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One Fateful Summer: A Travel Thriller



Synopsis

When Lisa, a small business owner from Los Angeles, arrives to the Mediterranean isle of Cyprus on a summer vacation, she marvels at the welcoming beaches and warm sea, tasty local food and wine, and hospitable local people. However, she soon gets unwillingly involved in a series of dramatic and mysterious events. She notices that someone is following her, then Lisa and her friend Elena narrowly escape tragedy when a part of a building collapses on them. Lisa suspects that several brushes with death that happen to her and her friend Elena are not accidental. In fact, both of them become targets of a group of well-organized criminals based in Turkish Northern Cyprus. They use Elena's lover Nikos in this dangerous game, blackmailing him with the secrets of his past. Now Lisa and her new friend Steve from British Secret Service need to outplay the intricate plot created by criminal masterminds in order to survive. The rapidly moving action of One Fateful Summer, layered with details of local bountiful nature, culture, history, and cuisine, as well as insight in the psychological motives of its characters, takes us from Los Angeles to Mediterranean Cyprus, London, and Istanbul, from 1974 to 2009.

Book Information

File Size: 1519 KB

Print Length: 535 pages

Publisher: MBI Publishing; 2 edition (February 20, 2016)

Publication Date: February 20, 2016

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01BR0FJ2K

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #735,543 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #31

in Books > Travel > Europe > Cyprus #1580 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Political #3674 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Political

Customer Reviews

I read this book on a recommendation, but it's very much a diversion from my usual pantheon of thick Russian novels and post-post modern American lit. So, I didn't think I would enjoy this travel thriller as much as I did, or I expected it to be a guilty pleasure... Like the occasional historical smut I read. Yet, once I got past the linear straight forward prose that says what it means, as opposed to trying to trick a reader (I'm looking at you Nabokov), it was a delightful unfolding of numerous characters, their families, and their faults amidst an exotic and very historically weighted back drop. I think it's more akin to War and Peace than to your standard paperback thriller. It's smart and ambitious, with a female protagonist who learns as much about herself as she does about the world surrounding her. At times this world is daunting, with such a long string of characters and a historical event that Americans tend to know nothing about - the Turkish/Greek trouble in Cyprus. I really recommend checking out the book's website if you're struggling with the logistics of the island. It gave me a helping hand with all of those Greek names. [...] My favorite aspect of the novel though was the history. It's rich and interesting going back to the medieval and even Biblical era, before hustling into the 20th century turmoil that befell the island. In addition to being palpably tasty, it provided the crux of the story, which is that these characters, flawed though they may be, very much mean well (mostly). Had it not been for the deeply penetrating events around them, they would have led very different lives. Genre is usually code for bad writing and flat characters, but this novel challenges that idea. While it is eventful, it's going after the human condition and experience as much as the thrills. My favorite passage of the novel that shows this reads, "Lisa was thinking how human life was transient compared to eternity. She was also thinking how everything could have turned out differently had it not been for the war in 1974. How Panayotis could be happy with Miriam, and Nikos and Elena could know and love each other as brother and sister. How Grandpa Andreas would love them both, and they would help him in business. How Panayotis would make peace with his father, and his wife, Maria, would meet another man who would really love her. But none of this was fated to happen because history ruled otherwise." Check it out if you're into history, travel, or just need a break from novels about chilly St. Petersburg. It's a scrumptious treat of a book.

This book is very interesting, especially if you enjoy traveling. I really enjoyed the details about Greek cuisine and the Isle of Cyprus. I could really relate to Lisa and issue with her friend. I loved this book and highly recommend it.

I really loved this book. I loved the feeling like I was working on a tan in Cyprus right alongside Lisa for the summer. I loved the excitement and twists, turns and loop de loops of the book. Vanessa Star is an excellent plot weaver and storyteller. I could relate with the relationship Elena and Lisa had, thinking of some of my college friends and roommates. Not understanding everything about the culture was a bit rough for me sometimes -- I mean, why were they all so trusting??! I just wanted Lisa to trust her gut and premonition every time! I wanted Steve to save her. I wanted someone else to realize the red flags Lisa was seeing. This was one of those books I couldn't get enough of. Sure, some parts were long, but it's that way with any story. You need the subtext to appreciate the roller coaster moments (I'd relate it to the filler episodes of Downton Abbey building up to the big scenes). Star had obviously done enough research and travel to make you feel like a local and understand a bit of the political and historical scene. I'm recommending this book to anyone with a few days to settle into a Mediterranean vacation full of surprises and excitement. My mom would looooove it! I don't typically reread books, but this might be one I have to, just to see it in a different perspective. I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

I've recently discovered a new genre of books that I love. I'm now infatuated with travel fiction. (I actually just made the name up). I like reading books where the main characters are uprooted from their normal routine. I feel as though each time you pick up a new book, you are traveling, essentially, to another realm. It's interesting and fun when the characters get to experience that along with you. I find it very cool that Ms. Star chose Cyprus as the destination for this novel. The scenery was described beautifully and it can give the reader a vivid image that goes along with the upbeat plot. The characters are very well developed, each having his or her own story that needs to be explored and discovered. These are all amazing factors, but the one that stood out to me the most is the author's tone and style. She writes beautifully! Each sentence is delicately crafted and it was a delight to read. This book would suit those who prefer action and adventure with that hint of traveling as well. Five stars from me. I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

The detailed dialogues and intricacies of plots allow the audience to gain deep insight into the characters' minds. One of my favorite parts of the book is when Lisa visits Miriam Faisal. Their dialogue was so beautifully written, and all the more because they were strangers. Steve Berry is my favorite character because he dives right into helping Lisa and her friend, Elena, uncover a series of unfortunate and deadly events on the island of Cyprus. Lisa

thought she was going to relax on the beach and catch up with her friends while on vacation. But life had something else in store for her! Which brings me back to Steve; he is a trustworthy and protective friend. Most people would prefer to stay out of harms way, but not Steve! What intrigued me the most was that the author made me feel like I was in Cyprus with all the characters. I enjoyed the historical background about this nation that led to turmoil with a Turkish North and Greek South for many decades. Add family drama to the mix and the fire has certainly been lit. The land of Gods and Goddesses is alive and well in Larnaca! I received a free copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

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