



All in the Mind

Jenny Twist

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Tilly wakes up in the dark, alone and very frightened. She finds she is in a strange room inexplicably furnished in 1940s style. However did she get here? Has she somehow slipped into the past? Has she been kidnapped? Of one thing she is absolutely certain, she has never seen this place in her life before.

All in the Mind is a fascinating tale exploring the human capacity to overcome any obstacle, no matter how great, as long as you believe you can.

Tilly is part of an experiment working on a cure for Alzheimer's disease. She and most of the other patients taking part in the experiment seem to make a full recovery, but there is a strange side effect.

Tilly and her fellow experimental subjects appear to be getting younger.

Can the same experiment be repeated for Tilly's beloved husband so that he can recover from a stroke? Tilly thinks it can and she will move heaven and earth to make sure it happens.

A charming and thought-provoking story full of reminiscences of a bygone age, All in the Mind also deals with the dilemmas posed by new developments in a society whose culture is geared to the idea that the natural span of a human life is three-score years and ten.

All in the Mind Details

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From Reader Review All in the Mind for online ebook

Effrosyni Moschoudi says

A Delightful peek into an enchanting world where we could all grow younger!

Tilly and Johnny are a young couple who meet and fall in love during WWII.

The sweetness of their romance and the exquisitely vibrant setting of the era reel the reader in from the very first page. We are also briefly introduced to a handful of equally delightful characters when Tilly meets Johnny's parents and the locals in the village where they live.

And then, confusion hits. Tilly wakes up in a room that she doesn't recognize. It is decorated in the style of the 40s but it looks so shabby that it makes her feel uncomfortable. And that's not all. Strangers walk in and then she is informed that she is an Alzheimer patient in a hospital ward that is part of an experiment: The doctors have attempted to create an environment that is reminiscent of the patients' youth thinking that this would help them recover from this horrible disease. Tilly's caring and comforting doctors take her to another ward where she reunites with her husband, Johnny. He is recovering from a stroke and has partial mobility problems. The experiment is then expanded to include her husband too with an extraordinary new venture that involves them returning to their abandoned cottage in the village where they had stayed as newlyweds. The cottage is reinstated by the doctors fully in the 40s style. They even made sure to provide them with suitable labeling on their food supplies and for their entertainment, they set them up with an antique TV set and a radio. They both broadcast programs of the said era on a loop thanks to state-of-the-art computer technology.

The moment that Tilly and Johnny return to the cottage, the magic begins and the reader is hooked to keep on reading. The elderly husband and wife gradually regain lost feelings of youth and happiness but also start to physically change back to their younger selves!

The story inevitably brought to mind "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"; another enchanting tale that involves the reversal of the aging process. Jenny Twist has created an equally magical novel where all the things we often wish for as we grow older, actually happen. How great would it be to go back in time and be young again? And what if this time we could even manage to do things that we never did before?

Jenny Twist goes the extra mile to give the reader a secondary story as well that initially comes across as slightly out of place. It is quite exotic as it involves a setting in India and a couple of Indian UK residents who are plagued by strict family values. It is an odd mix with the main story but somehow it all works and I found both the main and secondary plots equally delightful and interesting to follow. In parts, the process of rejuvenation felt so strange that it brought to mind bizarre episodes from The Twilight Zone. Still, they did the trick in luring the reader in a fantastical world where common wishful thinking relevant to recapturing one's lost youth becomes reality for a while and that is what makes the journey in this book, totally unique and satisfying.

I have thoroughly enjoyed All In The Mind and really look forward to discovering more books from this amazing author!

Elizabeth Spradbery says

I am tempted to proclaim that Jenny Twist has 'done it again' but, although this is true, after the short stories I enjoyed so much, in this book we are treated to a whole story in one fascinating read.

Tilly, a nurse, orphaned by WWII, is taken up by Johnny and his larger-than-life family. At first Jenny fears that Johnny's parents will wish she is a debutante rather than somebody of humbler origins but, with much laughter, this thought is soon dispelled. She later discovers that Johnny's experience with debutantes was prolific but bleak: his mother chasing off the latest in his repertoire by telling her that the family had lost all its money; the girl was off for the next train before they could blink. And the story makes them laugh afresh each time it is remembered.

Although green with envy at Tilly's good fortune, in impressing this large-hearted family, it is impossible not to like her; both clever and warm-hearted, she captivates everyone she comes across, including this reader.

The story takes a more unusual turn when Tilly develops Alzheimer's, and the strain of this causes her beloved husband to suffer a stroke. However, the indomitable pair, helped by a delightful bevy of doctors, overcome their setbacks; also aided by a charming young Asian, Kim, who puts himself out greatly to help them. When Kim's father is dying, his brother coerces him into travelling home in accordance with Indian culture. Not only is this section a fascinating insight into Hindu culture, it is also an exciting story line: will Kim be forced into an unwanted marriage before his father dies? I was about to answer this question but have decided to let readers find out for themselves.

I love Jenny's emphasis on love and happiness, and will just add that I found the ending perfect, having been transfixed by every word along the way.

And all splendidly washed down with 'gallons of tea'.

Highly recommended.

Susan Gesing says

Jenny Twist has created a cast of unforgettable and enjoyable characters in her book, *All in the Mind*. Tillie, a World War II nurse, awakes to find herself in a strange place with no knowledge of how she came to be there. The explanation and her path with her dear husband is the backbone of the story.

You want everything to turn out wonderfully for all the people you meet in this book. They are an engaging bunch who are involved in a unique and exciting experiment.

If you know anyone who has suffered from dementia, this book will be especially dear to you.

Mary Thornburg says

I LOVE this book! Short and sweet – but I mean "sweet" in a good way. It's really sweet, not sappy. A love story, and a believable science-fiction story, beautifully written.

The story opens with a woman trying not to wake up completely from what seems to be a dream about her past, a dream that becomes more and more clear as it goes on. But she awakens in spite of herself, to a realization that something is very wrong. Her husband, who should be in bed beside her, is not there. And the room she's in is strangely furnished...

She soon finds that the situation is beyond what she could have imagined. The book gives us two stories

about Tilly and the man she loves, and two different time settings. The first is the story of Tilly's romance and marriage, beginning just at the end of World War II in Europe. The second is the story of a medical discovery and experiment in present-day England. The tales fit together, and are resolved, in a surprising way.

This is a gentle book, not a slam-bang, edge-of-your-chair page turner. The writing style, criticized by one reviewer, no doubt has something to do with that. However, to me the style is perfect for this story. If you are a reader who likes a satisfying, thoughtful, well-told, and highly unusual tale, I think you'll agree.

Chris Ward says

A delightful little gem.

Jenny Twist's *All in the Mind* was the first of her novels that I had read, and it won't be the last. I had previously read the short story, *Away with the Fairies*, so I knew I wouldn't be disappointed.

All in the Mind is a fascinating little book. At its heart it's a feel-good look at love, but it's far more than a simple romance. In fact, Jenny Twist takes you into some quite dark subject matter such as wartime hardships, poverty in India and the trials of arranged marriages, without ever losing the lighthearted tone of the overall story.

Tilly's parents are dead, killed by a bomb in wartime London. Working as a nurse, she meets Johnny, who has been discharged from the army, and they begin a romance that will last the rest of their lives.

Fast forward to the present day and Tilly is suffering from Alzheimer's while Johnny is recovering from a stroke. Their love remains undiminished, although age is taking its toll. However, the talented Doctor Kim thinks he has a way to help them ...

At first, I thought this book was a wartime romance, then I thought it was a book about curing Alzheimer's, then suddenly it changed again. Each twist (ho hum) opened up another fascinating chapter and took the book to another level.

What impressed me most about this book was the depth of the research. The wartime period in particular felt so authentic I could almost believe the author lived through it. The attention to detail just in simple things such as what would be playing on the television or what utensils might be lying around the kitchen during the Blitz really pulled me into the story.

Definitely one I would recommend. I will certainly be reading more by this author in the future.

Tara Hall says

A Tale of Love that Lasts a Lifetime

Warning! Get out the tissues before you begin this book. This book moved me more than any other in recent memory, not because it was sad, although some scenes were very tragic, but because of the depth of emotion I felt for the characters, and the lasting love they share. Even though the hero and heroine are in their golden years, I had no trouble identifying with them, or hoping that a miracle would happen to save Tilly from her Alzheimer's disease, and John from physical limitations caused by stroke. Any other author might not have been to pull off the miracle that takes place in this book, but Mrs. Twist does it winningly with deft strokes of plot, strongly built secondary characters, and a well-researched plethora of historical and medical facts. I dare anyone to read this book and not be moved to tears of joy. Bravo!

Nikki Bywater says

When Tilly Thompson wakes up in a strange bed and a strange room, she soon learns that she has been part of an experiment for Alzheimer's disease. After she had been suffering from the disease her husband of over fifty years, Johnny had been taking care of her, but when he himself becomes ill after having a stroke. They both end up in hospital where Tilly is awoken by them taking her back in time to the 1940's by staff dressing in the clothes and the building been set up like it is from this era.

Tilly can remember up to the point before she gets Alzheimer's and she makes a full recovery. Tilly wonders if the experiment can help Johnny recover from his stroke. So an experiment is set up to place them back in the cottage they lived in when they were first married and it is fitted and furnished with everything that they would have had in the 1940's, taking them back to their younger days in more ways than one.

This is just one of those amazing reads. I just could not put this thoroughly well written story down and I ended up reading this book in one sitting. It is just a wonderful and original storyline, with interesting and likeable characters. This is a book really worth reading and if I could give it a higher score than five I would. I very much look forward to reading more books by author Jenny Twist.

Su Halfwerk says

In this day and age, it is rare to find and recognize true love, but Tilly and Johnny aren't of this day and age. In their golden years, each battles a type of disease that immobilizes the brain, rendering its victims helpless, dependent, and lost to the world.

I read All in The Mind with trepidation. Tilly and Johnny were well developed and 3 dimensional that I believed them (their house, their lives, their outfits, their food) to be real, which heightened my apprehension of a sad ending. I was immersed in the story.

All in the Mind will take you on a mind trip, one from which you won't want to return. The transformation of Tilly from a poor and lonely young woman, to an older and more confident version of herself was remarkable. I hardly felt the transition. Even after the onset of Alzheimer disease, I was so absorbed in her that I felt her fear and confusion upon waking up.

As always, Jenny Twist's fiction is an addictive treat that's tightly woven to draw the readers in and keep them there. If you're in the mood for something touching, sweet, and real, then All in the Mind is the right read for you.

Jill says

All in the mind is a wonderfully, evocative story! In her scenes from the 1940's, Ms Twist has a way with making the time period come alive as if you were actually living in the era. Then she moves forward in time and while you miss the previous era, you are moved to join the story of loss and dementia, followed by hope and inspiration. I was so lost in the story I didn't want to be interrupted by breaks. It made me long for the answer to the unlocking the mind from dementia and brain injury. It was uplifting and hopeful, beautifully crafted and written. I loved this story.

Lisa says

This is a fascinating read centering on the past and present of married couple Tilly and Johnny, a love story like no other.

Tilly has just come round in a room she doesn't recognise and where she is soon told that she has undergone a revolutionary experiment for Alzheimer's. The experiment is to reset her memory to a time that Tilly remembers before Alzheimer's set in. That time is post-war Britain when Tilly and Johnny are newly married. Tilly remembers the introduction to her warm and friendly soon-to-be in-laws, the welcome they gave her and how she feared they would reject her because of her humble background. On the contrary, they could not be more pleased to welcome the orphaned Tilly into their bosom and love and happiness blossom despite their lack of children being the one sorrow in their lives.

Johnny too is in hospital having had a stroke from the stress of caring for his beloved Tilly.

With Tilly's experiment being so successful she ponders the possibility of Johnny having the same experiment to treat his stroke. Under very rigid parameters whereby Tilly and Johnny are effectively cut off from modern day life, the experiment begins in their old fashioned, unchanged from postwar, home under the strict supervision of doctors.

As each day passes it seems Tilly and Johnny thrive on this experiment, appearing younger and full of vigour they relive their lives of old..with a few surprises!

This truly is a heartwarming and magical story, one that you wish could really happen. Jenny Twist pays such attention to detail that it all seems very plausible. Her characters are delightful and overall the story is one of love and determination that cannot fail to capture every readers imagination. Suspend your belief for a little while and engage with this delightful story, I feel sure you won't be disappointed.

Sheri says

All in the Mind by Jenny Twist

Tilly wakes up in the dark, she is alone and scared. The room furnished in 1940's style, she wonders if it is all a dream. Tilly has no idea how she got there or what this place is. Soon she her questions will all be answered.

Tilly learns she is part of an experiment working on a cure for Alzheimer's Disease. She seems to be

recovering, but there are bizarre side effects. She seems to be getting younger! The doctors decide to try the experiment on her husband as well. He suffered a debilitating stroke, it appears to be working on him too.

A well written fascinating story. I loved the idea of a possible cure for Alzheimer's Disease. Tilly and her husband are very likable. I liked learning of how they met, and how their lives turned out. The unconditional love they have for each other is very warm and heart-felt.

I strongly recommend All in the Mind to readers (of all genres). A very warm, thought-provoking story that will leave you thinking: What if....

Tori Ridgewood says

The sweetness of this romance...the hope spanning decades, touching and changing lives not just in England, but across oceans...it's simply a beautiful story. Reminiscent of The Notebook, it has the same poignancy of a couple rediscovering their love, joy, and passion for each other after the ravages of Alzheimer's has all but stolen it away, but with a much different resolution.

I enjoyed the way that Jenny Twist describes the little things that we might otherwise take for granted -- how we navigate, how we talk at present and spoke in the past, linguistics in different countries, the finer points of the post-war kitchen... I was drawn in by the love story of Tilly and Johnny, but also compelled to keep reading to find out more about their friend and researcher, Kim. (I think perhaps Kim was my favourite character.)

I devoured this book over the course of three lunch hours and completed it while my daughter was in her dance class. I didn't want to leave this world for a moment. Jenny Twist has once again entranced me with her wonderful imagination, articulate command of language, beautifully envisioned characters, and original plot. Please read this book and ask a friend to read it, too. In these dark days of November, or in the early days of spring, or in the light of summer, it's a thoroughly satisfying romance.

Juliette Townsend says

This book was awesome. I found it incredibly interesting. It seems like something that could actually happen and I've always been interested in psychological things. There is also so much emotion weaved into everything. It truly sucked me and kept me wanting to turn the pages. The hero and heroine are so sweet. It's exactly the kind of relationship we all hope for and it's so refreshing to see a couple that's older that is so in love. I loved the concept behind this and I loved being able to see all of the ways that they went about treating this disease. If only this were a true story! Trust me when I say this is a powerful read. Clear your schedule for a day and read this! You won't regret it. I read it in one sitting and that didn't take anything away from the beauty of it. This is exactly the kind of read I was looking for because it is so unique. It also gives an interesting insight into the minds of people who lived during this time period. If you're looking for something new and exciting to read, give this a shot. :) Read this review here:
<http://paperbacksandfrosting.com>

Simon Fenwick says

Jenny Twist's 'All In The Mind' is a truly charming story of life and love but written in a very unusual way.

The story opens with the line "Tilly was dreaming". There follows the wartime tale of a young nurse who is orphaned in the London Blitz of World War II. The narrative take the reader through her evacuation to the country, getting to know Dorothy who takes her under her wing and meeting and falling in love with Johnny a soldier who is back from the front.

So continues the first half of the book giving the reader an excellent picture of life as it was some 70 or more years ago.

Suddenly, at the beginning of the eleventh chapter, Tilly awakes in a darkened room and calls for her husband but he doesn't answer. When the light is turned on, she doesn't recognise any of the awful furniture and can't think what has happened. Where is she and where is Johnny?

To go into any more detail would spoil this book for other readers. All I will say is, especially if like me you have had the sad experience of a loved one with alzheimers then this book will really touch your heart.

You will cry but you will also laugh. However, the lasting memory will be 'what a masterpiece this book is'.

Lynette Sofras says

One of the great things about Jenny Twist's stories is the attention she pays to small details in presenting the past. She creates people and settings that buzz with life and colour so you get a little piece of social history alongside a great story.

And this is a great story. I loved it! Tilly's life and love in war-torn London and the pastoral idyll of Little Morpeth in those early post-war years comes vividly to life from the very first page. It's impossible not to love the characters, Tilly and Johnny, Dorothy and James above all. But anyone who knows this writer's work is aware from the outset that this is not going to be a straightforward story of young love and domestic bliss - though these are the themes that underpin the novel.

No, 'Tilly was dreaming', we are reminded from the start and while half of me didn't want Tilly to wake up from her wonderful dream and face whatever reality awaited her, the other half was constantly waiting for her to do so. And when she did, the most wonderful adventure of Tilly's life began to happen and I was entranced.

It involves a rich array of characters with aspirations and callings of their own, each one beautifully presented like richly-coloured satellites around Tilly and Johnny on their amazing journey. I'm tempted to talk about the plot but must restrain myself so that I don't create spoilers. Anyway, it's a discovery other readers really must make for themselves. I don't think anyone will be disappointed.

A wonderful tale from a consummate story-teller. I loved it. If only, if only it could be real.

Queen Spades says

I was really drawn in by the premise of this story. Can an experimental cure for Alzheimer's also assist in other ways? In many ways, the blossoming of this premise was done well.

I am a fan of a love story that goes beyond the bells and whistles. Tilly and John found each other during the worst of times, yet the love for each other was still strong. For me, this is endearing and touching—made of tough stuff, as my Grandmother would say. It really brings meaning to the phrase “for better or for worse.”

The detailing the author invested in the locations really made me feel like a part of things. I could really see the pain and suffering of the families who had lost so much, and I had a lot of admiration for Tilly’s determination and her endurance, despite losing loved ones.

The pace was wonderfully paralleled to the mood of the work. It fostered the climate of hope. It makes one wonder how many people would sign up for this cure: the elimination of Alzheimer's with the side effect of tapping the Fountain of Youth. It seems like a win-win, but is there a limit to how young one would get? Side effects can be pretty unpredictable and it would be a measure of risk vs. reward.

There are a few areas that could have used some tidying. *A few spots, the point of view changed frequently without a clear divide, separating one point of view to the next.* It was not quite enough to get me confused, but if one weren’t paying attention, she may have to give it a look again for reassurance.

Based on the premise of the story itself, the descriptiveness of the locations and conflict, and the connection with the characters, I award this an 4 out of 5 Stars.

Full review can be found on The Review Board.

Maggie says

An amazing read

An unusual regression-style of Alzheimer's treatment for Tilly works so well, the doctors agree to try it on her beloved Johnny, a stroke victim.

Soon they are immersed in a setting created to simulate the early years of their marriage. Not only does Johnny improve and respond to the treatment, the aging process itself reverses for both of these people.

After all, you are only as old as you feel.

I thoroughly enjoyed the feel-good vibe in this book. Another delightful read from Jenny Twist.

Mysti Parker says

Whenever I pick up something written by Jenny Twist, I know I'm not going to want to put it down. "All in the Mind" was no exception!

The story begins with an elderly lady named Tilly, who wakes up in an unfamiliar room decorated in shoddy 1940's furnishings. She soon discovers she's in a nursing home, and her husband Johnny is there as well, partially paralyzed from a stroke. Tilly and several other patients are part of a new and unconventional Alzheimer's treatment that involves immersing them in the surroundings from their younger days.

Soon, she and Johnny are moved back into the home where their life together began, and that's where something truly amazing begins. There in that cozy cottage in the English countryside, not only are Tilly's and Johnny's memories resurrected, but so is their youth!

Before you assume this is just another "adults become kids again" story, think again. Tilly and Johnny aren't the only ones changing. It seems the lives of their current friends are mimicking those of their loved ones from the past. You're left to wonder if it's just this elderly couple changing, if the time/space continuum is shifting, or if everything is just a coincidence.

Well, you'll have to read it to find out. Rest assured that Jenny Twist delivers a timeless love story that's truly unique and compelling. The characters' lives and beautiful romance is described in such heartwarming, vivid detail that you fall instantly in love with them.

There are several scenes from the middle to the end that involve the secondary characters, and at first, I wondered what these really had to do with the main story. Luckily, Jenny wrapped it all up in a lovely, neat package that is sure to please every lover of sweet romance. Grab a copy today!

Christopher Carrolli says

Tilly is semi-awake in a strange room that is not her own, reluctant to rouse from her endless dreaming of the past, of the happy times. She has been living her life over again in the dreams, back to the post-WWII days, when she first met her husband, Johnny, and her beloved in-laws.

They lived life happily ever after, but that's the best that Tilly can recall at the near waking moment.

Once fully awake, she finds that she is part of an elaborate Alzheimer's research project, and so begins Jenny Twist's "All in the Mind."

Twist has comprised a magnificent tale of modern day, endless possibilities interwoven with the reality of endless love. Her brilliant focus keeps the reader glued to every page as we discover that Tilly is getting younger, a side effect of the successful treatment not considered before.

Now, Tilly wants the same type of experiment for Johnny, who is recovering from a stroke.

Soon, the story of Tilly and Johnny unfolds with luminescent characters, surprising results, and an eerie, unexpected and unconsidered ending that blow the reader's mind!

Only Jenny Twist could conjure a tale of such powerfully provoking and suggestive implications for both our current time and the future with just enough of a paranormal "twist" to chill the spine. "All in the Mind" is a DO NOT MISS!

Casey Harvell says

All In the Mind
By Jenny Twist

A Captivating and Uplifting Romance!

9 out of 10 stars

Tilly has wonderful memories. Beautiful memories. Entirely overly-realistic memories. One day, Tilly awakens from her memories and finds herself in an unknown place. Slowly she acclimates herself to her surroundings, and builds the understanding that she has lost years of her life to Alzheimer's. A new experiment she has taken part in has restored her memories...and possibly much more.

Tilly learns her love, her husband Johnny, resides at the same place where her care is being given, having suffered from a stroke. With time, patience and love, Tilly and Johnny will embark on a journey of miraculous self-discovery. When Tilly recreates the experiment that saved her for her husband, only one question remains: Just how far will these side effects take them?

Author Jenny Twist does a great job addressing such a terrifying condition as Alzheimer's disease and with it, spins a lovely and inspiring tale. Take The Notebook and add a dash of magic and intrigue, and you'll get something close to All In the Mind. I found it to be well written and edited, without any defined mistakes. The plot and characters were well thought out and developed. The bit of mystery (which I won't give away!) adds to the story immensely. And the medical aspect left me wondering if it would be possible...maybe not to the extent shown, but in some form? And then, of course, there's the possible ramifications of it all, the unknown factors. What, you ask? If you want to know, you'll have to read it! I promise that you won't be disappointed.

Reviewed on behalf of The Review Board
