

B A R B B I S S O N E T T E



JUST A BIT
OF MAGIC

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BARB BISSONETTE

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SAMPLE CHAPTER

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“A purple door means a witch lives here.”

Old wives’ tale

Beyond the path lay a cottage looking as if it had been plucked from the pages of a fairy tale and placed very gently in its own special spot, so exquisite it appeared. The roof seemed to be thatched; the old stone walls had green ivy tumbling along them, catching in the stonework and encircling the windows. A gold etching of a new moon with three scattered stars adorned the deep purple door. I’d never seen a door like it, rounded at the top with an ancient brass door knocker in the shape of an owl just above the door knob.

An old wooden porch hugged the entire front of the funny little cottage, scattered with wooden chairs and pots of various herbs and flowers. A large ancient hawthorn tree guarded the entrance, with dozens of herbs growing every which way. Masses of purple and white lilacs lined the cobblestone path, spilling onto the lawn and around the sides of the porch. Splashes of colour decorated the ground in the guise of early spring flowers — tulips and daffodils, and even some trilliums — interspersed with

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different coloured pansies, including some of the little ones my mom used to call “Johnny Jump Ups”. The whole lawn murmured in the May breezes, a vision of colour and spring splendour.

Hens pecked in the grass beside the flowers while a goat grazed off to the side. I heard the “cock a doodle doo” of a rooster.

“Wow! I love it,” I exclaimed.

Miranda nodded, seemingly mesmerized.

“I’m so glad. It is rather pretty, if I do say so myself.”

The light airy voice floated to us on the spring breeze. It seemed to have been conjured out of nowhere. We both looked around, startled and beheld ... no one. No one at all.

Already unnerved by our previous encounter, I felt disconcerted at attending the abode of a witch. This bodiless voice did nothing to help this feeling.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” the voice continued. “I didn’t mean to frighten you. I’m up here. Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Jenny Smith.”

As of one accord, Miranda and I tilted our heads in the direction of the voice. At first, I didn’t see the owner until Miranda pointed her finger towards an apple tree on the right, a mass of fragrant pink and white blossoms. One of its branches had grown out from the trunk in the shape of a letter ‘L’, creating the semblance of a swing. We beheld a woman perched there, several feet in the air.

This must be the witch, I thought. The other witch. Were there really two?

So, this had to be the hedgewytch. I shook my head, trying to straighten it all out in my mind.

She could have been any age, any age at all, this Jenny Smith. Her face bespoke of a number of years, but her body seemed limber, her face wreathed in smiles. She looked spry enough as she surveyed us from the top of the tree, swinging her legs which were encased in khakis and running shoes. She wore a bright yellow blouse and a yellow hoodie. She resembled a little lemon drop roosting there. Her hair, a mass of grey curls, tumbled on top of her head, fastened with a bit of yellow ribbon. She could have risen straight out of the pages of a fairy tale book herself.

She surveyed us with a friendly little laugh.

“You’ll have to excuse me,” she lilted. “I’m all mixed up in May.”
“What are you doing? Did you fly up there?”

I spoke the words without even thinking, marveling at the sight of her.

“Oh no. I haven’t learned to levitate yet, much as I’d like to. I’m working on crossword solutions. Sometimes I can snatch the words out of the air.”

She chuckled. I wasn’t sure if she was joking or not. She stuck her hand into the air just then, but it appeared to be only to shoo away a pesky mosquito.

“Oh yes,” I said, regaining some composure. “Nora wants to know the answer to twenty-two down.”

Jenny Smith’s laughter rang out among the apple blossoms.

“Nora King has no patience,” she declared. “She thinks the crossword puzzles will improve her brain. She’s right, of course, but she has to think on them awhile for those benefits.”

“I think she’s been working on it awhile, actually. She was studying it yesterday at the café.”

Jenny peeked down through the apple branches. Two big blue eyes inspected us.

“Oh, yes, I see. You’re the girls from the corner store.”

We both nodded, returning her smile. And that is when I saw her eyes twinkle. They literally twinkled. I don’t know how else to describe them. The flashes of light lasted only a second. I thought maybe I had imagined them until the night of her huge mysterious revelation. Then I knew for sure that they could absolutely twinkle and flash. Such a big mystery for such a little woman — witch or no.

But wait, I’m getting ahead of myself. This big mystery took a long time to unfold. We had barely taken a step on the path to discovering it.

I felt fascination, but I felt something else too. I discerned a stirring of unease in the pit of my stomach — a stirring first manifested at the café when I heard her name. An unfamiliar feeling ... distrust, anxiety? I observed her, knowing deep in my soul that something amiss existed between her and I — something off-key. I had no earthly idea how to describe it even to myself. But warning signals surged through my bloodstream.

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Miranda seemed to have no such misgivings, appearing completely at ease.

“We heard you were a witch,” she called up the apple tree.

I didn’t know if this was a proper thing to say to a witch. Truth be told, I had no previous frame of reference for etiquette in this matter.

Jenny seemed not to mind in the least.

“Well, that’s what they say,” she agreed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barb Bissonette is a retired medical nurse of forty years at Soldiers Memorial Hospital in Orillia, Ontario. She completed a mission to Dominican Republic with the Sisters of Charity to work among the people living there. She loved nursing, but has always enjoyed reading and writing. As a child, she would write poetry and short stories. Barb belongs to the Muskoka Authors Association. Her favorite person is — and always will be — Lucy Maud Montgomery, the great Canadian author.

Barb has had three novels published with Strategic Book Group: *Among Little Faces*, *A Winter Town*, and *Leave a Light on for Christmas*. She has always believed in the everyday magic that lives inside each one of us — the kind of magic that happens when you close your eyes and wish with all your might and believe with all your heart.

You can find out more about works and world of Barb Bissonette on her website *BarbBissonette.com* and her Facebook page *Barb Bissonette Writer*.

Every morning, Jenny Smith stares into her magic mirror, searching for glimpses of two girls. Today, she is joyful with anticipation, knowing that this is the day they will materialize in her village.

Molly has come to the village for a fresh start. Her parents are dead, her boyfriend has cheated on her with her best friend, and she is feeling very alone.

Miranda has arrived at her boarding house and work place, but she has her own secrets. Nothing is as it seems in the village. Not the yoga studio. Not the bits of magic that seem to hover everywhere. Not even the assortment of women who gather there.

The two girls find themselves drawn into the circle, discovering that all of this is leading to the biggest story, the biggest mystery: the reason why they ended up in this strange, unconventional place to meet a hedgewyitch named Jenny Smith.



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