and is due to return to work at the hospital where her husband, Richard, is also a

surgeon. But things don't go as Julia plans. Just before Julia is due to return to work there is a complaint against her by a grief-stricken patient and she is advised to extend her leave until the investigation is over. And so begins an extraordinary journey that takes Julia to a prison doing voluntary work as a prison visitor as well as deeper exploration into past lives. Has she known the inmate Frank in a past life? Who are Maggie and Freddie? And what is the significance of Lyme Regis?

This has been on my to-be-read list ever since it hit the top spot on the writers' site *Authonomy*. I only read a sample back then. I was further interested because the author lives in the same county as me and also has a background in Psychology.

I found this a very satisfying novel and the editing is almost flawless, with nothing worse than the occasional misplaced apostrophe. It is beautifully described, very well-plotted and paced, and the characters are well-drawn and believable. The voice is assured. Here is an example of something acutely observed: '...(The waves) seem to pause for a second in mid-air, as though surveying the town in readiness for their attack, then they plummet down on the walkway like buckets being emptied'. Another example was Maggie bouncing like a pebble towards the beach. There are many more such images. I loved the moody descriptions of the East Midlands gloom at the time of year. Although there is a lot of tying up of loose ends, the ending is left slightly ambiguous which I tend to go for.

Highly recommended.

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### **Amy says**

This was an inexpensive (\$2) Kindle book and I definitely got more than \$2 worth of enjoyment in reading it. While I didn't LOVE it, I found it an interesting and entertaining read. Apparently, this book is independently published, which helps explain why it was so cheap. It also means they have no marketing machine behind the author. It's about a couple of English surgeons whose son overdosed and died recently. It's mostly focused on the woman and her belief that she has had past lives. It's got some nice twists I didn't see coming and a satisfying ending. I definitely recommend.

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### **Madeline Meixner says**

The Girl on the Swing was an unexpected and pleasant surprise for me! My favorite books are English mysteries and I only read this novel because a client recommended it so highly that I was compelled. As soon as I finished it, I wrote my client a thank-you note!

The writing is superb and, although I was quite busy at the time, I kept finding excuses to take a break from my work to dip back into the story. The plot moves along quickly and the little twists along the way are brilliantly crafted. The characters have a depth and richness normally only found in the old literary classics.

I was both surprised and happy to find that the author used the UK spellings throughout rather than diluting the ambiance of the locale by "Americanizing" the spelling so as not to confuse Americans who may not be familiar with the English spellings. I appreciate the authenticity of the work staying true to the author's own "native tongue" so to speak.



For me, a book is made (or broken) by its ending. This ending is one of the best I can remember in a long, long time. I highly recommend *The Girl on the Swing* to readers of all types - the appeal is universal and will be enjoyed by a wide audience, no matter what you "usually" read. I'm the living proof of that!

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