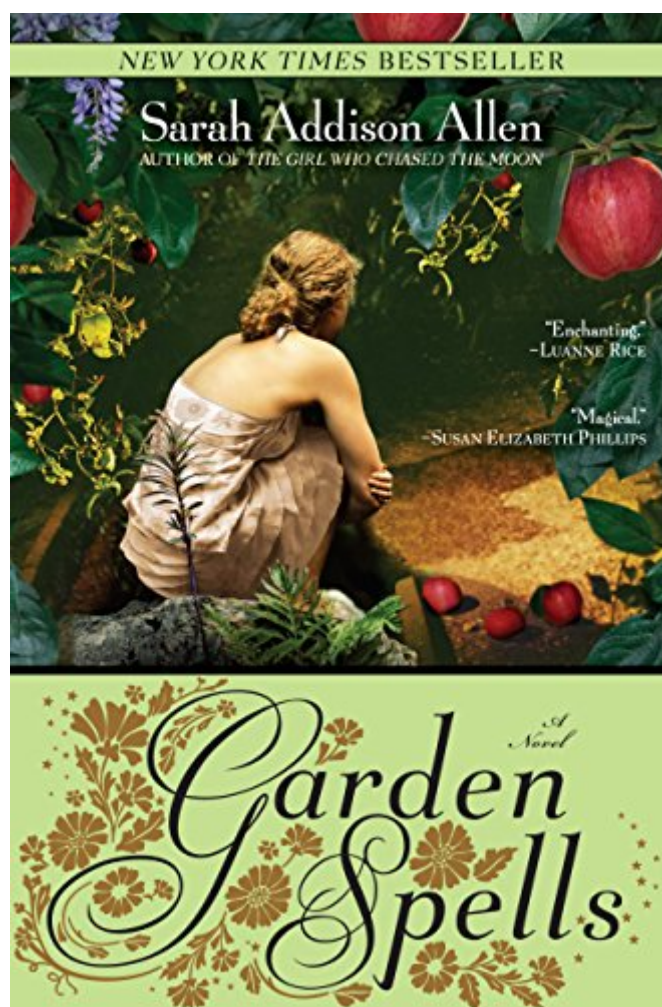


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# Garden Spells



## Synopsis

**BONUS:** This edition contains excerpts from Sarah Addison Allen's *First Frost* and *The Girl Who Chased the Moon*. In a garden surrounded by a tall fence, tucked away behind a small, quiet house in an even smaller town, is an apple tree that is rumored to bear a very special sort of fruit. In this luminous debut novel, Sarah Addison Allen tells the story of that enchanted tree, and the extraordinary people who tend it. The Waverleys have always been a curious family, endowed with peculiar gifts that make them outsiders even in their hometown of Bascom, North Carolina. Even their garden has a reputation, famous for its feisty apple tree that bears prophetic fruit, and its edible flowers, imbued with special powers. Generations of Waverleys tended this garden. Their history was in the soil. But so were their futures. A successful caterer, Claire Waverley prepares dishes made with her mystical plants—from the nasturtiums that aid in keeping secrets and the pansies that make children thoughtful, to the snapdragons intended to discourage the attentions of her amorous neighbor. Meanwhile, her elderly cousin, Evanelle, is known for distributing unexpected gifts whose uses become uncannily clear. They are the last of the Waverleys—except for Claire's rebellious sister, Sydney, who fled Bascom the moment she could, abandoning Claire, as their own mother had years before. When Sydney suddenly returns home with a young daughter of her own, Claire's quiet life is turned upside down—along with the protective boundary she has so carefully constructed around her heart. Together again in the house they grew up in, Sydney takes stock of all she left behind, as Claire struggles to heal the wounds of the past. And soon the sisters realize they must deal with their common legacy—if they are ever to feel at home in Bascom—or with each other. Enchanting and heartfelt, this captivating novel is sure to cast a spell with a style all its own.

## Book Information

File Size: 1022 KB

Print Length: 306 pages

Publisher: Bantam; 1 edition (August 28, 2007)

Publication Date: August 28, 2007

Sold by: Random House LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B000VRBBD2

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #20,939 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #49 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Women's Fiction > Sisters #71 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Magical Realism #116 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Contemporary Fiction > Fantasy

## Customer Reviews

I am biased in reviewing this novel, as well as Ms Allen's second, 'The Sugar Queen'. I do not fit the demographic for such fare (namely that of whimsical, magical chick-lit set in the South), as I am a middle-aged guy. However, these two books resonated for me in ways that ended up improving their ratings, simply because I have been greatly affected by the presence of romantic Love in the world, and the effects it can manifest in our lives. Specifically for me, the worst effects: my world was turned upside down by unrequited Love, by not being able to create the future that I saw so clearly for this woman and myself. So I am a member of the choir that this tale preaches to, maybe all the more susceptible because of the heartache I endured...and indeed, still endure more than half a decade later. That out of the way, let me say that once again, as noted in the title for my review for Ms Allen's second novel, I always want more. It is a personal inclination to see possibility in things, in people, in situations. Not only that, but also the mapping-out of how everything might be brought to a higher state of potential. And with this debut from Ms Allen, it's so much clearer to me what her strengths...and her weaknesses...are. She has a wonderful knack with the fantastical. Presenting it in such a way as to not have it be some circus event, but rather something to be accepted. To be wondered at, but not in a mawkish way. Here is a very, very creative person, who has managed to go back to this well twice (three times, if the blurbs about her next effort are accurate), and provides the willing reader with a lot to smile about. Being able to 'charm' with something, whether it be a song, a painting, a magic act, a film, or a novel, is a blessed gift.

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