



All the Summer Girls

Meg Donohue

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In Philadelphia, good girl Kate is dumped by her fiance the day she learns she is pregnant with his child. In New York City, beautiful stay-at-home mom Vanessa is obsessively searching the Internet for news of an old flame. And in San Francisco, Dani, the aspiring writer who can't seem to put down a book--or a cocktail--long enough to open her laptop, has just been fired... again.

In an effort to regroup, Kate, Vanessa, and Dani retreat to the New Jersey beach town where they once spent their summers. Emboldened by the seductive cadences of the shore, the women begin to realize how much their lives, and friendships, have been shaped by the choices they made one fateful night on the beach eight years earlier--and the secrets that only now threaten to surface.

All the Summer Girls Details

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From Reader Review All the Summer Girls for online ebook

Sarah says

I was very bored with this book. For most of the book, each character hints about her role in a boy's death years ago. When it all finally comes out how each girl was to "blame" for the accident, it really wasn't that shocking, and they were all angry at each other for about a paragraph, and then all is well and they are BFFs again. The most exciting part of the book was when the dog got lost on the last two pages of the book.

Mary says

I love chick lit as much as the next chick lit chick. And since I am a Jersey Shore girl, I really expected to fall right into this one and come out with a tan and a smile... I love a good beachy frothy light summer girlie caper. This book was not that. I made it up to page 59 and decided that my life is too short. It has been 59 pages describing the 3 main characters and their lives. Just describing. And I hate to say I didn't like or wouldn't want to be friends with any of them. Nobody is doing anything. They're dopey. Even Kate's breakup was a non-event. Her dog Gracie has more personality than these 3. So I have given up on this one. Sorry Meg. I won't be eating cupcakes either.

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

3.5 stars. "All the Summer Girls" tells the story of lifelong friends, Kate, Vanessa, and Dani who spent summers together at the Jersey Shore. When the adult lives that they have built for themselves come crashing down (Kate) or on the verge of potential change (Vanessa), or need a change (Dani), they come together again. All of them are hiding their own secrets from each other but they learn that honesty is the only way that you can get what you need.

This book is billed as a beach book and it definitely fits into my definition of a good pick for the beach. When I go to the beach, I want something that keeps me turning the pages but that I don't have to think about too hard. Although some of the topics that the book deals with are on the tough side, you still don't have to think about it too hard.

I really enjoyed this book. I really enjoy stories about friendship. Friendship is such a universal thing. We all need to have those sorts of relationships where we know that we have someone to lean on when things get really hard. Although there is some discontent between Dani and Vanessa in the beginning of the book, you still get to see why this group was so connected to each other. I loved seeing their relationship.

The ending of the book fell a little flat for me. I really wanted to see a little more closure. It almost felt like the book stopped prematurely and it would have been nice to see more where things ended up for the women.

Overall, this book is definitely enjoyable and I would recommend it to someone looking for a book on the lighter side that will still keep you turning the pages.

Clarabel says

Je ne sais plus comment ce roman a atterri entre mes mains, avant de réaliser que j'avais déjà lu *La Fille Qui Cherchait Son Chien* du même auteur. J'ai donc plongé et avalé 100 pages d'une traite : la tension dramatique est palpable, savamment dosée par un suspense réel. Seulement, au fil des chapitres, l'intérêt s'est émoussé. Quand, comment, pourquoi. Impossible de pointer du doigt. Peut-être l'amertume me semblait de plus en plus lourde et indigeste.

Toujours est-il que j'ai fini par me lasser : une fois révélés, les secrets ne nous laissent pas bouche bée. Que de tristesse et de non-dits... Le verdict final est désolant. En bref, ce court roman n'a pas su me convaincre pleinement et taille le portrait de trois copines sans concession, en laissant filer toute légèreté... J'espérais davantage de charme, de chaleur, de douceur. En vain.

<http://blogclarabel.canalblog.com/arc...>

Victoria says

So, yeah, beach read. Even though I am nowhere near a beach. It was a cheap download and I was in the mood for something "light," I guess. Chick Lit is not my favored genre, although I am a huge fan of women's literature. I found this a little formulaic for Chick Lit (maybe a lot formulaic). Not a waste of time to read, but I'd probably prefer to have spent the time reading something more substantial. (Note: I downloaded a number of cheap, beachy type books, so I might be in for more light reading.) I will say that Donohue won points for quoting a lyric from one of my all-time favorite songs ("Today") and for the character Vanessa saying to herself that people wouldn't remember her name correctly. Ha! As a "Victoria" who has regularly over the years been called "Vanessa," "Valerie," "Virginia"--yes, I feel you.

Patty says

All The Summer Girls

By

Meg Donahue

My "in a nutshell" summary...

Three girls/ women...with issues...try to solve them during a beach weekend at the Jersey shore.

My thoughts after reading this book...

There might be one teensie spoiler in here so be careful!

Loved it even though every one of these women were painfully annoying! The other thing about this book is that even though everyone has a secret...and they are all supposed to be best friends from childhood...they annoy each other! They still have secrets...they still irritate each other and in spite of their getaway weekend...Dani and Vanessa seem to want to tear into each other every second. And that leaves Kate...who has just been dumped...is preggers...and that's not a spoiler...you find it out in the first chapter...and still

hasn't told anyone...including her ex fiancé!

What hangs over everyone is what devastating thing happened to Colin...Kate's twin brother.

What I loved about this book...

I loved all of the Philadelphia and Jersey Shore references...we are familiar with all of it and the memories were awesome. The author even mentioned a Wawa hoagie...and locals crave those things!

What I did not love...

I was so annoyed by Dani, Vanessa and Kate...but that made the book a really yummy reading experience.

Final thoughts...

I thought this was a really fascinating book...I loved it without becoming overly fond of the three main characters...is that even possible? Yes! Plus by the end of the book I loved them all!

Laurel-Rain says

The three of them had met at the Philadelphia Friends School years before, and their friendship bonds had cemented during the summers spent at the Avalon Beach house. They were very different from one another, yet their connections came from a common bond developed in the school: Katherine (Kate) Harrington, whose twin brother Colin often joined them; Vanessa Dale, whose hippie parents were a constant reminder of how different her life was from her friends' lives; and Dani Lowenstein, whose father owned the house on Avalon Beach and provided the backdrop to the fabulous summers.

Now, years later, they come together for one more summer, hoping to heal from the secrets of the past and a tragic event that left them all reeling, and the problems in their present. Kate's fiancé Peter has just broken up with her only weeks before their wedding; Vanessa is still reeling from her husband Drew's betrayal with another woman; and Dani is suffering from her own guilt and unable to maintain any kind of life out in San Francisco.

Will their secrets break them apart, or will they find enough strength in their friendship to help them heal? "All the Summer Girls: A Novel (P.S.)" is alternately narrated by the three friends, and the reader can jog along with them as they agonize over the past and try to carve out a future.

An enjoyable and somewhat predictable read, it was also very satisfying and the perfect ending to a summer. 4.0 stars.

Gina says

Just an okay summer beach book. I liked that the setting took place in Avalon, NJ, but the rest of it didn't do much to keep my attention.

Catlyn Caldart says

This book was dumb. I will reveal the plot so you never have to read it.

Three friends: Kate, Dani, Vanessa. Friends since kindergarten. Kate had a twin brother named Colin, but he died from an overdose (and drowned) when they were all 21 years old. The three girls visit their "summer home" after a series of unfortunate events. Drama ensues.

Kate: Engaged to Peter, who dumps her on the first page. She then realizes she's pregnant. Lawyer. Fights with her friends throughout the whole book. Probably gets back together with Peter at the end of the book. Burned down lifeguard chair but her brother took the blame and was arrested. Then he died.

Dani: Drug addict. MAJOR DRUG ADDICT. Wants to be a writer. Fights with her friends throughout the whole book. At the end of the book, maybe stops doing drugs. Gave the drugs to Colin which caused him to overdose. Then he died.

Vanessa: Married with baby. Husband kissed another woman, therefore she decides to start an affair with her ex (they dated for one month eight years ago). Fights with her friends throughout the whole book. End of book, decides not to have an affair. Broke up with Colin the night he overdosed and drowned and died.

Seriously. That is the plot. SO DUMB. Also, poorly written. Tenses jump around like crazy.

Amy says

Threesomes can be awkward.

There are risks involved. Someone may feel left out, two may gang up on one, the balance is off. When they work, they work gloriously. But when they don't, well, that's where we get interesting ideas for books.

Kate, Vanessa, and Dani have been friends since high school, and although the three have gone their separate ways, the chord between them still pulls tightly. Their closeness may not be what it once was, but they are the sort of friends who, even after months or years apart, can reunite and slip back into "normalcy." Or what accounts for normalcy for the three of them.

They last were together at Vanessa's wedding to the son of a famous newscaster. Vanessa and Dani got into a vicious argument, the particulars of which we do not learn about till later. The same goes for secrets the three women hold regarding a tragedy that befell them the last summer they spent together at the Jersey Shore: the death of Kate's twin brother, Colin. Life for none of them has been the same since.

When Kate's fiancé dumps her three months prior to their wedding, she calls upon Dani and Vanessa to join her at the Shore. Secrets will be revealed, relationships tested, and friendships elasticized to embrace the changes that the three have undergone since Colin's death. Can they find their way back to each other, back to their closeness? Each needs the other desperately, as each woman faces upheavals in her life.

The story lines are interesting, if not a little predictable. Happily married Vanessa may not be so happy after all, Kate needs to feel attractive to men, and Dani needs to find herself. We've seen this before. But Donohue puts a fresh spin on the tales by unfolding her stories in a way that keeps us engaged and reading. The mystery of Colin's death directs the book, and we becomes as invested in finding out what happened as the friends do. Each thinks she knows the full story, but none do.

When you have three "heroines," the worry is that one will get short shrift. Again, the problem of threesomes. That is here to some degree. Kate is the most fully realized in that we see her not just through her own eyes but through Dani's and Vanessa's as well. She's a neat freak with OCD tendencies, a bad driver, the daughter of two loving parents, a twin without a twin. When we see her through her friend's perspectives, we feel we know her. We can't say the same for Dani and Vanessa, who appear more cookie cutter than Kate, more predictable. What we learn about them from their friends is what we expect to learn. Unfortunately, there are no surprises.

There is a little romance here, but the real romance isn't between the women and any men. It's between the friends themselves. They care about each other, and although they betray one another in various ways, their love and loyalty binds them as strongly as any romance or marriage would.

It's a good summer read. Enjoy.

Thanks to edelweiss for the preview.

Published on cupcake's book cupboard.

@VivaAmaRisata

Stephanie Elliot says

I loved All the Summer Girls by Meg Donohue

When I first started reading it, I must admit I was a bit scared since there are three main characters I thought I would get tangled up with so many to remember, but each character is so distinct and believable I fell into each story easily. The story is about three best friends since childhood, one who is a twin.

They summer in Avalon every year and when they are in college, Kate's twin brother dies. Each girl blames themselves for the death of Colin and although their lives continue, there is a rift in their relationship. Now, eight years later, they reunite at the beach for what will turn out to be a reconciliation and confrontation of sorts.

I loved this book -- it was one of those that I couldn't put down -- one that I had to jump into bed to read every chance I could get. Very satisfying, compelling. LOVED the ending. It left you with a feeling of SIGH, OK, that was good.

Didn't wrap up in a happy bow, but didn't end cheesy, perfect ending.

Meg Donohue may be the new Emily Giffin. There, I said it!

Rose says

Initial reaction: I'm not a fan of the narrative style, and there are many contemplative sections between three different POVs that make the narrative more sluggish than it ought to have been, but surprisingly...I liked this. The story came together much better than I expected, and I'd say it'd appeal well to literary fiction lovers and those who like women's fiction as well. Probably giving it around 3.5 stars.

Full review:

Meg Donohue's "All the Summer Girls" is the first book I've read from the author, and I'm surprised by how it pulled me into the narrative despite toggling between three different women's lives that converge one summer as they spend a vacation in a place that holds very dark memories for them. I say this is surprising because I'm not that much a fan of the narrative style here as it tends to meander a bit between three different POV sets that might be difficult to keep track of and tends to be lost in a sea of meditations of regret through each character. Yet, I found myself drawn to the stories of Kate, Dani, and Vanessa - 29 year olds (my present age at the time of my writing this review) who find themselves at tough spots in their lives and take one summer vacation for a "girl's trip" to reconnect. Yet each of the women have their dark secrets over a tragedy that once ripped them apart, and threatens to toggle the balance between them yet again as confessions come to the surface.

Kate's a woman who's six weeks pregnant and has just been dumped by her longtime fiance. Dani's stuck in a difficult place, being a writer who just lost her last day job in a string of one too many screw-ups. She's facing the possibility to move back home, though her father may not necessarily welcome her with open arms. Vanessa's distraught over a shared kiss her husband shared with another woman, and finds herself drawn to an old flame that she doesn't know whether she wants to pull him closer, or push away. Ultimately speaking, these women have a lot to deal with in the form of regret. But they all have some sentiments in common - finding it hard to let go of the past. With Kate, especially, it involves her dead twin Colin, who's death has left a shadow over the relationship between the three. The surprising detail in this is that they all hold a particular piece of guilt surrounding Colin's death, and it takes the ladies summer trip to make them realize how the pieces fit, and have a coming to terms after the secrets emerge and work their way in succession.

I did not expect the novel to come together so well in the end with each of the ladies's connections to the tragedy. Maybe some would find it to be too neatly tied, but the grief that Kate, Dani, and Vanessa feel is very real, and while the narrative is a bit more sluggish in pacing and presentation than I would've liked, in the end - I appreciated it for taking the time to develop the three women, and I realized the pertinence of having the perspective points showcased the way they were. In the end, I thought the novel brought the relationship of Kate, Dani, and Vanessa full circle and the resolutions were well noted for the coming to terms.

It's definitely a novel that those who like women's fiction/literary fiction would appreciate. I wouldn't call it as much a fulfilling "summer" adult story, but it's one that deals with grief and life events well for its characters, and I appreciated all it had to offer.

Overall score: 3.5/5 stars

Note: I received this as an ARC from Edelweiss, from the publisher.

Olga Godim says

I received the book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. It is a part of the TLC book tour, published on <http://www.ireadabookonce.com> on May 30, 2013.

I wasn't enamored of this book. Its plot is simple. Three twenty-nine-year-old women, best friends since kindergarten, are at the crossroads in their lives.

In Philadelphia, Kate discovers that she is pregnant. Her revelation occurs on the same day her boyfriend dumps her. Despite her successful career as a lawyer, **she wallows in gloom and loneliness**; understandably so. **She doesn't know how to go on with her life.**

In New York, Vanessa is a stay-at-home mom of her two-year-old daughter, but her husband committed indiscretion – kissed another woman. Nothing worse happened, and he apologized, but Vanessa can't forgive him. **She wallows in gloom and loneliness. She doesn't know how to go on with her life.** Should she divorce him? Should she go back to work?

In San Francisco, Dani is a drunk and a druggy. She just lost her latest job – 12th in seven years. **She wallows in gloom and loneliness**, with no money, no home, and no one to care for her. **She doesn't know how to go on with her life.**

All three decide to meet for the Fourth of July weekend in their favorite summer spot, Avalon, NJ, where they were happy as children. Perhaps the familiar and beloved beach town will rejuvenate their lives and rekindle their friendships?

Throughout the length of the novel, the friends talk a lot, dig into their souls to dredge out old lies, and contemplate their past mistakes. And that's all. Nothing else happens across 260 pages, although the author provides her readers with plenty of small, inconsequential details. Atmosphere – yes: brooding and hazy, palpable like the summer heat. Action – no. I don't consider driving a car or drinking beer an action.

There is one more prominent character in this tale – Kate's twin brother Colin. Colin has been dead for eight years. He died from OD the last summer they spent together in Avalon, and all three friends have been carrying guilt over his death ever since. Instead of the three living women, the dead Colin seems to be the protagonist of the story. Everything revolves around him. He is the only one in the novel allotted any action by the author, the only colorful personage in the entire book. He did stupid things, repeatedly and unrepentantly, until he died. Even after his death, he is affecting everyone who had ever loved him.

Kate, Vanessa and Dani are perpetually rehashing his death in their recurring mournful recollections. Their three lives seem on pause, trapped by Colin-related secrets and regrets. Because of their story-wise immobility, the friends, though alive, seem unreal and shadowy in contrast with Colin, dead but ubiquitous. Frankly, the Mobius strip of the women's mental process, repeatedly punctuating the same groove of Colin's tragic demise, made the story dead-ended and frustrating, just like Colin himself had been.

How long can one dwell on a death that happened many years ago, I wonder? In my experience, people tend to forget, even if they feel guilty. Especially if they feel guilty. Most people I know re-write history in their heads to absolve themselves of any past wrongdoings. Psychologically, we're not wired to carry guilt for long. In this respect, the novel feels ultimately untrue.

Another facet of this book that had me gnashing my teeth was grammatical: the constant juggling of tenses. The story is told in the present tense, which I dislike but wouldn't hold against the author. Unfortunately, every page or so, all the POV characters – Kate, Vanessa, and Dani – slide into retrospection, and the narrative switches to the past tense.

The tense-fluctuating technique becomes confusing fast. Eventually, the entire book feels like a memory clip. Anything of interest happened exclusively in the past. In the present, there is only a frame, a skeleton of a

story, and not very alluring at that.

Chelsea Nicole says

I have to start by saying that this book should not be titled All the Summer Girls, it is way too juvenile. I assumed it would be about a group of college girls during the summer. I really liked the characters in this book. They were all distinct with clear voices, something that is hard to find in pov books.

Kate, Vanessa and Dani, decide they should head back to the beach of Avalon after eight long years away, to face their demons. This is mostly the plot. The girls are supposedly best friends. You honestly do not get that vibe from them. I feel like they love each other because they grew up together and know they can't leave each other although they all live miles away from one another with completely separate lives.

Kate's character is pretty annoying, and you get this every time the story is told from her view point. She goes on and on and it's a bit much.

I really wanted to like Vanessa at first and I really did. She was poised and elegant. It wasn't until later when more of her character was revealed that I began to dislike her. She played with emotions for a game and was pretty snobby. I wished the author would have touched more on her features. I know she was supposed to be biracial but she was painted as a typical white girl, while Kate and Dani's characters received plenty of descriptions.

Dani was ultimately my favorite for two reasons. One, she's a writer. I can appreciate that. She also struggles to finish her first novel that she's been writing for eight years. Two, she has a real sap story. 12 jobs in 7 years? Fired from all of them? Struggling writer with no real sense of direction? Alcoholic and pill popper? I love it.

What I absolutely loathed is that all of these women were grown-ups, almost 30, yet they acted like they were 21. It annoyed me because even Kate who was supposed to be mature and Vanessa who was supposed to be well composed all acted catty and territorial like high school girls. I wished they would have actually acted like adults, then they wouldn't have all held an eight year grudge they couldn't tell their best friends about.

Jenna says

Three women come together for a July 4th vacation as they did in their youth, all in different places in their lives and all three have a bit too much drama in their individual lives (yet the only interesting parts of the book). There is so much focus on the drama in their individual lives that I am unsure why they got together because once they did the book began to bore me. The only interesting parts of the story were basically just summarized at the end or left open for interpretation. The one issue between the three of them was the death of one of the women's twin brother many years prior: they all blamed themselves. So the whole vacation is spent on their guilt and blaming each other until they think that another may have taken a handful of Oxycotin...then it's, "Oh, I don't want to lose you", etc. etc. Meh...
