



## The Summer We All Ran Away

*Cassandra Parkin*

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When nineteen year old Davey finds himself drunk, beaten and alone, he is rescued by the oddly-assorted inhabitants of an abandoned and beautiful house in the West Country. Their only condition for letting him join them is that he asks them no questions.

More than thirty years ago in that same house, burned-out rock star Jack Laker writes a ground-breaking comeback album, and abandons the girl who saved his life to embark on a doomed and passionate romance with a young actress. His attempt to escape his destructive lifestyle leads to deceit, debauchery and even murder.

As Davey and his fellow housemate Priss try to uncover the secrets of the house's inhabitants, both past and present, it becomes clear that the five strangers have all been drawn there by the events and the music of that long-ago summer.

## **The Summer We All Ran Away Details**

Date : Published August 1st 2013 by Legend Press (first published July 1st 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Cassandra Parkin

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Mystery

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## **From Reader Review The Summer We All Ran Away for online ebook**

### **Andrea says**

Ugh! Fucking ridiculous! It's hard to go into it without giving things away but I found the culmination of the various plot lines to be terribly clumsy and incongruous. Besides that, the whole book read like some kind of YA/Romance/Mystery debacle, but I was playing along until the wretched excuse for an ending. This book just completely rubbed me the wrong way.

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### **Tracey Scott-Townsend says**

I had already read Cassandra Parkin's second novel 'The Beach Hut' before I read this, her first, and I hoped I would enjoy this one as much. I wasn't disappointed. I love the way the different characters' stories each begin on separate paths and eventually intertwine, in the same way as the past and the present both seem to be alive in the house at the same time. The characters are superb: heartbreak Priss, abused Davey, calm Kate, with a hint of potential violence below her surface. Mute eloquent Isaac drifts between the two separate decades in which the story is set, and is the key to its telling, and Tom, who might or might not have escaped from prison, and might or might not be a murderer. Kate makes a family of them all. The house and the setting are in themselves equal characters to the human ones. The house has two faces, as has the story. I absolutely love the ending, and would love to think of the people in the house continuing to live together in their makeshift family for a while longer after the house's owner returns from his 30-year absence.

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### **Faith Spinks says**

I bought this on Kindle some time ago. I think it was either free or very cheap. Choosing to read it as my flight began I had no recollection of what the book was supposed to be about.

It was an interesting storyline - though being British, calling something interesting isn't necessarily a good thing. I think the best I can say about this book is that it did keep me reading till the end, and it did pass the hours of the flight. Not especially memorable but certainly not terrible.

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### **Ea says**

You know that feeling when you're just drawn to something, when you feel like you cannot continue existing without this object? Yeah. That was me when I saw the cover of The Summer We All Ran Away. I'm shallow, and I judge books by their covers. And this one.. oh my. I went all grabby-hands on it.

The point is, however, that unlike most other times when this has happened to me, the content wrapped in this cover turned out to match it in quality. We've got a talented author on our hands here. We really do.

The story itself is simple enough, but it gets slightly complex, and eventually it will require quite a lot of

focus (or, you know, actual note-taking) to keep up; it jumps between past and present, and various characters and their stories are intricately woven into each other. Each character is well-developed and somehow, they're entirely over the top in the best sense of the word. Especially Priss, who is annoying and sweet and all-round teenager-y at all times, and yet it is difficult not to adore her.

We are, naturally, given the nature of the story, told about the backgrounds of the characters, and this is where we find the only downside I can point out: Parts of that of Priss is told in some MSN-chat-slang. Had I been older, I would have despaired and given up on it. It is too bad, really, because a lot of important details that are almost required to understand in order to make sense of the parts written in regular English are hidden in these MSN-conversations, and it is really too bad if you miss out on anything because of this.

Overall, *The Summer We All Ran Away* is delightful, intriguing, fascinating and absolutely wonderful, and I cannot express how much I encourage everybody to read it. If not for anything else, then for the wonderful characters.

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### **Chrissi says**

I really liked the sound of this book, so I was thrilled when I was approved to read it. It didn't take me long to get stuck into the story. Cassandra Parkin has a very appealing writing style.

The story is told through 'then' and 'now' which really works for me. It was a risk to take. I think you have to be very engaged in the story to keep track of what it is going on. Luckily for me, I found it incredibly easy to be completely gripped by the story. I think Cassandra has done a fantastic job throughout the story combining the past and the present.

The characters are interesting and complex. I particularly liked Davey and Priss. I liked how the reader was told the back story of the characters. I found Davey's particularly heart-breaking and well developed. I felt like he was the most complete character. I cared for him a lot.

If I had to pick something that I didn't like about the story, it would be the slang of the MSN conversations when learning about Priss' back story. This is only a slight niggle, because I think the conversations were very true to the character of Priss. It worked, but for me, they made it very hard to read. I had to really concentrate on the slang to understand what they were saying.

Overall, I found *The Summer We All Ran Away* to be a promising, intriguing read. I'll certainly be looking out for more from Cassandra Parkin.

For this and more reviews check out my blog [here](#)

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### **Louise Beech says**

I was haunted from beginning to end - still am. The title suggests escape and I did, every time I opened a page bookmarked by whatever discarded scrap was to hand. I loved how past and present merged, how issues that test us, destroy us, save us, are the same no matter what era we belong to. Davey captivated me the most, perhaps because we begin with him, perhaps because his history of abuse resonated so much or

perhaps simply because he's so beautifully written. I was also intrigued by Jack Laker and the doomed relationships surrounding him. I don't want to give much more away - there are twists, revelations, but they're not those sometimes thoughtless ones that a writer appears to have added when they run out of ideas... they're perfect, adding depth to the characters and situations. This is definitely a recommended read, not just for summer, for any season.

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### **Claire says**

I received an advanced reading copy of this book from Net Galley, and I'm so glad that I did because I really enjoyed it.

It is written in the past and present, switching between the two in alternate chapters, and normally I don't like this, but I felt that it really worked in this book.

The story focuses around an old derelict house in which four people are living who have run away. They all have different stories to tell about why they ended up in the old house, and the house itself tells a story as well.

I thought that the characters were very likeable and I warmed to them all. There was not one character who I disliked in any way. The past linked to the present very well and there were lots that kept me reading, in order to find out who was who and what the answers were to the many questions that were going through my head throughout the book. I thought I had figured it out, but as always, there was a nice twist at the end, which left me feeling happy and contented.

It was quite an easy book to read, there was nothing complicated or boring about it. Sometimes when a story flits between past and present, things can get confusing, but I didn't find this with this book.

I will certainly be recommending this - it's a great summer read and will also brighten a dull winters evening. In fact, I think maybe reading it when there is a storm outside will give a better atmosphere as it will bring the empty house and it's ghosts to life. I certainly think that this book should be a must read for anyone!

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### **karen says**

a sad and lovely book about damaged people trying to pick up their pieces.

it takes place in "then" and "now," with thirty years separating the narratives. in the then, we have a musician suddenly and uncomfortably finding himself turned into a rock star, with all of the trappings and complications that the lifestyle contains. the story opens with him having climbed a tree to escape the debauched party taking place at his enormous house, and a near-mauling of a guest by his caged panther. in the middle of all this he meets an arresting and singular woman, and falls instantly in love with her in the most enduring way.

in the now, we are in the same house, whose 70's decor has gone through "dated and cheesy" and come right back around into retro-chic again. the rock star is long gone, and the people who are living there are essentially squatters, all of them being drawn to the house for their own reasons, nursing wounds both

physical and psychological. they form a sort of family, and like any family, there is a little love and a lot of secrets.

so we go back and forth in time, learning about jealousy and love and betrayal and self-discovery and all the painful bits of being a human and how each character got the scars they carry. davey arrives drunk and beaten, stuttering his way through half-confessions and fear-based obedience. priss is a sixteen-year old runaway, bitter and mistrustful of love and beauty, playing up her working class background and hiding her vulnerability behind teenage f-bomb attitude and aggression. kate and tom are older and more haunted, and it's best to discover their secrets as you read, not in a clumsy book report. and isaac, silent and inscrutable, who will affect them all, despite never uttering a word. in the then, we will follow reluctant celebrity jack laker through a tricky love triangle, addiction, and despair, and evie and mathilda, the women who shape him.

it is really beautiful, if a little unfinished-feeling in places, but i personally liked the loose ends. it's basically about all the various ways people can become imprisoned and all the different shapes that cages can take, and priss' story will break your fucking heart. if you like the jagged-storyline types of things, and stories where broken people co-exist in past-haunted, crumbling houses, you should probably read it.

i will definitely read more by this author.

come to my blog!

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### **Sasha says**

#### 4.5 Stars

This is a story about Davey, who ran away from an abusive family. Tom, who ran away from a life he could not repair. Kate, who was drawn away from what she had. And Priss, who is doing a whole bunch of running and pushing. They all come together in a huge, half-constructed house in the middle of nowhere and make a curious kind of living.

This book is really beautiful. The writing just made all the characters come alive. I really liked everybody, even the ones that didn't give you much to like. I'm a sucker for books where several narratives come together, so a story where broken people slowly untangle their secrets and join their lives together, in one way or another, is a really delicious treat for me. A sad delicious treat. I savored the book. Thank you for that.

I wasn't sure about the twist where it turns out that (view spoiler), but Priss's reaction to it really brought it together and I was able to go along with it. Well done! The book was really ready to lose some stars for me, but Cassandra Parkin had control the whole time and pulled it off, without the foundation that I was convinced was necessary.

I really liked the pacing of the book up until the end, where it felt a little jumbled. I don't mind that several things were unresolved, I like a little mystery to be left to think about. It makes me feel extra affectionate towards a book. But the revelations came too quickly and too close together and I didn't have the time to breathe and digest them. It would have been fine in a page-turner thriller, but not in a relatively slow-paced, thoughtful book like this one. I wanted to savor it even more at the end, like the chocolate tip in an ice cream

cone. I guess I shouldn't be so hungry next time I read a good book. Definitely coming back for more from this author.

-I received a free copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review-

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### **Beth (bibliobeth) says**

First of all I'd like to thank NetGalley and Legend Press for allowing me to read a copy of this intriguing debut novel. I have to admit I was initially drawn to this book by the simple yet absolutely beautiful and very effective cover art and a synopsis which sounded anything but dull. Unfortunately I appear to be in the minority group of readers that didn't enjoy it as much as I thought I was going to. It starts brilliantly enough, when a runaway called Davey is saved from the streets by Tom and Kate who along with sixteen year old Priss are living in a beautiful old house. At first, Davey assumes the same as the reader, that is that Tom and Kate are the owners of the house but it turns out that not only are they not a couple but they are all squatting in a house abandoned in mysterious circumstances.

As the story continues, we learn a lot more about the houses' previous inhabitants, in particular those of thirty years ago where a rock star called Jack Laker, burnt out at the height of his fame is planning an almighty come-back. His back story sees him neglecting one girl who saves his life and falling head over heels in love with another girl called Matilda (who appears to have a few secrets of her own) and looking after a black panther who he keeps caged in the garden. Yes, I know. It's a bit strange. However, Jack cannot maintain a rock star lifestyle without there being consequences and with the arrival of the mute and mysterious artist Isaac, emotions become heightened, dangerous and overwhelming with drastic results for those involved.

The story flips between the past (Jack's story) and the story of the inhabitants at the present time. Even the house becomes a character in its own right – oh the things it must have witnessed! They all have their own back story, some traumatic, some practically unbelievable. Not everyone is what they seem. And of course there is a link between the two stories which adds a nice little twist to the proceedings. I had already guessed it which was a bit of a shame as I like to be surprised (or proved wrong!) but I enjoyed the way the author pulled the two strands together. In general, I did like this book and as a debut it's incredibly promising but for some reason I didn't really connect with any of the characters so never felt fully invested in the story. There is some great writing here though and huge potential for the future so I look forward to reading more from Cassandra Parkin.

Please see my full review on my blog at <http://www.bibliobeth.com>

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### **Alicia says**

\*I received a copy of this book through NetGalley\*

It was amazing throughout the story how the past and present go together so well without giving everything away. I was hooked from the beginning! Each of the characters were deeply interesting and complex. The mystery of who they all were and what exactly happened kept me guessing.

My favorite character was Davey. At first, I didn't really care for him. Learning his past as well as seeing his current actions made me start to like him. I feel like he was the most complete person and I was satisfied with his story.

The only part I didn't enjoy was the backstory of Priss. Mostly because I had an incredibly hard time reading the slang of her various IM conversations. It made me skim through those parts, and I feel like I missed something.

Overall, this book was intriguing and very easy to read. I recommend it to anyone!

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### **Liz Barnsley says**

Thank you kindly to Legend Press and Cassandra Parkin for the copy of this novel via netgalley.

In an abandoned house in the West Country a small eclectic group of people gather – including young Davey, escaping from life, who is welcomed into their midst with one caveat – he asks no questions. 30 Years previously, Musician Jack Laker is writing a comeback album...and in abandoning one girl for another sets into motion a wave of events that will ripple through the years until they reach Davey's shore..

I have posted this review under Fiction – you might also consider it as a mystery novel but for me it was all about the beautiful characters and flowing almost poetic prose – sometimes it's hard to put a book into a single genre. Cassandra Parkin has created some wonderfully witty and heartfelt folk here – I loved each and every one of them from the hilariously honest Priss (my favourite) down to the less than likeable but still intriguing Evie. As you follow events both in the past and the present, you will get inexorably caught up in their world...a world as harsh as it is breathtaking. The house is almost a character in itself – there is a definite atmosphere about it and you know it is hiding secrets...but what those secrets are it refuses to tell.

The story unfolds over both the time periods in a charmingly delightful manner – it is gentle yet fascinating. You care less about what they may be hiding from than you do for the people themselves and what they might do next. The Summer We All Ran Away is the closest I've come expressively speaking to Agatha Christie – you feel like you are reading an age old tale yet in a modern setting. Of all the wonderful books I have read lately this is the one that has made me feel true nostalgia for those early days of my reading life – when wide eyed I would emerge from a story and suddenly realise it wasn't real. But it feels real when you are in it...doesn't it?

Happy Reading Folks!

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### **Lisa says**

A fantastic debut novel by Cassandra Parkin, her first but hopefully not her last.

The story has chapters from Now and chapters from Then. In 'Now' we meet Davey, badly beaten and clearly at the end of his tether; not knowing where to turn he makes his way drunk and randomly to Cornwall; guided by a light across the water he makes his way to a house where he collapses on the doorstep to be taken in by an odd bunch of people who offer him a place to stay, no questions asked as long as he returns

the no question favour.

Sixteen year old Priss is one of the residents of the house; feisty and curious she and Davey investigate the strange house, part of which is shut off. Convinced that at least one of the other residents is a murderer, Priss is determined to unravel the mystery of the older residents Kate, Tom and Isaac.

'Then' starts off with the story of Jack Laker, a musician and recovering addict but as the novel progresses 'Then' becomes everyone's story and we find out why everyone has ended up at this big house in the middle of nowhere and what has drawn them there as their secrets become known...and why there is a panther on the loose!

I found this a very easy story to become involved and interested in. The characters were intriguing without being fantastical and I found I wanted to read on to find out more about them and their stories. Whilst Tom's story was surprising, both Davey's and Priss' stories and characters were especially compelling and I had a lot of empathy with them.

The Now and Then of the telling works well and ties both past and present nicely together. I was a bit disappointed that we didn't find out what happened after the secrets were out; I felt there were loose ends that maybe could have been tied up a little better to allow for a proper new beginning for all the characters as I did feel most readers would want to know how all the stories ended and know that they could begin again. All in all though I did enjoy it and found the writing very good and very thoughtful, you could certainly get into the mindset of Tom, Priss and Davey. I'd definitely look out for another novel by Cassandra.

Thanks to netgalley for the chance to review this book.

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### **Jane says**

The title caught my attention, and then the story pulled me in from the front page.

Davey was running away from home, not quite knowing where he was going, just knowing that had to get away. He tried to escape into a bottle, but that only got him into more trouble, and he finally collapsed on the steps of a big house on the Cornish coast. He thought that he was in trouble again, but he wasn't. He met the three people who lived there and they told him that he could join them, that he could live there, and that the only condition was that he ask no questions.

It seemed too good to be true, even when Davey that the sensible middle-aged Tom and Kate weren't a couple, weren't owners, were simply squatters who had arrived at the same place at the same time. And it seemed incredible that they found a wonderful house abandoned, as if somebody had just stepped out and then never come back.

Priss was the other resident of the house, she was just a little older than Davey, and she was one of the most interesting and complicated young women I have met in contemporary fiction. A wonderful mix of brashness and vulnerability; meanness and compassion; confidence and caution.

Tom and Kate's insistence on not asking questions bothered Priss, and when Davey arrived she talked him into helping her explore the locked rooms and cupboards to try to find out more about them and about the

history of the house.

Because, of course, there was another story, set in the same house some years earlier. Jack was a successful musician, but he was troubled and he didn't like the attention that fame had brought. He retreated to a big house in Cornwall, he met Matilda, who was quite unlike the women who moved in his world, and he fell deeply and obsessively in love with her.

The story moves between past and present, gradually revealing the stories of the four people living in the house, and its absent owner.

All of those characters were very well drawn, and as I learned more of their stories I came to understand them better, and to care about what would happen to them. And I appreciated that their stories were distinctive: Davey's was the most shocking, Priss's the most intriguing, and Tom's the most unexpected.

Individually, all of the elements worked. And Cassandra Parkin wrote and constructed her story well; she created a wonderful atmosphere, a fine sense of time and place; she pulled me right into that house and had me asking so many questions.

But as a whole the story felt just a little contrived, and the I'm afraid that twist and the conclusion were rather predictable. Such a disappointment after characters and storylines that could have been predictable were anything but.

And that's why I'd still say that this is a very promising debut, and Cassandra Parkin is an author I'll be watching.

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### **Diane S ? says**

Sometimes I am not at all sure what makes me choose a book. This one was on NetGalley and there was just something about this rather stark and darker colored cover that called to me or maybe it was the waving tree and the glimpses of bright yellow. . Read the synopsis, which sounded interesting and thought "What the heck" and am so glad I did. This is a book that will probably not get very much press and yet it is wonderfully written. The story is different and captured my interest from the very beginning. The characters and their back stories were expressive, there was an air of mystery, much anguish and soul searching as five people come running from something in their lives and looking for a way forward. There is a huge old house, with many different sections, all containing secrets that must be let out. There is a musician who wants so much more than the life he has led as a rock musician, there is hope and there is love. There is also Priss, who is my favorite character, she is so amusing and irreverent that this novel is worth reading just to listen to her. An unusual but worthy find.

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