

## Lovereadings Reader reviews of The Summer Guest by Emma Hannigan

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereadings members.

### Emily Wright

*'The Summer Guest' is a heartwarming tale of friendship and motherhood. Emma Hannigan combines poignancy with gentle humour; she deals with the sadness and difficulties inherent in life using an insightful light touch and a warm heart.*

*The novel is set in Caracove Bay, an idyllic Irish town. The reader meets Lexie, soon to be forty, and her teenage niece Amelie during a summer of turbulent emotions. Meanwhile, Kathleen makes the trip back from America to her childhood home in Caracove Bay with sadness in her heart, wishing for rainbows. These three women each turn to Lexie's abode, 3 Cashel Square, as a place of solace and sanctuary and in doing so offer each other the precious gift of friendship during a very memorable summer. Lexie, Amelie and Kathleen are three strong Irish women who throughout the novel I came to care about; I was invested in the outcomes for our protagonists and because I felt involved in their lives the ending made me shed a tear. The supporting characters in the book are a delight to meet. I feel that a particular mention should go to Lexie's best friend Maia, and feel that Maia's experience of motherhood was portrayed by the author both sensitively and believably.*

*'The Summer Guest' is a feel - good novel that made me smile and cry; the author's style makes it feel as if you are sitting down with friends each time you pick the book up.*



### **Claire Nethercoat**

*I have enjoyed this book and it's characters, I find it hard to put down as at the end of every chapter something else will happen that you have to carry on reading. **This is a very emotive book and at times leaves you with a lump at the back of your throat, this only endears you to the characters and story more.***

*I would recommend this book to friends as a great holiday sun-lounger read.*

### **Joan Sidwell**

*'The Summer Guest' focuses predominantly on the lives of three women during an idyllic summer in the small Irish seaside town of Caracove Bay, just outside Dublin: Lexie, who runs an art gallery, her teenage niece, Amelie and Kathleen, the 'summer guest', visiting Caracove, where she was born, from her home in America.*

*This is a very light, easy reading book, it doesn't have an intricate plot but tells the story well. The relationships between the three main characters develop nicely over the pages although initially I found Amelie's diaries a little out of line with the rest of the book. 'The Summer Guest' is extremely descriptive and a very good travelogue for the coastal area outside Dublin, it conjures up warm summer days and does make you want to visit the area and experience the pretty town, the beautiful homes and the friendly people.*

*However everything is not sweetness and light all the way through as Lexie, Kathleen and Amelie battle with their secrets and demons. All three women have obstacles to overcome during this time but their growing and changing relationships over the summer helps each of them resolve their problems, although the outcome for each is not always as might be expected or predicted.*

***With less grit and realism than other comparable writers, Maeve Binchy in particular, this is nevertheless an extremely pleasant and enjoyable book.***

### **Ruth Paterson**

***'The Summer Guest' is an addictive read. This novel is very uplifting. Reading it brought both tears of joy and laughter.***

*The story revolves around a young Irish woman called Lexie, her friends, family*

*and her unexpected guest. Lexie is about to turn 40 (a similar age to myself) and finds herself at a crossroads in life with big changes on the horizon and decisions to be made that will effect everyone around her. Although Lexie's lifestyle is very different to mine, I could relate to her on many levels. The unexpected summer guest of the title is an elderly lady from the States who has returned to Ireland to revisit her childhood haunts. She touches the lives of all who meet her, including that of the reader in my case! All the characters are well described and despite any of their more negative characteristics were endearing, the kind of people I would love to meet. This novel is very uplifting. Reading it brought both tears of joy and laughter. I thoroughly recommend 'The Summer Guest'.*

**Rebecca Jayne** - [www.prettylittlememoirs.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.prettylittlememoirs.blogspot.co.uk)

Twitter @ LittleMemoirs

*'The Summer Guest' was a delightful and fresh idea influenced by friendship – that of three people in Caracove Bay, in Ireland. Their friendship is a very unusual one that sparks one day in the lovely little town. With Lexi, her marriage has turned from blissful to a nightmare almost overnight. For Kathleen, it's grief and returning to Caracove Bay to the house she used to live in, even if it's a plan she made with her late husband. But for Amélie, it's being a teenager that's got her life in a mess. If it's not a boy, it's her Parents fighting and questioning her at every chance they get. Lexi, Kathleen and Amélie grow a unique and amazing friendship, despite their ages, lives and problems. Having each other there to lean on when they need each other benefits each of them, even if it's just talking and laughing with each other at the end of the day.*

*Overall, 'The Summer Guest' is **perfect for adult fiction lovers this summer. It's the perfect book to read on the beach or on holiday. A must read.***

**Sophie Hedley** - <http://www.reviewedthebook.co.uk>

Twitter: @ReviewedTheBook

***'The Summer Guest' is a gorgeous, heart-warming read which brings easy to relate to characters and teaches us the beautiful value of friendship. Emma Hannigan's writing is a joy to read.***

*'The Summer Guest' has a stunning cover and the writing is just as beautiful and warm to match. Although 'The Summer Guest' touched on some serious*

issues, this was on the whole, a light easy read. So maybe not the perfect choice if you're after drama but for a gorgeous, feel good read which gently covers the realities of growing up, I couldn't think of a much better choice.

It was the people in this book that made it for me. I loved how everyone we met was kind and friendly – from the main characters to simply the taxi drivers. It really gave this book a positive, uplifting vibe which was a joy to read.

Kathleen was probably my favourite character and I loved her spirit and how she always had a great lease of life, despite some upsetting stages in her life. She teaches you to value and appreciate everybody in your life without being pushy and forcing her views onto others. Amelie was another character I loved – her relationship with Lexie and seeing her character develop were two highlights of this book for me.

Friendship was the biggest theme in 'The Summer Guest' and I thought this was written in a stunning fashion. I loved seeing Kathleen and how she could befriend anyone! Watching the friendships grow made for a beautiful story and the direction Emma takes this novel in is faultless.

### **Claire Simms**

***A lovely light read about making a new friend when you're least expecting too.***

A story about Lexi and her husband Sam with her mum pressurizing her that she's getting too old to have kids but that's something the couple had agreed they didn't want until the pressure gets to Sam and he has a change of mind but will he be able to change Lexis' mind. In the meantime they have a visitor. Kathleen visiting from America who'd like to look round their house as she was born there and they strike up a close relationship that is tinged with sadness. An excellent read.

### **Lucy Hall**

***'The Summer Guest' takes you on a wonderful journey with Lexi, Kathleen and Amelie who are all at different crossroads in their lives.***

*'The Summer Guest' is an excellent book, Emma Hannigan positions the characters in such a way that you can't help but identify with each of them.*

*This is a lovely read which also touches on some deeper subjects, regardless of*

*the characters age they all had their own individual struggles and the support offered between them is heart warming.*

*Would I recommend this book... 100% - 5 stars from me.*

### **Julie Wragg**

***A warm and gentle read about friendships, new and old, that touch our lives.***

*It appears that Lexi Collins and her husband Sam have the perfect lifestyle in Caracove Bay. They have a thriving art business, a busy social life and a beautiful house on Cashel Square. Their peace is disturbed by the increasing demand to have a baby from Lexi's mother which stirs up unsettling memories of the past and creates friction and misunderstandings between the whole family.*

*Kathleen Williams suddenly appears on Lexi's doorstep; visiting from America and keen to see the childhood home she left more than sixty years ago. Lexi and Sam invite Kathleen to move into their basement flat to stay for the summer so she can revisit old friends and take on the challenges set by her beloved husband. To add to the mix, wilful teenage niece Amelie, frustrated by the restrictions set by her parents and hoping her "mint-bomb" aunt will be much more understanding, decides to move into Cashel Square. The three generations of women become close sharing their lives and secrets.*

*A gentle read about the importance of friendships, love and the power of rainbows. At times it seems a little simplistic and although some more difficult issues are broached they are all neatly tied up by the end. Billed as perfect for fans of Maeve Binchy, it certainly echoes her Irish family sagas and is an enjoyable summer read.*

### **Nikki Clark**

***A delightful Summer read, full of Irish charm and warmth.***

*I really enjoyed this story of old and new friendships, the passing on of pearls of wisdom and guidance when it mattered and the support and comfort provided regardless of who had the most life experiences to draw on. I loved the way the author touches on the sadness and loneliness felt by each of the main characters without allowing the story to become maudlin; there is in contrast a vast amount of happiness and tongue in cheek amusing incidents too.*

*The story is uplifting and has a proper ending which I like but I will say I did have to park my cynicism whilst reading in terms of the likelihood of inviting a complete stranger to stay with me for the summer, no matter that they used to live in my house plus the speed with which a frustrated teenager overcomes issues is not something I have the same experience of! That said, this is a lovely Summer read full of warmth and simple pleasures.*

**Cleo Bannister** - <http://cleopatra loves books.wordpress.com>

***I defy anyone who reads this book not to warm to the characters within the pages.***

*This is a book to read for the pure pleasure of meeting some lovely people, to worry with them as they try to sort out everyday problems. A book where even when things are difficult there is hope that on the next page all will be resolved.*

*The characters include Kathleen Williams who is returning to Ireland for a three month stay. Her first visit since she left as an eight year old girl. Instantly she meets the friendly people and sets about tracking down the house she lived in as a child. Number 3, Cashel Square is owned by Lexie and her husband Sam who welcome their guest with open arms. During her stay she gets to know the couple's family and friends including Lexie's niece Amélie who is supposed to be studying but is keener on her boyfriend. The chapters are interspersed with excerpts from Amélie's diary making this a truly multi-generational novel.*

*Perfect for a summer read which is billed for lovers of Maeve Binchy which I endorse. This isn't a book which is all lightness and fluff, there are some serious issues explored but overall I closed the book with an overriding feeling of hope.*

**Mollie Mayson-Simpson**

*The three main characters in this skilfully woven tale are Lexie, her niece Amelie, and Kathleen, an American visitor who lived, as a child, in the house now occupied by Lexie and her husband Sam. Home is a small Irish seaside town, Caracove Bay, where Lexie owns and runs a successful art gallery. Lexie and Amelie are close, and each is caught up in a troubled relationship with parents. Then, one early summer's day, Kathleen knocks on Lexie's door, and the drama begins to unfold, binding the three women into close friendship and interdependence.*

*This is a perfect 'summer read' - a nice chunky size, short chapters and*

*spaciously printed - perfect for journey, beach or pool-side. It is also a serious read, with characters who leap off the page as real and believable. I found myself totally absorbed in their situations, and caring about the outcome for each, although I confess to occasionally finding Kathleen a bit 'too good to be true', and sometimes being a little out of patience with Amelie's teenage tantrums.*

*But the pages were quickly turned, and the reading completed in five or six large chunks within a week - that is quite fast going for me. **I recommend this novel highly both as a personal read, and also as suitable for a book-group, as there is plenty of opportunity for discussion about the challenges faced by characters, and how these were managed.***

### **Rachel Hall**

*This is a gentle, heart warming novel which tells the story of three generations of women, all at very different stages in their lives coming together for one special summer in an beautiful Irish seaside town and the unexpected friendship they all find. Centred around one house in Caracove Bay this is the perfect setup for a wonderfully pleasant, feel good light summer read, perfect for passing a pleasant few days in the sun.*

*On the positive side, the author provides wonderful descriptions of the surroundings and family life which you can fully immerse yourself in and imagine, perhaps not with quite the magical charm of Maeve Binchy but certainly not far short. Each character was fully developed and contributed to the storyline. The novel was certainly what I would consider a "female read", but far superior to your average chick-lit books which are solely focused on capturing a man and therefore, probably aimed at a more mature audience. Towards the end of the novel there seemed to be more emphasis on the two older women and perhaps the story of Amelie fell by the wayside a little which was disappointing somewhat. My main criticism of the novel would be that I didn't find it a gripping read and I felt I was constantly waiting for that one momentous thing to happen which would have hooked me. Sadly it never did and despite being a solid story it did seem to drag towards the end.*

***This is a real escapist read** - yes, perhaps all of the characters are just a little too welcoming and good hearted but surely that is the purpose of books - **suspend reality and let yourself be taken to another place!** And yes, I do want to live in Caracove Bay after reading! I liked the writing style of Emma Hannigan, the modern references and humorous sparkle and would*

certainly read more of her stories in the future.

### **Christine Waddington**

*'The Summer Guest' tells the story of one summer in the Irish coastal resort of Caracove Bay and the life-changing events for three women - Kathleen, Lexie and Amelie - centred around the house in Cashel Square which is a special place for all of them.*

***This book is a perfect holiday read and a real page-turner.*** It includes a cast of characters with whom you will quickly empathise. Emma Hannigan skilfully portrays the feelings of women of different ages and generations with real understanding. The narrative grips you right to the last page and there are a quite a few surprises along the way which keep the plot moving along well.

***Make sure you pack this book in your case along with the sun-cream – it's a feel-good and uplifting read.***

### **Lyn Barrett**

*On the surface, Emma Hannigan has written a summer holiday read but as you become more engrossed you hear the voices of the three main characters, all women but of different generations, articulate their fears. There are some very serious issues explored in this story, and dealt with very compassionately. Whatever their personal troubles, these women learn from each other and the reader watches on as each character awakens to the realisation of her own self-worth.*

***I found this to be a very enjoyable and thought-provoking read, hard to put down and certainly to be recommended.***

**Cheryl Kinney** – Twitter @cheryl\_bookworm

### ***Emotional, gripping book.***

*I have never read any of Emma Hannigan's books before I will definitely be checking out more of her books after reading 'The Summer Guest'.*

*'The Summer Guest' is an emotional story based on Kathleen and her visit back to Ireland, where she meets the rest of the characters in the book. The main characters Lexi and Sam take Kathleen into their lives and there are some low points during this stay, which will have you reaching for the tissues! There are*



*also high points, it is an emotional roller coaster of a book. I wanted to keep reading late into the night to find out what would happen next.*

*The subject of children and whether or not a couple want them is a delicate and thought provoking issue, this is well written and the characters handle this well and the journey they undertake to get to their final decision is really well written.*

***I really enjoyed this book and was sad to leave the characters behind.*** *Would recommend this book to all fans of womens fiction.*

*Thank you for letting me read and review this great book.*

### **Lynda DeFreitas**

***Emma Hannigan takes on the mantle left by Maeve Binchy.***

*The Summer guest of the title is a woman revisiting her childhood home near Dublin after living in America for more than sixty-five years. There is a poignant reason for the visit and Kathleen is keen to carry out various tasks whilst she's in Ireland.*

*The central characters, Lexie and her husband Sam seem to have a strong and secure marriage but as different situations arise, problems surface and have to be addressed.*

*The relationships between all the characters and the central issue of parenthood were thought provoking.*

*This book is a very good read and moves along at a pace that had me turning pages to find out what happened next, but at the same time it is a story of people in ordinary situations that made me think quite deeply. **I enjoyed this book and would happily read more by the same author.***

### **Janet Gilliard**

***I really enjoyed this novel and would highly recommend it. It is a lovely light Summer read , ideal to take on holiday.*** *Set in Ireland it is the story of three generations of women in a seaside town. The characters are well drawn and having three generations of women makes the story more appealing. As a 57 year old I don't always want to read about twenty-somethings. I read it almost in one sitting and will be reading more by Emma Hannigan.*

### **Joanne Nuttie**

*A truly delightful book...*

*This is my first book by this author and I was so pleased to see it was an Irish author and her book was based in Ireland... I always enjoy the above and read many books of the same genre.*

***This book was read over two days and at times I couldn't put it down! It was light and refreshing and made me smile and feel uplifted.***

*I loved the characters every one of them and I was fully immersed in their lives from the first page... Emma has a great way with her words and her descriptions were very accurate.. Not just of the characters, but the sights and sounds surrounding them..*

*The book had a touch of sadness at the end which I wasn't expecting.. The sadness soon turned into a touch of happiness, what a great way to end a really delightful book.*

*I will be reading more Emma Hannigan books very soon.*

### **Tracey Copeland**

*Emma Hannigan, The Summer Guest. **I read this over a few nights, an easy read with lovely, believable characters.** Not read any books by this author previously. The story made you realise that great, lasting friendships can be formed by chance meetings, and often these far out weigh the help, support and happiness you receive from blood relations. **I would happily read more by this author.***

### **Maz Tucker**

***I was really looking forward to this book as I enjoyed 'Driving Home for Christmas' so much. I was not disappointed; this is Emma at her best.***

*The pictures she creates in your mind of all the characters are people you feel you know by the end of the book. Set in a really great part of Ireland, which I now long to visit.*

*The story drags you in and you start to feel part of it.*

*This is a brilliant tale of people's lives and the ups and downs that we all*

*experience. I sure every one of us can relate to one or more of the characters.*

*If you want a really good book that unless you made of stone, will make you weep, then this is it.*

*An excellent book, can't wait for the next Emma Hannigan book.*

**Sharon Goodwin** - <http://jerasjamboree.com/>

***Emma Hannigan shows us that facing fears and the sadness that may bring can also be uplifting and empowering. An inspiring read.***

*Lexie's relationship with her mother Penelope is strained but with her approaching 40th birthday, it reaches a crisis that she doesn't manage very well and with best friend Maia pregnant, Sam moving the goal posts and niece Amelie relying on her to rescue her, Lexie's perfect life is falling into chaos.*

*Kathleen is a point of stability and balance, sharing her wisdom and enlisting her in the things she promised Jackson she would do while visiting her childhood home at No. 3 Cashel Square.*

*I found 'The Summer Guest' a gently paced and inspiring read.*

*With a third person narrative, I found it easy to get into our character's minds and emotions. I identified with the three generations – where they were in their lives and the life choices they were making. My favourite however, has to be Kathleen. I admired her strength and her positive outlook. The rainbows were just awesome!*

*Caracove Bay and its inhabitants became a part of my life. I was there, dealing with Lexie's customers in the art gallery, meeting Sam in the fish restaurant on the promenade and just as excited as Lexie at the change to the spare room! My favourite scene though is with Kathleen and Lexie picnicking in the undergrowth ... the contrast between the lashing rain and the seclusion seemed quite magical.*

*Emma Hannigan shows us that facing fears and the sadness that may bring can also be uplifting and empowering. No matter the changes that happen to our 'life plan' we are adaptable and with friends by our side, nothing is insurmountable.*

**Alison Bisping**

*What a lovely 'feel good' book. Very easy to read (over a weekend) - ideal for*

holiday reading.

The story is set in Ireland - Kathleen was born in Ireland but moved to the USA when aged eight. She had always had a hankering to visit her roots and finally got the opportunity to do so.

'The Summer Guest' is the story of Kathleen's visit as you would guess from the title. It shows the friendship and warmth that can develop quickly between people. You have the family at odds with each other, the teenage girl struggling to make sense of life and Emma Hannigan links it all together so beautifully. Of course, Kathleen is the outsider and at the age of 74, sees everything with the experience of her life and the wisdom she has developed with it.

**The characters and the situations are all so believable and although predictable at times, it is not the case the whole way through!**

Enjoy the read - I certainly did.

### **Catherine Dugmore**

**A beautifully written Irish saga. Wonderful, likeable characters. Unexpected friendships, secrets, happiness and sadness. Experience a roller coaster of emotions with this read.**

As a fan of crime, it is nice to read a totally different style of book. The story is based around Kathleen, who lives in America, but comes back to the town she was born in Ireland. She wished to revisit the house in Cashel Square where she was born - where Lexie and her husband Sam now live. From the moment you start to read you are drawn into Cashel Square and want to be there with all the lovely people you encounter on the way. There are many, many twists and turns along the way involving family and close friends all of which outcomes have surprised me. You have a roller coaster of emotions on the journey through the book, some sad, some happy, some unexpected. I ended up feeling like I knew everyone personally and wanted to be a little part of their lives (even as a visitor to Lexie's gallery).

Absolutely beautifully written, a wonderful, wonderful read.

Moved me so much I had to email the author, and have since read all her other books.