



# Gemini Summer

*Iain Lawrence*

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## Gemini Summer Iain Lawrence

In the quiet of Hog's Hollow, each member of the River family pursues a dream. Old Man River sets out to build a fallout shelter in case the war in Vietnam "brings the end of everything;" his wife Flo, who collects *Gone with the Wind* dolls, attempts to pen her own Southern saga; Beau, their older son, suffers from "space fever" and aspires to be an astronaut. As for Danny, the younger River boy, well, he just dreams of having a dog. Then in the spring of 1965 tragedy befalls the Rivers--a tragedy that makes the Old Man wish he'd never started building the shelter, stops Flo from finishing her bestseller, and leaves Beau grounded rather than airborne. But the tragedy does finally bring a dog into Danny's life. And not just any old dog. Danny comes to believe that the mixed-breed stray embodies the spirit of someone he dearly loves. He won't allow anyone to separate him from the dog, not even after it bites the neighborhood bully and the police are sent to take it away. Together Danny and his dog run off, heading toward Cape Canaveral, where the Gemini missions blast off from, and where dreams come true.

## Gemini Summer Details

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Author : Iain Lawrence

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## **From Reader Review Gemini Summer for online ebook**

### **Vicki says**

1965-the River family deals w/their dad "Old Man River" digging a fallout shelter since he feels something in Vietnam will spill over into the US.Young Danny wants a dog more than anything, his brother Beau loves the space program, rockets etc. When Beau is killed falling on the re-bar of the shelter, the River family is never the same. Can the little stray dog who comes into the yard help bring the family out of their tragedy, to be a family again? Great

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### **Al\_ryanleagre says**

Gemini Summer is a story of a young boy in 1965 whose dreams of exploring space are destroyed by a family tragedy. In light of the tragedy, Danny befriends his new dog, and after the police attempt to capture the dog because it bit the neighborhood bully, together they venture out alone towards Cape Canaveral where the Gemini missions take off.

This is a touching story that shows how strong the bonds of friendship are between two individuals, even if they aren't both humans. I encourage all children who have suffered a horrific tragedy, or are looking for a warming story, to pick up this book and give it a chance.

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### **Abby says**

This is the only book that has really ever made me openly sob. Sure other books have made me sad, maybe a bit of watery eyes here or there.

But I sat there, and read the book with tears streaming down my face. Pouring actually. It's such a beautiful, touching story, of family, and dreams, and even has an interesting historical record. If you want to break the dams, and cry your soul out. This is the book.

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### **Mary Kate says**

Danny and the Rivers family are compassionate and "real" characters that are very much a product of the times. The story takes place in the mid-1960s, when post war trauma is just as apparent as pre-war fear. There is one thing that seems to give people hope and a sense of pride, and that is the space race. Danny and Beau look to the skies for their heroes. Beau is especially focused on becoming an astronaut, and everyone seems to believe in him. However, tragedy hits and now the Rivers must learn to cope with life after loss.

As the Rivers navigate through this period in history and the loss of their son, I can't help but hope that Rocket the dog was in fact Beau in spirit. I want to believe Danny! Perhaps it is the dog, Rocket, that brings this family peace; perhaps it is Beau himself. Gemini Summer isn't just your classic tale of a boy and his dog. While Lawrence combines history with a bit of fantasy, one thing is for certain: that dog brought Danny and

his family back to life.

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### **Niki Rowland says**

Not to be dramatic, but this was the book that changed my entire life. Gemini Summer was the book that made me become the avid reader that I am today. I read this book in grade 5, I was so young and I thought that the cover was intriguing so I picked it up. No, this book is not masterfully written, however there was something about it that made me want to keep finding books that warmed my heart. Gemini Summer made me feel something deep down that only yourself and a book share. This was the first book that I truly loved and the first book that truly loved me back.

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### **Susan says**

A moving story set in the mid 60s about how a young boy copes when his older brother is tragically killed. My favourite scene? Danny has always, always wanted his own dog but when a stray puppy arrives at his doorstep soon after his brother's death, he is torn between an allegiance to sorrow and his natural inclination toward compassion and love. His attempts to reject the dog's overtures are poignant and heart-breaking. My favourite piece of dialogue? The astronaut sharing his powerful perspective of Earth: there is "more to it all than any one person can ever understand." Words to live by.

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### **Mauoijenn ~ \*Mouthy Jenn\* ~ says**

This was picked up at the library on a whim. You see, I'm a Gemini. So I thought why not. It was actually a good read. A little magic, crazy family, a boy and his dog. Definitely a summer read kind of YA book.

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### **Allison says**

I have mixed feelings on this one. On the one hand, it deals with a child's grieving process in such an authentic way, and especially unique given the midcentury setting. I'm thinking it's a decent study of family sociology and cultural treatment of death in America as far as YA goes. However, there is a general sadness that pervades the whole story, even before tragedy strikes. I'm not sure I picked up on the happy nostalgia that others seem to have keyed into (having read a few reviews). Sure, there are historical pieces, but I didn't take pleasure in reading hardly any of it. Uneasy, mostly. Was that the point? Perhaps, but I'd like to think that what a sad story lacks in joy it generally makes up for in beauty. This had little.

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### **Kirsten20 says**

I liked this book allot it made me cry 6 times. It made me think about how I treat my brothers it really makes you think again before you call your brother a name or anything like that. I recommend it to anybody any age.

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### **Ibrahim K says**

Gemini Summer is one of the best books I've ever read. The story so touching and the characters get so attached to you. It's about two brothers having dreams, ones going to space and the others having a dog. In light of the tragedy, Danny befriends his new dog, and after the police attempt to capture the dog because it bit the neighborhood bully, together they venture out alone towards Cape Canaveral where the Gemini missions take off. Danny comes to think that his dog rocket is truly is long last brother Beau

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### **Emily B says**

I gave Gemini Summer a five stars, because I thought this book showed the true meaning of family and how they are so very important to everyone! I loved how this book is full of adventure and includes a dog! The dog, Rocket, has so much character it's unreal! I love books that include dogs and any book that has adventure! This book really makes you predict and usually what you predict is wrong! This book was so suspenseful and you didn't know what was coming for any of the characters! Gemini Summer also shows how parents always want to help and care for their children no matter what they do! It showed me the bond between a boy and his best friend! I would suggest this book to anyone who is ready to read a amazing adventure book! Anyone would love this book, adventure lover or not! This book has emotional parts and off your seats, jumping parts! These are the reasons why I gave this book a five star! I hope you read it some time!!

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### **Twyggi says**

I rate the book five stars because it was a heart warming story that was truly about never giving up. I think that it was a great topic full of great imagination. I was originally reading this book for school purposes but when I started reading it became a pleasure read. I think that Ian Lawrence was very creative especially with the whole concept of the brother coming back in the form of a dog. I found it extremely touching when it was realized that Beau had come back to his brother because he had promised that he would always be there for him. I truly think that this story was a heart warming tale about family and a story that I will never forget.

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### **Jackie says**

The River Family live on one end of Hog's Hollow, and the Colvigs who are bullies live on the other end. The setting is the 1960's with a backdrop of the Gemini space program. Beau is killed when he falls into the nuclear shelter that his father, the septic man, is building. He is then "reincarnated" into a stray dog. Danny River runs away with his dog to see Gus Grissom. Gus Grissom returns Danny and the dog. It is "discovered" that Beau's death is an accident and the Colvig's move away.

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### **Becky says**

I did not think I would like this book that much but I really ended up enjoying it. It was very touching and made me tear up many times. I have not read many books with this historical background but it was really the family relationship and tragedy they went through that got me liking this book. I can not say that everything in this book felt real but the emotions and feelings did. I think this would be a great book for high schoolers to use in both literature and social studies. A lot is incorporated and it is a really good book.

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### **Neill Smith says**

Danny's brother, Beau, dreams of meeting Gus Grissom and becoming an astronaut. When he dies in a tragic accident, a stray dog comes into Danny's life and Danny comes to believe that Beau is somehow inside the dog. Danny tries to help Beau, in the dog, realize his dream.

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### **Maryjane Gordon says**

They go to lots of places and in the middle of the book its summer Danny meets a dog and he wants it but his mom would not let him have it so her pretend that he don't want it.His mom sees it then she looks at him and said that the dog been walking forever and that they should take it to the vet and the vet said its been walking probaly its whole life. Also that his mom wants to keep it even though she don't want a dog.I don't like this book because its boring and weird.I would recommend this book to some one that would want to here about adventers and about a stray dog.

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### **ReadALot says**

Good book  
with a sad storyline but you cant help feeling hopeful at the end  
The book was like a climb uop the mountain and at the end ,it was beautiful  
Book revolves around family relationship and how death affects us especially when its a sibling

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### **Al\_norahughes says**

Classified as historical fiction I would put this one under fantasy as well. Not my typical relaxing book but spunky and kinda fun. A father digging a fall out shelter, a mother writing a modern gone with the wind novel, and two kids, Beau and Danny, left to dream their lives away. Tragedy makes way for a sad look at this one family's life in the 50's.

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## **Skye Whitney says**

The book , Gemini Summer, by Ian Lawrence, many apparitional events took place. In the small town of Hog's Hollow, lived the river family. Each of which have a dream. The father, Old Man River has a vision of building a fallout shelter in the event of the Vietnam war "ending the world" for good. As well as his wife Flo, who collects, Gone with the Wind Dolls would like to have her own Southern Saga. Then there is their two sons Danny and Beau. Beau the oldest son dreams of following in Gus Grissom's steps and become an astronaut. Then there is the youngest boy of the river family Danny who had the simplest dream of having a dog. Then in the spring of 1965 a tragedy arises in the River family. Danny, Beau, and their "friend" Dopey Colvic were snooping out the fallout shelter

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## **Steve Vernon says**

Every now and then you read one of those books that are sort of unclassifiable.

Is this a paranormal novel?

Well, maybe.

There are elements of reincarnation and magic realism.

Is this a coming-of-age novel? A Bildungsroman, if you want to be fancy about it.

Yes, definitely there is an awful lot of that particular category in this haunting little yarn. The protagonist, DANNY, definitely goes a long way towards growing up and learning about himself.

Let me put it this way.

This book is a long slow drink of sarsaparilla.

Have you ever had yourself a glass of cold sarsaparilla?

It is a sipping drink and you might like it if you are fond of root beer - only sarsaparilla is a little bit different than just plain old root beer.

Or rather, sarsaparilla is a little bit more bitter than just plain old root beer. It sort of fills up your sinuses and washes down the dust of your gullet and gives you that little spark of sugar-zap without throwing you into a diabetic coma.

In a word - bitterweet.

I think that is the best sort of a category that you could put a book like GEMINI SUMMER into. It is a haunting bitterweet yarn of nostalgia that will leave you yearning for those carefree summers of your childhood back when life was easy and sweet.

It is a story that kind of sneaks up on you in a pair of well-worn Keds through fields of tall grass and

sunburns.

It is a tale of rocket ships and hero-worship and dogs and the possibility of reincarnation and the social realities of septic sucking Daddies.

There is a hint of *Something Wicked This Way Comes* Bradbury in here - which I always appreciate. Stir in a pinch of Stephen King's *Different Seasons* THE BODY and and a spoonful Joe Lansdale's *The Bottoms* THE BOTTOMS , and a heaping handful of Homer Hickam's *Rocket Boys: A Memoir* and you are almost close to GEMINI SUMMER.

I'd recommend reading this on a hot Sunday morning. Sit on the back porch, facing into the hopefulness of the rising sun with a tall glass of sarsaparilla close at hand and a jar of sun tea steeping for when evening falls. Read it straight on through and then just sit there and listen to the lonely bachelor crickets squeaking hot love songs to their prospective mates. Listen to the buzz of the mosquito and to the beat of crow wings as they harken home to their sleeping tree.

Listen for the sound of bittersweet memory and maybe even the trample of a young boy's sneakers racing through the dust of dusk.

Smile a little when the moon looks down and asks you what the hell you are doing out on a night like this.

yours in storytelling,

Steve Vernon

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