



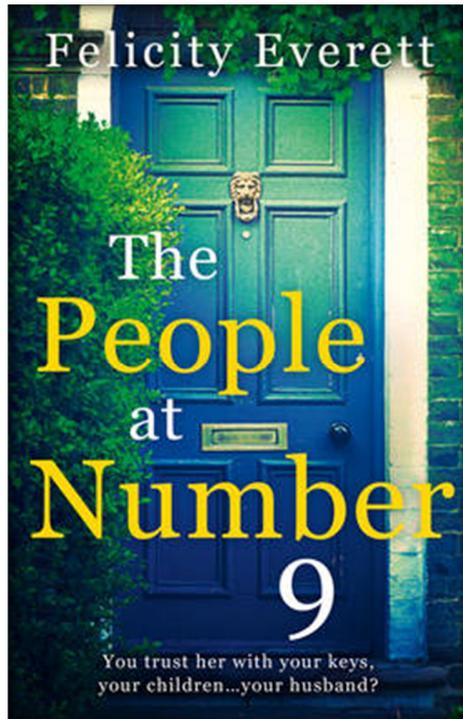
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LoveReading Reader reviews of **The People at Number 9** by Felicity Everett

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Peter Baiden

It is encouraging to this reviewer to find a modern author prepared to take a modern slant on an old concept. In 'The People at Number 9' Felicity Everett has achieved this with style and panache.

Looking at the world through the window of their semi-detached home in South East London, Sara and Neil seem content with their 'lot'. Neil is awaiting promotion at work and Sara, though not altogether happy with her daily commute, is prepared to ensure that all is well at home. Patrick and Caleb are progressing reasonably well at the local school. Then one day Lou, a film, screenwriter, and Gavin, an artist move in

next door. As they grow to know each other, Sara thinks that her neighbour's lives are much more exciting than hers. Sara is mesmerised by their approach to life and as she grows to know them she realises just how seemingly dull her family's lives have become. As time moves on, the relationship changes and Sarah tries to immerse herself in to a different style of life. Yet all was not what it seems! Promises are made and not kept; suggestions of adventure offered but unfulfilled. Lou cannot always be trusted to deliver on her raised expectations. Eventually, after trying to immerse themselves into a new way of living, Sarah and Neil experience a sorrow that neither anticipated. Their lives had changed forever and nothing would be the same again. This is a fine story of modern life that shows that "the grass is not always greener, on the other side of the fence!"

An enjoyable tale, well written and I strongly recommend it.

Sarah Musk

A clever sharply observed book about an intense new friendship between new neighbours and the disastrous consequences for one of the couples. An absorbing read.

This is rather a clever book. It is very accurately observed and the story is skilfully built up. Anyone who has had children in the last thirty years will recognise the types of parents portrayed in the book - the competition about mothering skills, outrage at perceived shortfalls at school and most of all for some women the overwhelming desire to be part of the right friendship group. It is school all over again but played out among scarily devious adults. The story centres on an intense friendship formed between stalwarts of the local parent's community - Sara and Neil - and charismatic, trendy newcomers - Lou and Gav. At first everything seems fine but then Sara, in particular, becomes too involved in her neighbours chaotic lives and her life starts to go wrong. The book is a salutary tale in how to be true to yourself. Sara and Neil are dazzled by this couple but they turn out to be shallow, fake users with disastrous consequences for the couple.

I found myself wanting to shake Sara and tell her to be content with what she had because she had a lovely life and marriage already. Lou and Gav are the sort of people who make you feel boring and inadequate but, in truth, they are the ones who have shortcomings because their attitudes and behaviour are skewed by pseudo views which have no basis in the real world.

A very enjoyable book and thoroughly recommended.

Glynis Elliott

I thoroughly enjoyed it. A novel of our time where pretentiousness is more important than real friends. Where we yearn for something more rather than to be happy with what we have.

Although I really enjoyed the book I did feel the ending was slightly weak but nevertheless entertaining. Would read more by this author.

Four stars out of five.

Nicola Kingswell

Everybody needs good neighbours. These are not they.

The eclectic and bohemian artist Gav and film-maker Lou move from Spain into

the house next door to Sara, a wannabe writer and her CEO husband Neil. Lou and Gav's chaotic lifestyle and eccentric friends seem glamorous and exciting to Sara, and she is soon ingratiating herself into their life at any opportunity. Lou and Gav have two boys of a similar age to Sara and Neil's, plus a baby daughter. At first, this seems like a mutual friendship with shared suppers, spa days and family days out. Their creative careers and carefree lifestyle are like a magnet to Sara, who compares her own life unfavourably to theirs. Soon she is encouraged to give up her boring safe office job to give her writing a chance. This ultimately leads to her being on hand for babysitting duties at short notice. Sara gets encouraged to remove her boys from the local primary school to home school with Gav and Lou's boys. It soon becomes clear that Gav and Lou are taking advantage of Sara and Neil, with 'loans' for film production, babysitting, expensive restaurant meals and festivals. Slowly Sara comes to realise that her neighbours are not the delightful antithesis to her own life that she wished them to be. In fact, they are slowly undermining everything that she holds dear.

Evelyn Love-Gajardo

I enjoyed this book, in spite of the fact that the main characters are extremely unlikeable. It is a very well observed study of life in middle-class London, and is about the effect that a couple, Gav and Lou have on their new next door neighbours, Sara and Neil, who until their arrival thought they were happy with their lives.

*I found myself getting quite involved in the story, but infuriated at the way Gav and Lou manipulated their neighbours so effectively and at the way Sara and Neil allowed themselves to be taken in by the promise of a more exciting life, to the extent that their lives were completely changed as a result of the friendship. **An interesting read, one that will make you think and will probably resonate with quite a few readers!***

Debbie Patrick

When Gave & Lou move into the house next door, Sara spends days waiting for the right moment to say hello. They are glamorous, chaotic & eccentric. They make Sara & Neil seem dull. Or so Sara thinks.

*They soon become friends. Eating, drinking & trading secrets late into the night. But soon Gav & Lou will be asking things that they shouldn't ask. **Well this book certainly makes you think about what people are really like.***

Sometimes people look and act in a certain way BUT they are not always what you think they are or the sort of friends wanted or needed.

Lisa Wallace

Ideal beach read. Unputdownable... Lou and Gavin are the "cool arty" neighbours with a party loving unpredictable lifestyle and Sara and Neil the "safe normal" couple...devastating consequences.

The characters in the book are imaginable and get quite under your skin. I found myself really disliking Lou for being so brazen at the way she uses Sara but on the other hand it was like I wanted Sara to wake up and start appreciating her life and not thinking the grass is greener...the book ended quite sudden and a bit depressing but not sure it could have ended any other way...there is a moral in the story...not sure Sara seemed to have learned it at the end...

Glenda Worth

A story of two families from different lifestyles coming together, with one family dominant in organising the others life, to their downfall in the end.

*'The People at Number 9' is essentially about two families, Gav and Lou with their three children and Sara and Neil with theirs. When Gav and Lou move in next door to Sara and Neil with their alternative views and lifestyle, Sara is fascinated by them. As time goes by Sara becomes indoctrinated by the couple and her husband to a lesser extent goes along with it. The children are encouraged to be together even if they don't see eye to eye. Soon it becomes clear to all that Lou is shamelessly using Sara and her family and whilst other neighbours steer clear, Sara just can't and keeps going back for more. Add into this the crush Sara has on Gav, behaving like a teenager around him, and the ensuing disasters that emerge for their families, it is a car crash waiting to happen. An easy novel to read, I felt it ended a little abruptly for me, but others may feel differently. **An interesting take on modern life in the suburbs that could quite easily happen in real life, whose side would you take?***

Michelle Hodson

Gavin and Lou are users! They pick up and discard people in a careless, carefree manner, sailing through their own lives unscathed and leaving other people's lives and marriages in tatters. Beware!

Poor Sara. She is so taken in by her new, glamorous, next door neighbours Gavin and Lou. With their exotic arty careers and bohemian friends they are everything that Sara aspires to. She is flattered by their attention but as the two couple's lives become ever more entwined it very soon becomes apparent that all is not as it should be and cracks start to appear in more ways than one!!!

Whilst Gav and Lou sail along without a care in the world, Sara and Neil's lives begin to disintegrate.

I really enjoyed this novel. The story raced along.

A little gem of a book.

Kate Simons

Compelling and divisive, this is a cautionary tale for modern times, staying in the memory long after the last page has been turned.

When new neighbours move in next door, Sara and Neil are keen to be embraced by their more bohemian and enticing lifestyle and gradually drop their old friendships in favour of this new one. Once the excitement and novelty start to wear off however, reality begins to take hold. In examining the complex machinations of the new relationships, this book dances through the highs and the lows, scrutinises the compelling attractions, and relentlessly pulls the reader along to an inevitable conclusion. At times witty, at times frustrating, dark and divisive, it was always thought provoking, coming too close for comfort at times in its moral questions.

A great read for the weekend or for a short break.

Xanthe Waite

A look behind closed doors into people's lives; fascinating and uncomfortable viewing. Who is telling the truth?

Neil and Sara (middle class couple, 2 kids) are accepted in their community, they are friendly and enjoy a nice steady life. Then Gav & Lou move in next door. Gav is an artist, Lou directs films and their bohemian, artsy existence is

attractive to Sara particularly. The couples become friends. Sara is intrigued and excited by all the things that are different about them. They are unconventional, artistic and fun. As the families' lives merge and the relationship between both couples and their kids grows we find out more about each couple and what makes them tick. Their lives become very intertwined. This story is a study of relationships. It is a look behind closed doors into people's lives; which is both fascinating and uncomfortable at times.

*I found it hard to like or engage with the characters to begin with - I found them slightly pretentious. Sara seemed to be too needy but as the story continued I got drawn into the events and complexities of the connections between them. The characters get drawn into some quite dark and catastrophic events. I started to question and doubt different characters motives ... whose version of events is the truth? Who is right or wrong? Which couple or character can you trust? Is anyone to blame for all the things that eventually happen? The book took a while to get going but the last 100 pages were great and had me guessing. I really liked the ending; it was realistic. I came away with a renewed sense that relationships are complex. **The tagline on the book says 'Whose side are you on?' and I think the wonderful thing is I'm still thinking about it.***

Sharon Butler

A modern take on the fact that “the grass is not always greener” and appearances can be deceptive.

Based on the development of an intense friendship between Sara and Neil and their arty, trendy new neighbours - Lou and Gav, the story sees Sara becoming too involved in their lives and her kind nature being taken advantage of.

At times I wanted to shake both Sara for being so gullible and easily manipulated and also Lou for being so brazen about dumping her kids on Sara.

Being a mother myself and having done the school run for a number of years meant I could totally relate to the different types of parents that are described in the story – from the competitive ones to the more laid back ones and even those parents that just have a desire to fit in to the playground Mums group.

I have to say that I was disappointed with the ending. After final events, there is no further mention about Gav and Lou and I felt that there needed to be.

Other than that, a good enjoyable read.

Sarah Harper

Sara falls for the non-conformist lifestyle of her bohemian neighbours but are Lou and Gav artistic free spirits or are they in fact manipulative extortionists, taking advantage of her suggestibility?

Sara thought that she was content in her suburban life until Lou and Gavin moved in to number 9. She finds herself gradually drawn into the lives of her new, bohemian neighbours, who sickeningly tick all the boxes for beauty, modernity, artistic flair and edginess. Theirs is the free-spirited, non-conformist lifestyle that Sara finds so appealing and believes that she wants for her own family. It is as if the scales have fallen from her eyes and she can see her boring, middle-class, mundane existence for what it really is. She falls under their spell and becomes bent on participating in their lives. Shunning her friends and job in favour of the enigmatic Lou, Sara isolates herself and becomes more and more dependent on her fickle new friend whilst also falling gradually in love with the charismatic Gav. So focused is Sara on achieving this idyllic existence, that she withdraws her boys from school in order to teach them at home alongside Lou and Gav's kids and raids her son's university fund to subsidise the art-house film which Lou is creating. But is this really the life that Sara wants or are her new neighbours just taking advantage of her suggestibility? Are they artistic free spirits or manipulative extortionists? As the balance of power between them shifts, Sara comes to realise what is really important to her.

I thoroughly enjoyed 'The People at Number 9' although I would have difficulty categorizing it into a specific genre. Written from Sara's perspective, it focused on the interactions and subtle shifts in the balance of power underpinning the developing adult relationships and, as such, was intriguing reading.

Edel Waugh

*When new neighbours move in next door to Sara and her husband Neil it shakes up their lives and the neighbourhood. Gav and Lou are sparkly new lights shining on the street and everyone is curious about them, when this attractive couple notice Sara and Neil, it becomes a dream come true for Sara who feels her life is less than exciting. The depth of the friendship and the quickness of how it happened between them all was fascinating. The manipulation, secrets and lies were engrossing, especially the twists near the end. **A thought provoking read that's a little on the dark side which I loved.***