



The Summer List

Amy Mason Doan

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Named a Best Book of Summer 2018 by PopSugar, Coastal Living, Family Circle, and The Globe & Mail

A tender yet tantalizing novel about two friends, the summer night they fell apart, and the scavenger hunt that reunites them decades later—until the clues expose a breathtaking secret that just might shatter them once and for all.

Laura and Casey were once inseparable: as they floated on their backs in the sunlit lake, as they dreamed about the future under starry skies, and as they teamed up for the wild scavenger hunts in their small California lakeside town. Until one summer night, when a shocking betrayal sent Laura running through the pines, down the dock, and into a new life, leaving Casey and a first love in her wake.

But the past is impossible to escape, and now, after seventeen years away, Laura is pulled home and into a reunion with Casey she can't resist—one last scavenger hunt. With a twist: this time, the list of clues leads to the settings of their most cherished summer memories. From glistening Jade Cove to the vintage skating rink, each step they take becomes a bittersweet reminder of the friendship they once shared. But just as the game brings Laura and Casey back together, the clues unravel a stunning secret that threatens to tear them apart...

Mesmerizing and unforgettable, Amy Mason Doan's *The Summer List* is about losing and recapturing the person who understands you best—and the unbreakable bonds of girlhood.

The Summer List Details

Date : Published June 26th 2018 by Graydon House

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Author : Amy Mason Doan

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Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Summer List for online ebook

BookGypsy says

I LOVED IT! One of the best books this year and just maybe the best book this summer. The bonds of friendships. The relationships between mothers and daughters. First loves. Emotional, whip smart and wonderful. A book I'll read again and again. Love how it ended. Loved the music, the books and the time. Took me back to some of the greatest times ever.

Thank you Net Galley

(Bern) Mom to 2 Posh Lil Divas says

A poignant story about the bonds of friendship, betrayal, secrets and second chances.

Laura and Casey met the summer before 9th grade and became inseparable. The beginning of the book chronicles their friendship and was delightful. Lazy summer days swimming and rowing on the lake. Picnics in secret spots, private talks, scavenger hunts and sleepovers every Saturday night. Doan did a wonderful job of immersing the reader into the lives of these two friends. *They were exactly what the other needed and their bond was intense.* I thoroughly enjoyed reading about Laura and Casey's friendship.

Besides the friendship aspect of the book, it also focuses heavily on family. There is a great deal of emphasis on the mother-daughter relationships. Laura is adopted and yearns to know more about her birth mother. All she has is a handmade music box and lots of unanswered questions. Her adoptive mother is very religious, strict and not exactly emotionally demonstrative. She gravitates towards Casey's free-spirited mom who accepts her into their lives and home wholeheartedly.

Of course things are not always what they outwardly appear to be. Casey's mother, Alex, is hiding secrets. Secrets that end up tearing the girls' friendship apart and keep Laura away from her childhood home, her best friend and her first love for seventeen years.

After seventeen years away, Laura is tricked into a reunion with Casey by Alex who arranges one large scavenger hunt for the girls. The list of clues leads them on a trip down memory lane - reminiscent of their cherished summer memories together. The hunt also leads to the unraveling of long kept secrets and just might mean a second chance for Casey and Laura.

This was a slow simmering, beautiful story. It was definitely the perfect time for me to read (while I was on vacation) and appreciate this type of story. Having a strong group of female friends that I have known since elementary school, who are like family to me helped me open my heart to Laura and Casey. It left me feeling nostalgic for my teenage years and so grateful for the lifelong friendships I have.

Overall, this was a sweet and endearing tale of friendship that I recommend. I look forward to reading more from Amy Mason Doan in the future.

Brenda - Traveling Sister says

3.5 Stars

Norma and I read *The Summer List* with two of our Traveling Sisters and two more joined us in our discussion. We all started off very comfortable in our lush coulee looking over our calm and inviting lake (really there are no lakes in coulees) however it sure felt like we were by a lake with the feel of this atmospheric setting Amy Mason Doan has created for us.

The Summer List started off as a tender and enduring story between two friends Laura and Casey and we really enjoyed some elements to this story. The lazy summer on the lake, scenic small town, scavenger hunt and a secret to add some mystery to the story.

Amy Mason Doan takes us back to the friends teenage years and we really get a good feel for their bond and it brought back some memories of our past friendships for us. We appreciated that she keeps the teen drama low and focuses on the bond here with our characters.

Things did start to go a little sideways for us and our sunny summer day turned a little dark for us when the pacing changed in the story for us. Some of us were caught a little off guard with this one and some gloomy clouds had us hiding in our coulee. For our TS who joined us in our discussion, they enjoyed this one from start to finish.

With a few more weeks left in Summer, this makes for a great summer read but also with that descriptive atmosphere. It also would make a great winter read to stir up some warmer summer memories. We recommend.

Thank you so much to NetGalley, Harlequin - Graydon House Books and Amy Mason Doan for the opportunity to read and review an advanced copy of this book.

This is Traveling Sisters GR Reading Group Review and it can be found posted on our themed book blog *Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading*.

<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com>

Coulee: a term applied rather loosely to different landforms, all of which refer to a kind of valley. Coulee references are symbolic to our reading experience

Kristin (KC) - Traveling Sister says

3.5 Stars* - rounded up because the first half of this book was *everything!

A touching story of friendship...

THE SUMMER LIST had me divided. The first half was a solid five-star read, one I could not put down. The setting alone was enough to make me want to dive inside these pages and swim across the sunlit lake beside these lovable characters.

This author brought to life the undeniable purity and intoxicating fervor of young friends. Of *new* friends. The friendship of **Laura** and **Casey** was like a love story in and of itself: the wanting to be *liked*, wondering what the other is thinking, spending every waking moment together ... their companionship even fell into a forbidden sort-of territory with one set of parents' disapproval of the other's.

Their bond felt invaluable, and larger than life—like it was the only thing that mattered on earth, as childhood friendships tend to become. The plot wasn't delivered in a tell-me manner, but revealed itself in detail through vivid imagery and bewitching descriptions, and I was fully entranced.

The story is set largely in the past, with glimpses of present-time conditions, offering little insight into this mysterious rift between the girls. As the past eventually catches up to the present, we learn very slowly what it was that severed their bond—a reveal that, for me, didn't ultimately fulfill its hype.

The enchanting tone I'd come to love faded away within the second half of this story, and the writing began to *feel* like writing, and the plot began to drag. I wanted back the initial appeal, and I grew conflicted by my sudden urge to skim though a read I'd been so eager to savor.

It was an unfortunate shift, but I can't say the story was completely lost. It was able to claim me once again, here and there, with its pockets of charm and bouts of sweetness. The ending was a lovely wrap-up, even if I was no longer entirely invested.

I do think many will readers will enjoy this emotional portrayal of friendship and love that spans decades and very much warms the heart.

Sister Read, and a perfect selection in the midst of this heat wave! ?

Huge thanks to publisher and Edelweiss for providing a copy in exchange for an honest review!

Debra says

“I wanted to ask her if she felt like I did, if the years when we'd been friends still seemed more important than anything that had happened since.”

The Summer list is a sweet and endearing tale of two friends, Laura and Casey, who were once inseparable until an event one summer night drives them apart. Ahhh, there is no sweeter friendship than the friendship of youth. The people who grow up with you. The ones who know your secrets, your dreams, your wishes and desires. The ones who go on adventures with you. Our childhood friends often knew more about us than our parents did. How sad when an event occurs which drives a wedge between you and your friend.

Laura is on the lake one morning when she sees a swimmer in the water. Casey is new in town and an avid swimmer. She and Laura immediately hit it off. They become best friends and Laura is drawn to Casey's eccentric Mother, Alex, who she often wishes were her own Mother. The pair experience their teenage years and confide in each other their crushes on others. They go on wild scavenger hunt and have many adventures together. Laura has finally landed her first love, J.B., and thinks life is pretty sweet. Casey, J.B. and Laura plan to all live in Los Angeles and continue to be in each other lives. It pretty much looks like that is going to happen until that fateful night.

Now around 35 years old, Laura receives an invitation in the mail. To come back to the lake for another scavenger hunt. She toys with not going but eventually does. There she is reunited with Casey and together they decide to go on the scavenger hunt and see what is waiting for them at the end. The scavenger hunt is like a walk down memory lane - some memories are good, some are not.

Their hunt takes them to the skating rink owned by J.B. and brings him into their hunt as well but more so as an observer and helper not as a participant.

Along the way there are bumps in the road, revelations, and growth. I really enjoyed this book. I found myself thinking about this book and it's characters when I could not sleep at 3 a.m. one day. I think most have that one friend we wonder "what ever happened to him/her?" Most have a friend they were close to and then drifted apart, some may have a friend who betrayed them, some may have had a friend steal a girlfriend/boyfriend, some may have had a friendship diminish or fall apart over a misunderstanding. That is what works for me in this book is that it is so relate-able.

What would happen if you could reconnect with that friend? Would you take it? That is what occurs in this book. The story is told by looking at the present and going back into the past. There are also passages where I wondered "Who is this about?" but it becomes very clear in the end.

This book reminded me of the movie *Beaches* to some degree. I loved that I did not know what drove them apart until the end. I made various speculations while reading and was wrong. I enjoyed how her characters acted and reacted in ways in which I think most people would. Nobody is perfect and our actions and reactions are not perfect.

I found this book to be well written and I was drawn into these two women's worlds. I found all of the characters to be like-able and I was invested in what would happen as they finished their scavenger hunt. Another thing I appreciated was the lack of filler - there were no unnecessary scenes. Everything in this book was needed for the telling of the story. The pacing was spot on, nothing felt rushed or drawn out. I look forward to reading more books by this Author.

This book is about friendship, family secrets, connection, second chances and love. A relate-able, heartwarming and endearing book about the ties that bind, acceptance and love. This is a beautifully told debut novel!

Thank you to Harlequin Graydon House and NetGalley for providing me with a copy for this book in exchange for an honest review.

See more of my reviews at www.openbookpost.com

Babydimps (Suzy) says

3 stars! ??????

I really wanted to like this book more than I did. The first half was really fun, entertaining and brought back memories of my childhood (which I really love in a summer read). I could really relate to the scavenger hunts, the skating rink and lake house life. I really dove into the book and was looking forward to a light read as a break from all of my thrillers.

Towards the middle and for the majority of the second half, I found the plot seriously dragging. While I really enjoyed Casey and Laura's childhood friendship, I found their adult relationship boring. I couldn't connect at all to those parts of the book and really didn't like any of the characters. Once it turned rather dark and depressing, I lost interest. I wanted more fun and laughs.

Although this book wasn't really a big hit for me, a lot of others enjoyed it. I would recommend it, but wouldn't put it high on the list of summer reads.

This was a Traveling Sisters read and I really enjoyed chatting with them about the story! ?

Big thanks to NetGalley, Harlequin and Amy Mason Doan for a copy of the book in exchange for my review.

Jennifer S. Brown says

I was lucky enough to read an advanced copy of *The Summer List*, and I think it's a wonderful debut. The novel is a luscious tale of grappling with the past, and it captures so beautifully the complexity and nuances of adolescent life. The story weaves the past and present of Laurie, a woman who returns to her childhood town as an adult to make amends both with her oldest friend and with herself. This is one of those books where the ending is perfect. Unexpected in the best ways. Gave me chills!

Andrea Lac says

I read an advanced copy of *The Summer List* and thought it was a really beautiful, fun and touching story.

On the surface it's about two 30something women who haven't seen each other since the summer after high school, and who are pulled, rather reluctantly, into a long weekend reunion by the lake. They go on a scavenger hunt (also reluctantly, at first) for reasons that make sense given their past.

The scavenger hunt part is a fun twist on the reunion theme, and it's handled well. (The women have to get Polaroid pictures taken at old hangouts and also to gather objects that were meaningful to them).

The characters feel lifelike, the dialogue has a lot of humor and rings true, and the author does a great job of evoking the feeling of youth & summer in one of the prettiest parts of Northern California, and the longing for the past.

It's a fast read but there's a lot more going on than might first appear—family secrets, something mysterious hidden in the lake, a long-lost love at the rundown roller-skating rink. I really enjoyed *The Summer List* and read it over 2 1/2 days. Recommended.

Meredith B. (readingwithmere) says

5 Stars!

Thank you to Kathleen Carter and Harlequin books for my advanced copy of this book! I was looking for a good summer read and this one came at the right time!

Laura and Casey are best friends. They meet when they are young because Casey moves into a house across the lake. Laura's mom makes a casserole for Laura to bring over to welcome the new neighbors. Once they meet, Laura feels an intense connection to Casey and her mom, almost like they are long lost family. They give Laura a sense of freedom and a place to be free rather than her strict household.

Fast forward to many years later, Casey and Laura haven't seen each other. They were supposed to live together in LA going to their respective colleges but at the last minute Laura pulled away and went

elsewhere and their friendship dissolved. They both get a card in the mail for a reunion to see each other. When they get there they have **10 clues and 1 scavenger hunt** to go on together. Little do they know that all the secrets, lies and truths are about to come to a head.

I loved this book. It has SO many layers and that is something I tend to love about books. It had a beautiful and complicated story about friendship, a story about religion (which was written in a classy way!), a few love stories, parent/child relationships, adoption, drugs, rape and even more. I think there were certain things that I could relate to in the book which made it even more compelling for me to read.

A few of my favorite parts were:

1. Laura and her Dad's relationship. Although Laura's mom was religiously strict, Laura and her Dad had a special relationship that reminded me of mine and my Dad's. He seemed to understand Laura needed to be herself and experience things on her own terms. He knew that Alex and Casey were great people and knew they were important people in Laura's life.
2. Forgiveness plays a huge part in this book. I think each character had something they may have lied or kept a secret at some point in time. This book explores how we can forgive the people who are closest to us and see their true intentions. Sometimes there are reasons people withhold certain things and they may want to try to protect you. In the end though, you know you are like family and it's better to forgive and move forward.
3. Chosen family: I personally don't have a large family so this one hit home for me. I have my husband, my parents and a sibling. I have 2 uncles and 1 aunt and only a handful of cousins. My friends are like my family - aka Chosen Family. This book explores that between Alex, Laura and Casey. Laura becomes chosen family to Casey and Alex. They help each other through the most difficult times and come together in the end. What a special thing Chosen family is and this helped remind me **don't take your chosen family (or biological family) for granted**
4. I can't say too much about this one but a character in the story reveals an illness at some point in time and it reminded me of my Grandma who just passed. That's special for many reasons <3

Overall this book is a clear winner for me. It comes out TODAY so pick it up for a fantastic summer read!

Jenelle Lindsay says

I truly love and miss these characters already. From the moment I picked it up, I devoured it in less than a week which is rare for me. Though I've always been a big reader, since writing for and working in TV I feel like I've acquired a diminished attention span. I start a million books with only a few needles in the haystack engaging me so thoroughly and the characters capturing me so deeply that I don't have a choice - I HAVE to know what happens to them.

I felt this way with Laura and Casey. The characters are drawn so distinctly, they're totally unique yet relatable as is their friendship, the peaks and valleys of it, the coming of age aspect and how they revisit it all as adults. I can't describe it any better than I felt like I was in their skin, feeling everything they were feeling emotionally while having no idea where the story was going and dying to find out how the strands of every mystery come together: what happened to Laura and Casey's friendship? What happened to JB and Laura's romance? What happened with Casey's mom? And what's Laura's origin story?

It all comes together so satisfyingly in the end which is a true feat. So many times I read books where

interesting character development and mysteries are posed but they don't come together for a satisfying ending. The Summer List beyond delivered, I loved how the characters developed, how they mysteries unfolded, and mostly I loved the feeling it left with me, where I thought about it long after I put it down and how the themes resonated with me.

The writing is beautiful, the pacing is great and the story flows seamlessly despite juggling a few strands (which engaged me even more, I loved how it went back and forth between them as teens and them as adults as well as the third leg of the mystery - it was all very easy to follow). I love a story where you're always guessing/wondering/being pulled along but you're also not thinking too much about what the ending might be because you're so emotionally invested in each moment.

What I also really appreciate and find admirable in the writing is the efficiency of story. It felt like there wasn't a single word wasted that didn't push great story and character development. A lot of stories can get mired in too much detail or backstory or purple prose, this never happened in this book, I always felt engaged, there wasn't a moment I could skim past. Sorry to belabor but it's rare!

However, in the end, I loved the book for how it made me feel. I cried at the end which I can't remember the last time that has happened to me after reading a book. It reminded me of one of my all-time favorite books Crossing To Safety - which I read 20 years ago but I remember that same feeling of being so deep in their relationship that I cried, missed the characters when I was done, but they and the themes of the story lived on with me for long time. Felt the same way about Casey and Laura and The Summer List.

Can't wait to have my book group read so can discuss it more deeply and to give it as gift to family and friends who love good summer reads and compelling stories of friendship and family.

Berit??? says

4.5 Summertime Stars?? ?????.5

What a beautiful story about the bonds of friendship... this book brilliantly brought you back in time to the lazy days of summer in your teens... when all I cared about was boys, my clothes, boys, my hair, boys, and my tan... now I am longing for the good good good old days! And yes I was a super deep teenager obviously, LOL ?

This book is about best friends Laura and Casey... Loved both of these girls and how strong the bond between them was... i'd love to spend a few days of summer with them swimming in the lake... rollerskating at the roller rink... and participating in their crazy scavenger hunts.... Casey's mom Alex was a bit eccentric, but Laura who had a complicated relationship with her own mother really admired Alex... Alex really was a teenager trapped in a thirtysomething body.... her relationship with both girls was wonderful but complex....

Casey and Laura had big plans to head off to LA for college together... but then one dreadful summer night something happened that teared them apart... this book gives you the story of the girls summer days of their youth as well as 15 years later when they reunite.... this book really had a dose of everything fabulous characters with wonderful complicated relationships, a fair dose of mystery, and a romance.... The romance was sweet and subtle and made me smile...

what happened to tear these two best friends apart? And will the reunion be a good one? This book is all about friendship, forgiveness, Family, first love, second chances, secrets, and love....

Absolutely recommend as the perfect beach read! When you're in the mood for a beautiful story that will captivate you from start to finish...

*** many thanks to Harlequin for my copy of this enchanting book ***

Norma * Traveling Sister says

3.5 Stars rounded up!

THE SUMMER LIST by AMY MASON DOAN is an interesting, charming and heartwarming story about the friendship between two childhood friends who had a falling out and then come together again in adulthood by the help of a scavenger hunt. I was totally entranced and captivated with the storyline in the first half of this book, then the latter part lost my attention a little bit and seemed to drag but then came together again for me in the end.

AMY MASON DOAN delivers a multi-layered and complex story here with interesting and wonderful characters that were easy to connect with. I really enjoyed how the two friends reconnected, the descriptive setting, the scavenger hunt, and the bond that these two friends had with one another. The past and present timelines were seamlessly interwoven to make this a fun, entertaining, and easy summer read!

This ultimately was a sweet, beautiful and endearing tale! Would recommend!

This was a Traveling Sisters Read.

Thank you so much to NetGalley, Harlequin, and Amy Mason Doan for the opportunity to read an advanced copy of this book in exchange for a review.

Review written and posted on our themed book blog Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading.
<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com>

Coulee: a term applied rather loosely to different landforms, all of which refer to a kind of valley.

DJ Sakata says

Favorite Quotes:

I had a journal my dad gave me when I was seven, a puffy pink thing with A Girl's First Diary on the cover in gold script. I hid it inside a hollowed-out copy of Silas Marner on my bottom bookshelf, and concealed the key in a mint tin in my third best church purse.

I could take the most direct route to the exit—hurdle over the blue-carpeted half wall in front of us and run straight across the crowded rink. I'd shove aside toddlers, the gang of tough-looking older women zooming past in matching black satin jackets that said Hell on Wheelz, whoever. But I was an adult now so I only smiled harder.

"You can tell my age in our high school pictures by the thickness of my eyeshadow." Like figuring out a tree's age by the rings in the trunk.

Soggy heart. I'd read that on some blog. The not-so-technical name for when you get tipsy and accidentally tell the truth.

Women's Studies 201. Sophomore year... Modern religion is an institution created by men to police women's sexuality. Discuss. Oh, the hands that had shot up that day. Not mine, though. I'd kept my own hands, twisting and fidgeting, in my lap, too overcome by the bell-like simplicity of the professor's statement, too angry at how long the world had waited to articulate it to me clearly, to speak. By the end of the fifty-minute class my palms were wet.

My Review:

This cunningly paced and well-crafted book resonated for me like the thrum of a well-struck tuning fork. It sucked me right in and held my rapt attention as I felt I knew and understood these endearingly flawed characters inside and out. Cleverly and deftly narrated by two women over three timelines, I never felt confused or lost but held suspended in an eager and avid state of curiosity. I was engaged, engrossed, and intrigued by the characters, their history, and the prickly unfolding story of their present.

I over-identified with the character of Laura at every age, but I took great pleasure in her clever stealth and ingenious efforts to carve out a modicum of privacy for herself, away from her stridently religious mother's stifling control. Laura devised secret hiding places for her diary and prized possessions and an intricate level of subterfuge was required for even the smallest acts of rebellion such as using lip gloss, eating pizza, and having a true friend in the real world who would not meet her judgmental mother's stringent expectations. I wanted to fist pump when Laura finally spoke up.

I was frequently awed by this intensely talented author's insightful and deft handling of the characters thoughts and observances, as well as their understanding or misunderstandings of the unusual events at various ages and levels of assimilation. The storylines were unique, beguiling, and captivating as were each and every one of the characters. I now need to sleep for a week as I had a hard time putting this one down. The writing was extraordinary, intricate, and arresting. I was more than satisfied by the ending but would have happily read another 384 more pages. Amy Mason Doan has crazy good word voodoo.

Kendall says

What a sweet and beautiful story about the amazing bond between two women.

I loved how the author so beautifully portrays how a friendship can drift apart from two people and somehow you connect again with one another as if nothing has changed.

I was very impressed with this debut by Amy Doan and this definitely won't be my last novel that I read by her! Put this one on your TBR for a light, sassy, and fun read for the summer! This is the perfect novel to cozy up with on the beach or in front of a fire on a stormy night. This is also a very easy and addicting read... I flew through this one in a day and a half :).

I have experienced in my life a time where I have drifted apart from a best friend and we reunited again.. but unfortunately we drifted apart again about 3 years ago. I still think about her and wonder from time to time... this story brought back some emotions for me. I love when you can connect on a deeper level with a novel and it surfaces emotions that you never thought you'd feel while reading it.

I would definitely recommend this one!

4 shining summer stars <3.

Thank you to Netgalley and Harlequin for the advanced arc in exchange for an honest review.

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Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

4.5 BFF stars to The Summer List! ?? ?? ?? ??5

The Summer List was hugely relatable to me from the start. I am sure many of us have stories about a childhood friend, maybe even about a lost friendship.

Growing up, Laura and Casey are as tight as two friends can be. They spend every spare minute together talking, dreaming, and the most fun of all, participating in scavenger hunts. A betrayal happens between them that tears their friendship apart. What happened is a mystery until much later in the book.

Just as time can cause friends to drift apart, it can also heal old wounds and bring loved ones back together. Seventeen years later, Casey and Laura are reunited for one more scavenger hunt. The clues lead them back to their favorite memories and force them to feel nostalgic. It seems like Casey and Laura are growing closer, but just as quickly, their tentative relationship could crumble all over again.

Amy Mason Doan “gets” the power and intricacies of female friendship, especially the glory days during the teen years. I loved the small-town lake setting, the multiple layers to the story, and as relatable as it was, the push-pull dynamics of Laura and Casey’s friendship. The Summer List captures the essence of forgiveness, friends who are family, and second chances at friendship. It’s a lovely, warm-hearted, emotional read with an uplifting ending. I felt nostalgic for my own teen years, for my best friend I don’t see often enough, and how ultimately a BFF throughout the years provides security along with that deep emotional bond.

Thank you to Harlequin/Graydon House for the complimentary copy. The Summer List is now available!

My reviews can also be found on my blog: www.jennifertarheelreader.com
