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‘A master of psychological suspense ’ *New York Times*

Beautiful newcomer, Elle, has turned the head of every man in the village. But it's Fiorimond, the local mechanic, who wants her more.

After just one date she moves in with him and his family. As Fiorimond starts to wonder if he's doing the right thing, he has no idea that Elle is planning to avenge a terrible crime from the past...

Set in the 1970s, and available in English again for the first time in decades, this is a true classic of French suspense.

One Deadly Summer Details

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From Reader Review One Deadly Summer for online ebook

John King says

I've been rereading all of Japrisot again and L'ete meurtrier is my favorite. The narrative is layered, being told by four different characters, each one adding their own different perspective. For first time readers it takes nearly half the book understand exactly where it's going but it's sure fun and suspenseful getting there. The ending has many surprises for both the main characters, Elle and Pin Pon, and of course for the reader. A great book which also gives a taste village life in 1976 Provence.

The 1983 movie is also very good. Japrisot wrote the screenplay and it's very faithful to the book. I was in the middle of my first reading of the English translation, One Deadly Summer, when a friend suggested we go to the movies. We went into a theater on 3rd Avenue of a French film having its New York premiere. I didn't pay much attention to the title, L'ete meurtrier. After about thirty minutes I said to my friend, "I can't believe this. I'm reading this book right now!" Now that's a coincidence.

Keith Currie says

What a superb novel this is! Set in Alpes-Maritimes in France in the 1970s it is a story of lust and revenge which leads the reader through a gamut of thoughts and emotions and fools him or her at every turn. Japrisot allows his story to be told through the mouths of the protagonists and signposts them as 'Executioner', 'Victim', 'Witness' etc. He tells no lies but allows us to fall into the same traps as the participants of the events which follow. This is really the story of two deadly summers, not one, but you will need to read to the deeply ironic end to find out why. In common with all his other novels, Japrisot can find humanity in the most deeply flawed of human beings. His characterisation is wholly convincing, his plotting so sharp it hurts. This is one of the best thrillers I have ever read.

Anna says

While reading the book, I didn't really know what to feel. It was so complicated at times, and the perspective switches made it very hard to move on. However, they were necessary to understand the entire story.

At times, I've held my breath, thinking 'NO, that can't be it'
Horrible things happened, strange people were represented, which made it rather hard to empathise with them, especially with 'Elle'.

If it wasn't for school, I would've never read this book, but it is one of the better works we've had to deal with, and I'm glad I had to finish it.

William Bentrim says

The author is described by the New York Times as a master of psychological suspense. I really never found the book compelling.

The story takes place in a village and is self proclaimed as a classic of French suspense. Sadly my tastes appear to be more plebian than many of the reviewers. To me the book was tedious and difficult to read. I do like character studies but the minutia in this left me cold.

Elle is certifiable and I suspect Florimond might also be committed. Due to all the accolades the book has received, I suspect I may be a lonely voice that didn't like it but loneliness can also be ascribed to a matter of personal taste. This book was not to my taste.

vicky says

Has its faults and takes you a while to make sense of everything that's going on, but it's a very cleverly constructed tale and the setting and sultry atmosphere are addictive! Once it had me in its grip, I couldn't put it down.

Jacqueline says

J'ai dévoré ce livre. L'histoire est haletante du début à la fin. Les personnages très bien étudiés. Le dénouement laisse sans voix. Comme un bon film (bon oui c'est dur de ne pas penser à Isabelle Adjani quand on le lit). Bref, j'ai adoré.

Frank says

This book was available in English for decades (except maybe in my library!)
I re-read it and found it as persuasive as before. Not as fast-paced as *The Lady In the Car With Glasses and Gun*, also by Japrisot, but equally persuasive.
She grows up unimpressed with, and upset by, sex and there's good reason for that.

Eliane (Elle) is obsessed with finding out the men who raped her mother and deal with them. She becomes a detective for this one case. She's tough-minded (even marrying one of the men she thinks is guilty) yet she is also strangely touching and still vulnerable. This is a revenge story of exceptional emotional power.

Pirate says

Twisted and dark thriller which was made into an equally good film starring Alain Souchon, Isabelle Adjani, Francois Cluzet and Michel Galabru. Riveting but painful and upsetting tale about events of yesteryear and revenge in the present which for this book is the mid 70's in the back of beyond of France. Gripping and well written but if you are looking for an upbeat holiday read this is not it, which is to say also that unlike most books one reads on holiday it is one that stays in the mind long after you have finished it.

Tony says

ONE DEADLY SUMMER. (1977). Sebastien Japrisot. ***1/2.

Just to get a few things out of the way: the name Sebastien Japrisot is an anagram of the author's real name, Jean-Baptiste Rossi. I don't know why he did that. He was a Frenchman, and, in his day, was one of the most popular writers around. Aside from writing several very successful novels, he was active in the world of film. All of his books were turned into feature films. My favorite was, "The Lady in the Car With Glasses and a Gun." This novel was a little different from his others. I had to read almost one-third of the way into the book before I had any idea of what it was all about. Once I caught on, I found myself in the middle of a well-constructed murder novel unlike any other I had read before. I think most readers will find themselves in the same situation. The main themes of the novel are revenge and retribution – sprinkled here and there with a soupçon of lust. I'm not sure why Japrisot is not better known in this country; he certainly deserves to be. Recommended.

Naksed says

Ayant lu ce livre il ya au moins vingt ans, je ne sais pas si j'aurais les mêmes sentiments à sa lecture aujourd'hui. Je me souviens à l'époque d'avoir vraiment aimé ce roman, ainsi que le film avec Isabelle Adjani. Les rebondissements de cette histoire m'avait complètement choqué et captivé. Je me rappelle aussi que le style de l'écrivain m'avait bien plu. Mes goûts ont bien sûr beaucoup changé depuis. Je laisse une évaluation positive basée sur ma mémoire et mon souvenir d'avoir passé quelques heures agréables avec cet été meurtrier, il ya quelques siècles de ça :-)

Andy says

Chilly tale about a promiscuous, inarticulate, amoral, drop-dead gorgeous girl who doesn't flinch at the prospect of fucking and killing every man she meets, all held under the phony guise of vindicating a terrible injustice done to her mother. Needless to say she's also schizo and throws fits periodically, just like Megan Fox on a bad day. Nobody does erotic noir (noirotica?) better than the French, and this is as sexy and deadly as it gets.

Hélène says

Très bon suspense.

Lu le roman après avoir vu le film.

Rien à redire ni sur l'un, ni sur l'autre.

Tosya says

Awesome book: much more than just a detective. The beginning was rather irritating, because of manner of

writing - simple clumsy phrases - but later you will appreciate it and just feel better the whole atmosphere of the book due to it.

anne says

[serre-billets, dont on ne sait finalement pas comment la mère a pu le voir, vu que... (hide spoiler)]

Liz Barnsley says

A slow burning and beautifully written psychological thriller which I took my time reading, so absorbing was it. Not without fault but for the most part highly compelling.

Full review to follow
