

## This Is How We Love

**Lisa Moore**

House of Anansi (Aug 16, 2022)

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Lisa Moore's novel *This Is How We Love* is an intimate and complex exploration of relationships—and of what it means to be entangled by the demands of love.

Jules and her husband, Joe, are in Mexico when their phones ring, simultaneous in piercing their tropical sleep and sparking instant awareness that something has happened. Their twenty-one-year-old son, Xavier, was beaten and stabbed at a party. Though left in the snow to die, he remains in critical condition.

Snagging the last seat on a plane home, Jules arrives in Newfoundland just as the snowstorm of the century has immobilized the city. Fighting her way to the hospital, she thinks that this is all her fault: the beating, the kicking, the boot to the head, the stabbing. Her heart counts out her failures: the times she let Xavier down; the times she left him to fend for himself. "I'd thought that nothing would ever get close enough to hurt him. I'd believed he was invincible," she thinks.

In prose as clean and clear as stars shining in a cold Canadian sky, the very souls of the cast are revealed. Each person navigates the highs and lows of living and loving; most are ill-equipped for either task. Flashbacks pierce the narrative like bolts of lightning, exposing the underbelly of life in Newfoundland, and the many shades and shapes of the relationships it fosters: between a mother and her son; between a mother and someone else's son; between young lovers; and between drug dealers and those bound to them by fear.

*This Is How We Love* is a haunting novel about the complexity of relationships, which can be both mazes of hopelessness and sources of wild joy.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July / August 2022)

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