



## The Summer House Party

*Caro Fraser*

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## **The Summer House Party** Caro Fraser

In the gloriously hot summer of 1936, a group of people meet at a country house party. Within three years, England will be at war, but for now, time stands still.

Dan Ranscombe is clever and good-looking, but he resents the wealth and easy savoir faire of fellow guest, Paul Latimer. Surely a shrewd girl like Meg Slater would see through that, wouldn't she? And what about Diana, Paul's beautiful sister, Charles Asher, the Jewish outsider, Madeleine, restless and dissatisfied with her role as children's nanny? And artist Henry Haddon, their host, no longer young, but secure in his power as a practised seducer.

As these guests gather, none has any inkling the choices they make will have fateful consequences, lasting through the war and beyond. Or that the first unforeseen event will be a shocking death.

## **The Summer House Party Details**

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Author : Caro Fraser

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## **From Reader Review The Summer House Party for online ebook**

### **Sarah says**

Overall I enjoyed the book and it was interesting to hear about how the war affected those left at home and the changes and sacrifices the middle and upper classes had to make, but I felt that there were many plot lines laid down that didn't bear fruition. I was constantly trying to work out twists and turns that simply never materialised. I would sum it up as a gentle very steady read but with no punch.

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### **Terry says**

I found this novel a bit disappointing overall. At the beginning, a young, under-loved child witnesses her father in a disturbing situation with her very young nanny. As a reader, I was lead to believe that the child and the nanny would be significant characters in this story, but the author chose to let both characters fade into oblivion which I found very unsatisfying. After having finished the novel, it is my opinion that the nanny and the underloved child were both superfluous to the story, but those stories, if developed, could have added so much more intrigue and depth to the story. The novel ended up being about a young woman and a young man who met before WWII at a mutual relation's house one summer and had a connection, but who didn't act on it. The young woman ends up marrying the man she's known since childhood, but for both of them, it's because they love each other, not because they're "in love" with each other. After that fact is established, the rest of the novel becomes something of a Harlequin romance novel and ended very unsatisfying as well.

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### **Shirley Revill says**

Audiobook version that was brilliantly written and I really enjoyed.  
Very well written and well worth a read. Storytelling at it's best.

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### **Andrea says**

Magnificent!

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### **Donna says**

#### **Brilliant!**

I so enjoyed this book. Not being familiar with the author, I wasn't sure what to expect. Well, sometimes, in choosing a book and an author you're not familiar with, brings an unexpected surprise. Caro Fraser writes beautifully, bringing the story, the setting, all the characters wonderfully to life. I definitely recommend this book and look forward to reading more of her work.

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## Love says

### The Summer House Party

In 1936 a group of young people gather for a frightfully delightful garden house party. From there we follow them as they grow and start to face the reactions of their choices and watch as they try to cope with the whole world changing around them.

I adored this book and the characters that I got to meet. Meg is so likeable and you do feel great empathy towards her throughout the book. She was my absolute favourite and I was at odds with her choices. There really wasn't a character that I didn't like. They were all completely valid in the roles they played. I enjoyed how they were all connected in some way. Very much like one domino falling down it has a reaction to the rest.

The book is a hefty 500 pages but it flows beautifully and to be honest, I read slower towards the end because frankly, I didn't want my time in this wonderful adventure to end. Yes, it really is that good.

If you are like me and you enjoy a good Sunday night four-part drama on the box. Then you will love to meet these flawed, engaging, dangerous and lovable lot. I recently visited London and it features a lot in the book and it was super to be able to imagine myself in certain places as I ghosted the characters as the story progressed.

I feel Fraser captures the war years absolutely perfectly. I really had not thought much about how social classes would, in the end, have to mix and work together to survive.

The book is colourful in lots of ways it heightened many of my senses as I read. I have great visuals of the grand houses with beautifully kept gardens and the vast alternative being the dark and smelly air raid shelters in the heart of London. Of course, you have this amazing cast of characters who are all fragile and flawed in their own ways too. So the book just keeps on giving. The plot for me was not predictable, I didn't quite know where it was going to go at times. Which made it even better.

I am overjoyed that there is indeed a sequel. Even now as I write my review I miss the characters dreadfully and I know that's silly but I do. I am not getting a holiday this year, but it's okay because I feel I have been on quite the adventure. Book two will be like a catch up with old friends. I am like a child before Christmas day, just bursting at the seams with happiness.

Jump into The Summer House Party you will leave full, happy and content that you just had the most amazing unforgettable time.

Read more here [www.lovebooksgroup.com](http://www.lovebooksgroup.com)

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## Anna says

This has an average rating of over 4 stars.

Huh???

It's a one-dimensional yawnathon. DNF at 20%.

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### **Jim Mullin says**

I enjoyed reading this book set in the early WW2 period in England. The characters and plot center on the upper class who at times exhibit no class.

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### **sue says**

You get real good value for money with this book, its a heaping 512 pages thick full of goodness, drama, intrigue and mystery.

I was very lucky to receive a proof copy from Head of Zeus which I will forever treasure.

Its the summer of 1936 and a group of people meet up at the Summer House. Its 'party' time. Champagne is flowing nicely, chit chatter being had and flowing nicely and what would a party be without a little bit of flirting. Dan had a 'thing' for Meg and she was in his thoughts as he was getting ready for the summer party.

A fight breaks out on the lawn between Latimer and Asher. Dan ran down the stairs needing to separate the pair of them. It turns out the fight was over a game of cards.

A few rows, bickerings follow including some loving behind closed doors.

A death suddenly occurs that put a stop to all the high adventure and revelry which now suddenly alters the entire meet up at the Summer House party.

Its a fabulously written book which will have you turning page after page. The conversations that go on and the intrigue of 'oh what is going to happen next' is well on the agenda as you flip the pages.

Within 3 years war will break out.

For anyone who loves to read books such as this, its a "must" read.

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### **Shoshi says**

At first I thought it to be worth reading. About a British upper-middleclass family and their friends. Meg marries Paul. She thought it would give her a nice, wealthy life, a husband, who always does the proper thing. But her heart and passion is with Dan, a childhood friend, who showed up at the summer party. Then the war comes with its challenges to survive.

From there on it gets slow and sticky. The affair plus her determination, to keep her family intact, takes its toll on Meg. Sudden Paul is "a good man". Got tired of all the praises. There are also some open issues not

finished. Sonias dead husband fling with the Nanny leaves a child behind, she is racing . An open secret. But hushed down.

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### Siv30 says

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## **Thebooktrail says**

I read this in order to clasp on to the last remaining days of summer. Well, there was certainly enough heat in the first section of the book. I can't imagine or even remember the guests of Downton Abbey being this much on heat. Knocks on doors in the middle of the night, stolen kisses on the Chaise Longue and that's nothing compared to what happens in the little wooden artists haven at the bottom of the garden.

There's a summer party going on and many guests with their fair share of secrets. They look down upon those with less money than them and celebrate their cleverness by games on the lawn, lazy summer days and whispered conversations in the library. War is coming, some of the men go off to foreign climes but will they live to tell the tale?

The lies which are told during this summer however have consequences that last for years. That's where the novel fell short for me as not all of the consequences were explained or even tied up in any way by the end. I'm not talking minor ones either, but one which is mentioned heavily at the start of the novel and indeed forms a large part of the lies of the day. I was waiting for an appearance of one character in particular, a mention, even a death....but nothing. Is there a sequel to this book I wonder? Still strange for a character to disappear like that. Then there's the little girl Avril, so traumatised at the house party, who also seems to disappear later on in the book. Was there a murder Agatha Christie style that was so perfect not even the characters have worked it out yet?

The setting of Woodbourne House however is magnificent and nicely done with its evocative description and jaunts to London for tea and cake at Fortnum. Oh this is the life! Well, apart from the infidelity, suspicions of homosexuality, the seemingly revolving doors on some of the bedrooms of this grand manor house, war, tales of survival and traumatised children.

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## **Deb says**

I received this book through Netgalley. This book is much more than the title or cover discloses; it is much more than a one-week summer party. The setting initially is in England prior to WWII but progresses through the war. It begins very lighthearted and is a pleasant read.

The introductions to characters are primarily made in the first chapter. As the story progresses, the complexity of the characters and relationships becomes evident. The story includes war, survival, infidelity, homosexuality, and relationships. The book does a fairly good job developing characters. With that said, some characters, such as Avril, could have been developed more. I wonder what happens to this character; she is left somewhat hanging.

I enjoyed the perspective of life in and near London prior to and during the war. It portrays some of the hardships for, primarily, women (since the men were at war) due to rationing which is overcome with gardening. Yet, at times it is somewhat predictable but overall entertaining.

The book is enjoyable and I recommend it as a good summer read.

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### **Jill Meyer says**

British author Caro Fraser's novel, "The Summer House Party" is set in the years 1936 to 1945, and looks at a bit of British society that is often the subjects of novels. The upper class - non-titled but still wealthy - who have country homes in addition to London apartments, and lived fairly easy lives with plenty of servants. The book begins during the summer of 1936 - that year of the three kings - and is the story of the Latimer and Haddon and Slater families. There is love and sex that first summer; lies told about both and the repercussions go on for years. Fraser does an excellent job of telling a story about 12 or so people and how they are affected by the coming war and the war itself. She writes without caricatures of her people and wartime events. If you're looking for just a great story, well-told, try Caro Fraser's "The Summer House Party".

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### **Roman Clodia says**

DNF/Skimmed to the end

I've dipped into Fraser's books set within a set of law chambers, but this family saga/romance is very different and seems to be aimed at Downton Abbey fans. Opening in 1936, it follows a group of friends and relations through love and lust affairs, marriage, separation, heartbreak and war. It doesn't add anything fresh to the genre and is a gentle rather than a gripping read.

The writing can be cliché-ridden: 'she felt the familiar fire glowing in her loins'; 'their love was like a plant which had struggled to survive in the harshest circumstances', and there's little character in the er, characters, the writing or the plotting. Bored, I skipped through the sections but sadly found all the predicted, well-worn attitudes and set pieces: the loveless marriage, the illegitimate child, the passionate love-you-forever affair.

Not for me, I'm afraid.

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