



The Magpies

Mark Edwards

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Fear lives next door...

When Jamie and Kirsty move into their first home together they are full of optimism. The future, in which they plan to get married and start a family, is bright. The other residents of their building seem friendly too: the horror writer and the middle-aged herbalist who live upstairs, and the Newtons, a married couple who welcome them to the building with open arms.

At first, the two couples get on well. But then strange things start to happen. Dead rats are left on their doorstep. They hear disturbing noises, and much worse, in the night. After Jamie's best friend is injured in a horrific accident, Jamie and Kirsty find themselves targeted by a campaign of terror.

As Jamie and Kirsty are driven to the edge of despair, Jamie vows to fight back – but he has no idea what he is really up against...

THE MAGPIES is a terrifying psychological thriller in which the monsters are not vampires or demons but the people we live next door to. It is a nightmare that could happen to anyone.

The Magpies Details

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Author : Mark Edwards

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From Reader Review *The Magpies* for online ebook

Eve says

Books like *The Magpies* are risky investments for me. They can be either incredulous and/or poorly written. This book was neither of those things. In fact, I have subsisted on a heavy diet of mystery books for so long that it is nearly impossible to shock me...and yet this book managed to do so, and with the last few chapters in the balance, at that.

Jamie and Kirsty are a young couple very much in love, with a promising future ahead of them. They manage to find the most perfect flat in the middle of London at a price they can afford. Their neighbors all seem nice and the neighborhood couldn't be more perfect. That is until strange things start happening to the couple. Before they realize it, their peaceful abode is anything but the haven of peace it should be. Someone is harassing and stalking them. But who?! Surely not their new neighbors? That'd be crazy, right?!

I couldn't help but think of films like *The Tenant* or *Rosemary's Baby*. This book is definitely a psychological thriller, and even though the characters make dumb decisions and are slow to piece things together, I liked how it all came together in the end. I can't decide if it's a 3 or 4 star read; maybe it's somewhere in the middle? Either way it was very entertaining!

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

A Creepy Halloween Book

I didn't really know what was going on with this book until I read the authors note.

Jamie and Kirsty are a new couple with everything going for them. They're fabulously in love and have just taken the first big step by buying a new flat together. It is exactly what they were looking for: old world charm and close to the city for an easy commute. Although it was at the top of their price bracket, neither one could believe the price they got it for – it was a steal. The old owners wanted a quick sale. Why did they want to sell it so quickly!

The flat they've chosen is on the first floor. Above them is an herbalist who deals in holistic healing and new age therapies (or is she a witch?), and on the top floor is a horror writer with a blacked-out writing room decked out with skulls, candles, pentagrams, and other items seen in horror flick backdrops. In the basement flat, preferred to be called the garden flat by the tenants, live the Newtons – a strangely detached couple who warmly welcome them to the building nonetheless.

Beginning at the night of their housewarming party, the hoaxes begin. The fire department is called and they show up looking for Jamie, who has supposedly called them. They get books in the mail that they didn't order, including books on Satanism. Magazine subscriptions for dirty magazines are issued in their name, hoax pizza deliveries are made, dead rats are found on their doorstep.

All of this has happened to them! It seems like a spooky haunted house or maybe something more sinister a witch! Read this book and find out what really is happening. I know if I lived there I would of left a long time ago. All of the neighbors are all so creepy.

Katy says

Dear Mark Edwards,

Hi. I know it can be hard: you're starting out on your own as a new author, and it takes a lot of time to find your voice, so to speak, as an author. I just finished your novel "The Magpies," and I'll be blunt--I hated it. I thought it was complete dreck. However! For this review to be helpful not just to you as author but to any readers who might be naive enough to pick up this book (let alone purchase it), I will make this review constructive by offering my own unsolicited advice on what went wrong and why.

1. "The Magpies" was published in 2013. Therefore, when such concepts as "masculine pride" are unironically trotted as an excuse for the main character's idiotic stubbornness, it comes off to the reader as a bit, ah, outmoded. Also, the "guy lifts weights/exercises in order to get tough" montage just feels so '80s. The gender characterizations were so retrograde as to belong more to pulp novels of the '30s and '40s than a contemporary piece of fiction.
2. Learn to characterize your characters. As it stands in this novel, they are so flat as to be non-characters. When the only way the author demonstrates emotion is by having (only female, natch) characters cry constantly, something is off. Also, the relationships you build in your work have to be believable in order to be worth the reader's time. Were we, the readers, really meant to buy that Heather would be so madly in love with Paul after one date that she would be reduced to a crying wreck later on in the novel at the mere mention of [SPOILER]? Not once in the course of the novel did I ever feel that Jamie, Kirsty, or any other character were actually human beings and not, say, cardboard simulacra of people in an extremely amateurish attempt at characterization.
3. No one wants to read about Jamie and Kirsty having sex, in off-putting detail, 6 times. No one.
4. The following three words are your friend: Show, don't tell. If you cut out the exposition that clutters this novel in lieu of actually showing character and plot, there would be no novel.
5. You actually had the germ of a good idea in this novel. In more competent (or experienced) hands, it might have been a genuinely tense, enjoyable ride. But any semblance of a good story was killed early on by frankly poor writing and characters so flat and non-compelling that you could bounce a coin off of them.

Sue says

The Magpies is a psychological thriller by Mark Edwards, giving new meaning to the phrase, "Neighbors From Hell". First I liked the title choice, as magpies are birds known for destroying the nests of other birds. And so begins a nightmarish tale, where a young couple's life is tested to the extremes...to force them out of their home. This book had me sitting on the edge of the seat, flipping the pages, with apprehension, to see what would happen next. Very creepy!

Jamie and Kirsty, a young couple, are excited about buying their first home, a new life, a plan to get married and have a family. The other residents in the building seem friendly, and Jamie and Kirsty want to make new friends and start a new life.

Lucy and Chris, the "Neighbors from Hell" live in the Garden Flat/Basement. Jamie and Kirsty had moved into the ground floor flat, Mary, a herbalist/witch lived on the first floor and Brian and Linda lived on the top floor. Most of the women worked in the Healthcare field, while the men shared similar jobs in the IT field.

But then strange things started to happen. Jamie and Kirsty started receiving complaints that their music was too loud, threatening letters, numerous hoaxes, tapes of their personal sex life, parcels, computer viruses and phone calls. Dead rats were left on their doorstep, spiders in their flat... Jamie's best friend is injured in a horrific accident, and remained in a coma. These "Neighbors from Hell", wanted them out! But WHY!

Jamie becomes obsessed with stopping this couple, and risking everything, as he is determined not to allow his neighbors to run him out of his own home.

I like that the characters are real people in this novel, and the concept is not far-fetched. It is a nightmare that could happen to anyone...but how would we handle it?

Would highly recommend reading this terrifying novel.

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

This top notch psychological thriller is an **outstanding** read. The Magpies is a stunning and frightening novel of how everyday suburban life can go horribly wrong. Mark Edwards has the knack of getting into the human psyche and scaring us all with the brilliant characters in his books. Especially the neighbours in this book. Scary indeed.

Jamie and Kirsty are a happy young couple, both have good jobs, both madly in love and so excited to have bought their first dream home together, a flat in a suburb of London they picked up for a brilliant price. Everything about it seems idyllic, they *FEEL* it's the right place for them and move in ready to embrace and embark on a new life together.

One by one we are introduced to the neighbours that also live in the building, everyone is friendly and welcoming. Soon Jamie and Kirsty are getting to know the young couple, Chris and Lucy that live in the downstairs garden flat from them, hoping for a mutual friendship with the couple. At first it's all friendly and pleasant, but oh how things can turn so quickly.

Really weird things start happening to Jamie and Kirsty, hoax pizza deliveries, dead rats left outside their front door. Things escalate with letters and more and more bizarre events. It just gets worse and worse until Kirsty and Jamie are feeling very unstable and unsure, even questioning their own judgement and reality. But these things are just the icing on the cake. Because there is so much more.

My spidey senses were tingling. (You will get that one later).

It's a chilling book that grabs on and does not let go, I was fascinated watching the events unfold on the page, hoping there would be some logical explanation as do Jamie and Kirsty. But when you live in the same building as psychopaths it's never going to end well now is it?

Nobody takes them seriously, not even the police, they are on their own in this madness that is meant to be a safe and cosy home for them, their whole life gets chucked into chaos and fear. As the book continues the events get more and more bizarre, the fear creeps up a notch, I had chills reading this book. I was yelling at the pages "run, get out, move for goodness sake!" but human nature is such that you want to defend your own piece of turf, stand your ground, not give in. But at what cost? *What cost indeed.*

It's taut and tense all the way through from early pages and it just gets better and better, yet again Mark Edwards threw me off when I was looking for certain things in this book that I was **SURE** was going to happen then they didn't. I had the same experience recently reading another fantastic book of his, the newly released *Because She Loves Me*.

Touche Mr Edwards!, you beat me again and I am a clever book detective (normally).

It's like watching a car crash with Jamie and Kirsty as their lives are impacted by the neighbours from hell, you want to look away but you can't, it's fascinating, it's a true insight into the sick mind of the psychopaths who live downstairs. Even better, I love the way we get to see what it's doing to the minds of Jamie and Kirsty too, the undoing of their own sanity to a huge degree.

The plot is excellent, the characters are memorable (I particularly loved Mary who lives upstairs) and the pace is non stop from the first word to the last. I read this over a couple of hours, I even kept reading as I ate my dinner. I could not miss a thing!

There is one moment in this book that really impacted me, I can't tell you but I had to briefly stop reading to absorb what I had read. Really good writing, very good indeed.

It's a fantastic psychological thriller in a nutshell, can't share too much more or I will spoil the journey for you dear reader. The events leading up to the grand finale are tense and taut, I was on the edge the whole time, it felt like I was there, in the book, feeling it all. The ending was exceptionally well done. Then just when you think it can't get better, it still hits you with more surprises until the very last word.

You just never know who you are living near or next to in this day and age, you just want to hope YOUR neighbours are nothing like the ones in this book. If they are, move and don't dilly dally along the way.

Five easy stars from me. I am a huge fan of Mark Edwards and think we will see many more exceptional books from him in the future. Grab this one and hold on for the ride. If you like a book that will stay with you and is a grab on read from the start, you will love *The Magpies*.

Margitte says

A creepy story. A thrilling read. A psychological litmus test for the sane. A neighborly disturbance on steroids. Based on true events, or rather, true events inspired this novel. Halloween for grown-ups.

After finishing the book I wanted to go and hug our wonderful neighbors, tell them how much we loved them and probably have the gossip-mongers in a spin. Finally proof, this woman is crazy. Point is, they have not read *The Magpies* by Mark Edwards.

And that's all I'm going to say. Uhummm...goodness, what an experience! And that's really all for now. :-))

Christine says

Dear Mr. Edwards,

I have just finished *The Magpies*. Let me just say that you are one smart little thriller writer, yes indeed!!! I have to say this is one of the cleverest, if not the cleverest, suspense novel I have ever read. And this is your debut book? Brilliant!

As I waded into your story, I noted how fast the tension starts, actually beginning in the prologue. Nice start. As the story progresses, the tension meter veeeery sloooowly sneaks up little by little, to a taut 4-5, with an occasional heart-jolting blip to 7-8 and even a couple of dreadful 9-10s. The meter never falls below 4, keeping the reader on edge relentlessly. I have only experienced this type of non-stop tension in one other book over these last 2 years that I have been seriously reading. That book is called *Because You Love Me*. I think you know that one, Mr. Edwards. What a fabulous method you have here. Very, very effective if you are looking to create stress ulcers or even heart attacks in your readers.

Every time anyone did anything in this story, I went on red alert, asking myself if I was facing a real clue or if my thoughts were just a manifestation of my newly acquired paranoia. There were so few characters in your book; it should be easy to figure out, right? Well, shoot, you made it so unclear, I had to suspect every one of them of being involved at some point. And what about that boatload of clues that kept coming? So many clues, but you made it impossible to get them to add up to anything I could figure out; and then it was laid out so nicely in the end. I hate feeling like I am fooled, Mr. Edwards, and by golly, you got me good. And yeah, I admit in retrospect that all the clues were there to lead me to the answers, but you weren't going to make it easy, were you?

And how about that ending, Mr. Edwards? Have you not been to Hollywood to learn about Hollywood endings? My, my, my. Apparently not. Lucky for you, I think an author brave enough to steer away from a Hollywood ending should get a gold star.

How can I not say how delighted I was to see your note about this book being based on a true story (yours) and is therefore a memoir of sorts. Write what you know, right? The real capper is the part about a potential recurring "something" that just might be popping in and out of your other writings. Great way to ensnare us readers into checking out your other novels. Clever, I say, very clever.

I read *The Magpies* along with 3 reading buddies, and we had loads of fun critiquing it to death. Even though for the most part you tripped up all of us, I must begrudgingly admit this is one heck of a story you wrote, Mr. Edwards. I am also going to have to recommend this tale to all fans of psychological suspense and thriller lovers, albeit with a warning: Make sure you check with your doctor first to see if you can take it.

Kudos, Mr. Edwards!

Sincerely,

Christine, your fan.

Lisa says

I am just getting over what i have just read & i must say THANK YOU Mr Mark Edwards for writing an original story that can happen to anybody the characters really grabbed me & were believable.

Jamie & kirsty were madly in love they thought all their christmases had come at once when the found their new flat seemed like the perfect spot to spend the rest of their lives they held a house warming to get to know the neighbours everything went well untill fire trucks turned up junk mail kept coming from places they never heard of then rats were left at the door then letters were left under their door.

Lucy & Chris invited Kristy & Jamie to go go carting Kirsty Paul & Heather went along as well anyway Chris & Paul were competing each other when all of a sudden paul crashed & was in hospital Heather was consumed with grief she stayed by his bedside day & night he slip into a coma Jaime was beside himself as his best friend lay comatose & could not believe how chris & lucy reacted they had shown no reaction just got on with their lives.

Then Kirsty saw some spiders in her house was terrified again they were let in somehow jamie got rid of them as they were only small but then the spiders got bigger the second time again Jamie got rid of them. Kristy & jamie said it had to be Chris & Lucy but they could not prove it so jaime goes to the police he sees detective Dodds & Sutton he explains it to them but they seem disinterested so when a virus gets into Mikes Computer who lives upstairs he checks his own all his files were wiped out BUT!! it also wipes his bosses computer files also so he quits & takes matters into his own hands but when Kirsty has a miscarriage that breaks the camel's back Jamie hires these friends of Mikes to give Chris & lucy a scare but it will cost a lot of money he sets it up but he has been had so he lost his & kirsty's savings it is making him just like them. Kirsty leaves as she cannot live there anymore what happens from then on i wont disclose but if you like a twisted thriller READ THIS!!! you wont be disappointed

Carol says

2.5 Stars. Oh Boy.....I had my ups and downs with this one.

At first I thought of Rosemary's Baby.....young couple move into the perfect new "old" flat with super weird and suspicious neighbors. Next, Pacific Heights came to mind when all the strange little creepy crawlers started to appear among hoaxes, threats and sabotage. And then, I just couldn't believe it.....an eerie dream about running down a hill being chased and attacked by masses of black flying creatures.....ok, that was definitely a scene from The Birds!

Now I don't mind all those similarities; I like super creepy, scary stuff, but what really bugged me was the inane predictability of what happens next.....the crash, the loss, the takeover, and the sabotage. I saw it all coming a mile away. And then there's the sex; now once again, I do not mind some descriptive interludes, but some of what was presented here was just over the top.....GEESH.....and the comment where Jamie says he's tired and decides to sit down to pee instead of stand.....Lord have mercy.....I lost it! (view spoiler)

Overall, I liked the plot of **THE MAGPIES**, I really did, and the "final letter" and the author's epilogue revealing that as a young man he had a 'somewhat' similar personal experience (*to a lesser extent*) but all of the above combined with my recently purchased trade paper copy (*complete with typo's*) and need of editing caused me to lower my rating down to 2 Stars.

I know this won't be a popular rating as many of my GR friends loved it and I respect that, but **bottom line**, I was disappointed, and bc I really loved **FOLLOW YOU HOME** look forward to reading more Mark Edwards novels.

Jan says

You've found your perfect home, the one you've always dreamed of and you can't believe your luck... It has it all: the size, the view, and of course the price! You move in with your better half and life is GOOD!!!

But little by little, odd things start happening. Fire trucks show up at your flat for a fire that isn't there, pizza is delivered that you didn't order, excessive amounts of junk mail and parcels start to arrive. Some you chalk up to a mistake, some gets under your skin and starts to ferment....

Things ratch up a bit with dead rats and spiders, a tape of your lovemaking gets sent to you, and you feel like someone is watching you 24/7. But who...and even more puzzling is why? What's real, and what's just plain paranoia??

So that's basically what the book is about...the shattering of ones dreams and hopes for the future taken by the hands of some crazed, nutty neighbors. I didn't give any spoilers away there, as the author clearly wants you to know the journey you are about to embark on. He wants you to feel the love and happiness of this couple Jaime and Kirsty, just as much as he wants you to feel their terror and paranoia.

I have to say that this is one of the creepiest, intense, spell-binding books I have read in a really long time, yet I have to give credit to the creative side as well. The way the author spins this tale with hidden clues, innuendo's and mixed messages, I found myself becoming paranoid myself as to the who and the why. Spectacular!!!

If you are looking to purchase this book, do yourself a favor and make sure you get a copy that has the letter from the author at the end. Reading that was like having the perfect dessert after an amazing meal....lots of nuggets of gold in there to chew on as you finish processing what you've just read, including discussion on the ending. I'll share one with you that made me giddy: this story came to life from the author's own real life experiences! BRILLIANT!!!

In case you couldn't tell, this is an easy 5 star rating, and well deserved in my opinion!

Gary says

'The Magpies' by Mark Edwards is a book I have been waiting to read for sometime following the rave reviews I have read from fellow Goodread friends.

The story focuses on computer expert Jamie and his girlfriend nurse Kirsty who move into a dream flat in London. In the beginning everything seems fine, they make friends with the neighbours and generally feel good about their move. But things start to change and there are unexplained goings on.

This psychological thriller is addictive and is very difficult to put down. Mark Edwards is a fine writer and I love his imagination which produces excellent books.

I believe there are flaws in this novel, with unexplained happenings and a few things that don't quite add up but the thrill of the novel and the tension produced throughout make the minor issues forgivable.

When I read Mark Edwards books I enjoy them so much I invariably follow them with another of his novels and that is exactly what I did after finishing this one.

Zoeytron says

Home sweet home. It is our sanctuary, where we have everything we need, where our loved ones sleep, where we keep our stuff, our very own comfy nest. Unfortunately for Jamie & Kirsty Knight, their dream flat is housed with someone who is a most unneighborly neighbor. Someone is turning the Knights' happy life into a nightmare. Is it the nutters downstairs, or the quiet herbalist with the cat named Lennon? Perhaps it is the older couple upstairs with the creepy Halloween decor? One thing is for certain. You do not want to tick off your neighbors. And for the sake of all that is holy, be quiet in everything that you do.

A decent dip into the murky waters of the psychological thriller genre. Loved the dress-up party with the vampire who had bloodcurdling halitosis. This was loaned to me by a GR buddy who won it in a giveaway, thank you.

Brenda says

[Right off the bat, I'm going to say the explicitness of the sex scenes detracted from the plot. It was totally unnecessary to include, for instance, the "p

Delee says

How do I love thee fiction about crazy neighbors???...let me count the ways...

I love thee not so frightening crazy neighbors ...

...and even more I love thee reeeeeeallly scary, bat-poop crazy ones...

THE MAGPIES falls under the category of reeeeeeeallly scary bat-poop crazy ones...

When Jamie and Kirsty buy the flat of their dreams- they have happily ever after in mind. Soon after they move in- embarrassing junk mail, unwanted parcels, un-ordered fast food and noise complaints bombard their love-nest and the two love-birds are slightly annoyed...but the tiresome pranks turn into something much more dark and sinister- and within a short time- Jamie and Kirsty are questioning their sanity, their relationship, and fearing for their lives.

This book had me up half the night wanting to finish. High tension...high anxiety...never a moment of peace after the first few chapters- complete torture... a lot of shouting in my head to the fictional characters to make smarter choices- but fictional characters rarely make smart choices in novels like this- which- when done well- is what makes them so damn entertaining!

Tulay says

Don't recommend this book.

Didn't like the any of the characters, especially Jamie was the worst one. Grown, educated man making stupid decisions, neighbors not getting alone. Even the police and fire department not doing anything. At least the wife knew what to do to save herself.
