

Topical and absorbing, *People Like Us* celebrates the power of female friendships and the promise of new beginnings found in unexpected places.

After Tina Lamb loses her family home in a bitter divorce, she finds herself living in a caravan on the city's fringes. Having raised four children and nursed her dying mum, she was not anticipating making a new start alone or from scratch. And while some of her new neighbours are welcoming, she soon finds herself getting far more attention than she bargained for.

When Tina finds work caring for a wealthy elderly woman, it is a welcome break from an ageist, sexist job market. But Mrs Bell is anything but predictable. Highly educated, acerbic and intimidating, she is not the straightforward charge that Tina had hoped for. As the two women form an unlikely friendship, they soon discover that financial security is about more than having money.



BOOK DETAILS

C-format paperback
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Q U E S T I O N S

1. How did the setting (the caravan park and its community) shape your experience of the story?
2. The story touches on starting over—what do you think it says about new beginnings?
3. Do you think Tina is complicit in her downfall? If so, what should she have done differently?
4. Which relationship in the story felt the most genuine to you?
5. Was there a particular moment or scene that stayed with you after finishing the book?
6. Should Tina have regarded her marriage as a financial partnership as much as a relational one?
7. What do you think the author is saying about friendship at different stages of life?
8. Who do you think learns the most from their friendship: Tina or Mrs Bell? Why?

_____ Q U E S T I O N S C O N T . _____

9. Do you think Tina makes the right choices in her relationship with Aidan? What might have been the consequences of her making different choices?
10. What do you think drives Clarissa's behaviour towards Tina: class, fear, ignorance, arrogance or something else? Do you think she mirrors the social attitudes of some people towards poverty?
11. Do you think society is keeping up with the needs and rights of 21st century women?
12. Tina reflects on page 184: *'On days when I feel I'm no further ahead than I was a year ago, I think of the vans here as cocoons, occupants encased inside preparing to metamorphose into something – someone – better... But maybe I should think of our vans as nests. Like a nest, they're fragile and unfixed structures that rock in a strong wind, but they also represent stability, a home... We're the lucky ones.'* Do you think Tina is lucky or unlucky?
13. What can governments do to address the increasing number of older women who live in housing stress? Discuss. (See also: www.sharingwithfriends.org/)

'A beautiful story of friendship and family. Packed with nuance and warmth, *People Like Us* explores the true value of connections, at any age.'

Jane Harper

'Big-hearted, full of compassion and dark humour, *People Like Us* zeroes in on women's invisible sacrifices for family.

Tina Lamb is one woman and every woman. Her voice rings vivid, clear and convincing, giving life to the fragility of existence on the knife-edge of poverty.

You will love this book'

Karen Viggers

'*People Like Us* is an increasingly familiar story of uncertainty when older women find themselves experiencing near homelessness. Heartwarming and ruefully funny, it is a story of struggle, but also one of resilience, restored dignity and hope.'

Susan Davies

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sally Piper is the author of three novels: *Grace's Table* (2014); *The Geography of Friendship* (2018), which was shortlisted for the ABIA Small Publishers' Adult Book of the Year; and *Bone Memories* (2022), a finalist in the Queensland Literary Awards for a Work of State Significance and the People's Choice Book of the Year Award, and longlisted for the Dublin Literary Award and a Davitt Award. Sally holds a Master of Arts (Research) in Creative Writing from Queensland University of Technology. She is an active member of the Queensland writing community, where she presents workshops, leads in-conversations and mentors other writers.



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