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The Witch Of Little Italy



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Synopsis

A sparkling debut that will make you believe in the power of love, family, and magic. In Suzanne Palmieri's charming novel, *The Witch of Little Italy*, you will be bewitched by the Amore women. When young Eleanor Amore finds herself pregnant, she returns home to her estranged family in the Bronx, called by the "Sight" they share, which now grows strong within her. She has only been back once before, when she was ten years old, and while everyone else remembers that summer of sun-drenched beaches, laughter, and cartwheels, Eleanor can't recall anything earlier than the moment she left the house on her last day there. With her past now coming back to her in flashes, she becomes obsessed with recapturing those memories. Aided by her childhood sweetheart, she learns the secrets still haunting her magical family, secrets buried so deep no one knows how they began. In the process, she unlocks a mystery over fifty years old -- *The Day the Amores Died* -- and reveals once and for all a truth that will either heal or shatter the Amore clan.

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Customer Reviews

"Charming and enchanting *The Witch of Little Italy* drew me in from page one. A magical story of family, secrets, loss, and rediscovery written in beautiful prose and sprinkled with effervescent characters you won't soon forget. Palmieri nimbly blends the past and present to concoct a delicious spell of a story that will appeal to fans of Sarah Addison Allen and other fabulously entertaining novels." --Karen White, New York Times bestselling author

"*The Witch of Little Italy* is a warmly enchanting debut that will have you believing in magic and craving homemade Bucatini Amatriciana." --Susanna Kearsley, New York Times bestselling author

"An enchanting debut.

Palmieri's plot makes for a wickedly good read!" -- Melissa de la Cruz, New York Times bestselling author "I was utterly enchanted from the first page and found myself continually marveling over the effortless grace with which this story unfolded. The Witch of Little Italy is a complex, richly textured tale that practically sings with magic, and I know Suzanne Palmieri has a long and brilliant career ahead of her. In a word: I was charmed." --Donna Ball, award-winning author of the 'Lady Bug Farm' series "The Witch of Little Italy had me spellbound from the very start. Suzanne Palmieri has created a poignant, beautiful tale of love, magic, history, and family where all are deeply connected and interwoven." --Joanne Rendell, author of The Professors Wives Club "A mystical family secret hidden in a spicy Italian stew." --Kelly Simmons, author of The Bird House

SUZANNE PALMIERI is coauthor of the novel I'll Be Seeing You (as Suzanne Hayes), and her essays have been published online in Life Learning Magazine and Full of Crow's On the Wing section. She lives with her husband and three daughters in New Haven, Connecticut.

This book was just "OK." Not great, but not horrible. The main story is basically already laid out for you as soon as you start reading. I didn't like the protagonist at all, frankly. She's very juvenile for a college aged woman. I did feel sorry for her, but that didn't make me like her any more. Almost none of the characters are particularly likeable, and those that are supposed to be likeable are saccharine and irritating. There are a few background characters that are interesting, though. The magical aspect of the story was not particularly present until toward the end of the book. You get hints of it here and there, and it's mentioned all the time, but you rarely actually see it. The love story in the book was dreadful. The main character meets this man she hasn't seen since childhood and all of a sudden they're best friends and dating after reconnecting for maybe two days? This boyfriend is seriously overbearing with his love for the main character. Her other "love interest" (if that) is only there to serve to make this guy look great and to push a portion of the plot forward. The ending of the story is predictable, and also very unsatisfying. The big, main action sequence where most of the mystery in the book is solved is so underwhelming. The smaller mysteries of the book and the little side stories are what make it enjoyable.

A daughter ought to be able to rely on her mother, especially when she is in an abusive relationship with a man who assaults her, when somehow, she finds herself pregnant by this very man. But suppose your mother turns her back? Where can you go then for help? With your questions about why you and your mother are so estranged and your sad, frightened heart? Not back to the

boyfriend. At least you know that much. An ordinary woman in such circumstances would be very limited in her options. But suppose she had access to a little magic? Suppose she had just the thread, the glimmer of a memory from her childhood of a certain trio of sisters, her aunts and a grandmother, who might help her? The witch of Little Italy has these very assets, but she's also a bit leery. She can't quite remember the last times she visited these women other than she knows things happened, uncomfortable things. Secrets were uttered, and then hidden away, that were perhaps dangerous. Our budding witch has no idea of her powers. She's unsure of her welcome. There are more questions than answers, the odd, sulfurous gleam of a mystery. Still, despite her misgivings, her trepidation, our girl sets off on her journey to a land that is enchanted, that spins threads of real-world wisdom with tendrils of magic. In a narrative voice that is at once delightful and poignant, Suzanne Palmieri, unfolds the history of the Amore clan until finally, in the end, the pieces of the puzzle fall into a wonderful and heartfelt symmetry. I was enticed and intrigued from the very first page.

This is the second book I've read by Suzanne Palmieri and I enjoyed reading it as much as the first. I find that Ms. Palmieri spins and weaves quite a tale. Her characters has a sense of mystery attached to them, which is what keeps me turning the pages. I found Elly to be a likable character, as I did her grandmother, aunts, and Anthony. After reading this book I'm ready to read the rest of Ms. Palmieri's books.

"The Witch of Little Italy" has much to endear it. First off, for not much more than the price of a three-hour movie, you'll get at least twice as many hours of page-turning reading. You may want later to revisit Ellie and her family or pass the book along to reading buddies, for even more page time. A good value! There are other reasons, though, to be bewitched if you like a book that offers (1) intergenerationality with engaging characters, (2) at least five stories & substories of love and of loss, and (3) a pivotal question worth thinking about, magic or not: how can we today affect tomorrow for ourselves and those we love. Intergenerationally, the story begins with 21-22 year Eleanor, an arts major at Yale, fleeing on Christmas Eve to her stage star mother Carmen. Ellie is pregnant and the dad, Cooper, with whom she has been in an abusive relationship for several years, really bashed her into (at last) flight. For Carmen, the mother, the story is of a toxic relationship between Ellie's yearning and Carmen's rejection. Carmen essentially throws Ellie out. Turning to her only memory of a loving safe place, Ellie finds her way to the home of her grandmother, Mimi Amore, and Mimi's two sisters, great-aunts Itsy and Fee. There, for a magic summer when she was

10 years old, Ellie was their beloved Babygirl. And there she is welcomed with the warmest of hearts, the most tender and loving of arms, and the most orgiastic of Italian cooking. Equally but more mysteriously adoring is the handsome Anthony who lives with the three sisters. Anthony has been madly and steadfastly in love with Ellie since they were playmates long ago at the family beach house in Far Rockaway. Ellie has no memories---none---before 10 years of age. The house, while welcoming, is saddened by memories of the 1945 day when the Amores died. She knows she must find her way to the past if the future is to be understandable, and good. The book traces this path, back to Ellie's great-grandmother, Margaret Green, a powerful and beloved witch or wise woman, and to Margaret's mother---five generations of very three-dimensional women of courage. How Ellie---with the unfailing support of the handsome, strong Anthony and her great-aunt Itsy---negotiates past, present, and future keeps the pages turning. The Day the Amores died is the emotional center of *The Witch of Little Italy* to which and from which many roads lead. The pivot is Itsy, who dared to ask and act on whether women who could foresee the future could change it. Change does happen, and the sixth generation Amore/Green is safely born, but the answer comes with a price to pay. Not so much to some uber-deity, as to a sense of balance, which must be restored if the future is changed, and a second chance given to avoid the causes of past toxic relationships for the next generation. The relationships include one nasty fella, the woman abuser, too rich, too handsome, and way too indulged, Cooper, who impregnated Ellie. I for one, was happy when he got his comeuppance though it sure took a long time! Gertrude Stein said of a book, "If you like this sort of thing, you will like this sort of thing." So, if you like a book that is intergenerational, involves magical powers, is a love story or stories, has plenty of New York, Bronx, Far Rockaway, atmosphere and great meals---you'll probably like this very much indeed. Any warnings? It can be a bit slow at take-off before reaching cruising speed, and yes, you do need to believe magic can happen. In a few places, the transitions between chapters was a little bumpy: nothing serious. Anthony seems too good to be true and the central secret, sad rather than so horrific. The three male characters are sorta two-dimensional, with no chapters in their voices. The women come alive. Expect, as mentioned, a good read but not an immortal classic of Nobel-prize winning literature. Perhaps though this is in the future for first-time and praise-worthy author Suzanne Palmieri.

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