



# The Mutual Admiration Society

*Lesley Kagen*

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**From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Whistling in the Dark* comes an unforgettable novel that illuminates the sweet and brittle bonds of family, the tenderness of growing up, the heartbreak of longing for what we've lost, and the poignancy of finding love.**

**FACT:** Unbeknownst to eleven-year-old Theresa “Tessie” Finley, she’s in over her head.

**PROOF:** After hearing a scream and catching a glimpse of a mysterious man carrying a body beneath the flickering streetlights in the cemetery behind her house, Tessie adds solving a murder case to her already quite full to-do list.

Tessie has elected herself president of the crime-stopping Mutual Admiration Society—as if dealing with her “sad madness” over the tragic drowning of her beloved father; showering tender loving care on her “sweet but weird” younger sister, Birdie; and staying on the good side of their hard-edged mother weren’t enough. With partner in crime Charlie “Cue Ball” Garfield, Tessie and Birdie will need to dodge the gossips in their 1950s blue-collar neighborhood—particularly their evil next-door neighbor, Gert Klement, who’d like nothing better than to send the sisters to “homes.” And, of course, there’s the problem of steering clear of the kidnapping murderer if they have any hope of solving the mystery of all mysteries: the mystery of life.

A rich and charming tour de force, *The Mutual Admiration Society* showcases Lesley Kagen’s marvelous storytelling talents. Laced with heartwarming humor and heartbreaking grief, this novel is nothing short of magical.

## The Mutual Admiration Society Details

Date : Published February 1st 2017 by Lake Union Publishing

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Author : Lesley Kagen

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# From Reader Review The Mutual Admiration Society for online ebook

## Susan Peterson says

The Mutual Admiration Society, featuring Tess Finley, is an adventure story, a mystery, a story about two very unique sisters, filled with laugh out loud moments intertwined with the hardships and challenges that Tess faces every day. Tess is a young girl trying to fill adult-sized shoes, beginning with taking care of her sister Birdie. She is a detective, a snoop, a blackmailer, an aspiring Miss America; but mostly she is smart and feisty, doing whatever she can to keep her family together. The book is set in 1959, adding warmth and nostalgia to the story. Heartfelt and tender, funny and charming, this is a special book about a very special young lady. Tess, Birdie, and the rest of the colorful characters will touch your heart in this very entertaining story.

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## Heather Gudenkauf says

Lesley Kagan does it again! I loved The Mutual Admiration Society. Funny and heartwarming, this novel has it all.

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## Barbara White says

THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY is a unique coming-of-age story filled with sister-promises, 'sure signs of loony', and amateur sleuthing. And the characters stole my heart from page one. Tess, Bird, and Charlie, three kids who have navigated such tragedy in their short lives, are a triumvirate of quirky wonders. I loved them and their view of the adult world. Bravo, Ms. Kagen!

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## Pamellia says

This is a fun book, but the main character's sides were distracting and made a short story into a novel. I would recommend this book for anyone who likes an easy read, as long as editing problems do not concern them.

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## Beth says

When it comes to stories that explore the bonds between sisters, no one does them better than Lesley Kagen. I fell in love with Tessie and Birdie Finley in Kagen's novella "The Undertaking of Tess" and I have loved them ever since. For those who remember the joys of a simpler yet richer childhood—a childhood where adventures began in the great outdoors and the discoveries of youthful sleuthing involved overactive

imaginations, sneaking through a cemetery, and eavesdropping on adult conversations, this heartbreaking and hilarious book is a treat.

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### **Kathy Worrell ? says**

Two little sisters are on the hunt for the (possible) murder of a nun in a cemetery.

Sounds cute doesn't it? Well, it did to me.

However, I found the girls spending more time running through the cemetery, hiding from the nosy neighbor, and eating.

Little girls usually aren't so dull.

They just didn't capture my heart.

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### **Pam Jenoff says**

All of Kagen's books are gems and her latest is particularly bright. I laughed and wiped away more than a few tears as eleven year old Tessie navigated adolescence, family loss and a murder mystery in her 1950s small town. Bravo!

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### **Kristin says**

You know when you are sitting in a car with a child that won't stop talking? At first it is cute, but after about 5 minutes you are running stop lights to get her home sooner and out of your car? That's what happened to me in this book, at first the perspective and voice was cute and I thought "Yippee another Flavia De Luce in the making" WRONG. This child is not as charming or clever, but tries to be, tries much too hard. I think it was over-reaching. Honestly, I could only read 3/4 of the book it was too much banter/chatty nonsense trying to be clever without much plot advancement. I finally dropped the kid off with relief.

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### **Jill Anderson says**

Thank you to Lake Union Publishing and the author for the opportunity to read an ARC of this entertaining book.

I've read several books by Lesley Kagen, and if you loved Whistling in the Dark and Good Graces, you will thoroughly enjoy this upcoming release of hers.

The story is told from preteen Tess Finley's POV. This spirited, witty, imaginative girl, and her side-kick, younger sister Birdie, take the reader on a possible-murder-mystery sleuth adventure. Her "gumshoe-detective" ways, and her "now just wait a cotton-pickin-minute" talk will take you on a trip down memory

lane of what life was like decades ago.

The author's "voice" in this story, as with some of Lesley's others, reflects life from the late 1950's. Even though the story takes place in Milwaukee, Tess knows her neighbors and the neighborhood gives you a feel for small-town life, where everyone looks out for each other.

A quick, enjoyable read!

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### **Lesley Kagen says**

Hey all!

Yup, this is my book and I gave it five stars because I'd have to be kind of a dope to work on a story for year and a half if I wasn't in love with it, right? There'll be a giveaway here at Goodreads as we draw closer to the release date, so be sure to visit often. Wishing you all the happiest of holidays! Hugs, Lesley.

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### **Cathy says**

Since Catholicism forms a subtext of this story, I feel it's appropriate to begin this review with a confession. I did not finish this book. Nay, I committed an even worse sin. I read about halfway through and then...skipped to the ending. Here's why. My opinion on this book vacillated wildly between being utterly charmed and thinking, "Enough already!" The main character Tessie is precocious, feisty, wisecracking, witty, and a very loving big sister to Birdie, who also possesses loads of character. Their relationship is a heartwarming one. But the book reads almost like one giant monologue from Tessie, sprinkled in with a little dialogue from supporting characters - Birdie, their mother, their neighbor. It's akin to having a very lovely cake iced with way too much, overly-sugary frosting. A little goes a long way. Forgive me.

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### **Jules says**

This was such good fun to listen to. Tessie is a fun, adorable and quirky young girl. She had me smiling throughout this story. Although somewhat emotional in places, this is an overall funny feel good story, and definitely one I'd recommend if you enjoy a cosy mystery with a pair of entertaining sisters to keep you amused.

I borrowed this in audiobook format through Kindle Unlimited.

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### **Tina says**

When I saw this book by Lesley Kagen on Netgalley, I jumped at the chance to read it! I read her book,

"Whistling in the dark" (which I just loved) and the sequel, "Good Graces" which was very good too. I love the nostalgia of stories set in the 1950's/60's. Add two elementary sisters running around a neighbourhood trying to solve a so-called "murder" and causing a bit of mayhem and I'm hooked!

The author does a good job with her research and I enjoyed Tess' cute 50's "talk." This book just didn't entice me like her others did. It was a bit slow to start but by the middle I was enjoying it.

It's still a cute, fun story that takes you back to a time when things seemed less complicated and at times more tranquil.

Thank-you to Lake Union Publishing and NetGalley for allowing me the opportunity to read this Advanced Reader's Edition.

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### **Fran says**

Move over Flavia de Luce...there's a new kid in town! Theresa "Tessie" Finley is the President of the Mutual Admiration Society, an aspiring detective and blackmailing agency. She is also a little girl with an awful lot on her mind. Since the death of their father, caring for her "sweet, weird" sister, Birdie, requires a great deal of attention, as does keeping on the good side of their neglectful, emotionally distant mother.

After witnessing mysterious events in the local cemetery late one night, Tessie learns that one of her many enemies, school principal, Sister Margaret Mary has gone missing. Now she has another item on her already full To-Do List--find the suspected abductor of the nun. The cards seem stacked against the sisters as they begin their investigation. Will their snooping alert their nosy, interfering neighbor...or worse, draw the attention of a kidnapper/murderer?

If you are familiar with Lesley Kagen's work, you have already met the indomitable Finley "ghouls". Readers were first introduced to them in *The Resurrection of Tess Blessing*. Her accompanying novella, *The Undertaking of Tess*, provided backstory to these unforgettable characters. If you are new to Kagen, I recommend you read EVERYTHING she has ever written. She has defined a genre all her own. The Mutual Admiration Society, as expected by her fans, is a delicious blend of smart, humorous, heart-breaking and heart-warming, with a dash of mystery to sweeten the pot. This author perfectly captures a child's perspective, while dealing with some very complex issues. Be prepared to fall in love with Tessie. She is clever, troubled, and utterly irresistible. Readers will recognize and relate to the characters....they are that real. This book by Lesley Kagen takes the reader back to their childhood, feels like a chat with their best friend, and draws them into the mystery facing the Mutual Admiration Society. Prepare to be swept up in the adventure!

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### **Jennie Menke says**

Kindle first book.

Always a bit leery of the kindle firsts. My experience is that they are rated higher than they should be because people do t expect as much from a book they don't have to pay for. Most of them I have hated. I didn't hate this book but I didn't love it either.

The narration, the voice of a young, imaginative girl, got to be a bit much. But it was original and consistent. The circumstances of her life are pretty tough but she seems pretty unsinkable.

I guess I didn't like all the really dark side stories that are treated so lightly as a result of the narration style. I did a fair amount of skimming when she got repetitive.

In summary, a decent free book that I probably would have rated 2 stars if I'd had to pay for it. So guess what: I'm guilty of up-rating too!!

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