

[PDF] Mare's Nest

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Description:

Review Praise for *New York Times* bestseller *Whistling in the Dark*, winner of the Midwest Choice Award, and other Lesley Kagen novels:

"A bittersweet and beautifully rendered story of two young sisters and a summer jam-packed with disillusionment and discovery...*Whistling in the Dark* shines." -- **Sara Gruen, international bestselling author of *Water for Elephants***

"One of the summer's hot reads. -- ***The Chicago Tribune***

"The loss of innocence can be as dramatic as the loss of a parent or the discovery that what's perceived to be truth can actually be a big fat lie as shown in Kagen's compassionate debut, a coming-of-age thriller set in Milwaukee during the summer of 1959. Sally, a girl who wouldn't break a promise even if her life depended on it, makes a charming protagonist." -- ***Publisher's Weekly***

"*Land of a Hundred Wonders* is a truly enjoyable read from cover to cover...Ms. Kagen's moving portrayal of a unique woman finding her way in a time of change will touch your heart." -- **Garth Stein, international bestselling author of *The Art of Racing in the Rain***

"I've been a Lesley Kagen fan ever since I read her beautifully rendered debut *Whistling in the Dark*. Set against the backdrop of the small-town south of the 1970's, *Land of a Hundred Wonders*, is by turns sensitive and rowdy, peopled with larger-than-life characters who are sure to make their own tender path into your heart." -- **Joshilyn Jackson, national bestselling author of *A Grown-Up Kind of Pretty***

"Lesley Kagen has crafted a story that is poignant, compelling, hilarious, real, and absolutely lovely. Her characters are enchanting and will have you racing to the end of this terrific novel." -- **Kris Radish, national bestselling author of *Tuesday Night Miracles***

"Kagen's stellar third novel, *Tomorrow River*, chronicles the dramatic changes in the lives of 11-year-old Shenny Carmody and her twin sister, Woody, nearly a year after their mother's disappearance. Kagen not only delivers a spellbinding story but also takes a deep look into the mores, values, and shams of a small Southern community in an era of change. -- **Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)**

"*Tomorrow River* is packed with warmth, wit, intelligence, images savory enough to taste and deep dark places that are all the more terrible for being surrounded by so much brightness." -- **Tana French, New York Times bestselling author of *Broken Harbor***

"...the charming, genuine voice of Shenny, whose country-Southern dialect is beautifully rendered with rhythmic cadences, is impossible to resist...Overall, it's the tender bond between the twins that redeems the world from the cruelty around them and keeps you rooting for them right up until the end." -- **Milwaukee Magazine**

"Moving, funny, and full of unexpected delights, *Good Graces*, is one sequel that just might be even better than the original gem. Kagen crafts a gorgeous pageturner about love, loss, and loyalty, all told in the sparkling voices of two extraordinary sisters." -- **Caroline Leavitt, New York Times bestselling author of *Pictures of You***

"For all the praise garnered for *Whistling in the Dark*, *Good Graces* more than lives up to its predecessor." -- **School Library Journal**

"*Good Graces* is filled with sensitivity and wit." -- **Shepherd Express**

A CONVERSATION WITH LESLEY KAGEN:

Q. What was your inspiration for Mare's Nest?

A. Initially? Outrage. I've seen so many little girls get their hearts and bones broken, and mothers being taken advantage of, I didn't feel right about not speaking up, or in my case—writing up.

Q. Do you think that the sort of nastiness you describe in the book goes on in other sports like soccer and gymnastics or figure skating?

A. Absolutely. The desire to see our children succeed is primal and powerful. It's expensive to

compete in any sport, but none that I know of is more exorbitant than horseback riding. A parent isn't buying their child a ball or a leotard or skates, they're purchasing a very expensive living, breathing partner. The financial and emotional toll can be devastating.

*Q. Did writing *Mare's Nest* help you come to terms with what you dubbed the "saddle soap opera" that you stepped into with your daughter fourteen years ago?*

A. The writing brought back a lot of memories. Remembering the ponies and horses, the love and time my daughter and I shared at barns and shows was sweet. But diving back into some of the other situations we faced, especially the horrible spill she took, made me sick to my stomach. I'll be forever grateful that she wasn't permanently damaged.

Q. The book spans almost two decades, more if you count your experiences as a child rider that are woven throughout. What was the hardest part of writing a story that takes place over such a long period?

A. Having to choose which aspects and incidents I wanted to cover was tough. The horse world supplies one with so much fodder. Getting the feel of the book was a challenge, too. I wanted it to be both entertaining and a caveat emptor, funny but unflinching. Always, the hardest part of writing for me is finding balance.

Q. This is your fifth book. Is the process of getting a story out of your head and down on paper becoming harder or easier?

A. Well, I like to think that I have a little firmer grasp than I did when I tackled my first novel, but I wouldn't say it's getting any easier. I try to raise the bar for myself with each book. Keeping it fresh for readers is important to me.

Q. I've heard you speak at a couple of events. You really seem to enjoy connecting with an audience.

A. I do, I do! I'm an actress as well as a writer and love the opportunity to go "live." A visit to a library or book club is such a great time to receive feedback from readers, too. I am especially fond of the part where they lavish praise and chocolate treats upon me. Or share a story about how one of the books touched them.

Q. You published your first book, shall we say...later in life? May I ask how old you are?

A. Well, one can always ask, but one doesn't always receive, does one. (Laughs.) Still thirty-nine and holding.

Q. It's been said that your writing is a little genre bending. A combination of literary, humor, and mystery. Do you agree?

A. I like to tackle tough topics, and there probably isn't a simile I've met that I haven't fallen in love with. And how would we cope if we didn't see the humor in life? As for the mystery element, I think all stories should be told in a compelling way that keeps us turning the pages.

Q. What do you enjoy doing when you aren't writing?

A. Spending time with my family, especially my two-year-old grandson, Charlie, who is the very definition of joy. I love to watch my daughter ride, catch a movie with my son, bake, garden, take my

dogs for walks, hike in the woods, hang out at Lake Michigan, read, and watch television, especially reality shows. I'm a sucker for over-the-top drama.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. Yes. I'd like send out heartfelt gratitude to all the readers who have made my writing dreams come true over the years. Their continued support and encouragement truly means the world to me and my family.

About the Author Lesley Kagen is an award-winning *New York Times* bestselling author, a mother of two, an actress, voice-over talent, former restaurateur, and accomplished equestrian. Her previous books include *Whistling in the Dark*, *Land of a Hundred Wonders*, *Tomorrow River*, and *Good Graces*. She lives in Wisconsin. Visit with her on Facebook, and at her web site .

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