

"One Summer" is Naureen Kabir's first book. It is about four friends, Cosette, Regina, Maria and Rachael who set off for Australia to spend their summer vacation. Summer in Australia and without the guardianship of parents! They could hardly wait to breathe in the whole of the land of koalas, kangaroos and Eucalyptus trees. What they did not know was that an adventure was in store for them and that the experience would teach them lessons that would change their lives forever.

Written by a fourteen-year-old, this book has all the elements that a young teenage girl would like to read about. It reminds us of the many adventure stories like Nancy Drew and Sweet Valley Teens that we've read in our childhood. The fashion factor has also been considered and that adds colour to the story. Overall, this book is a teenager's attempt at recreating the effect of her favourite series and her effort deserves praise. Perhaps her creation would have been more appealing if she portrayed characters from her own surrounding and developed the scenario in her own country. It would have given the story an original background and would have given the author more scope for creativity.

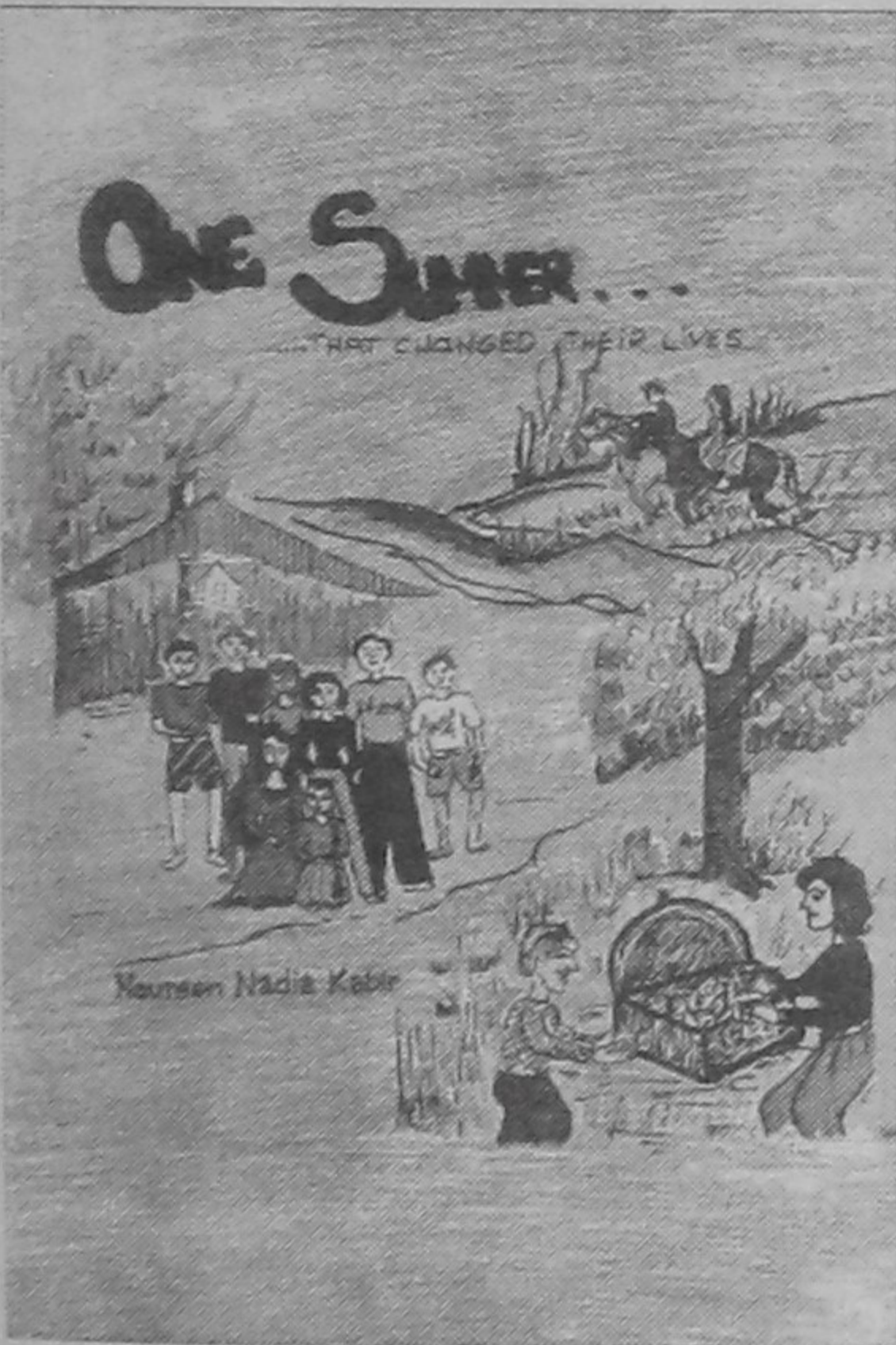
The friends are described as fabulously pretty, each as different from one another as could be and most interestingly, they are each of different nationalities. Cosette was born and brought up in France, Regina in Switzerland, Maria in Brazil and Rachael in England. They have all been living in Michigan, USA for two years, and they attended the same school. They are all around fourteen years old. The author tries to build up the movie-perfect picture with four fourteen-year-old girls pretty, popular and confident. From the beginning, Regina and Cosette stand out in the group because one is a natural leader and the other is noisy. Rachael is described as 'prim and proper' and Maria as a 'Brazilian beauty', but the readers cannot feel acquainted with their personalities simply because they never say or do anything significant. However, one would expect Rachael to be a little more prominent because the other three are her guests.

## Book Review

# ONE SUMMER...

...THAT CHANGED THEIR LIVES

Author: Naureen Nadia Kabir



Four good-looking boys enter the scene and naturally, that is a source of excitement for the readers. They are Garret-Rachael's cousin, Kevin-Garret's cousin, Scott and Rick, both Garret's friends. The author has not disregarded the implication of the situation and has only hinted at

romance. Kevin is attracted to Cosette and Scott to Regina. Its good that she did make up four pairs out of her eight characters, as is initially expected. Regina, the heroine finds a treasure map and the story gains momentum and dives headlong into the adventure. They journey to Tasmania all the way from New South Wales and during this time, an incident induces a quarrel between them. Finally they find the treasure a chest of gold coins. But too few words are engaged to describe the situation the awe and triumph of the adventurous teenagers is not elaborately dealt with. It is at points such as these that the author could have shown her empathetic skills by describing the human reactions of her characters.

Hardly had the treasures been enjoyed when the eight finders are kidnapped by a group of bad guys. They are taken to another island to find a second chest of treasures. The leader of the gang is Mack and Regina secretly discovers that he is actually a cop, out to catch the real kidnapers in disguise. Even at a critical period as this, the friends are constantly suspecting one another and quarreling and the readers are a little bewildered at the petty reason of the dispute.

The second chest is found and an action-filled scene follows. The police arrive and chase the real bad guys. Kevin is hurt and Mack gets shot and dies trying to save Regina. Regina is too shocked and she falls into a coma. This part is similar to many movies because Mack is portrayed as a very good person at heart who is devastated by the death of his beloved sister, who looked like Regina. He tries to act tough to serve his purpose but his goodness and his weakness for Regina shows through his actions. The author tries to make a tragic hero out of him.

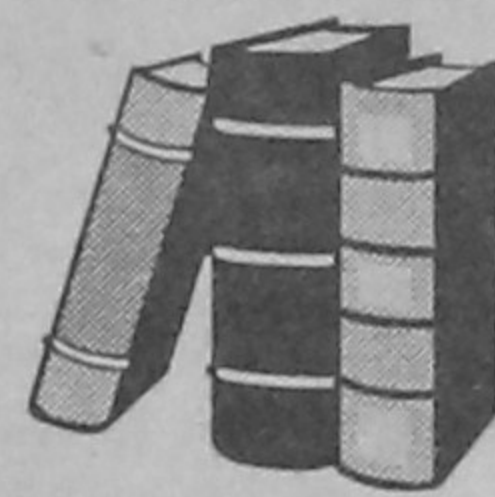
The story ends with an attempt to add substance to the whole thing. The author explains how each character had been taught a different lesson and how they go back home with different philosophies. Regina can never recover from the shock that Mack's death had caused. The others become more sober and go into humanitarian professions, though there is little throughout the story that explains this sudden change in their mental make-up.

I feel that this book is commendable as the effort of a fourteen-year-old. But perhaps it would be a more worthwhile reading material if the author added more substance to it.

Reviewed by Nilanjana Rahman

# WATZ UP this Week

By Simnan Abbas



## Weekly cd review

(compiled from mtvasia.com)

Most people have heard of Savage Garden and few of their songs. For those who don't know of them, here's what you are missing.



Savage Garden: "Affirmation" (Sony Records)

Rating: 3.5/5

Choice Cuts: "I Knew I Loved You," "Affirmation," "The Best Thing," "The Animal Song"

I believe that many of us have been waiting eagerly for this new album by Savage Garden, the Aussie duo who in 1997 brought us the mega-selling self-titled debut containing the Billboard No. 1 single "Truly Madly Deeply." Well, here is "Affirmation," and it is an affirmation that, unlike other flash-in-the-pan pop bands, that you can't tell apart from a cement wall, Savage Garden have actually come up with an appealing, well-crafted follow-up. I.e.-they're good!

Starting the album is the title track, a unique track that begins with "I believe" for every line of the song. Taking a closer look at the lyrics, you'll find that every line is a killer quote. For example, check this out: "I believe that junk food tastes so good because it's bad for you." How about: "I believe that beauty magazines promote low esteem" or "I believe you can't appreciate real love until you've been burned"? How true!

Compared to their last album, "Affirmation" contains more romantic ballads this time around. Songs like "I Knew I Loved You," "Hold Me," "The Lover After Me," and the heart wrenching "Two Beds And A Coffee Machine" make nice (and sad) little songs to listen to - if you are looking forward to some somber contemplation.

Looking at the duo's current popularity, it appears that titling the album, as "Affirmation" is a really good idea - especially if one believes that the album's title has something to do with its success or failure. Well, superstitions aside, it is definitely the duo's knack for crafting lingering ear candies that drive "The Animal Song" and "I Knew I Loved You" up the charts.

With "I Knew I Loved You" hogging the limelight now, just make sure you give the other songs on the album a chance too. See if you can pick the next hit out of the many potential singles.



## Web-site of the Week

Dialpad.com

If you have some relatives or friends in the USA this should be a very useful web-site. Dialpad allows you to make calls to the USA for free. If you are suspicious of any hidden costs or membership fee's let me assure you that there are no such pesky things as costs. According to its web site, dialpad is able to make phone calls through the USA at a very cheap rate. It allows customers to use the phone services for free, then covers the expenses up through advertising. Dialpad has over 2,50,000 users (I'm not surprised). Minimum system requirements for using this are: Microsoft Windows 95/98/NT, MS Explorer 4.0 or better/Netscape Navigator 4.5 or better, an

Internet connection, a sound card and a microphone/speaker. However, as a seasoned user, I should warn you that you would require a fast Internet connection to be able to use dialpad optimally.



## Book of the week

Pandora- Anne Rice

Anne Rice is the author of stories such as "Interview with a vampire". Her books usually center on vampires, their customs and what not. Anyway, her vampires aren't just a bunch of blood sucking leeches with nothing better to do than make sure that they don't get sun burnt, Anne Rice's characters are beautiful, (of course) smart, independent, resourceful, and really really slick.

In this new book The title Character is a highborn woman of Augustan Rome who later names herself after the Pandora of mythology, opening her own box of surprises. Sitting in a modern-day Paris café in the aftermath of a fresh skill, the vampire Pandora accepts the challenge of recounting her history and immediately sets to work, filling the blank pages of an elegant leather-bound notebook.

Don't let this summary discourage you. The book is good; it's worth reading it. BTW- did you know that the name of the band "Savage Garden" comes from one of Anne Rice's Novels? You can buy this book just about everywhere.



## Things to do for the week

I couldn't find any concert stuff and all, sorry. However you could always do something close to your heart during the week. For all you art lovers out there, why don't you check out the latest exhibition at the Dhaka University Art Gallery? I'm sure that there is some exhibition going on (there always has been). Science buffs can try to build something or the other. But here is what I'll suggest. Those of you, who are music fans, can go to the stadium market (In Motijheel). I went there sometime ago and bought a ton of CD's. An average CD there costs 100tk, whereas if you buy them from anywhere else in town it'll cost three times more. You can also buy VCD's there for approx. the same price. I also saw a few games; I'm sure there are plenty more if you look around. Tip- be ready to bargain, even though the shopkeepers insist that prices are fixed they can be brought down a bit.



## Movie of the week

Blue Streak

Compiled from yahoo.com

Rating: (3.9/5)

Starring: Martin Lawrence, Luke Wilson, Dave Chappelle, William Forsythe and Peter Greene

Miles Logan is a talented jewel thief who is involved in a \$20 million jewelry heist that goes bad, and he is forced to hide the precious diamonds at a construction site. Three years later, Logan is out of jail and returns to pick up his loot. One problem: the site where he hid the diamonds is now a L.A. police precinct. To recover his stash, Logan impersonates a detective and with his rookie partner in tow, finds himself in the midst of drug busts, car chases and robberies. Using his criminal expertise to solve case after case, Logan inadvertently wins the admiration of his "fellow cops" as he tries desperately to recover his stolen diamonds.

Blue Streak is funny, no doubt, but it lacks something that is hard to find in many movies: a substantial plot. But then, I guess without these incongruous sets of circumstances Miles Logan wouldn't be able to do all the really stupid things he does. Anyway, if you're feeling depressed you can also watch this movie for a light time.