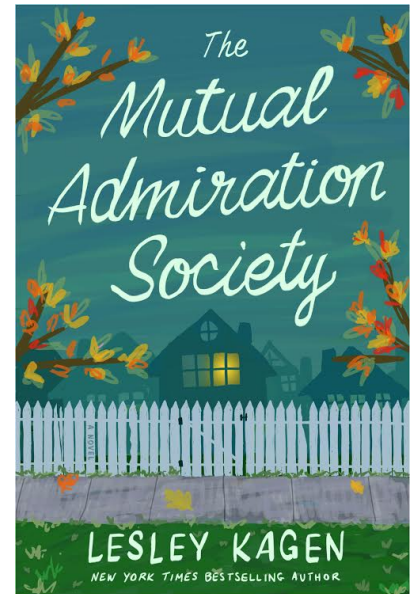


Discussion Questions for *The Mutual Admiration Society*

1. If you're a reader of a "certain" age, did you find the story transported you back to the "good old days?" If so, what was different about those times versus now? And if you grew-up during a different era, what are your observations about your childhood versus the Finley sisters'?
2. Do you believe in afterlife communication? Have you ever received a "sign" from a departed loved one, or God, the way the girls believe they did?
3. Tessie thinks that she'll never heal after losing her father. How have you dealt with a devastating loss, if so, how did you manage to keep on keeping on?
4. Louise, the girls' mother, is absent for most of the story. What do you think of Tessie's assessment of her? Do you think her observations are spot on, or viewed through the lenses of a child? Maybe both?
5. Tessie and Birdie's relationship is loving, but also tumultuous. Did their experiences resonate with any you may have had with your own sister?
6. Clearly, something is different about Birdie, but is she really as "loony" and "dumb" as Tessie thinks she is, or do you think she might be a whole lot savvier than she's letting on?
7. What do you think about Tessie's and Charlie's match-made-in-Heaven relationship? Is it possible for children to fall deeply in love?
8. Slang used in the book was quite common in the Fifties, but were you taken back by any of the terms Tessie used such as "Wop," "Polack," and "Bohunk," or how she assessed their stereotypical characteristics so breezily when it's now politically incorrect to do so?
9. There's a strong sense of community in the neighborhood. Do you feel that sense of connectedness has fallen by the wayside in today's hustle-bustle world?
10. Holy Cross Cemetery is an important setting in the story. Do you think the girls' fascination with it was morbid, or did you understand why they spent as much time as they could over there?



11. Kids in those days were treated very differently than they are now. Discuss the differences.

12. Which relationships could you most identify with in the story?