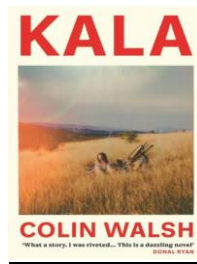


## Book Review



I cannot remember a time when I have not enjoyed reading or not had a pile of books to work my way through. Books are always something that I receive as presents or book vouchers. At Christmas I had 4 new books, the debut novel '**Kala**' by **Colin Walsh** was one of them.

The novel is set in Kinlough, a fictitious community on the west coast of Ireland, and revolves around 6 youngsters and the events of summer 2003 which reverberate down the rest of their lives.

The story of that summer and the present day (2018) is narrated by three of the characters – Mush, Helen and Joe – which structures the story and draws the reader in. From the very beginning we know that Kala, portrayed as a beautiful, mysterious and intrepid individual at the heart of the group of friends, disappeared during the summer of 2003. Mush, Helen and Joe are reunited in the summer of 2018. Mush has remained in Kinlough and works in his Mum's café, Helen has returned from living abroad to attend her father's wedding and Joe (a now a famous musician) is performing in his home town. The 3 friends have their past colliding with the present, when Kala's remains are discovered and they find themselves revisiting that memorable last summer together and searching for resolution to long unanswered questions.

This was a novel that totally drew me in and one that I looked forward to reading whenever I had a spare moment – not just at bedtime. Colin Walsh's characterisation of Mush, Helen and Joe is detailed and easily evokes the feelings of youth, juxtapositioned with the realities and frustrations they are dealing with in adulthood. As the plot moves along their individual stories unfold and we gain understanding about what has happened to shape Mush, Helen and Joe in the last 15 years. The switching between characters narrating the same events provides us with a perspective that is continually shifting, but successfully knits the story together, cleverly bringing the past and present together in the climax of the story and resolution of Kala's disappearance.

I hope this review entices you to read it, but there are plenty positive ones online!

[Kala by Colin Walsh review – vanishings, betrayals and friends reunited in rural Ireland | Fiction | The Guardian](#)