



## The Book of Summer

*Michelle Gable*

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## **The Book of Summer** Michelle Gable

The ocean, the wild roses on the dunes and the stunning Cliff House, perched atop a bluff in Sconset, Nantucket. Inside the faded pages of the Cliff House guest book live the spellbinding stories of its female inhabitants: from Ruby, a bright-eyed newlywed on the eve of World War II to her granddaughter Bess, who returns to the beautiful summer estate.

For the first time in four years, physician Bess Codman visits the compound her great-grandparents built almost a century before, but due to erosion, the once-grand home will soon fall into the sea. Bess must now put aside her complicated memories in order to pack up the house and deal with her mother, a notorious town rabble-rouser, who refuses to leave. It's not just memories of her family home Bess must face though, but also an old love that might hold new possibilities.

In the midst of packing Bess rediscovers the forgotten family guest book. Bess's grandmother and primary keeper of the book, Ruby, always said Cliff House was a house of women, and by the very last day of the very last summer at Cliff House, Bess will understand the truth of her grandmother's words in ways she never imagined.

## **The Book of Summer Details**

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Author : Michelle Gable

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## From Reader Review The Book of Summer for online ebook

### Cindy says

Thank you goodreads for this win. Always exciting to get a book in the mail and hopefully give a positive review. I really wanted to like and finish this book and I tried up to page 90. For me the story started out slow and I quickly became tired of the bantering between Cissy and Bess. I kind of found Cissy annoying and unreasonable. I really cared about the house as I love old houses but I just didn't fall in love with any of the characters. Don't let this review dissuade others from reading and enjoying. Just not a book for me. I will pass this book on to others to enjoy and appreciate.

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### Sue says

I loved this book. All of the main characters were fantastic and so well written with all of their character flaws on display. The main characters are Bess - a physician from California who has returned to Nantucket to help her mom pack up her house; Cissy - Bess's mom who is a real rebel; Ruby - Bess's grandmother who is long deceased but tells much of the story and The Cliff House - the magnificent house, build by Bess's parents that is now close to falling into the sea due to erosion of the cliffs. The story is told in alternating time periods - Cissy and Bess in modern day and Bess's narrative takes place in the 40s. It's a story of love and loss, family and forgiveness. But overall it's the story of a house and the women who lived in it and tried to live their lives as well as they could despite issues that were going on in the world outside their door. I have read all of Michelle's books and they are all fantastic.

Thanks to NetGalley for a copy of this book. All opinions are my own.

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### Susan says

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Received from Netgalley

Bess Codman has just returned to her family's home in Nantucket. She is shocked by the condition of Cliff House. It is just about to fall into the ocean and she can't believe her mother is actually staying inside of it. She tries to convince her mother, Cissy to leave, but she is having none of it. She wants to move the house back from the water, but it is huge and Bess just doesn't see this happening. THE BOOK OF SUMMER is all about these two women and Bess' grandma, Ruby who was living in the house back in the 1940's.

The dialogue between Cissy and Bess had me cracking up and crying, sometimes at the same time. Obviously, the house means everything to Cissy and she isn't going down without a fight. Bess doesn't want

to force her mother out of the house but she feels as if she has no choice. The house is not safe to stay in and Bess feels like it is going to crash into the water before she can get her mother out! **THE BOOK OF SUMMER** is filled with family, hope, secrets, drama, and learning to let go. The characters are not perfect and each has their flaws which made them all relatable to me.

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**THE BOOK OF SUMMER** by Michelle Gable is a story that is going to grab you right from the very first page and never let you go. I've never read this author before but I'm excited to find her older books now as I truly loved her writing. Learning about these three women and all the guests that signed the guest book was very enjoyable. Michelle Gable sure knows how to keep the reader engaged, trying to figure out all the family secrets. I think the aspect I enjoyed the most was learning about Ruby and all she had to endure during WWII. Michelle's writing and descriptions, had me feeling as if I were right there in Nantucket with these women dealing with their life struggles.

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### **Cindy Burnett says**

The Book of Summer takes place in Nantucket and focuses on the women of Cliff House, a beautiful home that is slowly falling into the sea due to erosion. The story is told in a dual timeline format with the inclusion of sporadic newspaper articles and entries in the Book of Summer, a book in which every individual coming to Cliff House writes an entry as he or she arrives at the house. The present day story revolves around Bess Codman and her mother Cissy, who refuses to leave Cliff House even as sections are eroding and falling into the sea on an almost daily basis. The 1940's story focuses on Ruby Packard, Cissy's mother, as she navigates family issues and the beginning of World War 2.

As the story unfolds, numerous family secrets come to light. As Bess spends time with her mother in Nantucket for the first time in a while, she comes to understand more about her family, including her mother, and the importance of Cliff House. My favorite parts of the book were the entries in the Book of Summer and learning more about the efforts in Nantucket to combat erosion. Gable's descriptions of Cliff House were fabulous, and I felt that I could envision the house through her prose.

I really enjoyed this book and recommend it highly. I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says**

A summer home filled with years of memories, a book filled with years of written memories, and a home that is eroding away and about to fall off the cliff.

The Cliff House, appropriately named, has been the summer home on Nantucket for the Young/Packard/Codman family for over one hundred years. The women maintained the house, but now only Cissy is left, and she doesn't want to give up and face the reality that the house will be falling into the ocean before too long.

To help her mother come to the realization that she cannot continue to live in the summer home, Bess comes back home after four years. The memories are pretty strong for Bess and even more so when she finds the book containing the thoughts of the guests and family members who stayed there, but she can't convince her mother to leave.

THE BOOK OF SUMMER follows the family from 1939 to present day with flashbacks from entries in the memory book kept at the house. I actually enjoyed the present-day story more than the past.

THE BOOK OF SUMMER is a pleasurable read and a book I enjoyed because of the family drama, its secrets, and the characters. The characters are comical and lovable as well as stubborn. The reader gets to meet each generation of the women who kept the house going.

THE BOOK OF SUMMER was a bit confusing at first and didn't grab me right away like her other two books, but it definitely grabs your attention as you meet the characters and learn more about the history of Cliff House. That gorgeous cover draws you in as well.

THE BOOK OF SUMMER is delightful, thoughtful, and a book about families that has you focusing on your family history.

ENJOY when you read THE BOOK OF SUMMER. 4/ 5

This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the publisher in return for an honest review.

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### **Michelle says**

#### **COMING OUT 5.9.2017!**

Confession time: if novels are children, this is my favorite book kid by far.

I conceived of THE BOOK OF SUMMER after reading an article in Vanity Fair about the gorgeous, grand homes on the Sankaty Bluff in Siasconset (known as Sconset), the easternmost spot on Nantucket Island. Many of these homes have been in families for generations and are now in danger of falling into the sea due to erosion. I immediately pictured a home with ninety-nine years of history and memories packed inside, a home that will likely soon come down.

In the BOOK OF SUMMER, you'll meet Cissy, a town rabble-rouser who's happy to raise all kinds of hell to keep her beloved Cliff House standing. You'll meet her grown daughter Bess, a physician from San Francisco, who's given the unenviable task of forcing Cissy out of their family home. Cissy is but one of Bess's problems, and it doesn't help that her high school boyfriend is somehow still hanging around.

You'll also meet the the people who've come before Cissy and Bess, like Bess's grandmother Ruby, who arrives on the scene as an idealistic young bride in 1939, just before the United States enters WWII. Ruby will introduce you to her new friend Hattie Rutter, a flashy, bright, modern woman who rocks the house perhaps more than erosion ever could. There is also Ruby's brother PJ and his wife Mary, a real wet sock, truth be told. And you'll meet Ruby's closest ally, her little brother Topper (oh, Topper! You might be my favorite of the favorites!), as well as her sweet husband Sam.

Through it all are excerpts from the home's Book of Summer, its first entry written by Bess's great-grandmother Sarah:

*"We will greet each summer with expectant delight, Cliff House the reward for the winter and the toiling away. The deed bears Philip's name but it belongs to us all. We'll invite friends, we'll invite family, and the friends of family. We will throw open the doors and shout, 'All of you! Come stay a night or three! Leave your shoes in the basket, your worries outside the door. Together now, let's pour ourselves a drink.'*

*"In lieu of rent we will ask our guests to make payment via words in this, the Book of Summer. We'll do this so the memories will stick and so those who follow appreciate what came before."*

As with all my novels, I hope that THE BOOK OF SUMMER transports you and has you googling the real-life stories that made up the bones of my tale. Please enjoy this journey to Nantucket and the beautiful, magical Sconset.

Much love,  
Michelle Gable

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### **Pamela says**

Overall, this is highly enjoyable. I enjoy dual timeline stories, and find that I usually prefer the older timeline - this is no exception. Reading about Ruby and her life was entertaining and heartbreakingly, but I just loved her.

The modern timeline is fine, but I found both females to be just a bit annoying at times. The concept of the "Book of Summer" was great and I'm sure I would love to actually read something like that. The entries in this one were intriguing. As I said, a highly enjoyable read.

\*\*Thank you to the publisher and Net Galley in exchange of an honest review.\*\*

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### **TL says**

I received this via Goodreads Giveaways in an exchange for an honest review.. all my opinions are my own :)

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It may have been her first book and I don't know if it was on Amazon or Goodreads I saw this but I remembering seeing "Perfect for fans of Kate Morton" .. not exact phrasing (it was a bit longer) but it got me excited since Kate Morton is one of my auto-buy authors so when the giveaway came up on Goodreads I jumped at the chance.

Maybe I set my expectations too high between the blurb/synopsis and the comparison to one of my favorites but while this was a lovely read, it ultimately missed the mark for me.

The writing was beautiful and the story was intriguing but 'something' just didn't click with me. It never pulled me into the story and people completely. 'The Book of Summer' was the only thing that succeeded somewhat (the concept is something I would love to just sit and read through).

This is a case of "its and me and not the book" Miss Gable has talent here, but she may not be an author for me. \*shrugs\*

I would still say give it a chance, I seem to be in the minority on this one.

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### **Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says**

This beauty was a bookmail surprise this week! I was in the mood for a beach read, and this highly entertaining jaunt, with plenty of substance, was perfect. If you've ever fallen in love with a house; the history, the memories, the connections to generations of your family within those walls, there is much to relate to in this book. The Cliff House in Nantucket is in danger of falling into the ocean, and Cissy Codman is trying her best to not only preserve the physical house, but to preserve what she thinks of as her family's enduring legacy. Bess, Cissy, Evan, Ruby, Hattie, and even old grumpy Chappy; the characters were fun, amusing, and endearing. Due out May 9, 2017, The Book of Summer certainly lives up to its title. Thanks to the author and the publisher for the complimentary copy.

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### **Judy Collins says**

Storyteller, Michelle Gable returns following I'll See You in Paris and A Paris Apartment with her latest Nantucket summer charmer (her best yet): **THE BOOK OF SUMMER** — a multi-generational story of family, home, the courage of tenacious women and *the special memories of Cliff House*.

**Rich in history and character**, a scandalous, emotional, and witty tale of family and saving a home. The past, loss and loves, and all the lives which connect. *A perfect mix of historic and contemporary*.

**Based on the real-life erosion** of the Sankaty Bluff in Siasconset —known as Sconset—the easternmost spot on Nantucket Island, Gable was inspired by an article in Vanity Fair (very intriguing) about the grand homes, passed down between generations *now falling into the sea*.

Though the Cliff House bears the fictitious address of Baxter Road, it is based on Bluff House, formerly located at 87 Baxter Road.

**The quintessential Nantucket** manor known as Cliff House is near falling into the ocean.

However, town shaker Cissy Codman, owner of the home is determined to remain in the house, using every trick she has to keep up the fight to save her family home. *She plans on going down the ship*.

**Cissy is a force to be reckoned** with and determined to get the local government behind her to either move the house or continue with the erosion prevention efforts.

Her daughter has been sent from San Francisco, California by her father to ensure her mom moves out of the

house before she dies left in the house.

**Bess Codman**, a physician is undergoing a messy divorce from a complete jerk (Brandon), plus she is pregnant (unplanned) and runs into her ex-high school boyfriend, Evan Mahew.

While tasked with the job of packing up her mom, Bess discovers the “**Book of Summer**.” A guest book filled with recollections of friends' and family's stay at the house. Entries in the book are highlighted throughout the novel, with difficulties and challenges faced by other residents.

**From 2013 and the start of World War II**, we hear from Ruby Packard, Bess's grandmother, an idealistic young bride in 1939, just before the United States enters WWII and Bess.

**Bess does not understand** her mom Cissy's obsession with this house; however, the more she reads she comes to understand similarities of present and past.

Three three generations of stubborn women who chained themselves to complex men like the house. Bess begins to understand the unspoken expectations placed on Cissy, *being the only child in a troubled home*. At the same time, she learns something about herself.

Loss is a part of life. Giving everything she had. A costly venture, "saving a bluff." The geo-tubes.

**From family drama**, lies, secrets, scandals, abortions, gays, alcoholism, betrayal, abuse, infidelity, hookers, divorce, marriage, life, relationships, security, and more – loss and love, mixed with tons of fun and humor and surprises (loved the part about the pecker-hilarious) and commentary and views from blogger—Corbie Tarbox, the Island ACKtion blog.

**Loved Cissy!** I related to her on some many levels. What a great cast of characters, from past and present. What is not to love about Nantucket? Have had many hotel clients over the years, and almost moved there full time to run a hotel. Always a good excuse to visit.

**Michelle transports** you to this charming coastal town by the sea, with an engaging story, resonating with the early writings of *Erin Hilderbrand and Nancy Thayer* (which I loved), before they changed, over the past few years.

The past and present were nicely done with many connections with highly charged topics. A perfect beach read and an ideal choice for book clubs and further discussion. *Can you imagine losing your house to facts beyond your control?*

**Gable keeps getting better** and better. I enjoyed reading the book; however when I discovered *Cassandra Campbell* was narrating the audiobook, had to pre-order. Love Cassandra Campbell (my favorite narrator).

She was exceptional and a perfect fit for **THE BOOK OF SUMMER**. Engaging, absorbing, and entertaining! The audio experience, actually bumped up my review another star, making this a 5-star reading experience.

**Highly recommend** the book and the audio. Love the subject material with the erosion problem which I am very familiar with highly relatable issues—residing in a coastal area.

**Here in Palm Beach**, (Breakers Hotel), as well as the Southern area of Palm Beach (Phipps Ocean Park and

Beach), the continued erosion along the project area threatens upland structures & recreational beaches. The sand placement and groin & mitigation construction cost millions and designed to last only three years. Very costly, temporary and ongoing environmental issues.

Fans of *Mary Alice Monroe, Dorothea Benton Frank, Joanne DeMaio, and Hazel Gaynor* will enjoy **THE BOOK OF SUMMER.**

*A special thank you to St Martin's Press and NetGalley for an early reading copy.*

JDCMustReadBooks

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### **Kathryn says**

Read to about 50% but just wasn't feeling it or enjoying it. Got tired of Bess and Cissie and the house problem. Didn't like the language and in many parts of the book there was too much dialogue. While many readers have enjoyed this, it may be a case of "just not for me". I was drawn in by the title and the cover.

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### **Hristina says**

Copy received through NetGalley

Mrs. Gable is consistent with her writing. You always end up with an interesting story, told with beautiful writing, and masterfully executed dual storyline.

The Book of Summer it's a really entertaining read. Beautifully paced with characters that shine, and a great style. I loved the setting of the story, but I loved most was a certain summery atmosphere throughout. This might be the perfect beach read.

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### **Elizabeth says**

I started this day thinking I'd get some housework done, but I started reading Michelle Gable's new novel coming out soon and completely got sucked in! I spent the entire day reading! That doesn't happen often and I'm so glad it did!

"The Book of Summer" is a perfect read for me. It has a lot of family between the pages, an old house, family history and an island full of wonderful characters. Cissy was my favorite. She's an older woman who is about to lose her home to the ocean and is not accepting of that at all! The talk between her and her daughter made me laugh and cry at the same time! The storyline is full of family and moves back and forth between current time and the 1940's (mostly) and the author really plays on the reader's emotions in both time periods.

Unfortunately, I've read all of this author's books, so I guess I'll just have to wait until her next book comes out! I'll be looking forward to it! Thank you to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press/Thomas Dunne Books for the privilege of reading and reviewing this book.

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## **Book of Secrets says**

Unfortunately, I'm stopping at 20%. Everything about this book's synopsis and cover appealed to me, so I don't know what happened! Well, yes I do. The bantering between characters got on my nerves - a lot of dialogue, and too much waiting for the plot to get moving. I was curious about the erosion/cliff house conundrum, so I did have to peek at the ending to see what happened. Thank you to the publisher and NetGalley for the opportunity to review this book.

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## **Amanda - Mrs B's Book Reviews says**

\*<https://mrsbbookreviews.wordpress.com>

The revelation of generation after generation of family secrets, all tied to an unforgettable summer home named Cliff House, is the focus of bestselling author Michelle Gable's third novel. The Book of Summer is set over the course of two weeks in Nantucket but it also traces back to pre World War II. Gable expertly binds together fact and fiction, to produce a moving family tale of three generations of women who passed through the doors of the summer home, Cliff House.

Cliff House has been in Bess Codman's family for generations. This once grand fixture, the site of many celebrations and opulent gatherings, is slowly descending into the sea, due to soil erosion. Bess' mother Cissy adores the home and refuses to leave, despite the danger of total collapse. Bess returns home in an attempt to lure her mother away from Cliff House and save their family heirlooms from total ruin. Over the course of the two weeks in which Bess works to pack up Cliff House, memories from the past resurface. The discovery of a pivotal guest book, marks the beginning of a series of deep-seated family secrets that are revealed, all of which are closely tied to Bess' grandmother, Ruby. Through the guest book, Bess travels back to the past of Cliff House, where she learns the shocking truth to a number of stories involving her grandmother Ruby and the female inhabitants of Cliff House. It is an eye opener for Bess, but also a turning point in her own life, where she learns a thing or two about herself along the way.

I am reader who loves covers and The Book of Summer immediately enticed me by its stunning and attractive cover. It features an antique bicycle on the front, with a basket full of flowers. My first thought was that this book was going to be a light and breezy summer holiday read. However, inside the book is a much weightier family saga, covering a range of serious issues, which Gable dissects well within the pages of this novel.

Gable blends fact with fiction in her latest novel. As The Book of Summer begins, we quickly learn that the main feature of this book, a once grandiose summer home named Cliff House, is on the cusp of complete ruin. The author, Michelle Gable, explains in her enlightening author note at the close of the book, Cliff House is based on a real life building, Bluff House, located in Sankaty Bluff, in Sconset, to the east of Nantucket Island. Gable makes the reader aware of the unfortunate soil erosion that has plagued this area for generations and how this has impacted on the grand homes situated in this area. Despite attempts to save the area with a sand replenishment program and geotubes (large jute bags filled with sand), the risk of ruin is still there. I found this real life inspired section of the narrative very interesting indeed. I will be honest and admit that prior to reading this novel, I had no knowledge of this problem. I also had no previous exposure to this part of the world. Nantucket is a new setting to me and I enjoyed being transported to a different

location. I appreciated the picture perfect descriptions of this beach side locale.

The Book of Summer is a novel grounded in the past and the present, through Gable's employ of a dual time frame narrative. Through Bess, our contemporary protagonist, secrets of the past come to light by the discovery of the all important guest book held at Cliff House. I love books that are focussed on the discovery of old letters, books or objects from the past. When Gable introduced this element to the novel, she had me hooked! I will say I enjoyed the World War II, grandmother Ruby based story thread much more than the contemporary storyline, which was still interesting. I found myself racing through the present day events, just so I could get back to the past with Ruby. The transitions from past to present were handled well by Gable.

Ruby's narrative thread begins just prior to the outbreak of World War II. It is a full bodied narrative, defined by period and place specific dialogue, featuring a range of serious issues. These topics range from adultery, multiple miscarriages, death of loved ones and the impact of war on the home front. Most importantly, a thread involving the treatment of gay soldiers in the war by the US Military held the most interest for me. It is an occurrence in the war which I was unaware of until Michelle Gable brought my attention to this issue through The Book of Summer. It was both enlightening but shameful to read at the same time.

In the present day narrative, Gable covers a lot of ground. From marriage breakdown, divorce, unplanned pregnancy, abuse and rekindled love. These topics are carefully intertwined with the main focus of the novel, which is Bess' mother Cissy's attempts to protect Cliff House and the surrounding area. In the present day sections of the narrative, Gable's characters are both flawed and spirited, culminating in a lively storyline for readers to enjoy.

The Book of Summer is a well crafted multi generational family saga novel that demonstrates the strength of the female spirit to overcome the roadblocks in life. It is a novel that serves up some hefty family secrets, a good dose of mystery, plenty of rich history and a touch of romance, all in the one book. The choice to present to reader with a blend of fact and fiction makes The Book of Summer a compelling tale to add to your reading list this summer.

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\*I wish to thank Pan Macmillan for providing me with a free copy of this book for review purposes.