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# The Sugar Queen

by Sarah Addison Allen




## About the Book

In this irresistible follow-up to her *New York Times* bestselling debut, **Garden Spells**, author Sarah Addison Allen tells the tale of a young woman whose family secrets --- and secret passions --- are about to change her life forever.

Twenty-seven-year-old Josey Cirrini is sure of three things: winter in her North Carolina hometown is her favorite season, she?s a sorry excuse for a Southern belle, and sweets are best eaten in the privacy of her hidden closet. For while Josey has settled into an uneventful life in her mother?s house, her one consolation is the stockpile of sugary treats and paperback romances she escapes to each night?. Until she finds it harboring none other than local waitress Della Lee Baker, a tough-talking, tenderhearted woman who is one part nemesis --- and two parts fairy godmother?

Fleeing a life of bad luck and big mistakes, Della Lee has decided Josey?s clandestine closet is the safest place to crash. In return she?s going to change Josey?s life --- because, clearly, it is not the closet of a happy woman. With Della Lee?s tough love, Josey is soon forgoing pecan rolls and caramels, tapping into her startlingly keen feminine instincts, and finding her narrow existence quickly expanding.

Before long, Josey bonds with Chloe Finley, a young woman who makes the best sandwiches in town, is hounded by books that inexplicably appear whenever she needs them, and --- most amazing of all --- has a close connection to Josey?s longtime crush.

As little by little Josey dares to step outside herself, she discovers a world where the color red has astonishing power, passion can make eggs fry in their cartons, and romance can blossom at any time --- even for her. It seems that Della Lee?s work is done, and it?s time for her to move on. But the truth about where she?s going, why she showed up in the first place --- and what Chloe has to do with it all --- is about to add one more unexpected chapter to Josey?s fast-changing life.

Brimming with warmth, wit, and a sprinkling of magic, here is a spellbinding tale of friendship, love --- and the enchanting possibilities of every new day.

## Discussion Guide

**1.** What keeps Josey from leaving home? What makes Adam stay in Bald Slope? In what ways do they feel the same about North Carolina and its landscape?

**2.** What has Josey hungered for throughout her life? What transformed her from a difficult child into a woman who hides her cravings?

**3.** Why does Margaret want to prevent the arrival of unexpected visitors? What fears are captured in her peppermint-oil ritual?

**4.** What are Julian?s motivations in his pursuit of Chloe? How did your opinion of him shift throughout the novel?

**5.** In her conversation with Livia?s granddaughter (chapter six), Josey suggests that Amelia might want to have a life of her own. Amelia immediately dismisses that idea. What enables Josey to free herself, rather than becoming like Amelia? Could Josey have done it without Della Lee?

**6.** How does money influence Josey?s outlook on life? How did her father use it, through lavish parties and an eye-catching house, to get what he wanted? What was he not able to buy, no matter how wealthy he was?

**7.** Josey lives in a world of rules, from a neighborhood that bans snowmen to a mother who bans a snug red sweater. What is the purpose of these rules? What stifling rules in your life?at work, with your family, or in your community?do you sometimes dream of breaking?

**8.** Discuss Chloe?s relationship to the world of books. What is the significance of the magical way they appear in her life, and the equally magical way she finds a house to call her own? How do books become a home for her?

**9.** What is Nova Berry?s role in Bald Slope? How do her remedies?such as stinging nettle tea?compare to Josey?s sweets?

**10.** How did Margaret?s past shape her future? Who ultimately is to blame for standing in the way of her love for Rawley? How have notions of love and motherhood changed for Josey?s generation?

**11.** How did you react when Della Lee?s situation was revealed in the end? Have you ever been guided by the wisdom of someone like her?

**12.** Would you have forgiven Jake? How did you feel about him after you learned the identity of his lover?

**13.** How are Adam and Josey able to heal each other as their attraction grows? What does it take to propel Josey?s crush beyond the realm of fantasy? When are they able to trust each other enough to have a real-world relationship?

**14.** What were your thoughts as Josey tore up the attorney?s note aboard the ship? What do you believe it said? Are secrets ever useful in a family, or do they always result in pain?

**15.** What themes appear in both this novel and Sarah Addison Allen?s debut, **Garden Spells**? What forms of mystical hope appear in both books?

## Author Bio

Sarah Addison Allen is the *New York Times* bestselling author of GARDEN SPELLS, THE SUGAR QUEEN, THE GIRL WHO CHASED THE MOON, THE PEACH KEEPER, LOST LAKE, FIRST FROST, OTHER BIRDS and PAPER GHOSTS. She was born and raised in Asheville, North Carolina.

## Critical Praise

"Like the most decadently addictive bonbons, once started, Allen?s magically entrancing novel is impossible to put down."

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