

Book Reviews

This month we feature book reviews by *Better Reading*

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***Suspects* by Leslie Pearce**

Moving into a brand new home in a new neighbourhood is an exciting time for most young couples, right? The very same day that Nina and Conrad move into their new home in Willow Close, a girl's body is discovered. Hurrying inside, they see horrified neighbours gathered by the police cordon—one of the residents has been attacked and brutally killed in the woods.

Believing someone must have seen the murderer, the police interview all the residents and soon find out that each neighbour harbours their own secrets. They are far from what they initially seem and strange, even dark, things happen behind their closed doors. Nina and Conrad had thought they'd found their dream neighbourhood. But this slice of suburbia is not what it seems, and question-marks are put over everyone's head—theirs included. Have they moved into a nightmare?

Suspects is the enthralling new novel from #1 best-selling British author Lesley Pearce. Pearce is well-known for her twenty-eight previous novels, including *Liar*, *You'll Never See Me Again* and *The House Across the Street*. Her repertoire spans historical fiction, romance and crime fiction. She skillfully weaves together multiple genres, and *Suspects* is no different. It's a murder mystery set in a contemporary UK setting, but it's not a gruesome or gratuitously violent novel. It's dark, yes, but it's the backstories of the characters, the neighbours of Willow Close, that sit at the core of this novel.

Suspects alternates between the point-of-view of different neighbours and Detective Inspector Marshall who's responsible for the investigation. There's the happy, naive young couple, Conrad and Nina, who can't believe the unfortunate timing of their move. There're also miserable couples stuck in a bleak suburbia, dysfunctional families, and troubled children. Pearce has a knack for tapping into a variety of personalities—she spent her formative years growing up in an orphanage and has often written about how one's traumatic past can linger and haunt one's present. As the police investigate the neighbours, their backstories are slowly revealed—building towards the novel's shocking ending.

Suspects is an intriguing domestic mystery from Pearce that fans of Adele Parks and Sally Hepworth are sure to devour.