



# The Secret, Book & Scone Society

*Ellery Adams*

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Ellery Adams

**The Secret, Book & Scone Society** Ellery Adams

*From New York Times bestselling author Ellery Adams comes the first in an intriguing new series set within a quirky small-town club where the key to happiness, friendship—or solving a murder—can all be found within the pages of the right book . . .*

Miracle Springs, North Carolina, is a place of healing. Strangers flock here hoping the natural hot springs, five-star cuisine, and renowned spa can cure their ills. If none of that works, they often find their way to Miracle Books, where, over a fresh-baked “comfort” scone from the Gingerbread House bakery, they exchange their stories with owner Nora Pennington in return for a carefully chosen book. That’s Nora’s special talent—prescribing the perfect novel to ease a person’s deepest pain and lighten their heaviest burden.

When a visiting businessman reaches out to Nora for guidance, she knows exactly which novels will help. But before he can keep their appointment at Miracle Books, he’s found dead on the train tracks.

Stunned, Nora forms the Secret, Book, and Scone Society, a group of damaged souls yearning to gain trust and earn redemption by helping others. To join the society, members must divulge their darkest secret—the terrible truth that brought each of them to Miracle Springs in the first place.

Determined to uncover the truth behind the businessman’s demise, the women meet in Nora’s cramped and cozy bookstore to share stories and trade support. And as they untangle a web of corruption, they also discover their own courage, purpose, and a sisterhood that will carry them through every challenge—proving it’s never too late to turn the page and start over . . .

## The Secret, Book & Scone Society Details

Date : Published October 31st 2017 by Kensington

ISBN :

Author : Ellery Adams

Format : Kindle Edition 304 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Fiction

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# From Reader Review The Secret, Book & Scone Society for online ebook

## Reading.Between.Wines says

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My reviews and (maybe) some other random thoughts can also be seen at

<https://readingbetweenwinesite.wordpress...>

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"Books are everywhere; and always the same sense of adventure fills us... in this random miscellaneous company we may rub against some complete stranger who will, with luck, turn into the best friend we have in the world."

The above quote and so many more are featured in The Secret, Book and Scone Society. This was my very first "cozy mystery" and my first time reading Ellery Adams. If you have yet to read a cozy mystery, you should give this one a shot. I was a little apprehensive going in, but this seems to be the perfect introduction into the genre.

Set in Miracle Springs, North Carolina, the story focuses on 4 women who become unlikely friends -- Nora, the owner of Miracle Books (the bookstore in town); Hester, the owner of the Gingerbread House (a place to buy comfort scones and other pastries); June, a Miracle Springs Thermal Pools employee (a spa); and Estella, owner of Magnolia Salon and Spa. All these women are damaged in some way and have a backstory that you slowly find out as the novel goes on. I found that aspect incredibly relatable, and who doesn't like a book with characters that are damaged and bruised just like the rest of us?

You only get one point of view in this book - Nora's - but I didn't have an issue with that. I liked that you only hear her voice and thoughts. Usually I'm a huge fan of multiple POV's, but it worked well in this book for the only voice to be Nora's.

There are SOOO many insightful lines about books and reading inside this novel, and I loved that each chapter started with a quote. There are also so many good books mentioned! Since Nora owns a bookstore (and used to be a librarian), you get to see a lot of different titles and authors mentioned in this book. Some I've read and some I haven't, but either way it was lovely seeing so many mentioned.

The writing style was just so amusing and inviting. I loved reading the prose in this book. Just a light, fun read with a good little mystery thrown in.

I was very happy that Ellery Adams chose to have Nora share the story of her past in the very last part of the book. I actually started to get a little worried that it would be saved for the next book in the series, but thankfully (\*whew\*) Adams was nice enough to include it in this book. I'm happy she did or I just know my rating would have gone down! It also built some suspense by having Nora's be last. I was very curious what the whole story was by the time she tells it.

Final Thought: I was SO happy with this read, and I don't have a single bad thing to say about it. If you love a good cozy mystery, or are looking for one to ease you into the genre, I highly recommend The Secret, Book and Scone Society. There was a decent amount of suspense as well, and I was really interested in how it would all turn out. I also think that Nora was the most likeable character. After hearing their stories, I warned up to everyone else as well. I can't wait for book 2!!

\*The hardcover was published on 31 Oct 2017\*

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## **Juli says**

Nora Pennington came to Miracle Springs, NC to heal from physical and psychological trauma from her past. Miracle Springs offers healing to everyone who visits. The natural hot springs and spa offer physical comfort. There is also spiritual and psychological healing through baked comfort scones at the Gingerbread House, and bibliotherapy at Miracle Books. Nora runs the bookshop, and always seems to know just the right books to help each customer. The shop is in the old railway depot. She lives nearby in an old caboose, refitted into a tiny house.

One afternoon she meets a visiting businessman who seems troubled about his past. She sends him to the bakery to get a comfort scone and then tells him to come to her bookshop. She wants to gather some books that can help him put his life on the right path. Unfortunately he never makes it to the bookshop. His body is found on the train tracks. Local police believe he may have jumped in front of the train. The man worked for the development company building upscale homes in town. He was scheduled to meet with other company officials about the housing development that very day. Nora just can't believe he committed suicide instead.

Nora soon finds herself bonding with 3 other women in town -- Hester, Estella and June. Not only do they investigate the businessman's death, but they form the Secret, Book & Scone Society. Their little group finds true friendship amid sleuthing, sharing personal secrets and finding comfort in trust, loyalty and caring.

I was pleasantly surprised by this book. The story is a nice blend of women's fiction and mystery. I love how Nora's shop uses books to help people heal. I also liked the idea of Hester baking custom scones to give comfort to her customers. The description of her scones and the lovely spices and ingredients she uses just sounds so delicious! The four members of the society are believable and well-developed characters. Each one is so different, yet they all come together as a perfect circle of friends.

I like that the story is set in Western North Carolina where I live. I recognized a lot of the places and regions mentioned in the story. :)

The mystery is nicely paced with some surprising twists, and it isn't overpowered by the emotional healing/friendship portion of the plot. The two intertwine together rather well. I usually avoid women's fiction because it often is just too sappy, overly emotional or melodramatic for me. This book avoids those extremes. The main characters Nora, Hester, Estella and June are nicely developed. They are all very different women, but they come together quite well as close friends.

Although this isn't the type of book I normally read, I enjoyed it. This is a nice start to a new mystery series.

Ellery Adams is the author of several mystery series. For more information on the author and her books, check out her website: <http://elleryadamsmysteries.com/>

**\*\*I voluntarily read an advanced readers copy of this book from Kensington via NetGalley. All opinions expressed are entirely my own.\*\***

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## **Lisa Morin says**

I finished this book late into Monday night. I couldn't put it down.

This book is so much more than a cozy mystery. It's an amazing tale about four very different women who find themselves involved in a mystery that is tearing their small town apart.

Nora owns a book shop, and helps to heal those customers who need it, by suggesting books, she's a bibliotherapist.

June is the manager of a luxury spa, Estella owns a hair salon and Hester owns her bakery, where comfort scones are her specialty.

When the mysterious death becomes the talk of the town, the ladies begin a friendship that is so unlikely, it will take your breath away. Each lady has their own story to tell, and every one of their stories were absolutely poignant.

I can't say enough about this wonderful new series by Ellery Adams. Her writing style and imagination goes beyond words.

This book is so much more than I expected and I'm sure this book will appeal to all readers of any age.

This book would make an excellent present for that hard to buy for person. Be sure to put this at the top of your list, you won't be disappointed.

I voluntarily read an ARC of this book provided by the author.

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## **Sarah Joint says**

My very first cozy mystery was a good introduction to the genre. *This book features lots of literary quotes and references, which definitely earned points with me.* The writing is pleasant and detailed, really affording you the opportunity to get to know the characters, who all have a very different voice. The characters in this book aren't perfect, far from it. I've gotten tired of characters too perfect to be real. Our main character, Nora, has a troubled past and disfiguring scars from a fire. The rest of the book club has their own stories. Their scars may not be as obvious as the ones Nora has, but they're there. All of them are outsiders of sorts who haven't made many friends in Miracle Springs. **The way they tentatively bond with each other, afraid to be hurt but needing comfort and companionship quite desperately, is touching.**

Miracle Springs is a small, charming town in North Carolina. People flock there when they need healing. They have natural hot springs and a reputation as being a place to go to relax and heal. Nora is the proprietor of Miracle Books, and she has her own special skills. She can talk to a customer about their life and then select books for them that will help them heal or come to terms with some issue. **She uses literature to heal.** She's not the only person in town with the ability to help people in unusual ways. Hester is a younger woman with a bakery who makes "comfort scones", specially made for each customer that can invoke memories of happy times.

When a man reaches out to Nora for help as she sits in a park, she sends him to the bakery and tells him to

meet her back at the bookstore for some bibliotherapy. She waits patiently, but he never arrives. Local hairdresser Estelle soon visits bursting with news: the man has been killed by a train, and no one is sure if he was pushed or walked in front of it himself. Nora refuses to believe that the man would kill himself, but only a few people are willing to listen: Hester, Estelle, and June, who is a lovely woman who works at the local spa.

**Four lonely women have come together to seek the truth and form lasting friendships. They think sharing their secrets is as scary as it gets, but soon they might be in the kind of danger they only read about in books: the man's death is only the tip of the iceberg in a big town secret.**

*I received an advanced copy of this book from Net Galley and Kensington books, thank you! My review is honest and unbiased.*

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### **Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says**

I enjoyed this one quite a bit. It was a bit more serious or darker than most cozy mysteries that I usually read. I think I wouldn't even classify this as a "cozy" mystery but more a just regular type mystery with a slightly cozy touch. In any case, I will say that one of my favorite things about this book was all the book and author mentions and the quotes. It was a bibliophile's dream and made for an excellent reading experience. Not to mention all the yummy sounding scones. I was a bit disappointed that the author didn't include any recipes. I think that would have been a nice bonus and would have made the book *that* much better.

I found it to be well written and paced. The plot was engaging and kept me turning the pages. The mystery kept me guessing until the end. I loved the interactions between the four women. I enjoyed learning their secrets and seeing their friendship grow. I loved the small town setting. The Gingerbread House and the personal scones. The bookstore and Nora's bibliotherapy. The caboose cottage. The book had a bit of a magical realism feel to it that I loved.

My only issue I did have with this one was I just didn't connect with Nora. I am not sure why because Nora is the central character, but I just found her lacking in emotions or personality. She came off a bit flat and if I am honest, a bit cold and standoffish. And perhaps that is precisely how she was meant to be written, but as I said, it left me feeling detached from her character. On top of that when we finally get to her secret at the end it had the unfortunate effect of disconnecting me further when I had just started to warm up to her. I think it wouldn't have bothered me as much if it hadn't included other people. But of course, these are characters not meant to be perfect. All four have flaws and are living with the repercussions of their actions so although her secret bothered me it may not bother others as much.

Overall though like I said above I did enjoy this one quite a bit and I look forward to heading back to Miracle Springs, North Carolina and seeing what these ladies will be getting up to next. There also seems to be some

potential romances in the air, and I hope the author plans on building on those storylines as well. This gets a solid two thumbs up from yours truly.

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### **Taryn says**

This was a fabulous read, if I could give it more than five stars I would. I kept putting the book down while I was reading it, not because I couldn't get into it but because I didn't want it to end. It pulled me in and I wanted to stay there and get to know the characters more. I so wanted to visit Miracle Springs and have a custom made scone and then go to Miracle Books and have a session with Nora wondering what books she would choose to help me. In this first book of the series you'll meet an array of characters who will touch your heart and have you wanting to be part of the secret society. I've always loved books and this one gave me a greater respect for the healing powers that they hold. The secrets told varied, but all were revealing moments and gave me a better grasp of who each character truly was not just who they portrayed themselves to be. I learned that true friendship offers a healing balm to those who trust and believe in it. This book wasn't just a mystery but a beginning to some wonderful friendships. I so look forward to seeing what happens next with this group of women and how ready they are to step out of their comfort zones.

I received an ARC of this book, all thoughts and opinions are my own.

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### **Paige says**

What a better way to spend time than in a Ellery Adams book. Just on seeing the cover I am enchanted. The title The Secret, Book and Scone Society contains two of my favorite things books and scones. The cover shows a plate of scones, a stack of books, a cup of tea and an open book and I am loving it. This is the first book in Ellery's new series and I am already waiting for the second book.

One of Ellery Adams's strong suits is creating powerful and real female characters. On page one I met Nora Pennington and felt I had met a new friend. And then we meet three other women who are just as well written. These four women live in Miracle Springs, North Carolina, a town people come to for healing. When a man is found dead these four women decide to get the answers and thus the Secret, Book and Scone Society is born. Each of these women holds a deep dark secret which they share with each other. By the end of the book I was ready to set down with them and tell my deep dark secrets. Oh and another great thing Ellery does is she creates handsome and charming male characters.

I have read and loved all of Ellery Adams books and I find this one so much more intriguing and thought provoking. There are lots of book references, which I loved and my TBR grew while reading Nora Pennington's gift with picking the absolutely right book for someone. Aren't we in pursuit of just the right book? Maybe this is yours!

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## **Book of Secrets says**

THE SECRET, BOOK, AND SCONE SOCIETY is the first in a new series by Ellery Adams that beautifully combines my favorite elements of mystery, magical realism, and women's fiction. The book is set in the enchanting town of Miracle Springs, North Carolina - a place that draws people in need of healing - including main character Nora Pennington and the other members of the Secret, Book, and Scone Society. The group forms initially to investigate the death of an out-of-town businessman, but a strong bond of friendship forms as each woman's most painful secret is revealed.

Nora's character is a bibliotherapist, and she always knows the right books to recommend to someone in need of guidance. Readers who love stories about books will appreciate the many titles mentioned and literary quotes throughout, as well as Nora's amazing bookstore.

This book was a bit darker than a typical cozy mystery in that the secrets revealed were weightier than I expected. Still, this character-driven mystery was strong and kept me engaged. Enjoyed!

Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Lisa Vegan says**

This has a fun premise. I love the idea of bibliotherapy and women's friendships and people's stories/secrets. I love cozy mysteries and I did enjoy this one, though it got a bit violent/intense for my tastes, but just briefly.

There are lots of wonderful quotes that I enjoyed, at the beginning of each chapter and within the book proper, and also mentions of many books.

So, loved the quotes, the concept, the books theme, and that there was some depth to the characters.

But while this is the first book in a series, the author has written other books, and I was surprised that the writing and story telling/construction seemed slightly amateurish and clumsy. It was okay enough and the story and characters and premise, and mysteries too, kept my interest.

And all the talk of food made me very hungry; I veganized everything, of course.

It was okay. I liked it. I might read on but I might not.

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## **Sandy \*The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice\* says**

EXCERPT: I read all the time. And I listen to people. I *really* listen...Stories don't change much across continents and centuries. Hearts are broken. Pride is wounded. Souls wander too far from home and become lost. The wrong roads are taken. The incorrect choice is made. Stories echo with loneliness. Grief. Longing. Redemption. Forgiveness. Hope. And love.

THE BLURB: From New York Times bestselling author Ellery Adams comes the first in an intriguing new



series set within a quirky small-town club where the key to happiness, friendship—or solving a murder—can all be found within the pages of the right book . . .

Miracle Springs, North Carolina, is a place of healing. Strangers flock here hoping the natural hot springs, five-star cuisine, and renowned spa can cure their ills. If none of that works, they often find their way to Miracle Books, where, over a fresh-baked “comfort” scone from the Gingerbread House bakery, they exchange their stories with owner Nora Pennington in return for a carefully chosen book. That’s Nora’s special talent—prescribing the perfect novel to ease a person’s deepest pain and lighten their heaviest burden.

When a visiting businessman reaches out to Nora for guidance, she knows exactly which novels will help. But before he can keep their appointment at Miracle Books, he’s found dead on the train tracks.

Stunned, Nora forms the Secret, Book, and Scone Society, a group of damaged souls yearning to gain trust and earn redemption by helping others. To join the society, members must divulge their darkest secret—the terrible truth that brought each of them to Miracle Springs in the first place.

Determined to uncover the truth behind the businessman’s demise, the women meet in Nora’s cramped and cozy bookstore to share stories and trade support. And as they untangle a web of corruption, they also discover their own courage, purpose, and a sisterhood that will carry them through every challenge—proving it’s never too late to turn the page and start over . . .

MY THOUGHTS: I finished *The Secret, Book and Scone Society* by Ellery Adams last night and I am still undecided. I liked the book. I didn't love it, but I wanted to. It was just a little bit too 'twee', too saccharine. And yet I love the work of Alice Hoffman and Sarah Addison Allen, to which this has been compared.

I loved the concept of the book, that the right selection of books can soothe our souls, that we can take from books things that will improve our lives, that we can learn great lessons from what we read. I believe that no man is an island, that our friends are our greatest assets. I believe all this. So why didn't *The Secret, Book and Scone Society* work for me? After pondering for almost 24 hours, I am none the wiser.

Perhaps Nora could recommend some books to sort me out.

3.5? I believe that this is the first installment of a planned series. I could be tempted to read the next book.

Thank you to Kensington Books via NetGalley for providing a digital copy of *The Secret, Book and Scone Society* by Ellery Adams for review. All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own. Please refer to my Goodreads.com profile page or the 'about' page on [sandysbookaday.wordpress.com](https://sandysbookaday.wordpress.com) for an explanation of my rating system. This review and others are also published on my blog [sandysbookaday.wordpress.com](https://sandysbookaday.wordpress.com) <https://wordpress.com/post/sandysbook...>

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## **?Dani? ?Touch My Spine Book Reviews? says**

I want to give a huge thank you to NetGalley, Kensington Books and Ellery Adams for providing me with an eARC in exchange for an unbiased and honest review!

Everyone who is damaged or looking for some sort of healing travels to the small town of Miracle Springs,

North Carolina. Strangers come to go to the renowned spa, the natural springs, and five star cuisine so that they can mend their broken souls and/or bodies. If they don't find relief in these treatments the end up seeing Nora the bibliotherapist at Miracle Books and Hester for one of her custom comfort scones at the Gingerbread House.

While eating her lunch on the bench a troubled businessman sits by Nora in distress. They make introductions and he tells Nora about his guilt and wanting to do what is right. Nora recommends that he go on to the Gingerbread House and wait for a comfort scone. She then tells the businessman that they can go more in depth what's going on and that she can prescribe the best books to help him heal and make the right choices for him. Shockingly, the businessman is found dead after visiting the Gingerbread House on his way to see Nora.

Nora has been a shut in and damaged since she moved to Miracle Springs years ago. She carries emotional wounds as well as physical scars on her body. She stays to herself and hasn't made any friends until now. Hearing the news of the businessman, Nora and three other damaged but great women form a society, The Secret, Book and Scone Society. They all are as troubled as the next but are they able to form a bond and help solve this man's murder that the sheriff wants to sweep under the rug. Are they able to let go of there past and trust again? Will they all be able to help find the murderer of the man they all tried to help? Read The Secret, Book and Scone Society by Ellery Adams to find out!

This book receives 5++++++ stars out of 5 stars! I absolutely fell in love with this story I didn't want to stop turning pages but then again I didn't want it to end. I felt like I could connect with all the main characters and feel their pain and their strength. I loved that it was largely focused around book lovers. There is mention of the everlasting TBR, literary quotes in the beginning of each chapter and so many references to books compared to life experiences. This book warmed my heart and made me proud to be a bibliophile, made me want to be a bibliotherapist, made me cry, had me on the edge of my seat with suspense and had me smiling through my depression. This book should definitely be a best seller! I would have to say this is one of my top favorite books ever! I recommend this to anyone for whatever they are searching for!

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### **Sue Em says**

Have you ever started a book and within just a few pages known that you were going to love it? It's rare, but special when it happens, and it happened when I started to read this one.

It has all the elements...books and references to other books, women's friendships, a realistic and intelligent plot, well-drawn characters and just a little extra -- not so much paranormal, but more magical realism.

Nora has made a new life for herself in Miracle Springs, N.C. When she refuses to believe the death of a customer was suicide, her investigation of his death and the new friendships she forms will change her life.

Thanks to netgalley and Kensington Books for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Amy says**

This is the first book in a new series by Ellery Adams. It was just as enchanting to read as is looking at the cover of the book.

We get to meet four powerful, and damaged women living in Miracle Springs, North Carolina. A town known where people travel to for healing.

When a man is found dead these four women decide to search for answers and the truth.

I have read Ellery Adams other series and love them, but this to me is her best.

A story how very different individuals can form friendships.

I voluntarily reviewed an Advanced Reader Copy of this book.

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## **Carrie says**

Miracle Springs, North Carolina is a small town that is known to be a place of healing. Not only is there a natural hot springs and renowned spa available but many of the shopkeepers in town have their own signature way of healing visitors. Nora Pennington is one of those shopkeepers being the owner of Miracle Books where she considers herself a bit of a bibliotherapist being able to talk with a customer and since which book would help them with their own problems.

When Nora meets a man that seems to be a bit troubled she senses that he could really use a bit of her brand of therapy but first she insists he go over to the Gingerbread House bakery and order one of the comfort scones made by the bakery's owner who also bakes a personal scone after hearing someone's story. But after getting his scone and before returning to the book store that same man ends up in front of the incoming train in what appears to be a suicide.

Nora immediately questions the death, sure she didn't know the man well or hardly at all really but in the moments she'd talked with him she saw a bit of hope in his eyes and knew that there was more to this story than suicide. Gathering with her fellow lady shopkeepers they form the Secret, Book, and Scone Society and dive right into finding out more about the death and the secrets of their small town.

The Secret, Book, and Scone Society by Ellery Adams is the first book in the new cozy Miracle Springs, North Carolina mystery series. Picking this one up it becomes immediately apparent that Ms. Adams had to be an avid reader herself since the main character in the story is a book store owner and the book is full of literary quotes and references to many different types of titles all fitting certain situations. As a book lover myself this was a major positive that had me enjoying this one right away.

Also, the theme of a town dedicated to healing was also quite apparent as you get to know the ladies in the story. All of them have their own past that they are trying to overcome and share their secrets to each other during the book making this one quite the touching and emotional story. Each have such a different background to the story but it easily apparent why they are drawn to one another.

As for the mystery side of this cozy I found that it wasn't quite as twisty that I was necessarily guessing all throughout. But with that being said the setting and characters certainly carry this book enough to make it quite a good one as I awaited the details to the conclusion of the story and just how everything had come about. Definitely a solid start to this series overall and would be interested in seeing how it continued now that we know the story behind these characters.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress.com>...

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## **Elle's Book Blog says**

**Release Date:** October 31, 2017

**Genre:** Cozy Mystery

**Series:** Miracle Springs, North Carolina #1

The Secret, Book and Scone Society is the first in a brand new cozy mystery series from Ellery Adams. Readers will be introduced to the beautiful setting of this charming small town and meet 4 women who become close friends over a murder that occurs in their town. In an essence, this is what starts their little group of amateur investigating, the secret book and scone society. Each of these women, while vastly different from one another, have their own secrets that unfold as the story progresses and it is these secrets that open up the characters and allow us to connect with them. At first, I thought the story was a little slow and frankly a bit darker than the lighter cozy mysteries that I am accustomed to, but I did like it. The characters are great- very well written and flawed like regular people, the town is as charming and atmospheric as they come, and the plot was intriguing. I liked how everything unfolded before our eyes and how I didn't know WHY this murder occurred until the very end. This one kept me on my toes, kept me interested, and left me feeling the thrill of it all. So I am really excited to see where the series goes next. Should be interesting to see these women come back together to solve another mystery.

### **Likes**

- The author wrote these characters as PEOPLE who have flaws and tough backgrounds.
- The friendships between these women.
- The overall feel of the story
- The ending when we finally figure out what is happening and who the killer is

### **Dislikes**

- The pacing was really slow. It didn't bother me so much when I had to put the book down either which can be a major turnoff. I look for a lot of excitement in cozy mysteries and if I had to rate the excitement in this book it would be a 4/10

Want to grab a copy of this book? Here are the links!

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Amazon Print: <http://amzn.to/2y6OpIc>

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<http://www.prettylittlebookreviews.com/>

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