


LitChat: Lesley Kagen, Author

The following is the #LitChat conversation held through Twitter on September 12, 2016 with bestselling author Lesley Kagen. #LitChat was founded and is moderated by Carolyn Burns Bass (@LitChat). www.litchat.com.




Welcome to #LitChat! Stepping in today is bestselling novelist [@Lesley_Kagen](https://twitter.com/Lesley_Kagen), author of 8 novels. pic.twitter.com/w0pW6pt2qD


 LITCHAT @LITCHAT · 22 DAYS AGO



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While #LitChat is underway with moderated chat between 4-5pmET, please don't use the hashtag unless contributing to topic. Thanks.

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Hey! #LitChat

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#LitChat was founded in 2009 and is moderated by [@CarolyBurnsBass \(@LitChat\)](#). Visit our website at [litchat.com](#).

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


So great to be here! #LitChat

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The easiest way to participate in #LitChat is through [@Nurph](#). Just login at [nurph.com/litchat](#), authorize and you're in the chat.

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While everyone is gathering, please introduce yourself and let the convo begin. #LitChat

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We're delighted to have [@Leslie_Kagen](#) back. She's been busy writing and sending to publisher a new book. Welcome, Leslie! #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Always love talking to you and readers, Carolyn! #LitChat

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Your new book, THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY, pubs in February. What's it like waiting all these months for book to launch? [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

This is my 8th pubbed book, so I know what to expect when expecting. Try to keep myself busy knitting little booties for it. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

And, of course, writing the next one. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


And admiring the cover! [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

So proud of it! [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Unlike many, many book covers it is "bespoke". Original art by Rachel Adams. [#LitChat](#)

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You have such a wide range of novels to your credit. Many of them featuring young girls as protagonists. Why are you drawn to them? [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


I love the honesty of young girls right on the brink of it all. The authenticity of their feelings. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


And I set many of the stories in the 50s for the same reason. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Before cell phones, boy, barely before TV. When kids roamed my block like restless herds of cattle before a stampede. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


And the freedom! [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

To get in as much trouble as they want to. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Sometimes more than they can handle. #LitChat

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Your books are definitely written for adults, though. Do you ever consider writing MG or YA novels? #LitChat

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I love this image. I remember these times, though in the 60s. #LitChat
twitter.com/Lesley_Kagen/s...

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I think most of the novels narrated by young girls would work as YA books as well. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

For instance, Whistling in the Dark is taught in high schools and colleges, and a couple of the others could work as well. #LitChat

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I think your books are definitely multi-generational stories, @Lesley_Kagen. Hard to pin them to a specific audience. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

And, actually, I just finished writing what I hope will be a YA "Tween" novel, but we'll see. #LitChat

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What specifically do they look at when teaching WHISTLING IN THE DARK in classrooms, @Lesley_Kagen? #LitChat

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Chat with author
LESLEY KAGEN
in #LitChat,
September 12, 2016
4 pm/ET

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All book chat
www.twitter.com/LitChat

The Mutual Admiration Society
LESLEY KAGEN
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

We're chatting today with bestselling author @Lesley_Kagen in #LitChat for the next 45 mins. Join us. pic.twitter.com/ND7BoxID7d

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Primarily the emotional context. The sisters are dealing with a lot of the same issues kids, and, all of us, really, deal with. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Times don't change in many ways. Loss, love, and fear are part of the human condition. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I had a chance to speak to a couple of high schoolers who had read the book and it surprised me a little how much they identified #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

with the girls. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I'm hoping readers will feel the same way about The Finley sisters in The Mutual Admiration Society. #LitChat

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WHISTLING IN THE DARK was referred to me as featuring children and violence with a soft, but emotional brush, @Lesley_Kagen #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Well, isn't that a nice way to put it. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

The violence is sanitized in the story, yes. #LitChat

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It was meant as a compliment, @Lesley_Kagen. They were speaking high praise to your writing finesse. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

And that's exactly the way I took it! As a compliment of the highest order! #LitChat

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There is a fine line when writing mainstream novels featuring kids as protags. What are some ways that define this, @Lesley_Kagen? #LitChat

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Oh good. I was worried I botched it. #LitChat twitter.com/Lesley_Kagen/s...

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I think it gets down to writing about subject matter that we as adults now remember as being tough to deal with when we were kids. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

And to approach the story in a certain kind of way that I'm having a difficult time describing.
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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

YA has a very specific pace that's different than an adult novel for instance. #LitChat

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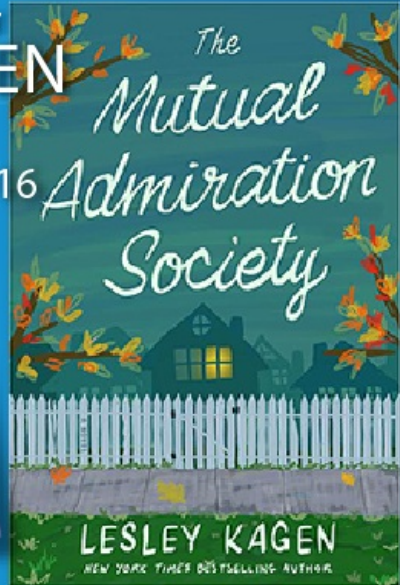
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You're doing great. Do continue, @Lesley_Kagen #LitChat [twitter.com/Lesley_Kagen/s...](https://twitter.com/Lesley_Kagen/status/791111111111111111)

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Chat with author
LESLEY KAGEN
in #LitChat,
September 12, 2016
4 pm/ET



We're here today with bestselling author @Lesley_Kagen in #LitChat for the next 30 mins. Join us.
pic.twitter.com/ND7BoxID7d

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YA is so much better today than it was in my day. There are no more taboos in YA lit. #LitChat

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8 Strategies for Reaching the Reluctant Reader #edchat #litchat #literacy #elemchat
buff.ly/2chdrc0 pic.twitter.com/CwEL77BYi3

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Often times writers will do what Harper Lee did so brilliantly. Have Scout tell the story in retrospect which allows the author #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

more headroom. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

YA is pretty wide-open, yeah. So of the stuff I read is so much better than many adult novels.
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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Realer. #LitChat

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Let's get back to THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY, @Lesley_Kagen. How about a tweet (or more) of summary. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

It's a coming-of-age story and well as being a mystery. Fast paced. Narrated by eleven-year-old Tessie Finley. #LitChat

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Ben Metlis
@pumpkinclaw

pumpkinclaws.wordpress.com/2016/08/30/ivo... #indieauthors #horror # history #mustread
#freebooks #bookgiveaway #kindlegiveaway #litchat #writerslife #writers

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Tessie has a lot of gumption. Probably one of most favorite characters to write. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

She's funny and sad, but also a liar, thief, blackmailer, spy, and poison pen writer extraordinaire.
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@Lesley_Kagen

And she's got a fiance. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


The kid slays me. [#LitChat](#)

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@Lesley_Kagen


But also her sheer vulnerability reduces me to tears. [#LitChat](#)

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Tessie's home backs up to a cemetery. What a wide open plot line there, right [@Lesley_Kagen](#).
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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I know!! [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


My father died when I was a young girl and my kid sister and I spent a lot of time in the local cemetery. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Much like the girls' mother, our mother wouldn't tell us where he was buried, so we spent a lot of time in that cemetery. #LitChat

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My cousins lived in an apartment that backed up to a cemetery when I was a kid. We invented lots of stories about the funerals. #LitChat

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@Lesley_Kagen

The Finley sisters are authorities on the subject. Their hobby is, well, death. #LitChat

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Did you ever find your father's grave, @Lesley_Kagen? #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Not until I was adult. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Back in those days, it was thought that it'd be better if kids didn't attend funerals. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Or burials. #LitChat

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These are the kinds of experiences that seed good fiction. Horrible to go through, but writers draw from them. #LitChat

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Sad, but true. #LitChat twitter.com/Lesley_Kagen/s...

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Yes. I can't remember which famous writer said this, but it was something like, "Thank God for my rotten childhood! #LitChat

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BookManiaLinda
@LindaWonder

@LitChat That sounds like great writer material! #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

An old elementary school friend of my recently got it touch with me and reminded me of the scavenger hunts I used to conduct [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

in the cemetery. I was a pretty morbid kid. [#LitChat](#)

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Mother/daughter themes are big in your work, [@Lesley_Kagen](#). Does your new book have a strong M/D theme? [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Yeah. I love to write about sisters and mothers and daughters because I think they're the most complicated of all relationships. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

In Mutual, Tessie has a horribly contentious relationship with her mother. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Which I find enormously hilarious. [#LitChat](#)

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Chat with author **LESLEY KAGEN**
in #LitChat,
September 12, 2016
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All book chat
www.twitter.com/LitChat

The Mutual Admiration Society
LESLEY KAGEN
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Only 15 more mins with bestselling author [@Lesley_Kagen](#) in #LitChat. Join us.
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Lesley Kagen
[@Lesley_Kagen](#)

And Tessie's sister, Birdie, is a real bone of contention. #LitChat

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Have you ever found any common thread in what breaks down mother/daughter relationships, [@Lesley_Kagen](#)? #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
[@Lesley_Kagen](#)

To me, it's often times boundary issues. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

And it so depends on the personalities of the mother and daughter. Are they wired too much the same? Too differently? #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


It can be such a walking-on-egg-shells situation. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

And, of course, the mother often projects her own wants and needs onto her daughter, and that can be a sticky wicket, too. #LitChat

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No doubt, the M/D relationship makes great fiction. Same with Father/Son. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

The father and son relationship is similar but because it's culturally unacceptable so much of what they're feeling stays hidden. #LitChat

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How do you separate your personal experiences (the cemetery) from the fictional for a compelling tale, @Lesley_Kagen? #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I don't separate my personal experiences from most of my stories. I'm the kind of writer that needs my work to be rooted in real. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


I could not for instance write Sci-Fi or historical English novels. I need to have experienced the smells, the tastes [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

the sounds of what I'm writing about. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


That's what I find most satisfying. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

It's got to come from my heart. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

Or else what I write is sorta stinks. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I leave that kind of writing up to those who do is so well. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

it [#LitChat](#)

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Now that THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY is at the publisher, what are you writing, [@Lesley_Kagen](#)? [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

I'm still hanging out with the Finley sisters. I can't work on anything different until I put them to bed. [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

And where almost there . . . [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

we're [#LitChat](#)

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

It's fingers-crossed time. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


Soon the advanced readers copies will go out to reviewers. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen


And that's always sort of nail-biting. #LitChat

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THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY by [@Lesley_Kagen](#) launches February 1. Read more about it at lesleykagen.com. #LitChat

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What did you learn about yourself while writing THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY, [@Lesley_Kagen](#)? #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

That I'm even more morbid than I thought I was, and how sweet and endearing and powerful first loves are. #LitChat

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THANK YOU so much for stepping in today @Lesley_Kagen. It's always a good chat when you're here. #LitChat

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We've been chatting today with @Lesley_Kagen, author of 8 novels including THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY due out 2/1/17. #LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

To say it was my pleasure, Carolyn, would be an understatement of vast proportion. Thank you so much! #LitChat

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Let's give @Lesley_Kagen a HUGE round of THANKS for joining us today. {{{APPLAUSE}}}
#LitChat

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Lesley Kagen
@Lesley_Kagen

:) #LitChat

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