



The New Yorkers

Cathleen Schine , Leanne Shapton (Illustrator)

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Cathleen Schine's brilliantly funny new novel revolves around one city block in Manhattan, a quiet little block near Central Park kept humble by rent control. Living on a street like this in New York with a dog is like living in a tiny village, one that has a rhythm all its own. Dogs bring people together unexpectedly, people who would otherwise never meet. And the dogs act as cupids for the quiet, struggling, sometimes lonely, eccentric people, the old and the young, male and female; the people who live on the block, who are, in their ways, romantics, as all New Yorkers secretly tend to be. Walking her dog, Beatrice, Jody falls under the spell of Everett's bewitching smile. Everett begins to appreciate his postdivorce life only when he falls in love with Howdy, Polly's puppy. Polly lives with her brother, George, and wants him to fall in love. George isn't so much looking for a love life as for life direction, and Howdy leads him right to it. Doris hates the trash on her block, she hates the pee on her SUV's large tires, and, above all, she hates dogs. That is, until she gets one of her own.

In *The New Yorkers*, as in life, canine companions compel their masters to go outside of themselves, to take part in the community they live in, to make friends, and, sometimes, to fall in love. And Schine returns to what she does best: crafting a compulsively readable, elegantly written novel that seduces in the way we were once seduced by *The Love Letter*, Schine's beloved classic.

The New Yorkers Details

Date : Published May 1st 2007 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux

ISBN : 9780374221836

Author : Cathleen Schine , Leanne Shapton (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Contemporary, Animals, Dogs, New York

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nici says

Le aspettative che mi ero creata ammirando la bella copertina, il titolo e i disegni di cagnolini fra le pagine non sono state soddisfatte.

Ho fatto fatica ad immedesimarmi nelle situazioni, innanzitutto perché l'autrice passa di continuo da un protagonista all'altro, da una scena all'altra, anche all'interno dello stesso paragrafo. Inoltre i personaggi vengono descritti sempre nello stesso contesto casa-bar sotto casa-parco sotto casa, e già dopo 50 pagine queste dinamiche risultano noiose. Gli stessi protagonisti risultano ripetitivi e limitati all'interno delle solite frasi o pensieri, non hanno profondità e nessuno di loro mi ha colpito.

Gina says

I give this book 2 stars simply due to the fact that I finished the book. A finished book deserves at least two stars. However, I did not enjoy this book. Not only was it HIGHLY unrealistic (I get the fact that it's fiction, but it was trying to be realistic, and highly ineffectual), I found it to be very offensive towards women. The author (who is a woman btw) portrays the women in this book as being highly emotional and afraid of making one wrong move in regards to dating men. There was not a single strong female character in this book. However, I do look forward to using this book in my feminist philosophy class as an example of how women still are portrayed as weak and helpless in the 21st century. I would not recommend this book to anyone.

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

People meet and fall in love via their dogs in this book of light fiction. Friends pointed me toward this book after I complained about the hours I've spent this summer with Al Qaeda and fundamental extremists and the poor of sub-Saharan Africa and the test-weary world of disadvantaged New Jersey schools. There is nothing that lingers in your bones after reading this book, nothing that leads you toward writing editorials to the Times. Simple little stories of relationships combined with the steady love of loyal dogs.

Susan says

I was in the right spot at the right time for this book, I guess. I loved it and would probably have given it 4 stars, but maybe that's just because it appealed to me at this moment in time. Anyone who is single and loves animals would probably relate to it. Maybe any dog lover would like it. The main gist of the story follows tenants in an apt. complex in New York and their dogs and how they all interact with one another through their dogs.

Linera says

So very skillful. I heard her read from this last year at Wordstock. Sophisticated use of POV. Good interwoven stories. (2007)

And now, December of 2012, I'm re-reading this book, because it is so skillfully done. Also, it's quite enjoyable, although I am getting rather tired of New York, but then, I live out in the wilderness of Seattle, by choice, so all the descriptions of how wonderful the city is just leave me cold. I like visiting New York, and then when I notice that I am spending more and more time in Central Park, no matter what the weather, I know it is time to get back out West and into the garden.

Samantha says

As soon as I read the synopsis for this book, I knew that, as a dog-lover, I just had to read it. (I should have done more shopping around though because, yet again, Barnes and Noble had the eBook available for \$9.99 and the actual book for \$7.18...Grrrrrr, B&N.) A book about a neighborhood coming together, and pulling apart, all due to their dogs and dog and dog owner manners, I was ready for the promised funny and light and entertaining story. That's not quite what it was, however. As I read, I kept wondering to myself 'when is it going to get funny?' and 'cancer and loneliness and isolation and dog-hating is funny?'. It was a good book and I did like it, but it didn't live up to the reviews. At times, this book was very sad and, because I am overemotional when it comes to our furry friends, I felt the tears well up in my eyes more than once, but I would not rank it among the best books I've read. The writing was excellent and the story certainly progressed, but it never really captured me.

Kerry says

I was intrigued to read this book that it would really characterize a particular neighborhood in NYC. Unfortunately, I didn't really get drawn into the characters of the dogs or people. A lot of the characters, despite their relationships seem apathetic towards one another. I suppose I kept reading, hoping that the book would become more engaging. Alas...it didn't really happen. I still read the whole book though..usually I give up..so something kept me going.

Jennifer says

This book had all the elements I'd assume would make for an interesting story: Several characters who will somehow interact despite the odds of doing so, simple and believable plot lines, a familiar setting. However, it failed to set any actual scenes. The term "Show Don't Tell" came to mind as I read. The majority of the book I felt was being told to me rather than revealed to me and I felt that detracted from the story's value.

The narrative follows several characters living in NYC who while living in close proximity, some even in the very same building, only meet through interactions created by their individual dogs. The narrator is innocuous and tells us how so and so thinks and feels before jumping to another character and doing the

same. You follow primarily a late 30s music teacher named Jody and her elderly pit bull named Beatrice as they navigate the streets of NYC and Jody's love choices regarding the predictable, sensible Simon and the elusive Everett. In the meantime, Everett starts relations with Jody's younger neighbor Polly while Polly's brother George fills his days with picking up women with his dog training skills. It's straightforward, polite, but overall less interesting than the plot had the option to be.

If you're looking for a quick read you won't remember two days after finishing, this is it.

Connie N. says

What a nice, pleasant, relaxing, and enjoyable book. I'd rate it 4.5 stars, if I could. Loved Nicole Roberts' narration. The voicing was fine, pacing was well done, and her reading was very clear and consistent. There's not a lot going on in this book, meaning it's really just a snapshot of a few months in time of several people's lives who all happen to live on the same block in NYC. Kind of like a soap opera in book form. And, like a soap opera, the reader gets involved in the characters and their thoughts and feelings as they go through the every day activities of their lives. We meet Jody first, a single 30-something woman who has gotten a big pit bull for companionship. She's friendly and outgoing and basically introduces us to everyone else. Polly and George are brother and sister, living together, and adopting a puppy. Polly is pretty pushy, while George sits back and lets her take the lead. Everett is a 50-something man, divorced, and also looking for companionship. Simon is more shadowy than some of the others, although he ends up playing a prominent part in the story. Jamie is the owner of the local restaurant. Doris is the local do-gooder who wants everyone else to do what she commands. Although we are following the lives of the characters, they are drawn together by their dogs and the relationships they all have with their pets. Each character grows and changes throughout the story, and their interactions are fascinating. I loved how each character came together briefly, then would move on and someone else would come along. It was a constant shifting dance of people and scenarios. I'm not really a fan of epilogues, but in this case it was necessary as a way to end the story. Otherwise, I could have continued to listen to their stories indefinitely since there was no real beginning or end. Schine writes in a casual and easy-going manner. The thoughts of the characters are often silly, just like in real life when your mind is wandering. For instance, Polly commented on the unpleasant day she was experiencing and said, "This is what hell would be like...if it weren't hot...or freezing...if it were just...not nice." Schine offers great turns of phrases, such as Everett describing himself as an "emotional minimalist" or having "geographical distress." Cute.

Nancy says

Meh. I hoped for better things with this book, because I liked the premise: a group of New Yorkers who become a community because of their dogs. Because that happens, you know? If you have a dog, and you walk the dog, you get to know every dang dog in the neighborhood - and their owners. And to have that happen in New York, the city of strangers, seemed like a lovely idea.

And yet. The truth is, I just couldn't seem to stay interested in the characters. This was partly because they were not exceptionally likable: Everett is sort of mean and selfish, George is weak, Polly is controlling and annoying. Still, they all have their human moments, and I think I could have gotten past their faults, except that it seemed as if the author herself wasn't all that committed to her characters. She writes about them in a curiously detached fashion, occasionally breaking away from her narration to address the reader directly - a conceit which could be charming, but feels poorly thought out and executed instead.

Oh well. I may try another Schine novel, but I will acquire it at the library - no sense in cluttering my shelves with long shots.

Rebecca McNutt says

I like books set in New York City and books about the importance of friendship and community as much as the next person, but unless you're a *really* hardcore dog lover (and I don't just mean you own a dog or you happen to like dogs, I mean "my computer wallpaper is my dog", "my kids skip their doctor's appointments when I need to pay a vet bill" and "when someone tells me they're not a dog person they become my enemy for life" type), you, like me, may not find the running canine theme so endearing after the first few pages of it. Don't get me wrong, there are some great dog stories, from the classics like *Lassie* and *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be* to the more modern books like *A Dog's Life* and *Free Days With George* - but this book passes up a great opportunity to capture New York's spirit and culture and the human characters of this story feel almost like silly cartoons. It does try to dive into the lives of these human beings away from the dog stuff in many cases, looking at romances, loneliness, medical conditions and friendship, but it quickly degenerates into dull, hokey fluff that we've all seen in other places before. It's also not particularly original or funny as it claimed to be. If anything, it just felt depressing, fake and bizarre.

Rob says

I give this book 1 star because I like dogs I like New York. Otherwise, I thought this was a hugely disappointing novel. Reading it was akin to biting into a meringue and expecting it to be dense and flavorful, only to discover that it's mostly just substance-less, whipped up, showy fluff. I almost quit reading about halfway through but soldiered on just to say that I finished. When you read this book, you can almost hear the author's thoughts as she was writing as she ponders which Hollywood actors and actresses she would cast in the movie adaptation. The characters could have had some depth, but instead are written as caricatures, almost silly and cartoonish. The Doris character was completely unnecessary and irrelevant. I will give Cathleen Schine props for finishing a book and getting it published, something I aspire to do one day. But God help me if what I publish is this bad. I would hope that someone close to me would have the decency to be honest and tell me so if it is. I question why no one close to Cathleen Schine cared enough about her to be honest about how terrible this book is.

Bookslut says

This was boring and disappointing. I was so excited to find a cute dog book, told as a million little interacting dog stories, but I don't think it was originally written that way. I feel like some publisher must have found this book and thought, 'Hey, this has trace elements of dog, and dog books are so popular right now. If you can give me a little more dog in your plot, we can make this really fly'. So they designed a great cover and added line drawings of dogs throughout the book and retrofit the plot to sort-of be a dog book and fooled me, big time.

I love the idea of these books that are snippets of many different stories that weave together to make one big whole, and I stuff my to-read list with them, but I don't know that I ever really like them. There must be some essential element that makes them successful, and must authors don't figure it out. I do have some suggestions, that could have at least improved this one. First off, have one character amidst the jumble that is

your most dominant character, and start the book with one of their snippets. She started and ended this book with a character named Jodi, so I feel like that strikes a sacred covenant with the reader, that Jodi will be important and my brain will weight her story more heavily than all the others in the pile. So it's a way to sort and organize, and ultimately prioritize a story, and keep it from being a jumble. But the author violated our sacred understanding by having the bulk of the book be about Polly, and left me always with the nagging feeling 'where's Jodi? When do we get back to her part of this?' My second suggestion would be to not have so many of the snippets be so freaking boring, so people would want to pick up your book.

Mayda says

Sometimes you need a catalyst to get something going. In this tale, canines are the catalysts that result in some pretty interesting developments. Set in a neighborhood near New York's Central Park, some very diverse people are brought together in some unusual ways. Filled with warmth and touched with humor, this audio book is entertaining in a nice way. Even people who don't particularly like dogs will find themselves drawn into the lives of these characters. It might even make you want to take a dog – yours or a friend's – for a walk . . . just to see what might happen!

Lisa Gordon says

I really enjoyed this novel - I am sure it will appeal to dog lovers and owners everywhere. I am not a dog owner, but I certainly enjoyed the tender way the author handled the personal relationships of the dogs owners to their dogs and to eachother. The book looks at the interaction between the residents of a very ordinary street in New York's Upper East Side. Love, infatuation, friendship and interpersonal relationships are examined with humour and sensitivity. The book shows us how pets actually help us as humans to come together socially and to interact, where without the help of a pet dog we may never have bothered. I loved the characters and found them very believable and interesting...the descriptions of the dogs were adorable. I gave the book 4 stars, not five as I did find the ending a little sad, abrupt and perhaps disapointing in way. It was however a great and entertaining read. It wont disappoint.
