



Cruel Summer

Juno Dawson , James Dawson

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A year after Janey's suicide, her friends reunite at a remote Spanish villa, desperate to put the past behind them. However, an unwelcome guest arrives claiming to have evidence that Janey was murdered. When she is found floating in the pool, it becomes clear one of them is a killer. Only one thing is for certain, surviving this holiday is going to be murder...

A compelling and psychological thriller - with a dash of romance.

Cruel Summer Details

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Author : Juno Dawson , James Dawson

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From Reader Review Cruel Summer for online ebook

Daphne (Illumicrate) says

Ooh, solid murder mystery with a great voice. Reminds me of The O.C. and every other teen soap you love. Crazy ending, I couldn't stop reading it!

Sharon Mariampillai says

This was an alright read. The story is set up like a play, and it was not that great. I was not really liking the characters. I did like the mystery, just wish there was more of it. I was pretty bored during the read. I had to put it down a couple of times. I thought the story had potential, but it lacked execution. The writing style was not for me. I will see what other books that this author wrote, hopefully I have more luck with those books. Overall, an okay read.

Beth (bibliobeth) says

I have only read one of James Dawson's novels before which I enjoyed but I had high expectations for this one after a rave review from my sister and fellow blogger Chrissi Reads, whose opinion I definitely trust if she thinks I will enjoy something. Luckily, I wasn't disappointed! The story revolves around a group of friends who meet for a relaxing break in sunny Spain but have barely seen each other since the previous summer when tragedy struck and one of their friends Janey lost her life. From the very beginning however it becomes clear that what was thought of as a suicide attempt on the part of Janey may have actually been a murder which had to have been carried out by one of the members of the group. This is corroborated when an extra (unwanted?) guest turns up at their villa and confirms that she has the evidence that Janey's death was neither an accident or suicide and if they want her to keep schtum, they had better pay up.

Then, just like in a horror movie, the hand of Death strikes again, and the group of friends now have to deal with the fact that there may be a murderer amongst them, and we have a pretty mixed bag of characters/potential villains. Furthermore, the group find themselves in a situation way over their heads and contacting the police for assistance is no longer an option. I have to admit I did end up guessing the identity of the killer in the end but not their reasons behind it which was fantastically drawn by our author. One of the things I loved most about this novel is the way it was written, in other words imagined as a film script by one of our lead characters Ryan (superstar wannabe and theatre darling) who I completely fell in love with. In this way we also heard the voices of several other characters as well as Ryan, which was a very effective way of getting into their mindset and motive for murder as they grieve (or cry crocodile tears) over the friend they lost a year ago.

There are so many delicious twists and turns to this novel, and it really reminded me of some of the Point Horror books I devoured as a teenager. As with those, the author kept me turning the pages while I tried to figure out exactly what was happening and who was responsible. And the ending? The pacing just builds and builds right to the nail-biting finale and the dramatic revelations. I found this novel a perfect and exciting young adult read from a very talented author who I hope keeps churning books like these out for a long time to come.

Please see my full review at <http://www.bibliobeth.com>

☛ Cristina ? says

SPOILER FREE

You can check this review with more details on my blog (x)

OR my video review on my channel here - (SOON!)

“Everyone has the face they show people and the face for when they’re alone in bed with only their thoughts.”

My rating: 4 stars out of 5

I was super excited to read this book since I read the synopsis a while ago and since it’s summer it seemed like the perfect time to do it. If you like mystery but not that super elaborated adult books that can get kind of boring this is the book for you. **It’s exciting and intriguing and can make you LIVE the story yourself.** I also had a lot of fun trying to figure out who had really killed Janey.

I just recently started reading mysteries and thrillers more often so I’m not sure If I’m the best person to say if there are other books similar with this one but for me **it was a different and very fun experience to go through.**

Although the letter size in the version of the book I own is smaller than normal **I was still able to read this book very quickly because of the engaging story.** The cover it’s not the most special thing in the world but it fits really well in the contemporary genre and looks quite acceptable on my shelf.

Okay, let’s talk about character development which is one thing that it’s a necessity for me to enjoy a book. Every character in this book has his own distinct personality, being the same good or bad and that is a major point, especially in a mystery/thriller book like this one. We get to see different typos like the jock, the nerd, the bad girl, the good girl and the new girl **which are no less interesting even if they are stereotypes.**

The action can take some dozens of pages to start but in those we are able to get to know most of the characters and a bit of the past which was still captivating to me. When we finally get to the main story almost **every chapter finishes with a climatic ending that keeps our eyes on the book wanting more and more.** But not all is good and the only reason that I didn’t gave this book a five star rating was because I predicted some events and those ended up not being that surprising to me.

Putting that aside, Cruel Summer was a fun, weird and mysterious ride that was totally worth it and made me search all about James Dawson and his other books for future reading.

That was it guys, comment below your opinion on this book, if you feel like reading it now or if you just want to add some info to what I said :)

Maddie says

If you're aware of the video game 'Until Dawn', this is kind of like that, expect the killer is among one of the group of friends. 'Cruel Summer' fits well into its genre, and I really liked how aware the characters were of their situation, compared to a horror movie!

Lo O'Neill says

"Everyone has the face they show people and the face for when they're alone in bed with only their thoughts."

"In a weird way Alisha had got her wish – the old gang was back together again. For eternity. They were all bound together by their terrible secret, until the day they died. That was a terrifying thought."

Another Dawson Dazzler!

Juno Dawson is quickly becoming one of my favourite YA writers having devoured two of her books in as many weeks. I would highly recommend her book Clean which is one of my favourite reads this year.

Cruel Summer was a wonderful mix mystery, witty British dialogue and friendship that from the first page was impossible to put down. With wonderful pacing as the story developed up until the heart-pounding ending (and make no mistake my heart was actually pounding) I could not pry myself away and when I absolutely had to I was counting down the minutes until I could reunite with the gang in their Spanish villa.

Dawson has a wonderful way of luring you into the world that she is creating, with characters that are constantly developing in a very holistic way until the last word. All of the characters have their flaws but they have this sense that you have met these people before that allows the reader to feel like these are your friends, they all have a great depth without taking away from the flow of the story by becoming overly cumbersome with backstory.

The framing of the story as a TV show in the imagination of Ryan (in my head it came to life as a *The OC* meets *Pretty Little Liars* meets *I Know What You Did Last Summer*) was expertly done and framed the story in wonderful way. I have to say this element really drew me into story and allowed the author to create an element of realness in this clever and twisty mystery, allowing the main narrator to acknowledge that in a TV show this would represent different elements of the season which would be expected but in real life it was insane. It was also a very interesting way to show a different type of coping mechanism as Ryan uses this as a way of trying to disassociate harder times in his life from the reality of what is happening.

Throughout the story there were so many times that I (smugly) thought that I had beaten the author and figured out who had done it, only to completely change my opinion in the next chapter. The story is so cleverly plotted that I had a blast reading it. I hope that Dawson continues to write stories like that this for a long time to come, she is one of the most captivating authors that I have read in very long time.

This need to be mad into a movie because it would be perfect and it is about time we had another great 'I Know What You Did Last Summer' style of movie.

If you haven't read this I would highly, highly recommend it. I am actually worried for the next book I read because Juno Dawson is setting the bar high.

daisychainbooks says

Can I please have more books like this? Ah-mazing! FYI: I figured out the 'who' before the reveal, but was wrong on the 'why'. Would make a very fun (in a dark and twisted 'Scream'/'I Know What You Did Last Summer' type way) movie (and the cast would be SO HOT!). Ryan did make me laugh. All the drama with that boy!

For fans of: Christopher Pike, Gretchen McNeil's 'Ten'.

Vicky says

I've heard a million wonderful things about this book even before I picked it up so I was pretty sure I was in for a treat, but I would have never predicted how much of a nail-shredder it actually is and how much I fell in love with it by the end. If I had to sum it up in a nutshell, I would say *Cruel Summer* is like a modern, young adult version of Agatha Christie's timeless classic (and one of my favourite books of all time), *And Then There Were None*. It's just as twisted, just as gripping as Christie's book and is a definite must-read for adults and younger readers alike.

When I started reading the book it seemed a little slow paced compared to what I was expecting but once you get through the first couple of chapters it all makes sense. Every little detail from the characters' past is relevant to the plot and what they're going through at the moment and – as much as I dreaded it – it never gets dull. Not for one moment. In fact, once you realize that all of these characters all had a lot to lose and could have easily killed Janey you just won't be able to put the book down. I raced through the second half of the story in no time and couldn't get it out of my head ever since.

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???????? says

Całkiem dobry dreszczowiec z udziałem nastolatków. Do pewnego momentu akcja naprawdę mi się podobała, podejrzany nie był oczywiście, a kiedy z bohaterów wydawał się mieć motyw. Niestety końcówka mnie rozczarowała, nie finałem pt. "Kto zabił", chociaż moje niezmienne podejrzenia się sprawdziły, to bardziej chodzi mi o to, że akcja zaczęła przypominać tani horror z psychopata na głównym planie. Trochę enui. Mimo wszystko dobrze bawiłam się przy czytaniu książki i nie nudziłam się ani razu. Polecam bardzo. :)

Rose Heartfilia says

So actually this book got 3 and a half star because it was difficult to pick between 3 and 4 but after some thinking I made it to 3. (GOODREADS HALF STARS PLEASE). However this book reminded me a bit too much of *Pretty Little Liars*, they were all perfect and all and the whole idea was craycray but that wasn't the problem, it was really the all in all vibe. At first I liked it but then the picture perfect was too much and I found it a bit of a shame. Not saying that it was too much like *Pretty Little Liars* but they were all rich and perfect at what they were doing. The lying over Janey her death was cringe worthy but that's also because I studied law and I can't see why you would lie to the police when it wasn't your fault.

The writing however was brilliant, it was like a movie and I liked Ryan his character absolutely. Shame of the ending. But he wasn't enough to make me love the rest. I hated Greg, I disliked Ben, Katie was my number one no go, Alisha was fine and Erin was good too.

The setting with a middle of no where summer house is asking for trouble, something that Ryan mentions the moment he thinks about a horror, the slamming of the doors: hello wind, nice to hear you too. I am glad that I'm not in a rich clique like they are, the fact how Rox handled their leaver's ball and the whole situation with being a pro footballer, alcoholic person and so on and most of all the craycray last person that had this ridiculous idea of revenge. Well boo hoo, I can't really believe it, but it was a fun read! Don't get me wrong. But this came especially because of the writing! :)

Stacey (prettybooks) says

Who says fictional teenage murder cannot be fun? Not James Dawson. *Cruel Summer* is a brilliant mix of the adolescent drama in *Pretty Little Liars* and ridiculous humour combined with crazy violence in *Scream*. It's just what you need after a hard day's work.

For Ryan, our main character and star of the show, life is a movie (or, at least, a teen drama) taking place on a studio set, right up to the point where the chapters are called 'scenes'. He is currently hanging out at his good friend Katie's holiday villa in Spain, with a bunch of old school friends that'd fit in one of his films perfectly. Greg's the Jock and his twin Alisha's the Bad Girl, while Katie's the Good Girl. Greg's girlfriend Erin is the New Girl and their friend Ben is the Geek. Ryan's certain he knows who would survive this 'low-budget Spanish bloodbath', but he's not *quite* prepared for what's about to come...

Cruel Summer is layered with macabre mystery and British wit, full of murder and secrets – you won't know who to trust. I enjoyed Ryan's narrative and his internal monologue that constantly imagines life as a script, plus the storyline surrounding Janey – did she really commit suicide or was it murder? – wasn't easy to guess, which only added to the intrigue. It's a little bit ridiculous, but on purpose, and more light-hearted than other YA mysteries I've read lately, such as Tanya Byrne's *Follow Me Down*. *Cruel Summer* is more like the *Scream* movies we all watched in the late 1990s or early 2000s – a bit silly, a little less violent, and complete fun to read.

James Dawson's voice and personality stand out, like this story could not be told by anyone else. I couldn't help but imagine him reading the book aloud. Its unique mix of British (specifically, Northern English) narrative and psycho plot make it a compelling read. Will it leave you thinking that this could happen to you? No. Will it leave you wanting it to be made into a TV show *right now*? Absolutely.

Cruel Summer is a seriously fun, beach thriller (who knew they existed?), with a motivation for murder that you'll *never* guess.

I also reviewed this book over on Pretty Books.

Georgie says

Wow, but this guy can **write**. Just like 'Hollow Pike', 'Cruel Summer' had me gripped from the start. I was completely plunged into the world of the characters and it really did keep me guessing as to what happened to Janey, who killed Roxanne, and just what was going on with the characters besides that. I also had several 'OMG' and 'LOL' moments as well.

Six friends go on holiday to an isolated beach villa in Spain one year after their friend, Janey, supposedly killed herself after an unpleasant incident at their sixth form leavers' ball. The friends - Katie, Greg, Alisha, Ryan, and Ben (joined by Erin, Greg's latest girlfriend) - haven't seen each other since Janey's funeral. Ryan in particular has his suspicions about Janey's 'suicide' and these are confirmed when an old enemy - Roxanne (she stole Alisha's boyfriend when they were at school) turns up at the villa with 'evidence' that one of them killed Janey. Next day, Roxanne turns up dead. And it simply gets better and scarier from there. One of them is a killer.

The characters in 'Cruel Summer' are really well drawn and there's a lot more going on with them than it seems at first. At first, they all seem to fit typical teen-horror-movie roles - The Good Girl (Katie), The Bad Girl (Alisha), The Gay Guy (Ryan), The Jock (Greg) The Sweet Guy (Ben), The New Girl (Erin) and of course The Bitch (Roxanne). Indeed, the book is told from different points of view - mostly Ryan and Alisha's, and actor and tv-addict Ryan actually pretends like they are all in a typical hot teen tv series (and later horror movie) with multiple 'seasons', flashback scenes, and pairings (Katie and Ben). The 'chapters' are actually 'Scenes' told from the characters' different points of view, and this worked really well, adding to the dramatic, tension building immediacy of the plot, as well as making it all seem very visual and film-like (in a really cool way).

My favourite characters were Ryan and Alisha. Like all of the characters, as if the basic 'one of us is a killer!' drama they have their own tumultuous issues going on as well. This was great as it stopped the plot becoming formulaic and broadened it out, keeping me wondering about more than just who the killer was, and it also made all of the characters more real and dramatic.

I hope Mr Dawson is going to write many more books. He is not only a fantastic YA author, but just a fantastic author full stop, and 'Cruel Summer' blows a lot of 'adult' crime fiction right out of the water.

Five stars, A+++, absolutely great read. Read it now!!!!

Liz Barnsley says

Right. I'd heard good things about this one so I was dying to get into it and get into it I did...it grabbed me by the throat and led me kicking and screaming through an enthralling tale of Friendship, Murder and Mayhem under the sun and didnt let go until the stunning finale. Then I needed a few hours sleep.....

A group of friends gather at a villa in Spain, one year after the suicide of one of their number, to reconnect and have some fun and frolics. Things don't go according to plan however as it becomes increasingly apparent that one of them hides a dark secret....

I loved this book in the way that I love all twisty turny tales, with a fiery passion – even more so because this really was a movie in a book. I played my favourite game of “Beat the Author” whilst getting completely entangled in the world of Ryan, Katie and co...the snappy writing and a unique chapter style made it a brilliantly page turning glorious read. And I really do hope that there IS a movie...I would love to see these characters come to life on screen in the way they did in my head whilst I was reading.

Ok, so James Dawson did not beat me – My twisty brain had the answer about half way through..but the beauty of this book is that this really won't be the case for most people. Sharing Mr Dawsons love of Horror films probably helped me along the way...I know the “rules” well and yet he manages to put his own twist on things and keep the story intriguing and brain bending throughout. Compelling characterisation made things even more interesting...how many of us had the same grouping of friends personality wise at school and beyond I wonder...probably most. Cleverly realistic and always fascinating this is a must read for anyone who loves a good mystery, backed up by great characters and great writing. Read it. Read it now.

Veronica Morfi says

Rating: 4/5

Cruel Summer was the first book by James Dawson that I've ever read but it won't be the last.

The story of this book centers around a group of friends that had been estranged for the past year, after the death of one of their group Janey, and decide to spend their summer vacation together in a Spanish Villa. In that seclude place a surprise visit from someone who claims to their secrets will turn their summer into a nightmare.

This book was really great. One of the main narrators, Ryan, has this way of setting the scene like a movie which really drew me in. His way of thinking reminded me a lot of my own and I loved his PoV. Also, this book kind of reminds me of Ten by Gretchen McNeil and And Then There Were None by Agatha Cristie, and pretty much any good old horror movie. There is a group of kids with secrets, a dead body (or more) and mystery all along the way. It was really hard figuring this one out and I have to say I failed but when the reveals started I was shocked that every little things made sense. This story was beautifully put together.

Another aspect that I really enjoyed was that even though there seemed to be a lot of romance all around, it didn't pull away from the main mystery. I hate it when characters seem to ignore everything around them just to lust over someone. Also, the relationships and problems in this books were well built and seemed so real.

All in all, I really enjoyed Cruel Summer and I can't wait to read more by James Dawson in the future.

Mizuki says

[She happened to get sick and stay home when the murder took place? It sounds fishy! (hide spoiler)]
