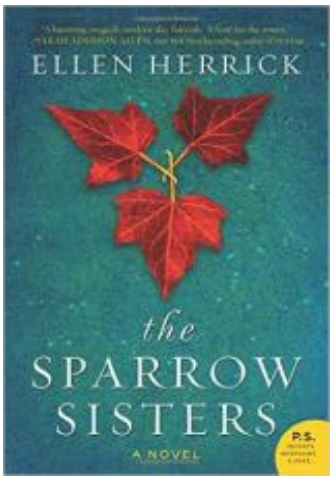
The Sparrow Sisters

by Ellen Herrick



About the Book

The Sparrow Sisters are as tightly woven into the seaside New England town of Granite Point as the wild sweet peas that climb the stone walls along the harbor. Sorrel, Nettie and Patience are as colorful as the beach plums on the dunes and as mysterious as the fog that rolls into town at dusk.

Patience is the town healer and when a new doctor settles into Granite Point he brings with him a mystery so compelling that Patience is drawn to love him, even as she struggles to mend him. But when Patience Sparrow?s herbs and tinctures are believed to be implicated in a local tragedy, Granite Point is consumed by a long-buried fear --- and its 300-year-old history resurfaces as a modern day witch-hunt threatens. The plants and flowers, fruit trees and high hedges begin to wither and die, and the entire town begins to fail; fishermen return to the harbor empty-handed, and blight descends on the old elms that line the lanes.

It seems as if Patience and her town are lost until the women of Granite Point band together to save the Sparrow. As they gather, drawing strength from each other, will they be able to turn the tide and return life to Granite Point?

THE SPARROW SISTERS is a beautiful, haunting and thoroughly mesmerizing novel that will capture your imagination.

Discussion Guide

1. What do you think is the meaning of the first line in THE SPARROW SISTERS: ?All stories are true, some of them actually happened.? Do you think, for instance, that it is a reference to the story that is about to be told?

2. THE SPARROW SISTERS is set in a New England seaside village, Granite Point. Why are we often attracted to stories about small-town life?

3. Living a simple life in a small town is seductive. Yet, Granite Point becomes very complicated as it turns on Patience Sparrow. Is that particular to small towns?

4. The three sisters in this novel each play a role in their family and at the Nursery. Discuss each role and how they complement each other and sometimes conflict with each other.

5. How does the author create the tension that exists between Patience and Henry? How does she create it differently between Sorrel and Charlotte, Simon and Sorrel, Nettie and Ben?

6. THE SPARROW SISTERS has an old-fashioned feel. In fact, in the early pages it could almost be set many, many years in the past. Do you think this timeless effect makes it easier for the reader to believe the magical realism aspects?

7. There are a handful of vivid characters that inform THE SPARROW SISTERS even though they are dead. How does the author make those characters real and relevant to the sisters and to the reader?

8. The author paints both a realistic picture of Granite Point and its residents and a fairy-tale one. What elements and senses and words does she use to make her word pictures so vivid? Which of the senses she employs is most appealing to you?

9. Why do you think Henry Carlyle and Patience Sparrow are attracted to each other when they so clearly have very different views on healing?

10. Do you believe that Eliza Howard and Clarissa Sparrow were really witches? Do you believe that Patience Sparrow is a witch?

11. Do you think Rob Short will stay in Granite Point?

12. Do you feel hopeful for Sorrel?

13. Do you believe in magic?

Author Bio

Ellen Herrick was a publishing professional in New York City until she and her husband moved to London for a brief stint; they returned nearly 20 years later with three children (her own, it must be said). She now divides her time between Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a small town on Cape Cod very much like Granite Point.

Critical Praise

?If you?re looking for a read à la Elin Hilderbrand with a touch of magic, look no further than THE SPARROW SISTERS, Ellen Herrick?s wicked and romantic debut.?

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Publication Date: September 1, 2015
Genres: Fantasy, Fiction
Paperback: 384 pages
Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks
ISBN-10: 0062386344
ISBN-13: 9780062386342