

Book Review: None of This is True
By Lisa Jewell

Don't believe everything you hear. And sometimes, what you see as well.

That's part of the premise behind Lisa Jewell's psychological thriller "None of This is True." Chances are you will get to the end of this intriguing novel not knowing who or what to believe. And that's a sign of good writing.

Alix Summer is a 45-year-old podcaster. Josie Fair is a 45-year-old housewife working part-time as a seamstress. They learn through a chance meeting at a London pub celebrating their respective birthdays that not only were they born on the same day, but in the same hospital as well.

Josie can't shake the feeling that there's a connection between her and Alix. And after listening to Alix's podcasts about successful women, they bump into each other again (or was this deviously planned?) on the street near the school Alix's young children attend. Josie tells Alix she is on the verge of huge changes in her life and convinces Alix to include her in the successful women series.

As the story progresses, we learn there are many bizarre elements to Josie's life. She married her husband Walter, who is now 72, when she was 16 years old. She paints him as a pedophile who she must break free from. Her 16-year-old daughter Roxy ran away from home a couple of years ago, and her 21-year-old daughter Erin is a recluse gamer.

Alix's life is not without its share of drama. Her two young children are normal enough, but her husband, Nathan, frequently goes on benders, sleeping them off in hotels and coming home the following afternoon.

The more Alix learns about Josie through recordings for her podcast, the more questions arise about what is and isn't real in her storytelling. And we *know* something big is coming

because interspersed between the chapters are interviews for a filmed Netflix documentary series called “Hi! I’m Your Birthday Twin!” It’s heavy-duty foreshadowing, and it works well to keep the narrative driving forward.

The more you read, the clearer it becomes that Josie is a train wreck waiting to happen, and her stories are as creepy as they are intoxicating. And Alix and her family are caught in the middle. You’ll likely find yourself wanting to grab Alix by the shoulders and tell her to wake up before it’s too late. But Josie’s story is addictive, and it’s what makes “None of This is True” a suspenseful, compelling novel that’s hard to put down.

The ending was a bit disappointing, in my opinion, but I understand the purgatory limbo Jewell chooses as her climax.

I give 4.5 out of 5 stars to “None of This is True.” And that’s exactly how you’ll feel when you turn the last page: does anyone’s story ring true?