



Summer Shares

Kevin Pilkington

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It was 1981 and Chris MacCauley was nursing a broken heart, a bruised ego and his own post-adolescent resistance to his rite of passage into adult maturity. This satiric novel grapples with the social and sexual issues that confront the lives of a group of young New Yorkers who share a beach house in The Hamptons from Memorial to Labor Day. It is during that summer when The Hamptons just began to grow in popularity before becoming the exclusive enclave it is today. The narrator and central character, in a voice reminiscent of the first person "J.D. Salinger narrative style," is wounded from a disastrous love affair with his ex-girlfriend, Laura. He decides that spending a summer in the Hamptons would be the best emotional therapy he could undertake. As the novel unfolds we learn about the other share members through Chris' interactions with them. We discover their restlessness and passions as they go about searching for a "significant other." All their passionate and, often times, humorous dramas are staged on the beaches, at the parties, and at the "hot spots" of the Hamptons. Through his nostalgic voice Chris' world unfolds in an entertaining series of flashbacks, complete with male vulnerabilities, insecurities and the role ego plays in moments of self-clarity: "Most men grow old but not all mature." He also offers glimpses of his life with the materialistic Laura and his inability to let go. He realizes that learning how to let go might be where the maturing process will begin for him. With wit, emotion, laughter and tears, during the course of the summer, Chris experiences a lot more than he bargained for.

Summer Shares Details

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Author : Kevin Pilkington

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From Reader Review Summer Shares for online ebook

Katrina Knittle says

Goodreads win. Will read and review once received.

This is definitely a quick read type of book for me. Throughout my time reading the book I found myself being surprised after surprise. I saw this book as it being about the main character trying to find themselves like so many of do. The book is about letting go, love and friendship. A good read. I hope to come across more from the author.

Jason says

"Summer Shares" was a quick read that continued to surprise me; at times comic and tragic. This isn't so much a book about sex, but about a man, the main protagonist, Chris McCauley, who whether he knows it or not is trying to find himself, like we all are trying to find ourselves in the world. It is a novel about friendship, love and letting go; it is a novel of endurance. What I think I liked best was the self deprecating humor of Chris. Here is a guy who seems confident about making a good first impression on two women he is meeting in a bar, but then when he looks in the mirror he sees that he is wearing a "Budweizer mustache!" After a neighbor comes for sex and Chris is exhausted, all she say is that he "Makes a good cup of coffee." All the characters for that matter were real and convincing. They were the people we meet all through our lives, some passing on the street, some for just a summer, and some remain with us forever. Pilkington's clever and insightful word play which dominates his poetry is present in his precise, well crafted prose as well. "Summer Shares" was an enjoyment from cover to cover.

Linda says

This book is about a group of New Yorkers who get together and rent a house on the beach in The Hamptons for the summer. The main character is Chris, who taught poetry at a New York college. He rented a share to get away from the pain of a breakup with his girlfriend. He found a new love interest but wasn't over his girlfriend. Other characters included a pair of misfits who found love with each other until tragedy struck, a couple who were not happy with each other but kept telling themselves and others that they were, a woman who had gone through a bitter divorce and held it against each man she met, and a single woman who was attracted to Chris but did not want to come in second.

Grady says

'I give a voice to the modern male mind.'

Though this reader first encountered Kevin Pilkington gifts when reading a terrific collection of poems called

`The Unemployed Man Who Became a Tree' and responding by saying `Reading Kevin Pilkington creates a synergy with the one turning the pages hesitantly, making us wonder if we can go to the next with him - or whether we need to just quietly re-read the little miracles he has created, page by page. His world is abnormally normal - we discover, going back to memorize lines that burned lines in our brains.' That was written in response to his poems, but reading his prose as in SUMMER SHARES produces the same emotional impact. He is a writer who not only deserves our attention, but a wordsmith who is definitely a voice of importance in American literature. And it is difficult to believe that this is his debut novel! Reading `this' Kevin Pilkington story does bring to mind some comparisons: Colm Tóibín, JD Salinger, Jamie O'Neill, John Banville, William Golding come to mind easily, so able are they to understand and communicate the chameleon aspects of boys' minds as they finally mature into men.

The story is a sort of coming of age tale except that the chief character Chris McCauley does not fall into the newly puberal state, but instead is a slightly naïve young man who wants love, sex and companionship - the order is not significant. Doing well at work his life is tainted by his extended mourning for his lost love of Laura, a girl whom he felt was his life partner - until that relationship ended. In desperate attempts to step on solid ground in a new relationship he takes part in a time-share home on the Hamptons (the time in 1981 so the Hamptons were not the gilded palaces of the wealthy at that time). At a rather at once hilarious and hurtful party he meets his fellow share holders for the summer (a strange lot of young people each with distresses at least equal to the emotional insecurity of Chris) and from there we progress out to Amagansett where the story of a summer of living together unfolds into a myriad stories. Chris' vulnerabilities are tested, challenged, reinforced at times and all of this information is presented to the reader in not only a highly successful linear fashion, but also a style of naturally flowing flashbacks to the origins of Chris' tattered road toward (but not quite complete) manhood. The phrase `Most men grow old but not all mature' is so well crafted (and used by many people in remembering this novel) that it will probably fall into that category of frequently quoted passages from memorable books.

Pilkington knows that fragile balance between comedy and drama and he is unafraid to use visceral descriptions of body functions to pepper his pages. The book is hilarious, is touching, is profound, and above all, is immensely readable. As the title of this review reads - a quote from Pilkington's blog page - `I give a voice to the modern male mind' leads us into a world of discovery, not only about Chris McCauley's epiphany, but also about our own. Highly recommended.

Grady Harp
