Clarion Review

General

Summer Flowers Some Are Not
P.A. Kowalski
978-1-4389-4720-4
Two Stars (out of Five)

P.A. Kowalski's novel *Summer Flowers, Some Are Not* is a quick read that revolves around the adventures of a group of friends and their family members. To say this novel is about any one thing would be false; it is full of everything from UFO sightings to love triangles and time travel. Jam-packed with action, *Summer Flowers* is a good choice for a summer beach read.

Like real-life friends and family members, Kowalski's characters bicker, but they really do care about one another. Small events become more stressful because of hot tempers and complicated relationships, and everything from Christmas shopping to moving between homes can be either a picnic or a grand disaster. It is in such situations that the characters and their personalities are most transparent.

Ann, one of the most charismatic and well-shaped of the characters, is at the heart of the novel. The story's structure is circular; it begins with Ann sitting down to coffee to consider how the past few months had been touched by "tragedy, happiness, and a lot of crazies," and it ends in the same way. This circular structure mimics the way the characters come in and out of one another's lives and fits in with other plot points, including moving, the passage of time, and the linking of relationships.

The protagonists are engaging and fun, but the novel's action moves so fast that it is difficult for readers to get to know the characters as well as they should. The text is not broken into paragraphs, which makes it hard to follow each change of scene or even changes in point-of-view. For example, the beginning of the book is told from Ann's point-of-view, but soon it seems to shift to Joe's perspective.

Summer Flowers could have used some editing. Grammatical errors and spelling mistakes litter the novel's pages. This is not only a distraction, but it results in confusion. The novel would be more effective if the pace were slowed down, with details spaced out, paragraphs made shorter, and smooth transitions created between scenes.

Kowalski should have either focused on the supernatural, the romantic entanglements, or on one of the many characters rather than switching between scenes, situations, and characters. One thing is certain—the author is not short on ideas.