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Tristi Pinkston

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Ida Mae Babbitt, president of the Omni 2nd Ward Relief Society, didn't mean to become a spy. But when visiting teaching stats are low and she learns that one family under her care is in financial trouble, she'll do whatever it takes to make sure they have what they need. If that includes planting surveillance cameras in their home and watching them from a parked car in the woods, well, isn't that what any caring Relief Society president would do? With the help of her counselors Arlette and Tansy, Ida Mae soon learns that there's more to the situation than meets the eye. It's all in a day's work for the Relief Society.

Secret Sisters Details

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From Reader Review Secret Sisters for online ebook

Cheryl Malandrinos says

In an effort to help Bishop Sylvester reduce his stress level and his blood pressure, Ida Mae Babbit, the president of the Omni 2nd Ward Relief Society, suggests the group attempt to handle any slight problems that come to their attention--without mentioning this little tidbit to the bishop, of course.

When the women of the Relief Society discuss how they could help one family who might be in need, their "attempt to handle any slight problems that come to their attention" blossoms into an amateur attempt at detective work. With the help of her counselors, Arlette and Tansy, and some technological expertise from her nephew, Ren, Ida Mae and the Secret Sisters uncover a mystery, while still managing to assist other families under their care.

Just another day's work for this Relief Society.

In this first book of The Secret Sisters Mysteries, LDS author Tristi Pinkston creates a light and funny mystery with characters you'll soon come to love.

The reader is treated to the hardworking Ida Mae who seems to be busy taking care of everyone but herself; Arlette, who is always knitting socks in outrageous colors; Tansy, whose amazing ability makes her able to help people without them realizing they are being helped; and Ren, Ida's quirky nephew, whose ability to invent neat gizmos and gadgets provides quite useful.

These women, Ren, and the secondary characters blend well with each other. Ida is an engaging character, whose point of view carries the reader through the book. In less than 300 pages, the reader learns a great deal about Ida, but Pinkston does an excellent job of gradually sprinkling in the backstory, so that it doesn't distract from the present day happenings. And this book, while comedic in nature, gives the reader a good look into the workings of a relief society.

While I truly enjoyed this cast of characters, I felt more emphasis was placed on the daily workings of the Relief Society than on solving the mystery--at least until the final few chapters when things started coming together. Now, it seems that this could be the author's intent, but even though I've read more than one cozy mystery, this is something that stuck out to me. There was a lot going on outside of the mystery, and every once in a while I felt the focus was lost.

Now, that definitely isn't going to stop me from reading the next book in this series when it comes out; a sneak preview, of which, appears at the end of Secret Sisters. I want to see what Ida, Arlette, and Tansy get themselves into next time, and what Ren will invent to help them along. I would also like to see more of Hannah, whose involvement in the Relief Society was limited when she needed to tend to her own family.

Overall, this is a book that I didn't want to put down once I opened it. It is an enjoyable, quick read.

Holly (2 Kids and Tired) says

I love books that make me laugh out loud and *Secret Sisters* does just that. Hysterically funny, this is a story that gives new meaning to the phrase, Relief Society Presidency. Ida Mae, genuinely concerned about the welfare of a young family in her ward, finds herself on a stakeout in the woods with her nephew, Ren, and her Relief Society counselors Arlette and Tansy. Ren has a penchant for designing/inventing spyware and Ida Mae finds herself caught up in his enthusiasm. Soon, she is placing a surveillance camera designed as a refrigerator magnet and planting bugs.

As the story unfolds however, Ida Mae discovers that there is more to the situation than simple financial troubles, and she and the other sisters find themselves caught in a wave of intrigue and investigation.

With quirky characters and a completely implausible premise, it's a perfect escape book and one you won't want to put down. It's also a terrific, if unorthodox look into the inner workings of an LDS Relief Society! I'm anxious for the next book in the series.

Karen Hoover says

This book was Laugh out loud in PUBLIC funny! Totally rocked!

Krista Jensen says

At first I thought, "No way. Uh-uh." Then I kept reading this fun farce of a story and the characters drew me in, like long lost episodes of "The Golden Girls"--I love these *Secret Sisters*!

A light, good-natured read with just enough suspense to keep you turning pages. This will be a fun series to follow!

Mary Weibling says

Very funny in parts. A very enjoyable read.

Kathy says

Secret Sisters is the first Tristi Pinkston novel I have read and it won't be my last. I grabbed this book as I was rushing out the door yesterday to take my son to a meeting. It was such a fun, light easy read. I was 50 pages into the story and hooked by the time his meeting got out. I finished the book up before going to sleep last night.

This made for a great Sunday read. I enjoyed the crazy way Ida Mae and her Relief Society Presidency went above and beyond to fulfill their callings. Enlisting the help of Ida Mae's nephew these ladies go to extremes to watch over a family in their ward. Tristi's book was full of humor and I could so relate to Ida Mae and her New Year's Resolution to not judge others.

The epilogue was a little too short and left me wondering what became of a few of the characters. There is a sequel which I am looking forward to reading positive it will be filled with plenty more light-hearted, entertaining fun.

Review from my book blog:
<http://iamareadernotawriter.blogspot....>

Teri says

Secret Sisters by Tristi Pinkston

This new foray into humorous mystery for Tristi is a big hit. The mixture of humor with mystery is a good mix, as it lets us see the human side of a Relief Society group of sisters.

Ida Mae Babbitt is the RS President of the Omni 2nd Ward and it is her job to see that everything is ok with all her sisters in the ward. When she notices the ward stats are low, it's her responsibility to see why this is happening and when she learns that one family is having financial difficulties, it's her responsibility to make sure the family gets the needed assistance. When Ida Mae and her counselors form a spy group, they decide to call themselves "Secret Sisters." When her less active nephew Ren, who has lived with Ida Mae since his parents died, is trying to work on a patent for a "bug" for eavesdropping, they decide to plant one in The Dunn's home to watch their comings and goings, as it's not a "bug" that hears conversation.

The local law enforcement tells Ia Mae to leave the investigation alone, as the sheriff seems to think the sisters are just a bunch of busybodies, but when a body turns up dead, The Secret Sisters with Ren's help, is able to sniff out the evidence they need to find out who the culprits are and save the day.

I look forward to the next Secret Sisters mystery, which is entitled "Ida Mae Rides Again." If you like a fun mystery with a bunch of RS sisters "sleuthing" around, you'll love Ida Mae.

Forever Friends Rating 4 Stars by Teri
Until Next Time, See You Around The Book Nook.

I received my review copy for the Virtual Book Tour from Senior Editor of Valor Publishing Group, and author Tristi Pinkston.

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Lucy says

I currently serve in a Relief Society presidency, so when the opportunity to read a comedy about a Relief

Society presidency that spies on one of its sisters in order to help her came along, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to put some levity into what can be a pretty burdensome calling.

Ida Mae Babbitt is the perfect Relief Society President. Ready at a moment's notice to help any and all that fall within the boundaries of her stewardship, she has the time and the resources to be that person, the one that seems to have a limitless supply of how-can-I-help-you. Before serving with my own relief society president, who would give Ida Mae a run for her money, I never would have believed that someone could put this amount of effort into a calling. Now that I've seen it done, Ida Mae seemed like a perfectly believable, refreshingly real character. Having her narrate the story, complete with her own flaws and reasoning, gave the story a snappy, humorous edge.

While I truly enjoyed and believed Ida Mae, none of the other characters, except perhaps her crusty counselor, Arlette, who is always knitting an ugly pair of socks, felt real. Her young nephew, Ren, who was central to the idea of enabling his aunt to cross the line from caring Relief Society president to spy due to his interest in technological gadgets, felt especially weak. Whenever he spoke, I didn't feel like it was something a pony-tail-wearing-ear-pierced-twenty-year-old-college-drop out would say. He was just too nice.

Too...communicative. My logic needed him to be more withdrawn and confused and much less eager to hang out with his aunt and her middle aged counselors.

Still, the writing is solid. Tristi Pinkston, the author of Secret Sisters, does a good job moving her story along and keeping the main plot active. There are a few times when Ida Mae attends to some other RS business that isn't necessary to the main spy plot, but instead of taking away from the momentum, it actually lends itself to develop Ida's character and the town of Omni, where the story takes place.

My only real grievance, unfortunately, has to do with the main premise of the story: the spying. No matter that the story is intended to be unlikely and humorous, I could not get over the fact that a relief society president put a surveillance camera in someone's home. I was ready to go along for a farcical ride, but after reading, I felt like the story would have been equally as humorous had the spying been limited to middle age women hiding behind trees or sitting on benches with rain coats, dark sunglasses and hats. I wanted the spying to be much less....well...disturbing. Each time the story mentioned what information they were getting from their "bug" on the kitchen refrigerator, and later from another camera they secretly planted in the living room, I imagined the inevitable embarrassment that would arise when the realization that what you thought you were doing in the privacy of your own home, that thing you would NEVER EVER want anyone to know about, came to light. You know, the times that you make up the lyrics to your own musical and sing them loudly. Or what about when you hear your cell phone message alert go off right after you get out of the shower and walk out into the kitchen to get it without any clothes on because no one else is home. Or what about the private talk between husbands and wives. All of those completely acceptable things become mortifying when you add the fact that someone is secretly watching you. And I can't even imagine the havoc and discord that would happen within a ward and community when it became public knowledge that someone in a position of trust did something like that.

Oh, I know it's fiction. I get that defense a lot. It's fiction! It's fun! Don't take it too seriously. I know that. But, I have never thought labeling something as fiction means the rules of life no longer apply. In fact, I believe what is funny in real life translates into what's the most funny in literature, and unlawful surveillance placed inside the sanctity of someone's home isn't funny. Like I said earlier, I would have liked it a whole lot more had the spying been more of the old fashioned and less technology dependent kind. Sure, they would have still been breaching the scope of their calling by spying at all, but I think the end result would be a much more easy to digest comedy.

I believe this is the first in what will become a series of Ida Mae Babbit books. As I'm a fan of Ida Mae, I'm glad she will continue to serve in her best-of-intentions way.

Laurie says

Fill your thermos with hot cocoa, stuff some chocolate chip cookies into a Baggie and grab a copy of The Bishop's Handbook of Instructions. You'll want easy access to all three as you begin your raucous romp with the dysfunctional Relief Society presidency in Valor Publishing's new release, *Secret Sisters*, by five-time author Tristi Pinkston.

Pinkston's heroine, Ida Mae Babbitt, a well-intentioned bulldozer of a Relief Society president, is a "git-er-done" kind of woman, and when ward and family stresses spike the Omni Ward bishop's blood pressure, Ida Mae knows just what to do. The how-to-do-it is another issue, however, and with a directionless techno-prodigy of a nephew and her wacky presidency in tow, it's "Lucy and Ethel meets a McGyver-dude" as Ida Mae and company make a literal Federal case out of a Visiting Teaching report!

Pinkston has created a vivid assortment of over-the-top, multi-dimensional characters, while carefully adding enough depth to endear them to the reader. The plot is pure whimsy with an unexpected twist at the end that will keep you scratching your head until the final page-turn. Pinkston has done a fine job of hitting the comedy and drama buttons while tugging on the heartstrings as well.

You may not want these ladies running your Relief Society, but you'll enjoy the mayhem they stir up as they "protect and serve" their ward. For a delightful escape with some good chuckles thrown in, "*Secret Sisters*" by Valor Publishing, fills the bill.

"*Secret Sisters*" is available at Amazon and in Barnes and Nobles

Mormonhermitmom says

My new book club actually picked a different book to read, but it wasn't at the local bookstore, and I had wanted to read this anyway so when I saw it I picked it up. I finished it in a few hours and chuckled all the way through.

The story takes place in a fictional small town in Utah. (At least I'm pretty sure there is no town in Utah called Omni, but I could be wrong.) A Relief Society president, Ida Mae, and her counselors, Arlette and Tansy, are the typically middle-aged/elderly ladies that help out wherever they are needed. They babysit for tired moms, they deliver cookies and bread to the sick and/or needy, they listen to people's problems and are experienced enough to give appropriate advice.

They aren't too old to learn a new trick, however. Like electronic surveillance. Hoping to determine if a young family needs food, Ida Mae and her nephew Ren plant a camera in the house. After a couple of stakeouts they decide the family is alright in the kitchen but a mysterious visitor to the shed warrants further investigation. The local sheriff rejects their preliminary findings as crazy, female shenanigans brought on by boredom. The fledgling detectives bumble through escalating adventures, all while trying to keep the ward

running smoothly without the Bishop knowing anything's wrong.

Oh my. Please don't think badly of me when I say that I imagined certain Relief Society sisters I knew as I was growing up in these roles. Someone says "blue-haired old lady" and a certain image comes to mind, right? Well, I can see Ida Mae, Tansy and Arlette in my head as real people. And it's frightening how spot on Sister Pinkston nails them.

This is a good, clean book; just the sort of thing my book club is looking for. I don't know as if young people would enjoy it, simply because it takes a certain "season of life" to appreciate everything that goes on, but at least there is no worry if a young person reads it. If you need a light, stress-free story, read on.

Tristi says

What do you get when you combine three elderly women, a family in need of financial help, a young man with a sense of mischief, and a cat with an attitude problem? You get my latest novel, "Secret Sisters." My three main characters - Ida Mae, Arlette, and Tansy - will keep you in stitches as you follow them through the woods, sneaking up on persons unknown, gathering up important clues and bringing the villains to justice. Add hacking in to the computer at the DMV and trailing their accomplice on her undercover date, and you've got a true recipe for fun.

This LDS comedy/mystery/chick lit for the elderly is a hysterical read for persons of any age or religious affiliation. "Secret Sisters" is the first in a series.

Kimberly Job says

Secret Sisters is the perfect mix of reality and an entertaining story. Is it likely that a Relief Society presidency will spy on the sisters they visit teach? Probably not. But it could happen. The unlikeliness of the situation is what makes Secret Sisters so hilarious.

Tristi has created characters that you can't help but love. Ida Mae, Tansy, and Arlette each have their own distinct personality, and Tristi has done a remarkable job giving each of them a voice that you can recognize.

While Secret Sisters does include a mystery, it is not the focus of the story. The zany antics of Ida Mae and her cohorts will keep you laughing throughout the entire book. Tristi also includes some real life lessons throughout the book. I finished the story feeling uplifted and happier, and I think you will too. It's a quick, entertaining read, and I highly recommend it. It's definitely going on my shelf of books to keep and read again and again.

Marsha Ward says

Relief Society president Ida Mae Babbitt never meant to break the law or become a spy, but when she discovers that one of the members of her ward is in trouble, and the woman denies it, well, a little

investigation doesn't seem out of line.

As Ida Mae and her presidency, Arlette and Tansy, become embroiled in adventure and deep secrets between taking care of the needs of various members of the Omni 2nd Ward, the murder of one of their suspects shakes them to the core. But with no cooperation forthcoming from the sheriff's office despite their best efforts to enlist that aid, they press forward to untangle the mystery, helped out by Ida Mae's techno geek nephew and Arlette's charming granddaughter.

Secret Sisters is a whimsical departure for LDS author Tristi Pinkston. Her previous works have been serious historical fiction, with one romance thrown into the mix. Now she has built a unique world peopled with interesting characters and sprinkled with delightful, laugh-out-loud-at-the-library repartee between Ida Mae and her cohorts. That's a good thing, because Secret Sisters is just the beginning of a cozy mystery series featuring Ida Mae and her friends.

Tristi Pinkston put a lot of effort into publicizing this book before it ever appeared in March, 2010. Ida Mae is all over the Internet: she has her own blog, Facebook profile, and even tweets through Twitter. In fact, she participated in the recent Whitney Awards live blogging coverage. Ida Mae has become quite the personality, and Tristi's effort is paying off. Everyone I know wants to read this clean, entertaining book. I'm looking forward to reading the second installment of "The Secret Sisters Mysteries," Ida Mae Rides Again.

Angelina says

This book did not work for me because it relied on my knowledge of Mormon culture in a "you get this, so you must find this premise funny" way, but I didn't find it very funny.

Chantelle Sedgwick says

This book was so funny! Loved the characters, the relief society presidency, and the mystery! Cute, clean story that anyone would enjoy! :)
