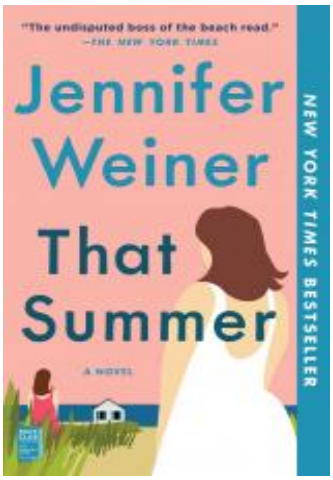
That Summer

by Jennifer Weiner



About the Book

From the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of BIG SUMMER comes another timely and deliciously twisty novel of intrigue, secrets and the transformative power of female friendship.

Daisy Shoemaker can?t sleep. With a thriving cooking business, full schedule of volunteer work, and a beautiful home in the Philadelphia suburbs, she should be content. But her teenage daughter can be a handful, her husband can be distant, her work can feel trivial, and she has lots of acquaintances, but no real friends. Still, Daisy knows she has it good. So why is she up all night?

While Daisy tries to identify the root of her dissatisfaction, she?s also receiving misdirected emails meant for a woman named Diana Starling, whose email address is just one punctuation mark away from her own. While Daisy?s driving carpools, Diana's chairing meetings. While Daisy's making dinner, Diana's making plans to reorganize corporations. Diana?s glamorous, sophisticated, single-lady life is miles away from Daisy?s simpler existence. When an apology leads to an invitation, the two women meet and become friends. But, as they get closer, we learn that their connection was not completely accidental. Who IS this other woman, and what does she want with Daisy?

From the manicured Main Line of Philadelphia to the wild landscape of the Outer Cape, written with Jennifer Weiner?s signature wit and sharp observations, THAT SUMMER is a story about surviving our pasts, confronting our futures and the sustaining bonds of friendship.

Discussion Guide

1. Daisy and Diana are originally framed as opposites --- Daisy as the timid housewife and Diana as the woman about town. However, the two end up having more in common than they ever could have imagined. Compare and contrast these characters and what they learn from each other.

2. From THAT SUMMER?s onset, Weiner draws a connection between appearance, status and perception; Diana even calls her executive get-up ?drag? (p. 96). What are some other ways that characters signal their status? Across the book, do you think clothes are used more as a form of personal expression or as performance? In particular, you might think about Beatrice?s style and how it differs from her mom?s or Diana?s.

3. Our two main characters first meet as the result of a name mix-up. What is the importance of other names in this novel? In what ways do they serve as protective shields, or possibly burdens?

4. Various characters struggle with society?s suffocatingly narrow definition of success. In high school, Beatrice observes that ?all the kids bragged about how little sleep they?d gotten and how much coffee they?d consumed? (p. 44). Daisy creates her own dichotomy of better/worse life outcomes (?Instead of a college graduate, she?d become a mom? [p. 32]). Does this novel argue that success should be equated with happiness? Which character is ultimately presented as the most ?successful??

5. Diana still thinks about what her life would have been like if she?d never been raped; ?sometimes, the sorrow of the road not taken would overwhelm her? (p. 240). How are other characters haunted by the past, and how do they struggle to retain control of their lives and decisions? Does the novel ultimately offer hope for how to move forward?

6. How is social class portrayed in this novel? What is the effect of having characters in relationships with people of different backgrounds? What is meant to be our takeaway about the concept of an ?institution??

7. Age is a major theme in THAT SUMMER: Diana was robbed of her youthful innocence, while Daisy was slotted into a maternal role usually inhabited by older women. Hal?s horrific actions are mostly dismissed under the guise of his ?manly needs? (p. 28), and Beatrice?s actions are rejected due to teen stereotypes (??Teenage girls. They get emotional. As I?m sure you know?? [p. 41]). How do gender and age intersect here? What is Beatrice?s role in the novel, given that she is almost the same age that Diana was when she was raped?

8. Why do you think the author chose to set the novel on Cape Cod? What are some other important locations that inform or reflect these characters? Consider their homes, as well. How does Weiner evoke the power of both nostalgia and trauma in her descriptions? Is there a home you would want to live in?

9. Diana has had decades to imagine what she will do upon seeing her attacker. After she meets Brad she concludes, ??I think that this is what I needed. Just to see him, and have him see me?? (p. 301). What exactly does this mean? Did your feelings about Diana?s quest change after Brad?s death?

10. Diana describes a ?world where being born female meant spending years of your life at risk, and the rest of it invisible, existing as prey or barely existing at all? (p. 375). Do you think that Beatrice?s short-lived flirtation with Cade is proof that this principle still holds true, or is this a more generational concept? How do the women in the novel defy this idea? How does Michael fit into this viewpoint?

11. What is the effect of the novel?s different points of view? What do we learn about Beatrice and Daisy in being able to see the two from each other?s perspectives? How about Daisy and Diana? What did you think about Hal?s final section, and did it change your opinion of him?

12. THAT SUMMER asks complex questions about who needs to be held responsible for assaults, and what it means to be a bystander. According to the book, what actions are considered irredeemable, and how has the Internet affected the answer to this question? Do you agree with Katrina, Teddy?s high school girlfriend, when she says, ??I guess anyone?s capable of anything, right??? (p. 289) How does this idea play into your idea of how severely actions should be punished, or whether they should be forgiven? Does the novel offer a definitive conclusion about who should be punished? How do the characters of Brad, Danny and Daisy further complicate this question?

Author Bio

Jennifer Weiner is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling author whose books have spent over five years on the *New York Times* bestseller list, with more than 11 million copies in print in 36 countries.

She is the author of the novels GOOD IN BED (2001); IN HER SHOES (2002), which was turned into a major motion picture starring Cameron Diaz, Toni Collette and Shirley MacLaine; LITTLE EARTHQUAKES (2004); GOODNIGHT NOBODY (2005); the short story collection THE GUY NOT TAKEN (2006); CERTAIN GIRLS (2008); BEST FRIENDS FOREVER (2009); FLY AWAY HOME (2010); THEN CAME YOU (2011); THE NEXT BEST THING (2012); ALL FALL DOWN (2014); WHO DO YOU LOVE (2015); MRS. EVERYTHING (2019); BIG SUMMER (2020); THAT SUMMER (2021); THE SUMMER PLACE (2022); GOLDEN HILLS (2023); THE BREAKAWAY (2024); and THE GRIFFIN SISTERS' GREATEST HITS (2025).

She is also the author of *The Littlest Bigfoot* middle-grade trilogy: THE LITTLEST BIGFOOT (2016) LITTLE BIGFOOT, BIG CITY (2017), and THE BIGFOOT QUEEN (2023).

Her nonfiction collection, HUNGRY HEART: Adventures in Life, Love, and Writing (2016), was a finalist for the PEN/Diamonstein -Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay.

That Summer
by Jennifer Weiner

Publication Date: April 5, 2022
Genres: Fiction, Women's Fiction
Paperback: 448 pages
Publisher: Washington Square Press
ISBN-10: 1501133551
ISBN-13: 9781501133558