



Woman No. 17

Edan Lepucki

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A sinister, sexy noir about art, motherhood, and the intensity of female friendships, set in the posh hills above Los Angeles, from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *California*.

High in the Hollywood Hills, writer Lady Daniels has decided to take a break from her husband. She's going to need a hand with her young son if she's ever going to finish her memoir. In comes S., a magnetic young artist, who will live in the secluded guest house out back, care for Lady's young toddler son, and keep a watchful eye on her older, teenage, one. S. performs her day job beautifully, quickly drawing the entire family into her orbit, and becoming a confidante for Lady. But as the summer wears on, S.'s connection to Lady's older son takes a disturbing, and possibly destructive, turn. Lady and S. will move closer to one another as they both threaten to harm the things they hold most dear.

Darkly comic, twisty and tense, this mesmerizing new novel defies expectation and proves Edan Lepucki to be one of the most talented and exciting voices of her generation.

Woman No. 17 Details

Date : Published May 9th 2017 by Hogarth

ISBN :

Author : Edan Lepucki

Format : Kindle Edition 320 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Woman No. 17 for online ebook

Julie says

Woman No. 17 by Edan Lepucki is a 2017 Hogarth publication.

Offbeat mixture of art and the complexities of motherhood.

Set in the Hollywood Hills, Lady Daniels is working on a book about her son, Seth, a selective mute, who is now in his late teens.

Lady also has a toddler with her second husband, from whom she is now separated. She needs a nanny so she can concentrate on her writing, so with hardly a second thought, she hires Esther, whom she refers to as 'S'.

Along the way, we learn about Seth's father, Lady's mother, her ex, Marco, her current husband, Karl, and his sister, Kit. We also learn that Esther is acting out a unique art form that involves immolating her mother.

But, the story's main focus is on the women, 'S' and Lady, and their relationship with each other, with Seth, and with their own mothers.

First of all, this book was a little strange, and not at all what I was expecting. But, I couldn't help but pick up on the underlying ode to motherhood, the way we view our own mothers, the kind of mother's we become and the consequences of our choices. But, it is also about friendship, and the odd connection Lady and 'S' have with one another.

For Lady, the fact that Seth does not speak, has her over compensating in a way that freezes out her youngest son. Guilt, an unhealthy fixation on her ex, mingled with regret, and an obsessive need to micro-manage and protect, Seth makes her vulnerable to 'S', a young woman she becomes very close to.

By comparison, 'S' is trying to capture the essence of her own mother, by using her as a prop, so to speak for her artistic experiment. She, too, is drawn into a friendship with Lady, but is also very aware of Seth.

It's really a story with many complexities, and I suppose can be interpreted in various ways. It is labeled as a psychological thriller, but you know, I'm not so sure that fits. It does certainly have it's moments of suspense and carries a dark atmosphere, but it's not like any PT, I've ever read.

Sometimes, when I read a book like this one, I worry about missing something symbolic or that the allegory is sailing right over my head. I don't know if there is some big message the author wished for readers to grasp, or if I am totally missing the point.

For example, the artistry mixed into the story which was so unusual. Perhaps the 'Woman No. 17' photo was symbolic, in that it froze Lady into a set period of time, a representation of her she has come to resent, regret, and wishes to move away from?? or not??

There is a surprising twist in the end, and I wasn't sure how to feel about that. But, I did see character growth, and the very last bit of the book was a little cheeky, which was fitting conclusion.

This book was a challenge for me, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. It gave me something to puzzle

over, and gave my brain a little workout, plus I appreciated the imagination and originality of it, as well as the dark humor sprinkled in here and there, which made it a nice change of pace, even if I wasn't entirely sure what to make of it, at times. So, overall, this one gets a 3.5 rating.

Theresa says

Thank you, Crown Publishing from sending me a free ARC of "Woman No. 17", in exchange for an honest review.

"Woman No. 17" by Edan Lepucki is a rollercoaster ride of the female psyche. This novel explores so many different complexities of what modern women have to face in the 21st Century like: motherhood, childhood trauma, alcoholism, depression, anxiety, self-loathing, and self-destructive relationships. I liked that I didn't know how this novel was going to end. It kept me on my toes throughout. It wasn't a perfect novel, the writing was a bit eccentric, but Lady's story about her eldest son, Seth, not being able to communicate, verbally, (selective mutism) I found incredibly fascinating. Without that subplot, I don't think I would've enjoyed it as much as I did. The chapters alternate between Lady (real name: Pearl) and S (real name: Esther) who becomes a live-in nanny (to Lady's youngest son, Devin) as Lady tries to concentrate on writing a memoir about her life raising her nonverbal son who is now an adult. I must admit, Lady and Esther are extremely odd and emotionally wounded in similar and different ways. Both women are borderline alcoholics and suffer from "mommy issues". But that's where their similarities end, S is an aspiring artist, and Lady is a bored and aloof housewife (she's recently separated from her husband, Karl as the novel opens). I don't want to give too much away about S, but she's definitely got a screw loose, especially when it comes to her motivation/inspiration as to why she applied for the nanny position. Very strange indeed. "Woman No. 17" was such a guilty pleasure to read. I couldn't put it down. It was riveting in a way I wasn't expecting. Slightly creepy and unnerving. You may find Lady and S to be obnoxious, self-involved characters (they make bad a questionable choices), but they are definitely little spitfires to say the least. I liked getting to know Lady and S, warts and all. Women aren't perfect, we are complicated little creatures. Thank god for that! This book will be released May 9, 2017. Enjoy!

Deanna says

My reviews can also be seen at: [https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress...](https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress.com)

3.5 stars

When I first came across this book it was the cover that caught my eye. I really liked it. And after reading the description, I was very intrigued.

Lady Daniels lives in the Hollywood Hill. Recently separated, she's looking for a nanny to take care of her three-year old son, Devin. Lady is writing her memoir. Having a nanny will give her uninterrupted time to write. A woman who calls herself "S" comes for an interview. Lady likes "S" and hires her on the spot without even checking her references. What could go wrong? Along with taking care of Devin, S will also

keep an eye on Lady's eighteen-year old son, Seth. Seth is nonverbal. He is not deaf or autistic, he just never spoken.

We learn a lot about Lady's early years with Seth and Seth's father, as well as her tumultuous relationship with her own mother. She alludes to mistakes she made when Seth was young. It seems like she tries to make up for it now by being over-involved. Seth has always wanted to know about his father. Lady thinks she's protecting him by not telling him about the past.

But secrets always seem to have a way of coming out....

Esther Shapiro now wants to be known as "S" Fowler. Her reasons for becoming a nanny are bizarre to say the least. After some recent personal issues, she decides a change is in order. So along with a new name and a new job, she's trying on a new personality, well actually an old one.....

New bonds are formed and old ones are tested. While Lady opens up with some of her secrets, others she holds close to her chest.

She's not the only one with secrets.

The book alternates between Lady and Esther's (S's) point of view. Events in the present, mixed with flashbacks. It took me a little while to get into the story. It started to get interesting, but it also started to get a bit...strange. Some of the plot was confusing and I found it hard to relate to a few characters. I liked Seth and of course little Devin. The fact that Seth didn't communicate verbally made how he did communicate that much more interesting. But when things started going in so many different directions, I found I was getting distracted. All that said, I didn't want to stop reading. I was very interested in how this would all turn out.

This was a bit of an odd read for me. Overall I think this was a story that many will love, but it just wasn't what I was expecting.

Thank you NetGalley, Edan Lepucki, and Crown Publishing - Hogarth for providing an advanced readers copy of this book for me to read in exchange for my honest review.

Edan says

Thoroughly brilliant! Sui generis!

Lark Benobi says

I'm not the right reader for this novel. I was disturbed by the self-obsessive nature of the narrators, and their (for me) excessive attention to small details of their lives, almost as if I were being forced inside the mind of someone with severe obsessive compulsive disorder. I was uneasy with the story telling because I never knew what terrible thing might just be on the verge of happening. This is of course exactly what makes this novel "noir" rather than something else--just this trapped and uncomfortable feeling of dread--and I have a feeling it will be popular with readers who aren't me.

Debbie says

3.5

Just what I suspected—I decided to round down instead of up, so it's now 3 stars. What changed my mind? Well, every time I think of this book I think of the things that annoyed me rather than the stuff that made me happy. I'll start with the joy. This way I'll feel guilty that I downgraded it to 3 stars (I guess I'm a masochist).

Joy Jar

-Yes to art! Usually I like artist characters, but it's tricky. Sometimes writers go overboard describing art projects, which I complained about with *The Animators* and *The Woman Upstairs*, both excellent books. Here, the writer kept art in our vision but didn't overdo it. One of the two main characters is an artist and her creative multi-media projects piqued my interest. There's also an amateur filmmaker, a writer, and a successful photographer.

-A cool mute teenage boy. Who isn't intrigued by a mute teenager without a diagnosis? His mom is quick to point out that he is neither autistic nor a genius, which is her pat explanation to all the curious (nosy) people who ask.

-Good metaphors, good language, good insights. This really is a smart book. Here are some juicy samples (though note that the content could change because I'm reviewing an advance copy):

"The marine layer in L.A. is pantyhose compared to the heavy white shawl that hangs over the Berkeley Hills."

"The acrid smell asserts itself once more. It seems like it's coming from the back of the house, but perhaps it's the stench of my mother's soul. She is a spiritual landfill in heels."

"I'd always hated the name Esther and shortening it to a single letter felt like sloughing off so much dead skin. A psychic facial."

". . . his long white ponytail greasy as an old shoelace..."

"Meanwhile, I'm lint in a troll's armpit if I don't spend forty-five minutes on my hair and makeup."

-The plot moved right along. No dead zones.

-Plenty of edge. You all know how I crave edgy.

-Plenty of gossip. Yes, this is a plus for me, I hate to admit it. For some people, the gossipy nature might make them categorize the book as chick lit, which it doesn't deserve.

-I couldn't look away. Even though the characters were mostly jerks, I could not wait to see what they'd do next.

Ha! Just as I suspected! I'm hovering between stars right now, looking upward. My Complaint Board will remind me of why I went downward instead.

Complaint Board

-Didn't buy the dialogue. The talking was witty, often acerbic or sarcastic. This would be cool if it was also realistic, but I just didn't buy all of the conversations, especially at the beginning of the book when the two main characters meet. I often thought, "No one would say that out loud!" The conversations seemed too blunt and personal. Maybe the writer wanted to make sure the dialogue wasn't boring. It wasn't boring, but I didn't buy it.

-Animal neglect leads to bad. It wasn't earth-shattering or prolonged horror, but it did make me feel bad for a while. The book didn't need this tidbit. Also, the character's reaction to the resulting badness was bizarre and unrealistic. (view spoiler)

-I thought I didn't care about characters being unlikable. Hear me, I really don't mind unlikable characters, but here, they made me want to leave the room so I didn't have to watch any more of their selfish, mean behavior. Seriously, I don't have to like the heroes to like a book, but it sort of felt like I was supposed to think they were cool and acceptable, but I didn't. I compare this to *The Dinner*, which had a totally unlikable narrator who made me want to stay put in the room, and who entertained me endlessly. (Obviously, I have a better time with unlikable psychos than with unlikable neurotics.)

-The reason the nanny chose to be a nanny was ludicrous. Nope, too far out for me.

-I'm not a prude, but . . . Well, maybe I *am* a prude. I found myself being pissed at a relationship that just didn't seem right. Plus, there was an absence of morality throughout, and that bugged me. There was an unsettling lack of guilt about hurting others. There was much self-destructive behavior and an overabundance of drunkenness—that got old for sure.

-The secrets were blasé. Actually the secrets weren't blasé but their presentation was.

-The ending fizzled out. (view spoiler)

-No noir. The blurb said this book was noir, which attracted me to it. My mistake—I thought noir meant that it was a mystery. Wrong. And if not a mystery, maybe just dark nights and dark moods? Most of this story takes place by the pool—which is all sun and brightness. Sigh. I should not read blurbs. (I had to look up "noir fiction" and the definition was complicated.)

So that's it for the Joy Jar and the Complaint Board, which are both full to the brim. See? It's hard to rate! Even though I've landed on 3 stars, give this book a try—it has a lot of merit.

The book is narrated by two women (a mom and a nanny), in alternating chapters. This format worked for me; it was well done. What we have here are a helicopter mom, a mute teen, and a young drunken nanny with an identity crisis. Stir in deception, carelessness, self-destructive behavior, art, tweets, mommy issues, and a lack of boundaries and you have quite a stew. Don't be looking for maternal instincts or good people, but do look at all the trouble online communication can cause.

I enjoyed this book a lot, despite my bulging Complaint Board. It's a fast, smart read that was hard to put down.

Thanks to NetGalley for the advance copy.

?Karen says

Writer Lady Daniels and artist S Fowler (pseudonym for Esther Shapiro) share the spotlight of this story set in the Hollywood Hills. Lady gives the first POV, and I was struck at how bluntly honest and forthright she was with us readers. She kept me engaged even though her life was extremely messed up, but I eventually realized that she is not as honest as she pretends to be, unfortunately for her family.

S, on the other hand, is upfront about her trickery and deceit, at least with us readers. She, weirdly, has taken on the persona of her estranged mother, who, when S's age, was an irresponsible nanny and a drunk. S also matches hair color and makeup choices to Mom circa 1985. Weird that S would want to imitate such a phase in her mother's life, and that she actually knew so many details. S is doing this for an "art project." I didn't get it. When Lady hires S as nanny to her three-year old, Lady has no idea that S is playing a part (Who would do that, after all?) and no idea how her 18 year old son will react to the new live-in. S goes on to another art project, one that Lady is unwittingly swept into, and I started to get the why, but felt it still very strange indeed.

These women are more alike than initially apparent. Mother issues on both their parts; their mothers even had mother issues. Mother issues are a big factor. That I got! Complicated relationships and self-absorbed characters make this one that you have to occasionally stop and wonder about, sometimes asking, Who are these people? Do I care about what will happen to them? The children, yes. The adults, not so much. I read an ARC provided my LibraryThings.com.

Marie says

This book had me cringing, yet I was intrigued and felt compelled to read to the end. The setting is Los Angeles and a great many themes are explored throughout this novel. The two main characters, are at such transitional points in their life, making rash irresponsible decisions. These two women grew up with "bad mothers," however end up becoming their mothers, either inadvertently or purposely in the pursuit of art. They are brought together in this novel as Lady has separated from her husband and is looking for a nanny. "S," as Esther is calling herself in her play-act of being her mother, responds to nanny position and is hired on the spot, without even a reference check.

It is about mothering, the different ways a woman may parent different children. It is about bonds between mother and child and boundaries. It is about identity, as a mother, as a daughter, as an individual.

It is about relationships between women and how quickly they can change. The characters in this novel and their relationships with each other are incredibly well developed. The reader experiences the shifts in the relationship as life changes or new facts come to light.

It is about bad choices in relationships with men that seem exciting, yet leave the women with emptiness. It is about the possibility of good relationships with good men, that seem boring and easy to throw away. These women, Lady and Esther, through whose alternating voices the novel is rendered, seem destined to self-sabotage. Esther, in becoming her mother, takes the color out of her hair, dresses in frumpy clothing, drinks

herself into oblivion, and makes poor rash choices on many fronts. Lady plays with fire on several fronts. Most shockingly, she revisits the father of her oldest son (whose identity she is hiding from her son) not just once but repeatedly.

It is about art and the subtle shifts that can change the entire tone of the piece. The title of the book refers to a photograph taken by Lady's sister-in-law, Kit Daniels. It was part of a series of photographs taken of 'regular' women caught off guard, half-dressed, with clutter in the backgrounds. Lady's original photo had been altered for the publication, and the slight alteration made a tremendous difference in the way she presented. Certain other details were hidden as well.

In the end, this novel is about learning to accept yourself and the life given you, your strengths and weaknesses, not trying to copy or imitate others', but to work with what life has handed to you.

Even though, I was annoyed with the characters and their alacrity for self-sabotage, from which they all seemed saved at the end, I do think the novel was incredibly well executed. It is not a feel good beach read. It is much deeper and more complicated. The writing is excellent. The author develops many themes and there is significant complexity to the novel. It is intriguing and unique. It would make a great book club book!

Thank you to net galley and the publisher for an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

For discussion questions, please see: <http://www.book-chatter.com/?p=1441>

Jessica says

I am not the right reader for this book. I don't want to be anywhere near these characters.

Carol says

3.5 Stars.

WOMAN NO. 17 is a story filled with unusual and complex relationships and two characters in particular that are recklessly irresponsible thus unlikeable (*for me*) but.....I still could not stop reading.

Edan Lepucki brings something different to this novel, communication through expression and expression through various forms of art, and while Lady and "S" are the main protagonists, it is Seth's character and story that kept me reading to find out more.

Combined with a super high weird factor, you will find....sex....secrets....lies....and an abundance of alcohol consumption that unfortunately leads to an unnecessary mishap of animal abuse.

Overall, thought the writing was good and the storyline unique. Look forward to reading **California**.

Many thanks to NetGalley and Crown Publishing for the ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Esil says

I hate writing negative reviews, but here goes... I am generally happy to read novels featuring unlikeable characters. Eileen is a case in point. But, yikes, *Woman No. 17* really didn't work for me. Told from the alternating perspectives of Lady and Esther, this felt like an endless portrait of petty, self-centred, dislikable women. Lady is in her early 40s, and is relentlessly capricious and self centred in her dealings with everyone, including her two sons and their fathers. Ester is in her 20s, comes to live with Lady as a nanny, and is also selfish and keeps escalating her bad behaviour. To top it off, they both have despicable mothers, and Lady's sister in law is not much better. Meanwhile Lady's sons are quite lovely, and her ex husbands aren't too bad. The dynamics between this cast of characters are pretty twisted -- to the point where I felt manipulated. As I say, I'm actually fond of many books featuring unlikeable characters, but something about this one rubbed me the wrong way. Two stars rather than one because the writing is pretty good. Others have liked this one far more than me. Read their reviews before you make up your mind. Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

The publisher summary describes this as "sinister, sexy noir about art, motherhood, and the intensity of female friendships, set in the posh hills above Los Angeles." I should have known this was not the book for me, but it is pretty ridiculous isn't it? Noir & motherhood, should these two concepts be combined? I would say no. This book didn't work for me. I kept waiting for there to be a payoff with all the ideas introduced but they fizzle out, or maybe a point to all the artistic spin, but I was pretty disappointed in the end. The two female characters are relatively unlikable, which didn't help, and I find the word "friendship" in the description as fairly misleading. One is an employer, the other the employee. I did not pick this book when it came up for Book of the Month, and that was a good instinct. It was fairly well performed on audio, but I guess at the end of the day, I just don't know what the author was thinking. It takes so much time to write a book, why try to force these elements together?

There was a joke about a jacaranda though, and that word is the new word following me around in 2017.

Patrick Brown says

So, right up front, I'm married to the author of this book. You should assume that I am hopelessly, ridiculously biased. There. Glad we got that out of the way.

For those of you who are still reading, I don't think there's a way I can top my review of *California*. I gave that book 5-stars, and I felt (and still feel!) that it deserved it. It will sound weird because the author is my wife and all, but there are many things in that book I still think about today.

But *Woman No. 17* is a better book. That's just, like, a fact.

It doesn't have the same easy-to-pitch premise that *California* does. But WN17 is about a whole mess of different things. Here's what I'd say is its core:

- * Motherhood (and daughterhood). The plot revolves around Lady, a mother of two boys--one a toddler, one a teenager--living in the Hollywood hills and newly separated from her husband. Into this mix comes S., a recent college grad artist who becomes nanny to Lady's toddler. Complications ensue.
- * The self we cultivate and show to the world, particularly as it relates to a) art and b) social media
- * Female friendship
- * Los Angeles. But for real Los Angeles, not "La La Land" (the movie or the concept) or some bullshit like that. This is a big deal for those of us who love Los Angeles. So many books get it so, so wrong.

And it has so much good stuff happening in it. It's fun, but with so many interesting threads at which to pull. The reader reviews of this book (by people who don't know the author, mind you!) have often mentioned its readability, how it's hard to put down. In my experience, this is true. It is a very well-plotted book. I have read it maybe three times, and each time, I found myself pulled along, not wanting to stop reading. I bet you'll feel the same.

Basically, I'm jealous that you get to read this for the first time.

A few other miscellaneous notes:

- * There is a sense that this book is a mystery. It isn't. It has a mysterious, sexy edge to it, and there's a sense of danger constantly looming, but it's not really a mystery in that traditional sense. I'd call it a literary novel with a noir tinge.
- * There are some very good made-up tweets in this book. If that's how you roll.
- * One of my 10 most favorite songs -- "I Want to Be Your Dog" by The Stooges -- features prominently in the book. This is maybe my one small contribution to this amazing novel.

Pouting Always says

Lady has decided to hire a nanny for her son, Devin, after she separates from her husband, so that she can spend more of her time writing her book. After publishing her first book about raising her nonverbal son Seth, she was writing a follow up, one that was much more of a memoir. S is a recent graduate who wants to reinvent herself. S has always been artistic but after her college experience struggles with what that means for her and what makes art real. S takes up the nanny job with Lady and uses it as an opportunity to be someone new, reinventing herself into the idea of her mother at her age. S. goes into the job with a vague idea of an art project and gets sucked into a friendship with Lady as the two bond over their mutual feelings of uncertainty and terrible mothers.

Once again I was torn about my rating but I would say 3.5 stars. The story telling and writing was really good and I didn't want to put the book down. I also do enjoy the complexity that was brought to the table by the characters and even though both Lady and S kept having moments where I wanted to slap them at the same time I could sympathize with them. The problem for me was the plot of the book or lack of plot. I kept waiting for more to happen. I mean I just don't get off on reading about self destructive women anymore which is mostly a personal thing. I've just out grown it and now when I read about women who are smart but emotional unstable and make bad decisions I'm just like bored because they all seem to blur together for me.

Also I don't get why anyone would get mad at S's 'pretending' to be someone else, which I guess brings up the question of what does it really mean to be yourself versus pretending. People do tend to reinvent themselves and change over time so if S is behaving differently as she graduates college and transitions into

a new phase of life is it really that big of a deal. The whole project of pretending to be her own mother seemed convoluted and kind of stupid. Then again what do I know about art?

The book was good and I would read more by Lepucki but the plot was kind of a disappointment and it didn't feel like anything really ended up happening in the book.

Elyse says

Update -Am I crazy --I just entered the Goodreads Give-a-way-- I'd love to win a 'physical' copy of this book. Has any other Netgalley reader --ever tried to win a 'physical' book --besides your already 'arc' Kindle? And....have you won? lol curious....

Where is my review????

This is nuts.... several of my reviews keep disappearing-- I read this book last year. Left a review early.

The author read it - comments were made- so I know I'm not crazy!

I loved Edan's new book.... author of California!

THIS IS A COPY OF THE REVIEW I WROTE LAST YEAR!!!!!!

-- I'm glad I saved a copy in my notes! I highly recommend this book! It's great enjoyment!

Irresistible!!!!loved it!!!!

A *FEW* details in this review but NO SPOILERSI've only covered a smudge of the great fun this novel is.

Edan Lepucki knocked the ball way out of the park with another hit novel.

"Woman No. 17" is crackling with creativity and energy that's wickedly clever.....a tragicomedy with sharp observations about love, lies, lust, family, art, class, fidelity, regret, money, alcoholism, friendship, betrayal,.... and subtle ways that relationships are formed and altered.

This story takes place in California. Primarily in Southern California... but there were some highlight moments in Northern California- in Berkeley. I was feeling some nostalgia for Berkeley...(my home town) - - laughing silly at a "concocted flimsy plan"...

an art project involving Teva's and other "Franken-sneaker-sandals on the market.

Oh... I was shaking my head laughing when character Esther Shapiro felt it was her duty to speak out about the worse sandal offenders. The fashion ethos in Berkeley is all about comfort! Oh ... How funny Esther makes 'comfortable' sound.

Being a fan of schmata clothes myself... I was crackin up!

Before the story moves to Los Angeles- in the Hollywood Hills...there's another scene in Berkeley where Esther is in her 4th year at Cal, moves into a house with other artists...(to be with her boyfriend "Everett Forever James"), in a "Intentional Community Living" house.

Esther asks Everett what is "Intentional"? -- He tells her they cook, listen to music, discuss books, politics, art, sex, and they get drunk. Esther still isn't sure what's "intentional", but drops the subject. There is a scene in the middle of the night -- that I'm still laughing at. Edan: You wrote some funny scenes!!!!

Boyfriend *Forever*....says BYE-BYE to Esther. She wasn't "artist" enough for her.

The drama gets more and more juicy once Esther Shapiro arrives in L.A - her home town.

She has always hated her name Esther (I can relate- it's my Hebrew name) - and begins to go by 'S'not 'Es'.... but 'S'. I happen to personally love her nickname so much.... I'm about to call my Rabbi and see if I can change my Hebrew name to 'S'. Much more tolerable!

'S' also takes her mother's last name. She drops the Shipiro. She is now S Fowler.

She also begins a new art project. She starts with a makeover in reverse. 'S' purposely makes her hair look bad, wears sloppy clothes, and begins drinking, all with the purpose to experience being a younger version of her mother- Katherine Mary Fowler.

The more liquor she fills her belly with - the more she becomes "HappyKathy". It's a very twisty - questionable project which we watch unfold that keeps us on the edge and entertained.

'S' becomes the live-in nanny for Lady. A friendship develops. 'S' encourages Lady to write - work on her book with the same best interest for her as she has in keeping her child Devin happy and safe.

"Lady" is in her 40's. She lives in the Hollywood Hills with her toddler son Devin, and her 18 year old son Seth. Both sons are fathered by two different men.

Seth is "non-verbal". He doesn't speak at all --but doesn't seem autistic, and yet he's not a genius either. His silence - charm- behavior- choices he makes mixed with his silence throughout this story is always interesting and a little mysterious.

Lady is separated from Karl. Karl wants her back. He loves Lady. He's older, is generous, always been a great father, empathic, patient, financially secure and responsible, nice looking, and kind.

We wonder 'what's the problem'?

Marco is the father of Seth. Marco is no longer in the picture - but there is much more complexities to find out why and what happened.

Kit Daniels is the twin sister of Karl - a gifted photographer. Kit's relationship with everyone in this novel is a tad complicated.

Both mother's -Lady's and S's, are a sore spot in their daughters lives.

There is no smooth coasting in this book - so don't expect it.

There is not a female character that has not been hurt - and or caused hurt.

Lots of drinking going on... vodka beer wine etc.

I thought this book was terrific. A few times I thought of 'Sliding Doors'. Another time 'Sex, Lies, and Video Tapes'. -- yet this book is not that!!

I enjoyed the FRESHNESS - I never knew what was coming -It was all about THE CHARACTERS!!! >>> and some very wonderful unique descriptions.

And....if you are wondering WHY it's called "Woman No. 17" READ IT!!!

Thank You Crown Publishing, NetGalley, and Edan Lepucki (FABULOUS.....sooo good!!....and Edan, I promise not to stalk you more than 3 times this year --ha...little personal joke)

Publish date is not until next May 2017(forgive me for this very early review-- I was too excited to read Edan's book to wait) ... so THANK YOU for this early opportunity.
