



The Big Beautiful

Pamela Duncan

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The critically acclaimed author returns to the North Carolina landscape she knows so well with this gloriously written sequel to **Moon Women**.

On an eastbound North Carolina interstate highway, the mountains and her hometown far behind, Cassandra Moon realizes that she has not only broken the heart of the one man who's ever asked her to marry—on their wedding day, no less—but she's driven the limousine into the ground, gotten "skunk drunk" on the champagne, and has somehow managed to get herself stuck in the sunroof while still in her wedding gown. Caught in a whirlwind of taffeta and tulle, heartache and second guesses, Cassandra desperately needs some peace of mind. When she arrives in the coastal town of Salter Path—disheveled and in the company of a mysterious red-haired seafaring man—Cassandra knows for sure that her life has taken a turn she can't quite understand. But the people Cassandra encounters on this unexpected odyssey will share with her the hurts and hopes of a lifetime, and she may finally realize that getting lost in this oceanside town, in the memories and dreams of its people, is the only way she'll be found.

The Big Beautiful Details

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From Reader Review The Big Beautiful for online ebook

Tammy L. Noble says

Such a great book!

My favorite from Pamela Duncan! I loved her other two books but this is such a great book! I did not want to put it down and did not want it to end.

Please write more!

Patricia Keefe says

I'm not from the south, and I'm not a romance novel reader. I usually read mysteries or thrillers and the occasional Stephen King. That being said, I loved The Big Beautiful and couldn't put it down. The characters are down to earth and may remind you of people you know in real life. They were hard to leave at the end of the book and they will hang around in my sub-conscious for a long time to come.

I read the book in the wrong order and will now read Moon Women (this is the sequel) and hope that maybe someday Pamela will decide to make this a trilogy. I sure would like to know what happens to Annie Laurie and Jim, Dennis, Doris, May, the turtles . . .

The humor alone is worth the price of the book. I was hooked in the first chapter and I haven't laughed so hard in a long time. Cassandra Moon has the ability to laugh at herself and life around her while learning to love herself and more importantly, believe in herself as the wonderful person she is.

I had the privilege of participating in one of Pamela Duncan's summer novel writing workshops. I am a writer myself and she is just as charming in person as the characters of her book. If you write, or if you think you would like to write, and you see a workshop with her name on it, run to the registration.

Tawnya says

This book had a good base story to it, however I found that the climax was not as big as I thought for how the author was setting it up for. It also seemed like some of the parts were just skimmed over and there could have been a lot more in depth things to it. Overall it was a pretty easy read.

Christina says

Like its predecessor, Moon Women, this is a book I return to and am reading over a very long period of time. I found it on the shelf with a bookmark about halfway so I still need to finish it. I started when I was pregnant and at that time I had a very difficult time reading books and switched to magazines (mostly craft/sewing/art). In both books you can remember the characters and what was going on when you read it last - even if it was a year ago - but I'm not driven to inhale it like some books but am drawn back to it at

different times of the year.

Beth Browne says

Ok, I admit it. I'm a sucker for romance. You can have the chills and thrills, give me love and kisses. Pamela Duncan's book, *The Big Beautiful*, has both, along with a plot that takes off running and characters you want to adopt for your own family.

At forty-five, Cassandra Moon thinks she's been given a last chance at love and marriage with Dennis, but as she heads down the aisle, she realizes that something just isn't right. She runs out of the church, jumps in the waiting limousine, cranks it up and burns rubber in front of the crowd gaping on the front steps.

When the limo runs out of gas Cassandra is rescued by a mysterious man in uniform who turns out to be closely acquainted with Cassandra's Aunt May. Cassandra has fond memories of summers spent with May and Walton in Salter Path and, having no other plans, decides to spend the summer in May's cottage.

Dennis reappears, having resolved to win her back, and he and the mysterious rescuer Hector set about competing for her attention. Along the way, Cassandra falls in love with Aunt May's motley crew of salty friends, including twelve-year-old Annie Laurie, Hector's motherless daughter. Cassandra also enjoys several unexpected and exciting adventures before coming to the ultimate and satisfying conclusion.

This exuberant tale is set against the backdrop of the North Carolina coast, a setting Pamela Duncan weaves into the narrative with a deft hand. There are quite a few moments of pure joy, such as this one:

“This must be how turtles felt, coming back into the water after laying their eggs, the exhilaration of weightless freedom after being so heavy and burdened on land. Naked as the day she came into the world, nothing between her skin and the water, she became part of the big beautiful...”

Cassandra struggles with her self-worth, determined to find meaning in life and finds all that and more in some surprising places. The book is a fun and entertaining read with surprising depth. And who couldn't use a nice vacation at the beach? I'll take one, even if it lies between the covers of a book, especially if it's a really good book.

Robin Hammond says

The book started out great making me laugh out loud. The last third meandered too much with too many characters and irrelevant side stories. *Moon Women* is by far Ms. Duncan's best effort.

JG (The Introverted Reader) says

Cassandra Moon, firmly in her 40s, is finally getting married. She's been taking care of others all her life and now she's looking forward to having someone else take care of her for a change. All she has to do is walk down the aisle and say "I do." So why does she find herself in her wedding dress, driving like a bat out of hell in the honeymoon limo and heading for the coast, still a single woman? She must be crazy.

She ends up staying with her Aunt May and Uncle Walton in Salter Path, NC. She loved visiting there as a child and she's hoping to get some time to herself to figure out what she really wants. Everyone else is always telling her what she *should* want and she's tired of it. She just needs some downtime to get things straight in her own heart and mind.

I have enjoyed all of Pamela Duncan's books but this one is my favorite. Cassandra first showed up in *Moon Women*. In my review of that book, I wrote, "Poor Cassandra. I wasn't entirely happy with her story, but there's a glimmer of hope for her. I'll have to dive into *The Big Beautiful* soon to see how she ends up." I am much happier with her story now. She does a lot of growing up and thinking and gets a stronger backbone. I want to start praising her to the skies but I don't want to spoil anything. Her development and her reactions all felt real and right. She has a great big heart and I think she finally starts to focus on her strengths and blessings rather than her shortcomings. I just love books where women make that journey successfully.

The other characters in the book were a hoot! Aunt May and Doris were hilarious. They sparred all the time but their love for each other was apparent. Uncle Walton was wisely quiet and always there. Young Annie Laurie gave Cassandra someone to love on and look out for. Dennis and Hector were good foils for each other and for Cassandra. When I wasn't irritated with this bunch right along with Cassandra, I was wishing I could meet them in real life. They felt like family.

I loved the location! My family used to go on vacation every summer to Emerald Isle, NC and Salter Path is just up the island from there. I have a lot of great memories of that little town and long summer days with my extended family. It brought a smile to my face when I realized where Cassandra was.

The family and friends have formed a book/poker club (don't ask) and they read *Persuasion* with Cassandra. If you've followed my blog at all, you know that I *love* Captain Wentworth. There are parallels between spinster Anne Elliot and Cassandra. And there's a scene where the book club is reading "The Letter" out loud. I melt inside whenever I think of that letter. This isn't a huge part of the book but it only added to my enjoyment.

It helps a little to have read *Moon Women* before reading *The Big Beautiful* but I don't feel that it's necessary. If you do read them out of order, you'll come across some spoilers if you're really paying attention. Since the focus has shifted to the family on the coast, you would really have to have a good head for characters to really remember and connect them together though.

I highly, highly recommend this book. It was a joy to read and it left me with a huge smile on my face.

Barbara says

I like this book. It was an easy read but it was a book that made you feel good. I felt like I wanted to take a trip to their area and visit the people and sit in the sun and enjoy the water. The characters had a good rapport with the readers. I liked the main character and her feelings about family and life. A nice story with a happy ending despite all of the drama.

Amy Christopher says

Great book

Loved the setting and the characters. Will read this author again!! Great plot and setting. Would love to see characters develop over another book

Susan Reeves deMasi says

Not as charming as the first book (The Moon Women).

Dianna says

Enjoyable enough

Good, homespun southern read. Leaned just a tad more toward the romance genre than I like, but perfect for the lighter read I was seeking.

Nance says

DNF

Kay Carman says

It's bad enough that bride-to-be Cassandra Moon left her groom at the altar. But did she have to take off with the poor chap's limousine, too? Now the fraught, forty-four-year-old North Carolinian finds herself careening toward the coast in the company of a copiously freckled sea captain who just might be the man of her dreams. The two wind up in the idyllic town of Salter Path (a real place) where Cassandra sets her mind on figuring out how and why her life's gone awry. The citizenry of Salter Path constitutes a quirky lot, including Cassandra's irrepressible Aunt May, who's determined to move the TV remote control with her mind.

Cheryl says

Cassandra is a runaway bride. She's an older bride at forty five years old, and while she thinks its now or never, never starts feeling a whole lot better. Walking down the aisle, the very last minute she turns around, takes her finance's limo and drives who knows where. She decides to take the summer off in North Carolina, staying with relatives and figure out what she really wants to do with her life. She needs to get away from her sister, brothers and her kind but annoying finance Dennis. Cassandra is equal parts lovable and aggravating. Very impulsive and mercurial, but with huge loving heart. She's a big girl and that has played havoc on her self esteem, that and her bitchy sister Ruth Ann that can't help but give advice that seems awfully self serving for Ruth Ann.

I enjoyed this way more than I thought I would, as there is definitely a romance element to it, that I thought I'd hate, but ended up not. What I loved most about it was how the writer really made the location so real. I could smell that beach and feel the breeze.

DeB MaRtEnS says

Love this author... loved Moon Women and this one was a great follow up. Mysterious, complex and loveable characters.
