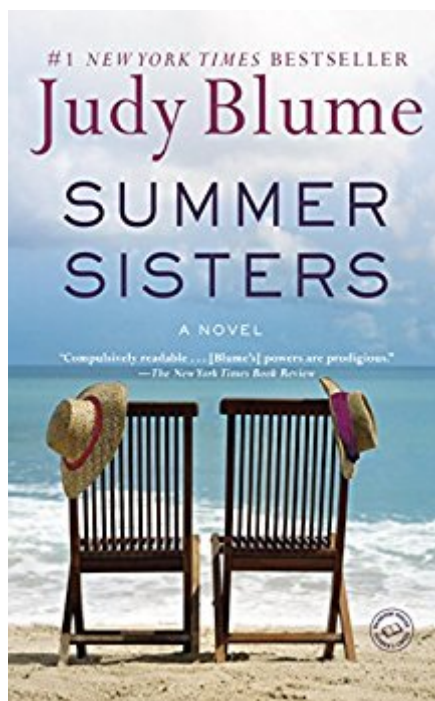


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# Summer Sisters: A Novel



## Synopsis

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader's Circle for author chats and more. In the summer of 1977, Victoria Leonard's world changes forever when Caitlin Somers chooses her as a friend. Dazzling, reckless Caitlin welcomes Vix into the heart of her sprawling, eccentric family, opening doors to a world of unimaginable privilege, sweeping her away to vacations on Martha's Vineyard, an enchanting place where the two friends become "summer sisters." Now, years later, Vix is working in New York City. Caitlin is getting married on the Vineyard. And the early magic of their long, complicated friendship has faded. But Caitlin begs Vix to come to her wedding, to be her maid of honor. And Vix knows that she will go "because she wants to understand what happened during that last shattering summer. And, after all these years, she needs to know why her best friend "her summer sister" still has the power to break her heart. Praise for *Summer Sisters* "Compulsively readable . . . [Blume's] powers are prodigious." *The New York Times Book Review* "As warm as a summer breeze blowing through your hair, as nostalgic as James Taylor singing "How Sweet It Is." You remember. So does Judy Blume. How sweet it was." *Chicago Tribune* "An exceptionally moving story that can leave the reader laughing and crying . . . sometimes at the same time . . . Blume creates a rich tapestry of characters." *The Denver Post* "Blume's characters still tend to hover after the book is set aside. . . . She catches perfectly the well-armed love between longtime female friends." *The Seattle Times*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

SUMMER SISTERS by Judy Blume The story of a rather one-sided friendship is told in Judy Blume's SUMMER SISTERS. Victoria (Vix) meets Caitlin as young schoolmates, and for some reason although the two of them are worlds apart, Caitlin chooses Vix as her guest to summer with her family on Martha's Vineyard. Vix has always been the quiet one, and Caitlin is the wild and crazy one. And despite their differences, Vix seems to be attracted to Caitlin's life, including her family and Caitlin's rather eccentric ways. The story opens in the present (1990), with Vix receiving a call from Caitlin, saying she's inviting Vix to her wedding. The brief prologue sets the stage, with Vix a bit perturbed by the phone call and torn between being angry with Caitlin, but also thinking "summer sisters forever". It is obvious that there is a love-hate relationship between the two, or at least that is how Vix feels about her long time friend Caitlin. Their summers together on Martha's Vineyard are full of fun and laughter. But as they get older, Caitlin's selfishness starts to show. Vix however takes it all without too much complaining, always finding reasons to forgive Caitlin. Caitlin's selfish behavior is not obvious to all, but are subtle and often times happen in shocking ways. As the two start to meet and date boys, Caitlin's behavior in this department is directly opposite in the way Vix handles herself with the boys, and on one night, Vix celebrates her birthday with Caitlin and the boys and it ends up a disastrous moment for Vix. (Caitlin, on the other hand, sees nothing wrong with what she has done, and thinks it's all in good fun). As the two girls become young women, their differences tear them apart.

I don't understand the negative reviews for this book, calling it "banal", "tripe", and "girly foolishness". Obviously these are people who just "don't get it" and would never survive one summer in the ramshackle cottage on Martha's Vineyard with the Somers family. I LOVE this book. I've read it and re-read it over the years, from a tattered paperback, and recently bought it digitally to add to my Kindle library. Though I have not been part of a "summer sisters" style friendship, nor suffered betrayals from friends on the level of those in this tale, I can relate to the teenage friendship between the two girls. Judy Blume paints a lush portrait of an era, a location, and the conflicting characters and scenes: the high desert of New Mexico versus Cape Cod, the wealthy versus the

lower middle class, and spoiled, needy Caitlin versus serious and pragmatic Vix. I grew up reading Judy Blume, but I'm no teen now. I'm in my 40s. Blume's graceful writing style never disappoints. Negative reviewers that have complained the young teens focus too much energy on their budding sexuality have obviously forgotten what it's like to be that age. In using varying viewpoints and characters narratives to tell the story, each character is well-developed from their own words and conversations as well as through the observations of others. As another reviewer astutely pointed out, Caitlin is the only one not given a voice. We only see her in the 3rd person, and I think that is intentional, as her character remains mysterious and conflicted in her motivations to the very (sad) end. 1970s- '80s Martha's Vineyard and the late 20th century in general are characters in the story as well, and Blume expresses them both very dynamically.

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