



Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death

Mark Reutlinger

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Move over, Miss Marple—Mark Reutlinger’s charming cozy debut introduces readers to the unforgettable amateur sleuth Rose Kaplan and her loyal sidekick, Ida.

Everyone knows that Rose Kaplan makes the best matzoh ball soup around—she’s a regular matzoh ball maven—so it’s no surprise at the Julius and Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors when, once again, Mrs. K wins the honor of preparing the beloved dish for the Home’s seder on the first night of Passover.

But when Bertha Finkelstein is discovered facedown in her bowl of soup, her death puts a bit of a pall on the rest of the seder. And things go really meshugge when it comes out that Bertha choked on a diamond earring earlier stolen from resident Daisy Goldfarb. Suddenly Mrs. K is the prime suspect in the police investigation of both theft *and* murder. *Oy vey*—it’s a recipe for disaster, unless Rose and her dear friend Ida can summon up the chutzpah to face down the police and solve the mystery themselves.

Advance praise for *Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death*

“Is there kosher food in jail? These two heroines have gotten themselves in quite a pickle! Well, it’s a matzoh ball mess, really. Too deliciously funny!”—**Rita Mae Brown, bestselling author of *Nine Lives to Die***

Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death Details

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Author : Mark Reutlinger

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From Reader Review Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death for online ebook

Marji Morris says

Humorous, light-hearted--which sounds odd concerning the fact that deals with a mysterious death in a nursing home. The characters remind me of old Jewish women that lived in the nursing home when my grandmother was there, and the dialogue, peppered with Yiddish, sounds like my great aunts' talking.

Kathy Martin says

Welcome to the Julius and Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors! Residents Rose Kaplan and Ida Berkowitz have a mystery to solve when Bertha Finkelstein dies while eating Rose's matzoh ball soup. To clear her name, Rose has to find out what happened to Berth. How did Daisy Goldfarb's diamond earring get into Bertha's throat?

Luckily, Rose is a devoted fan of Sherlock Holmes and Ida is there to be her Jewish Dr. Watson. Ida is the narrator of the story which is filled with Yiddish expressions—each translated on first appearance—and the sentence structure of someone who learned English as a second language.

This was an excellent and funny cozy mystery. Ida's desire to help her friend mixed with her reluctance to do anything dangerous added to the fun. Ida's colorful asides were also amusing. And wasn't it lucky that Ida's niece Sara just happened to be friends with a cat burglar?

Along the way, the two intrepid detectives also managed to save one of the resident's daughters from a real fershtinkiner who was courting her. With the help of one of the resident's sons who is a police officer, Rose gets the unsuitable suitor's criminal record and uses it to convince his mother to cut off his support. The mother, a former cleaner at the home, had retired after winning a substantial amount in the lottery.

This was a fun story for fans of cozy mysteries.

Victor Gentile says

Mark Reutlinger in his new book, “Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death” Book One in the Mrs. Kaplan series published by Alibi introduces us to Mrs. Kaplan.

From the back cover: Move over, Miss Marple—Mark Reutlinger’s charming cozy debut introduces readers to the unforgettable amateur sleuth Rose Kaplan and her loyal sidekick, Ida.

Everyone knows that Rose Kaplan makes the best matzoh ball soup around—she’s a regular matzoh ball maven—so it’s no surprise at the Julius and Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors when, once again, Mrs. K wins the honor of preparing the beloved dish for the Home’s seder on the first night of Passover.

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rest of the seder. And things go really meshugge when it comes out that Bertha choked on a diamond earring earlier stolen from resident Daisy Goldfarb. Suddenly Mrs. K is the prime suspect in the police investigation of both theft and murder. Oy vey—it's a recipe for disaster, unless Rose and her dear friend Ida can summon up the chutzpah to face down the police and solve the mystery themselves.

What do you do when one of the residents of the retirement home dies while eating the matzoh ball soup that you made and, somehow, the police think you did it? well sure if the police will not investigate this case properly then you will have to do it and clear your name and soup as well. Welcome Rose Kaplan who goes to show that getting older doesn't mean we are done. Rose and her friend, Ida, are out to prove what is really going on and they are a joy to hang out with. There is a lot going on in this retirement home that you would never think goes on. Mrs. Kaplan is just great fun. "Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death" is loaded with twists and turns and red herrings that will leave you guessing all the while you are flipping pages to find out what happens next. Mr. Reutlinger has provided us with a clever heroine inside a fairly exciting book and I am so looking forward to more of her adventures.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from TLC Book Tours. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

SoWrongItsRANDI {Bell, Book & Candle} says

Bell, Book & Candle | Mrs Kaplan Review

Such a cute little mystery this one was. I loved how it had a 'Game of Clue' and the Thin Man kind of storytelling and vibe going on. The writing was impeccable and the pacing was right on the money. Never once did I feel bored or that the story was dragging its feet at all. The best part that made me chuckle the entire book was the fact the two old women were the sleuths that unraveled the mystery, much to Pupik's chagrin.

"So Bertha had survived the Holocaust but not MRS. K's chicken soup!"

I can only imagine my grandma and her friend snooping about like they're Sherlock Holmes and John Watson. It's adorable but laughable in a good way-- that's not to say that senior citizens can't be detectives, but rather it's the first time I've read a book in which they were. I adore Mrs. Kaplan -- she's my kind of woman. Her bravery and sharp wit was endearing, and her 'never take no for an answer' mentality. I especially loved that her and Ida are close knit friends who don't keep each other in the dark. I should probably mention that Ida is the POV character. My only wish is that Ida be a little more assertive when in presence of others. It seems like she's more of an introvert while Mrs. Kaplan is an extrovert.

I truly liked this story and how the reader is immediately immersed into the mystery, since it starts off with a death. The side mission these two did seemed out of left field for me, but perhaps it served as a foreshadow for another character (you'll know what I mean once you read the book); or perhaps its purpose is lost on me completely. Nevertheless I enjoyed reading the Jewish (Yiddish?) words and their meanings. To be honest it reminded me of The Nanny with Fran Drescher.

Good book. Good mystery. Good humor. All around its a solid 'A' to me and definitely worth a read. By the

way, I did not see that twist coming at the end.

Meghan says

Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death. Mrs. Kaplan and THE MATZOH BALL ... OF DEATH. HOW could I not want to read this?!?! Really?!

Now, take a second. Scroll to the top and look at the cover. Specifically: the bowl of soup. See that one matzoh ball? Yeeeeeah. See? Hooked. HAD to read.

Rose Kaplan lives at the Julius & Rebecca Cohen home for Jewish Seniors. It's almost Passover and, as usual, they have a competition to find out who has the best matzoh ball soup - and that person gets to be the person who makes the soup for everyone to eat at their seder. When Bertha is found dead facedown in a bowl of Rose's amazing soup, she's the one they look at as the main suspect. Her, and her best friend, Ida, can't let that happen, so they decide to investigate the murder themselves.

Rose and Ida are awesome. I can't say they're "typical" Jewish "old ladies" because I've only actually met two, but they are EXACTLY like the two that I have met. They have all the yiddish words that crack me up and they are just awesome. I love them - VERY well done - and the additional characters in the story are a lot of fun too.

One of the great things about the story is that there are a few side things going on, which make Rose and Ida that much more real.

Another great thing about the story is where they live. First there's Shady Pines and NOW there's the Julius & Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors. This place is great and there are a lot of really great people living here, and a lot of interesting things happening.

I liked this book so much, I handed it to my mother (who is a picker-aparter) and told HER to read it :)

Mr Reutlinger, I do have one request - that you share Mrs. Kaplan's totally awesome matzoh ball soup recipe. I may not be Jewish, but that stuff is delicious - and it's great when you're sick. I could use a good recipe :)

Note: I received a copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest and unbiased review.

Jo Dervan says

This is a simple book about a death in an assisted living facility for older Jews. Mrs. Kaplan, a lover of mystery stories, is accused of murdering one of the residents, Bertha Finklestein . Bertha was died with food in her throat as well as a missing earring. Mrs. Kaplan had made matzoh ball soup for the seder and Bertha had died eating it.

Mrs. Kaplan and her friend Ida set out to clear Mrs. K's name and also solve the mystery of Bertha's death. The book is filled with Yiddish expressions used by older Jewish people. So this book might appeal to a Jewish population. However the story is so mundane that it should have ended well before it did.

The Flooze says

A delightful little mystery!

Written in a lovely cadence with lots of yiddish sprinkled throughout, this series starter kept me entertained from beginning to end. The titular Mrs. K. is a clever and thoughtful woman who much admires Sherlock Holmes - and enlists the narrator, Ida, to fill the accompanying role of Watson.

As the two deftly weave their way through their list of possible suspects, we get a glimpse of life at their retirement home. Quiet, it is not! The supporting characters offer lots of humorous tidbits and an extra challenge or two. These added crises help shore up the impression that our two ladies are sensible, caring, and well-able to navigate life's pitfalls. They're also very likeable, which leaves them well-positioned to ferret out details from their fellow residents.

All told, this light read allows its heroines to shine while also proving that age is of no consequence when one has a sharp mind and a tenacious nature.

Lelia Taylor says

Spending a pleasant afternoon with a quiet little mystery is never a bad thing and Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death fills the bill quite nicely. Our two senior sleuths, Rose Kaplan and Ida Berkowitz, are intelligent women who are not just going to sit there and let the world go by so doing their own snooping comes naturally when Mrs. K is accused of being a thief and a killer.

I enjoyed these two ladies but the supporting cast is less well developed and I didn't feel the same attachment to any of those characters. In particular, the two police detectives are mere shadow figures and certainly don't behave as detectives normally would. I also felt that far too much emphasis was placed on the players being Jewish and being residents of the Julius and Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors. We're told over and over again where these folks live when that is really not necessary since nearly all the action takes place there and the very, very liberal use of Yiddish quickly became annoying. I get it, they're Jewish and this is a Jewish senior home but, except for the soup and the seder at which it's served, this could easily have been any nondescript community. Judaism really isn't a factor.

The mystery itself is a puzzle, as it should be, and I didn't guess the solution ahead of time but one aspect of the ladies' investigation made no sense as a certain item would not have been returned to the victim's room after her death. No matter, though, as I did spend an enjoyable afternoon with Rose and Ida and, with a little work by the author, a second adventure could be worth waiting for.

Betty says

This a funny cozy mystery without sex and violence. The characters are developed and catch interest. The is told by the protagonist sideline and is well written. We are at a Jewish Senior Home. The residents celebrate the Seder with Metzoh soup. The soup was made by Rose Kaplan; she was alone in the kitchen when was

made. Bertha Finkelstien falls into her soup and is dead. It was found that she checked on a diamond earrings belonging Daisy Goldfarb. The earrings were report stolen. The building administrator and the police feel that only Mrs Kaplan could have stolen the earrings and dropped one in soup. Mrs Kaplan and her pal most prove Mrs Kaplan is innocent before she is arrested. How they do it is very different and funny and you won't to stopped reading until they are proven correct. I recommend this book.

Fall Disclosure: I received a free copy from Allibi through Netgalley for an honest review. I would like to thank for the opportunity to read and review this book. The opinions are mine.

Smitten says

Originally posted on Smitten by Books Blog

3.5 Stars

For fans of: Mary Daheim

It's an honor for Rose Kaplan to be chosen to make the matzoh ball soup for her retirement home's Passover seder, but when fellow resident Bertha Finkelstein keels over mid-bowl, Rose starts to wish the honor had been bestowed upon somebody else. Everyone initially assumes Bertha was felled by a heart attack, but as it turns out, she actually choked to death on a diamond earring belonging to – and reported stolen by – Daisy Goldfarb. Because Rose prepared the soup while alone in the kitchen, the police now suspect her of both the theft and Bertha's murder. Can Rose and her best friend Ida Berkowitz solve the crime before Rose has to serve hard time?

If you're on the hunt for a fun, mild-mannered mystery full of larger-than-life characters and more Yiddish expressions than you can shake a schtick'l at, look no further than Mark Reutlinger's Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death. This book is a pretty quick read, but that's actually to Reutlinger's credit; while clever, the mystery isn't complex enough to warrant a higher page count (as it is, Rose and Ida have plenty of spare time to meddle in 'others' affairs), and though I find Ida's wildly tangential Jewish-grandmother-telling-you-a-story narration charming, I could see how it would wear on you after 200 pages or so.

Jewish stereotypes abound, but all told, Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death is an entertaining little diversion. The book's got a brisk pace, a wry sense of humor, and manages to work in a wealth of information about Jewish customs and traditions without feeling like a textbook or a lecture, and Reutlinger gets bonus points for creativity. A high-concept thriller it's not, but it's also not your typical traditional mystery; if you're looking to change things up a bit this holiday season, you could certainly do worse than Mark Reutlinger's Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death.

Reviewed by Kat

Aoife says

Just for once I want a book with an an awesome title to actually be awesome...this one was just a mess. First: the narrator. Ida uses a terribly stilted grammar that just isn't realistic for somebody who while not a

native-speaker has lived in the US for over 50 years. She also reminds me of my more annoying relatives. The noisy ones who despise everything modern (i.e. post 1960...), feel superior about it and go on constant 'In my days everything was easier and so much better'. She spends a page talking about the fact that nowadays you can buy magazines for every hobby there is. Apparently the rising number of magazine titles is indirectly proportional to her life-quality because I can't imagine another reason why anybody would be that upset about this. No it's not cute, just really, really annoying.

The case...I am tempted to put that into quotation marks because every cozy should be really ashamed of presenting such a ridiculous and shallow story as case. In fact it was solved about 60% in the book...and by that I mean Mrs. Kaplan has most of the necessary information that is needed to solve the case but she won't share it with Ida or the reader. Because...because she doesn't want to share it. This was the point where I loudly yelled 'Oh for fucks sake' at my Kindle because I couldn't believe it. That's just so incredibly lazy writing I can't believe that this is actually done outside very bad fanfiction...(but then 50SOG got published as well...)

The final 40% continue like that. Mrs. Kaplan collects some more information by the power of incredibly plot-convenience (or am I the only person in this world who doesn't have a friend who has a friend who is a burglar that owes them a favour?) but but doesn't share them till the last chapter because fuck The 10 Rules of Detective Fiction. You dear book are definitely not a detective story, you are just a horrible, horrible book...pages with words on it.

Oh there's also some side-characters that made several 70s sitcoms call and say 'Wow, and we though we only had flat and stereotypical characters' but I am too exhausted to yell about those.

ARC provided by NetGalley

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

Rose Kaplan knows her matzoh balls and when she is accused of adding something extra to her soup to kill another resident at the Julius and Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors she appalled. Together with her friend Ida they decide to solve the case themselves.

Ida tells the story of Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death. Her tale includes details about Jewish holidays and tradition plus is peppered with plenty of Yiddish words. I knew some but thankfully the author includes translation.

The mystery is fun and full of humor and drama. Rose and Ida go to great lengths to find the guilty parties and take much delight explaining to the police officers their findings and how the police missed obvious clues.

The Julius and Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors is quite a place with a variety of interesting residents. A great setting for a whole slew of mysteries.

Yvonne says

It's Passover at the Julius and Rebecca Cohen Home for Jewish Seniors and everyone is at the seder meal on

the first night. Rose Kaplan, “Mrs. K”, is given the great honor of making the matzoh ball soup. It’s going to be a great evening for everyone, but then tragedy strikes.

One of the residents, Bertha Finkelstein, sits alone at her table and suddenly is found with her face in the soup. She’s also not breathing and very much dead. It’s discovered that Bertha choked on a diamond earring that had been stolen from another resident. Mrs. K becomes the prime suspect as the police figure the earring must have been in the matzoh ball soup, which means not only did Mrs. K kill Bertha but she stole the valuable earring.

Mrs. K is more than a little insulted by these charges. With the help of her dear friend Ida Berkowitz and some professional thieves, they vow to catch the real killer. Of course they run into a few obstacles along the way – investigating murders is new to them.

The two senior sleuths remind me of Thelma and Louise or maybe even Lucy and Ethel or a combination of both. Mrs. K and Ida get themselves in the craziest situations and they don’t even realize they are doing it. They are sweet, funny and very clever. I’ve now become a huge fan of this new-to-me author.

To say this book is charming and delightful is putting it mildly. This was a pure joy for me to read. The narration is done by Ida. Authentic Yiddish words are sprinkled throughout the book. The setting, the characters, the storyline...all of it mixed together for a fast-paced mystery that keeps you thinking and smiling at the same time with a great twist at the end. I can’t say enough good things about this book. My one regret is that I didn’t read this one sooner.

Great job and there’s another one to be released soon! I’m looking forward to reading it!

FTC Disclosure: NetGalley provided me with a copy of this book to review. This did not influence my thoughts and opinions in any way. All opinions expressed are my own.

Julie says

A new cozy mystery series I think I'm going to love!

Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death by Mark Reutlinger is a 2014 Alibi publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher and Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

This first book in an all new cozy mystery series features Rose Kaplan and her very good friend, Ida, two senior citizens residing at the Julius and Rebecca Cohen home for Jewish Seniors.

Rose makes the best Matzoh ball soup in the world, so after winning a contest, she is allowed to make her infamous soup for seder, the first night of Passover.

But, things go horribly awry when someone falls face first into the soup and is pronounced dead at the scene.

Rose is relieved beyond measure to learn her cooking hadn't killed anyone, but it would seem she is still a person of interest, because what did kill the poor woman was found in Rose's soup. So, the question is how did it get there if Rose didn't put it there?

So before Rose winds up in jail for crime she didn't commit, she and Ida must determine what really happened.

I do believe I have found a new cozy series to follow. Told from Ida's first person perspective, these ladies had me in stitches. Seniors they may be, but they are sharp, alert and observant. The home is a boiling pot of gossip and secrets so it will take a some unconventional methods for Rose and Ida to solve the case.

I was fascinated by the vernacular and intonations and expressions used, with authentic Yiddish language included in some of the dialogue, adding another level of enjoyment to the story for me.

The dialogue was snappy and sparked with wit and humor, the characters were well drawn and developed, the pacing was steady, and the character driven plot kept me engaged, and puzzling over the red herrings, but mainly I was just entertained by this story and actually laughed out loud a few times.

There were some moments where things got a little too far fetched, but with a cozy mystery I think a little elbow room is required at times, especially when writing about senior amateur sleuths, who are limited to what they can plausibly accomplish while living in an assisted living home.

Rose cleverly outsmarted the detectives on the case, which caused some embarrassment for them, but also garnered Rose a little respect too. I've got the next book queued up and ready to read and can't wait to see what happens next.

Overall, this well written mystery was a very satisfying read and I had a lot of fun with it. I think this series is going to be a keeper.

4 stars.

Christoph Fischer says

"Mrs. Kaplan and the Matzoh Ball of Death" by Mark Reutlinger was every bit as good as I had hoped it would be. The quirky title and cover promised an entertaining and very enjoyable murder mystery with fun characters and a amusing setting. There were many laugh out loud moments, a lot of smirks and many happy moments for this reader. Very well done.

I received a copy of the book via netgalley for an unbiased review.
