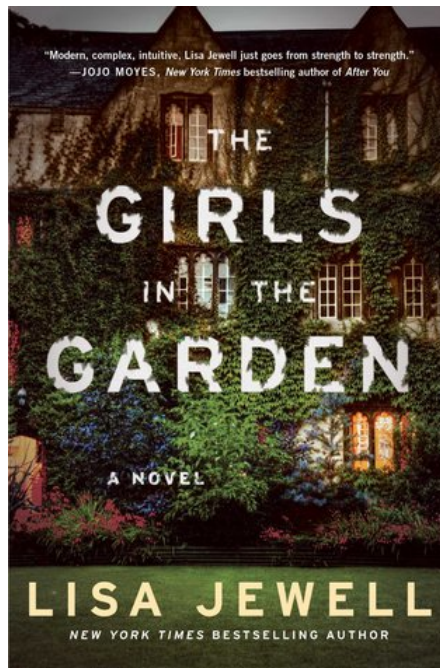




The Girls in the Garden

Lisa Jewell

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The Girls in the Garden Lisa Jewell

Imagine that you live on a picturesque communal garden square, an oasis in urban London where your children run free, in and out of other people's houses. You've known your neighbors for years and you trust them. Implicitly. You think your children are safe. But are they really?

On a midsummer night, as a festive neighborhood party is taking place, preteen Pip discovers her thirteen-year-old sister Grace lying unconscious and bloody in a hidden corner of a lush rose garden. What really happened to her? And who is responsible?

Dark secrets, a devastating mystery, and the games both children and adults play all swirl together in this gripping novel, packed with utterly believable characters and page-turning suspense.

The Girls in the Garden Details

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Author : Lisa Jewell

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Suspense, Contemporary, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review The Girls in the Garden for online ebook

Melissa says

This is a character-driven novel at it's best. Odd, eccentric, maybe even a little strange, the characters in this book kept me in the dark until the end. I had a hard time deciphering who was legit and who was shady.

The story takes place in central London in a community that backs up to a large private park. A park where kids are free to roam from house to house, at all hours of the day, and the adults are in everyone else's business. It's communal living and almost manages to come off as charming. In the beginning.

As the story progressed and the cracks started to show, it didn't seem so great to me anymore. Everything that I had originally liked sort of took on a sinister tone. It wasn't all happiness and light. It was years of lies, jealousy and dysfunction.

"Best to keep yourself to yourself out there. Don't get too involved."

I really like Lisa Jewell's style. This is the second book of hers I've read and enjoyed. I don't know if I would consider this a suspense, maybe more of a dark women's fiction novel. I think in that realm her stories are different and sort of refreshing.

This particular book wasn't fast-paced in my opinion, but where the pacing lacked she made up for in the depth of her characters. I think she managed to make them down to earth and weirdly authentic. Not that I didn't enjoy them, but they were definitely a strange bunch. In my opinion, of course.

In the end, there was a piece of me that still wanted a little bit more. More definitive answers and some sort of justice. I guess what I'm trying to say is that it felt like a big build-up to a pretty lackluster ending.

"Things happen in that park differently to how they happen in the real world. Different rules apply."

ARC kindly provided by Atria and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Norma * Traveling Sister says

Traveling Sisters Review by NORMA, BRENDA and JALINE!!

LISA JEWELL sure has a knack at keeping us totally engaged with all the red herrings and leaving so many cliffhangers throughout this book that had us all turning those pages as fast as we could.

THE GIRL IN THE GARDEN by LISA JEWELL is an engrossing, intriguing, steady-paced, and a suspenseful mystery with lots of twists and turns along the way that kept us all reading and guessing right to the very end. We were pretty much suspicious of every character!

LISA JEWELL delivers a character-driven story here that is cleverly written in such a skillful way that allowed us to really get into the voices of our main character's and the storyline. With the help of a map of the communal complex on the first page of the book we were able to picture the characters homes and where the events took place within the book.

We all loved the enchanting communal garden that appears to be the perfect oasis and a parent's dream place to let their kids play and always have friends around, however we soon learn of the danger lurking in the garden. Two mysteries are among the bushes and thorns that had us suspecting almost everyone and Jaline even suspected a total bystander. We came up with a few different scenarios and our thriller imaginations were running all over the place. In the end we were very happy we were wrong about many.

Although, we wouldn't say that this was a nail-biting thriller it was the way that the story was told and the drama within that really grabbed our attention. Would recommend!

All of our Traveling Sister Reads Reviews can be found on our blog:
<http://www.twogirlslostinacouleereadi...>

Julie says

The Girls in the Garden by Lisa Jewell is a 2016 Atria publication.

This is my first novel by this author, but now that she is on my radar I plan to check out her other books, as well.

When Clare's husband, Chris, has a psychotic episode, and winds up institutionalized, she and her daughters, Grace and Pip, move into a new apartment surrounded by a delightful communal garden. Grace begins to worm her way into the group of kids who hang out in the park, while Pip hangs back, writing her father letters, telling all about their new life, and observing things from a distance. When Grace makes new friends, Clare finds herself getting a little friendly with her neighbors, Adele and Leo. Leo makes the biggest impression on her with his easy going, slightly flirtatious manner, prompting her to open up about her problems, which seems to lighten her burden considerably.

But, when Grace is found unconscious, and hospitalized, remaining in a coma, leaving everyone unsure of what happened to her, a dark side of the idealistic garden community is exposed, with long buried secrets coming to light, prompting some to take drastic measures to protect one of their own.

In some ways, this story is a little quirky, told from various POV's, but also does a pretty good job of creating a feeling of unease, and building suspense at a steady pace, with a few very surprising twists thrown in along the way.

Despite the odd presentation and the strange way these characters developed, leaving me unsure of how I felt about them, I enjoyed the book, and found it weirdly absorbing, and kind of unique, which is a good thing!

So, overall, I enjoyed the book, although it wasn't exactly what I was expecting, and think fans of psychological suspense will like this one too.

3.5 stars

Chelsea Humphrey says

COVER LOVE! The first thing that drew me to this book on NetGalley was the cover. That mixed with the concept of living in a somewhat communal neighborhood sold me. I'll be honest, I've always dreamed of what it would be like to raise my baby girls in a simpler time; one where "it took a village" and everyone's door was always open to visitors. I think our generation has lost something important in the fact that we are so incredibly isolated as families now; not borrowing sugar from our neighbors and having another families kids over for the night so that their parents could have a night off. This book did a fantastic job of solidifying that vision for me while also bringing to light all the things that can go wrong when you are too close to your neighbors.

This particular story is told from multiple POVs. We open with a somewhat gruesome scene where a 13 year old girl is found unconscious and clothing askew. We then go back in time to fill in the events that brought us here, mainly from Pip (sister to Grace who was found unconscious), Adele (mother of friends of Pip and Grace's who also live in the Garden), and Clare (mother to Pip and Grace). While there is the underlying mystery of what happened to Grace, there are also a few more minor side stories thrown in, one involving the absence of Clare's husband.

While this wasn't a heart pounding thriller, it did manage to keep my attention nicely once everything was set up. I loved the childlike drawings thrown in by Pip in the letters to her father. My favorite character was Adele; she was such a strong character and I found her sense of humor refreshing and a little lighter air when the mood was getting too somber. I also really enjoyed Gordon's character (I know he was despicable and unlikable but he always made me laugh!); my favorite scene in the book was when he was singing:

"Cecilia, you're breaking my heart, you're shaking my confidence daily," giving a showgirl kick at the doorway and wiggling his large bottom just once before disappearing.

Overall, it wasn't what I was expecting but I thoroughly enjoyed it and will be reading more from Lisa Jewell!

*** I'd like to thank NetGalley and Lisa Jewell for my copy in exchange for an honest and fair review. This did not influence my opinions and all thoughts are my own.**

Jaline says

This was a Traveling Sisters Read & Review with Brenda and Norma, and was my first experience with a group read. I can't think of two people who could possibly have made it easier – or more fun!! For more fabulous Sisters Reviews as well as other Traveling Sisters Reviews, please visit their site at: <https://twogirlslostinacouleereading....>

Lisa Jewell sure knows how to ramp up the suspense – and how to throw out a red herring or five or ten!

Luckily, there is a nifty map/diagram right on the first page of this book showing the housing complex where the events in this story take place. There are also handy little arrows with the grown-ups' names on them showing where they live in relation to each other and the various areas in the communal park. I found it helpful to jot these down because there are a lot of children in this story, and it helped to write the children's names in under the names of their parents or guardians.

The novel takes place around the attack of a young girl in the communal park after a big annual event in the park on a day that happens to be the girl's 13th Birthday. We know this right from the beginning. From there, the back stories of all the people who are part of this story unfold and intertwine.

This book has more twists and curves than the switchbacks on a mountain road! I was completely immersed in the story while harboring suspicion toward at least 6 or 7 characters. Brenda, Norma, and I assigned ourselves reading goals and then would email as a group to discuss our impressions. We all pretty much suspected everyone – I even suspected a totally innocent bystander!

I found the ending to be very satisfying and, if not completely happy, it left me feeling hopeful that everyone in the book had learned valuable lessons from the events that took place, and that they would ultimately allow those lessons to govern their futures.

Altogether, this was a thoroughly enjoyable read – and a very clever, well-written book! I recommend it to anyone who enjoys suspense stories that are so real they could be happening in your own neighbourhood park!

Laura says

This story really puzzled me, and not completely in a good way. I find it hard to decide exactly which genre it falls under - its a little drama, a little mystery, a little crime. Jewell is known for stories featuring complex family and friend orientated issues, which this book does well. However, there is no one lead protagonist, which makes it difficult to fully understand any one character.

When Clare and her two pre-teen daughters move into an open-plan housing estate (the synopsis touts it as a commune of sort, which it actually isn't), they are welcomed by a host of neighbours and their children. The reader is introduced to both Clare and her neighbour Adele's families, whilst events unfold resulting in one of Clare's daughters becoming seriously injured.

I didn't particularly warm to either Clare or Adele, they were each too one-dimensional and cliched. The reader meets so many different people who are part of the estate, that its difficult to keep up withe everyone, their actions and their motivations.

The writing style is fair, if feeling a little amateur at times. I have read a few of Jewell's other novels, and I truly find them hit and miss. Despite the cover art screaming "compelling" "gripping" and "fascinating" I just didn't feel any of those things. If I had three words to sum up my thoughts on this book, they would instead have to be: underwhelming, forced and disappointing.

Maureen says

'The Girls' is set in a terrace of houses and flats in London, and they share one of those picturesque communal walled gardens. Whilst providing lots of freedom for the kids who live there, it also has a claustrophobic feel about it - it's a place of secrets, whisperings and past misdeeds.

When Grace is found unconscious in the gardens on her 13th birthday, it opens a can of worms for the residents. Mysteries from the past are brought to light, along with many questions that need to be answered. There are lots of clues and misdirections as to who is responsible, but I couldn't have guessed how it was going to end. This was a gripping tale from Lisa Jewell, an author I'm not familiar with, but I would certainly

read more from her.

Thank you to Netgalley and Random House UK, Cornerstone for my free 'Wish For It' copy

Esil says

What is it with all these books with “Girls” in the title? The last book I read was The Girls. Now I have just finished The Girls in the Garden – which I gather was titled The Girls in the UK. And last year I read Those Girls...

And what is it with seat mates on flights who don't get the hint when you have your nose in a book? Last year it happened when I was reading The Seven Good Years. Yesterday, it happened as I was reading The Girls in the Garden. Some drunken idiot sitting next to me kept asking what I was reading, whether it was any good, and sorry for bothering you, it won't happen again... I used to read too but I don't have time anymore, how's that book by the way ...

Anyways, The Girls in the Garden is the second book I have read by Lisa Jewell. I read The Third Wife last year. It made me think that Jewell is a very good story teller, but I had a bit of an issue with the main male character and the women who fawned over him. I'm glad that I took a chance on The Girls in the Garden, because Jewell is indeed a good story teller. Set in London, the story focuses on a group of families that live off a communal garden. Adele and Leo have lived there for many years with their three home schooled daughters. Clare moves in with her two daughters in the shadow of a recent tragic event. And there are other adults and children in the mix. Something nasty happens to one of Clare's daughter's at the beginning of the book – it's not particularly brutal so no need to shy away if you're squeamish. And the rest of the book goes back and forth in time and unpacks the dynamics between these characters -- what happened before and in the aftermath of the event. What I like about Jewell's storytelling is that her characters and family dynamics don't feel pat or conventional. Characters are flawed -- but not awful. Children are less innocent than their parents give them credit for – but they're normal kids motivated by wanting to be accepted by friends and loved by family. It all kept me turning the pages at a furious clip – despite my obnoxious seat mate. Nothing deep, but a good story with a satisfying end. Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy.

Li'l Owl says

A beautiful private garden where close-knit families keep the children safe from the dangers of urban London.

Or does it?

Pip watches him go, feeling that something is wrong.

"Grace!" she calls out. "Grace!"

There is something on the brow of the hill, a strange shape emerging from the hedge that encircles the Rose Garden. She heads toward it.

"Grace!" she calls again.

"Grace!"

As she nears the shape she can see it is a foot. She holds her breath deep inside her body and rounds the corner timorously.

The foot is attached to a person. Pip passes the beam from her mobile phone across the figure: a girl, half-undressed. Shorts yanked down to her thighs, floral camisole top lifted above her small naked breasts. Her hair is spread about her. Her face is a bloodied mass.

Grace

Pip drops to her knees. "No," she mutters, "no. No. No. No." She pulls Grace's camisole down, pulls her shorts up. Then she runs down the hill, runs and runs, toward the warm safe lights of the Howse's apartment, toward the grown-ups, her heart thumping piston-hard in her chest.

The Girls in the Garden by Lisa Jewell begins with a terrible crime, catching my attention right off. The reader is then taken back in time, before the attack on Grace, giving us an up close view into the lives of the characters living in Virginia Park, a picturesque, seemingly safe haven in the center of London. I was drawn into the world of engaging characters, each of whom have a unique quality about them. The dynamic writing gave me the impression that the garden seems safe, and yet....

There is an undercurrent of hesitation, a feeling just below the surface that seems dangerous somehow. The twists kept me off guard and as an avid reader of mysteries, I thought I had the attacker pegged. I was wrong. I love Lisa Jewell!

Diane S ? says

3.5 From the very beginning we know something terrible has happened, which lends an ominous air to all that follows. After a family disaster Clare and her two daughters move into this gorgeous place that because of its communal space, acres that are shared by all the houses surrounding it, seem like a good place to call home.

I kept thinking of Lord of the Flies as I was reading this. Children that seem to be basically raising themselves, either because of neglect, a hands-off approach to child rearing, or because it is assumed they are safe. Didn't agree with much in the way of parenting here, not sure I cared much for the parents who seem oblivious to all the undercurrents happening within this gang of kids. Pip, who is only twelve seems to have more sense than any of them.

Still, it was an engrossing story and one I would have rated a solid four except for the ending. Seemed somewhat anticlimactic, not in keeping with the rest of the story. That is of course only my own opinion and up to then felt the story flowed well, was suspenseful because the reader knows where it will lead but not how or who. This author has a good storytelling ability and it is well worth the read. Maybe as a precautionary tale for parents.

ARC from Netgalley..

Jan says

This is my first read by author Lisa Jewell, but it certainly won't be my last!

While the storyline had some issues for me-I had a good idea how this was going to play out relatively early on-it was Jewell's descriptive writing style and character development that really drew me in. This is a well

written family drama with a good dose of mystery/suspense to keep everyone on their toes.

This whole story takes place in a neighborhood of London where the flats are all connected and they all share a communal walled 'garden' instead of individual backyards. Children are allowed to run free and independently with friends they've grown up with for years. Neighbors become a part of the family and bonds are formed. I could see this fictional garden in my head-from the benches and the rose garden, to Rhea's sitting on her balcony with her giant rabbit.

But what happens when a single mother of 2 teenage girls moves in to this tight-knit world? Everything is not as perfect as it seems, and slowly things go off kilter. Families with secrets, teenage love, green-eyed monsters, and an unresolved 15 year old murder of a young girl that was killed in this very garden make for a captivating story that I found hard to put down.

There are some really stand out characters in this story. Like every other female in the book, I too fell madly in love with Leo. Of course Leo is fictional...does anyone like him really exist?! :-) Even Gordan, Leo's grumpy and obnoxious father was well imagined, and I think we all have someone like him in our own family. But my absolute favorite has to be Pip. 12 years old but wise beyond her years, with a fierce love for her family that is infectious.

I highly recommend this drama to all lovers of fiction...there is a little something in here for everyone to enjoy!

ARC provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Brenda - Traveling Sister says

5 Stars for this reading experience

Fantastic read with Norma and Jaline! Such great fun and what a great choice for us!

Our full Traveling Sister reviews can be found along with Norma and my reviews on our sister blog:
<http://www.twogirlslostinacouleereadi...>

Bill Kupersmith says

Had I known by hearsay how The Girls would end, I might have have skipped it as too tepid. That would have been a mistake; it ended quite the way it ought to. It belongs to the world of romance more than the tragic. And the enclosed garden setting in a north London crescent combines the perfect mythic locations, the mediaeval hortus conclusus (the enclosed garden) and the neo-classical rus in urbe (the country amidst the city). Not only is the setting perfect: the characters are beautifully drawn. There are two mums, Adele with her homeschooled daughters Catkin, Fern and Willow, and Clare with her Grace and Pip, whose father is supposed to be in mental institution after burning their house down during a schizophrenic episode. With a couple of more neighbour children, Tyler and Dylan, the children explore the mysteries and conflicts of early adolescence in what ought to be a safe setting. But as in Eden, there's evil lurking in the garden. The night of the summer garden party, Grace is found by her sister Pip, attacked and left in a coma.

I so loved this book for the young people - who really drive the book. Even the adult mums are mostly motivated by what is happening with the children. And the children are the best characters. I think that may be why I am coming to love YAs and stories of teen friendship so much. Stories about 13 year olds seem so much more interesting and at least as mature as those about "adult" characters. And that seems just as true in real life as well. Most to the grown ups in today's world act mostly like 13 year olds. And real 13 year olds make so much better a job of being 13 than those in their mid-years or older who are running our world. Or trying to. Appropriately the most odious character here, Gordon the father-in-law of Adele, is the most elderly. He seems to have the maturity of a 3 year old and as the story has him returning to Africa, I hope he gets ebola.

Why is The Girls so much better than Lisa Jewell's I Found You? Partly for 'the girls' themselves and Adele and Clare. They are so much more appealing as characters than those in Jewell's succeeding book. Partly too for the absolutely perfect setting. And the absence of thriller type violence was welcome - what happened to Clare was the only actually violent crime - nobody gets tied up whilst threatened (unconvincingly) with a knife. The actual execution of the villany was hard to follow and unconvincing, but that didn't matter. Just add a beautiful ending where justice is tempered with mercy and you will feel you got back in the garden.

Megan Johnson says

I remember reading the description for this book a while back and being so excited about reading it. Set in a community situated on a garden, there's a sense of community to this book that I haven't read elsewhere. Everyone feels intimately connected (sometimes far too much so), and though each family has their own dwelling the bulk of what happens centers around this garden.

I hesitate to go into too much detail because each development is important to the progression of the story. Sure, you kind of know where the story is going from the start but as you begin to piece together the puzzle you realize just how much more complex things really are. There's murder, mental instability, love (which you might could argue is mental instability in itself), and most of all, the dynamic of neighborly fellowship. Even if things weren't seemingly crumbling from within, the last thing this place needs is more drama.

I give Lisa Jewell a lot of credit, right from the start I felt totally immersed within the garden community. The setting descriptions are beautiful and almost at times unsettling in their real-ness. I found myself feeling like I could totally picture the places these characters were walking. It's a real sense of adventure to be able to immerse yourself in a book like that.

What did I think?: I really enjoyed this book. It wasn't the heart-racing tale that I had possibly hoped, but it wasn't disappointing either. I see this one really being popular with many readers and I'm glad I was able to get my hands on it and share it with others early on.

Who should read it?: If you like thrillers or mysteries, I wouldn't say this necessarily fits into that niche, but I still think you would probably enjoy it. It wouldn't surprise me if we saw this in theaters in the future.

I was provided with a copy of this book in order to conduct this honest review.

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Jody McGrath says

The actual mystery portion of the book was pretty good. A lot of twists and turns, with a ton of red-herrings thrown in.

Getting to that spot was a little less thrilling. Clare's complete abandonment of her husband, due to his mental illness, was harsh for me to get over. I realized they had gone through some scary stuff and she was scared for her girls, but he didn't hurt them. She kept saying he could have, but the fact was he didn't. Yes he needed to be institutionalized, but she abandoned him there. She wouldn't talk to him or let the girls talk to him, even when the counselors said they thought it would help him. Then when he was discharged as being stable, she was just freaked out that they would let him go. He was mentally ill, he didn't hurt anybody, and the book acted like we should understand Clare. Maybe she should educate herself on mental illnesses and show some freaking compassion to the man she has been married to for like 13-14 years. It really pissed me off.

Otherwise the buildup is pretty slow, and the ending kind of is "What??!" but I thought it was okay.
