



First Frost

Sarah Addison Allen

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From the New York Times bestselling author of GARDEN SPELLS comes a story of the Waverley family, in a novel as sparkling as the first dusting of frost on new-fallen leaves...

It's October in Bascom, North Carolina, and autumn will not go quietly. As temperatures drop and leaves begin to turn, the Waverley women are made restless by the whims of their mischievous apple tree... and all the magic that swirls around it. But this year, first frost has much more in store.

Claire Waverley has started a successful new venture, Waverley's Candies. Though her handcrafted confections—rose to recall lost love, lavender to promote happiness and lemon verbena to soothe throats and minds—are singularly effective, the business of selling them is costing her the everyday joys of her family, and her belief in her own precious gifts.

Sydney Waverley, too, is losing her balance. With each passing day she longs more for a baby— a namesake for her wonderful Henry. Yet the longer she tries, the more her desire becomes an unquenchable thirst, stealing the pleasure out of the life she already has.

Sydney's daughter, Bay, has lost her heart to the boy she knows it belongs to...if only he could see it, too. But how can he, when he is so far outside her grasp that he appears to her as little more than a puff of smoke?

When a mysterious stranger shows up and challenges the very heart of their family, each of them must make choices they have never confronted before. And through it all, the Waverley sisters must search for a way to hold their family together through their troublesome season of change, waiting for that extraordinary event that is *First Frost*.

Lose yourself in Sarah Addison Allen's enchanting world and fall for her charmed characters in this captivating story that proves that a happily-ever-after is never the real ending to a story. It's where the real story begins.

First Frost Details

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From Reader Review First Frost for online ebook

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

4.5 stars

I first read Garden Spells, the prequel to this book, back in 2008. Though I'd always been in love with reading, my reading volume was much lower back then. I was reading about a book or two a month at that point, compared to about 350 books a year, which is my current rate. Now that 7 years have passed, I wasn't sure how I would view this author or her stories. Would I still love her style, her voice? The answer is a HUGE *hell yeah*.

From the moment I started this book I couldn't put it down. It is amazing how much I remembered the original characters and their stories, and was able to pick right back up where I left off. It is like the Outlander books: No matter how much time has passed between sequels, I have no problem jumping right in again.

I think the most wonderful thing about this book is the *feeling* that it gave me. It felt like coming home, like warm chocolate cookies right out of the oven. I wanted to LIVE in this town, be a magical Waverley or part of some other old family with a famed talent. I feel like where I live, people are just sort of drifting and moving and commuting. There is not that sense of generations of people living in the same small town, all knowing each other and their secrets, for better or for worse. This book made me nostalgic for small town living, and it gave me a strange sense of peace to read about this magical place.

I loved the focus of this book on Bay, who was just a small child in the first book. Her talent of knowing where things *belong* was one of the more fascinating talents for me, and I think the author did a beautiful job of it. I really enjoyed how Bay's story unfolded, along with each other member of the Waverley family.

I think this book also appropriately changed with the times, introducing a few key LGBT characters and modern advancements. The whole book felt both fresh while at the same time, retained it's old-fashioned vibe.

My only complaint is that this book is a bit predictable, and that it isn't an "in your face" kind of story. But the magic in this book is in the skillful, subtle writing and that came through loud and clear.

Copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review

Margitte says

Imagine a house with feelings, and an apple tree who doesn't favor men. Then add to it food with magic qualities, four generations of Waverley women with special 'talents' and you've got this delightful family saga.

And yes, you've got me loving this book for the perfect magic realism it presents and for the simple fairy stars it sprinkled all over my upside down world.

What's not to love about a cute apple tree, flowering the wrong time of the year, shower her beloved people in petals at the first frost, and throw out-of-favor people with apples. And yes, if the out-of-favored stand

near enough, they will get bumped on the head with a branch. This tree was a presence, a personality, an influence on every Waverley who ever lived there.

In Bascom, North Carolina, The Waverley house, an old Queen Anne with a wraparound porch in Pendland street need to be talked to, particularly when her front door should be unlocked. Within her walls, Claire and Sydney, Mary's two granddaughters, learnt their skills to survive without parents to guide them along.

Everywhere in her interior, the old mansions hid Mary's multitude of diaries which told Mary Waverly's life story in recipes. From how to rid the garden of shiny green beetles, to husband-catcher cake. The eccentric agoraphobic Mary was famous for her secret-love custard pies, mint jellies, chive blossom stir-fry, and her rose geranium wine. Throughout her life Mary changed the recipes to suit her circumstances, mood and memories. One of them was the hard candy recipe which brings fame to Claire in adulthood.

The candy sent children to bed early, ease sore throats, bring the truth out, ensure happiness, make adults think of their first loves, change their destinies. Nobody know why their lives change but they have to have Claire's candy with her secret flower ingredients. And then there is grandma Mary's fig and pepper bread recipe...

Claire have this thing for cooking. Flowers bring out the best or worst in people and Claire knows which flowers to use in her cooking... Her catering business thrived as a result. But that was before she discovered Mary's candy recipes. It did not worked out quite as planned, even though it injected Mariah's college funds considerably.

Sydney had this thing for hair. Women cannot do without her cuts. Sydney's haircuts enable women to win promotions, sell more Tupperware, receive raises and become winners. Pure magic, they believe.

The silver-haired, silver-eyed old gentleman in his silver suit arrives in town, more or less a few days before the first frost. And that's where the skeletons in the closets begin to rattle and shake and old secrets start falling out, spreading the mystery all over the floor when fifteen-year-old Bay tries to find an old dress of great-grandma Mary in which the old dame bewitched men and made women jealous. With flowers in her hair, beautiful great-grandma Mary used to host her fairy garden parties, dressed as a garden nymph which captured the minds and souls of the unsuspected people in town. Most did not like it. "You can't compete with strange. Strange always wins", they said.

Bay had her own battles to win in school. Aunt Claire offered to serve mint cookies and tea with honeysuckle syrup to clear a particular boy's thoughts and help him see. However, there was a secret foiled between the Waverley and Matteson families of which Bay and Claire was unaware and only Sydney can explain, but she ain't talking, that is, until the silver-eyed man enters town...

So much southern charm grace this tale of women negotiating their lives through family secrets, heartbreak, botched-up love affairs, and social challenges in a town where they are deemed odd.

But it all will change before Claire's first frost party take place this year in the garden with the apple tree. It will be the weirdest hoedown ever.

A wonderful, relaxing, uplifting southern tale. My fourth novel by Sarah Addison Allen. What a delight!

Claire Robinson says

5 - "Autumn winds bring strangers." Stars!

My literary love affair with the books of *Sarah Addison Allen* began way back in 2007, when I stumbled across a paperback book in my local book store (yes books were still a physical thing back then).

The cover grabbed my attention and the synopsis on the back piqued my interest, to this day that book still sits on my book shelf, one of very few that I have kept, because it evokes a memory every time I pick it up, a memory of comfort, happiness, expectation and joy.

Waverley women are mysterious and magical women with a long and well-known history in the south.

So to be returning to Bascom, North Carolina after such a break, made this quite an emotional read for me on several levels, some personal and some not.

A lot has happened in my life in the intervening years as you would expect, and reading of the changes that have happened in the lives of the Waverley sisters as well as their spouses and children also brought back memories of some of the highs and lows in the tapestry of my own life.

Bay Waverley was only a small child when I read *Garden Spells* so to read of her experiences as she approaches womanhood, especially with her unique Waverley take on life and love, and the way her peers treat her because of it was an absolute treat.

Each Waverley had something different about her.

Claire and Sydney also feature heavily in this book as well (thankfully), as well as the aging Evanelle, it was akin to a long lost family reunion for me, and I loved every second of it.

First Frost is an easygoing and comforting read, it almost felt like coming home after years away. It brought back happy memories, fizzles of excitement, and the reawakening of a memory of something innocently forgotten, but no less loved because of it.

Sarah is one of my 'go-to' authors, I love her books and the characters contained within. Her stories are unique, colourful and memorable, *First Frost* is no exception, it is another perfect example why I love her books, and I would encourage anyone to give them a go, disappointment is not a word contained in the book of *Words to Describe Sarah Addison Allen*

Don't define yourself by what you don't want to do. Define it by what you do want to do.

ARC generously provided via Netgalley, and it was my absolute pleasure to provide the above honest review.

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to St. Martin's Press and NetGalley.)

“First frost was always an unpredictable time, but this year it felt more... desperate than others. Something was about to happen.”

Wow. Just Wow. I Loved this book! I really didn't want it to end, and now I'm just crying!

I loved the characters in this book, it was so nice to find out what had happened to everybody after the end of 'Garden Spells', and seeing Bay all grown up was just so special. I also loved her assortment of slogan t-shirts, with such wonderful statements like 'come to the dark side. We have cookies', 'I have not yet begun to procrastinate', 'Either you like bacon, or you're wrong', and 'my life is based on a true story'.

“I'm Bay Waverley, the girl who knows where everything belongs. Nice title, huh? It makes me sound like a neat freak. Which I am, a little. But that's another story.”

Claire was still Claire, Sydney was still Sydney, and I loved how happy they were with Tyler and Henry. It was also good to meet Mariah, and even though I guessed the twist with regards to her new best friend I still loved it!

The storyline in this book was really good, and I loved the tension over what was going to happen! There was a very dodgy bloke in town, and other slightly odd things going on, and even though I was supposed to be reading another book, I got so sucked into this one, that I couldn't put it down.

“That man, who was he?” Claire asked, trying not to sound like it was urgent, because it wasn't really urgent. At least, she didn't think so.

“What man?” Patrice said.

“There was an elderly man standing here a moment ago,” Claire said. “He had silver hair. He was wearing a silver suit.”

“There was no one here,” Tara said.

There was some romance in this book, and it was super sweet. I just loved how Bay had realised that a certain boy was who she belonged with! Even if it wasn't who Sydney would have picked for her, it really was just magical.

“Bay was an extraordinary young woman. Beautiful, kind, mysterious. If Josh spent any amount of time

with her, he would fall for her. Sydney knew that with a certainty as hard as flint.”

I felt really sorry for both Claire and Sydney in this book and the things they were going through, but this whole book was just so heart-warming and touching, and an absolute joy to read. I hope that more people will read this and fall in love with it too! That ending was just so beautiful! I totally ended up in tears!

Please, please, please let there be more books about this family!

Lauren Henderson says

Another book with the Waverleys!!!! Is it January yet!??

Darth J says

When opening the hardcover edition, I was treated to this:

I love that kind of detail.

On to the story, which takes place roughly 10 years after Garden Spells. We find Claire has taken to candy-making and forgone her catering business. Sydney's salon has taken off and her Waverly hair magic (seriously??) is still going strong. Sydney's daughter, Bay's gift of finding where things belong gets her into trouble when she gives a note to an older boy about how they "belong together". And an ailing Evanelle has taken Fred under her wing in more ways than one.

The conflict in this story expressed magical-realistically in the theme of *what makes a family*. For Claire, her doubting her gifts with food has lead her away from her joy of catering and into a business where she is making money but kinda hates what she is doing. This leads to an opening for a former circus performer to try to scam her out of money by insisting that she isn't a Waverly by blood, which would threaten her business somehow because she was quoted about it on a blog.

Sydney wants to have another baby and is desperate to conceive. In a predictable storyline, she finds that her irresponsible receptionist—who has a child that Sydney loves being around—is looking to leave town and (view spoiler)

Her 15 year old daughter, Bay has her own problems. One of which is that modern vernacular has ruined the name "Bay", because I kept reading it like "Bae", though this isn't the author's fault as much as it is *damn youths and their hip hop slang* *shakes fist angrily*. Well, Bay gets a feeling that a senior named Josh is her bae and writes him a note. Teenage girls, please take note: this is not romantic, it is **creepy**. Somehow they end up as a friends, though?? To be honest, I didn't care for the teen storyline in the book, and that's why I

had to take a star away.

Oxygen tank-toting Evanelle is still up to her old tricks of giving people what they need. She doesn't understand her gift, but somehow she passes it on to her caretaker Fred. This solidifies the theme that blood doesn't always equal family, but it does raise some questions about how magic works in these books if it isn't biological. Although it keeps being hinted that Evanelle is on the decline in life, she is still kicking at the end.

Claire's child is finally expressing her Waverly talent, though Claire did think that her daughter might just be a muggle for most of the story. (view spoiler)

All in all, I thought it was a fun book. Though it did seem a little short at 291 pages.

There's also a recipe for Fig and Pepper bread at the end.

Keertana says

Anyone who has read *Garden Spells* can confirm that the novel hardly needs a sequel. It's a magical, beautiful stand-alone novel and Allen's debut holds a special place in my heart. *First Frost*, on the other hand, does not. It takes place a decade after *Garden Spells* ended and though the re-visit to the Waverley household is familiar--warm, comforting, loving--it feels strangely unnecessary. I didn't *have* to know of Claire's new candy-making business, Sydney's desire for a son, or Bay's feeling that she belongs with Hunter John's son. While I loved being back in Waverley House and the distinct feeling of Allen's writing is a sensation that wraps around you and holds you tight, like a blanket, *First Frost* is possibly the most disappointed I have been by her work. If it were not that these were beloved characters I knew before--and intimately, *loved* these characters--I wouldn't even have given *First Frost* three stars.

The issue with Allen's latest is the fact that the conflict at hand is flimsy. I appreciate the post-marriage struggles Sydney and Claire face. Their demons from *Garden Spells* aren't as pronounced but that doesn't mean they have disappeared. Thus, I rather enjoyed being back in their minds, witnessing them come to terms with the change in their lives that time inevitably introduces. Most of all, I loved Bay's narrative and the teenage issues she found herself face-to-face with. Yet, the coming together of these plot lines didn't work quite as seamlessly as it worked in *Garden Spells*. The shift from Teenage to Adult perspectives wasn't perfection. The strange side plot line with an odd old man entering town, poking around and asking about the Waverley's, ended too abruptly and anticlimactically to satisfy. Ultimately, *First Frost* lacked the strength of *Garden Spells*. Claire and Sydney were a unit and in being so, the union of their sisterhood from *Garden Spells* is a far more compelling story than their joint unity in *First Frost*.

Allen's latest isn't *bad*, not in the least. It is beautifully written and, as always, her prose is impeccable and characterizations are point-on. In my eyes, though, there wasn't enough of a story to be told, here. I didn't feel moved by these characters or their struggles as I was in *Garden Spells*. I wasn't charmed or enchanted or rendered speechless by the magic in the air. *First Frost* is a novel that fans of Allen are bound to read--and I don't fault them. It's a few hours well spent in the company of an author and characters I adore. Just don't go in expecting the caliber of Allen's debut.

Carole says

4.5 stars.

I won this book as a First Reads giveaway.

The Waverly women from Garden Spells return in Sarah Addison Allen's latest, to be released in January. It was a perfect time to read this as it takes place just before the first frost. I enjoyed the magical themes once again as we learn that Claire is in business making candy, Sydney is longing for a baby, and her daughter, Bay is a teenager, accepting her life and gifts as a Waverly woman. A mysterious man shows up in Bascom with secrets that threaten to change lives.

This was a very enjoyable, quick read, I stayed up late to finish. Delightful, and highly recommended, especially if you enjoyed Garden Spells!

Diane says

This was disappointing. While I didn't expect much from it other than some pleasant escapism, this novel had me sighing in exasperation.

"First Frost" is the sixth book by Sarah Addison Allen that I have read, and it is one of her weakest. It is a sequel to "Garden Spells" and continues the story of the Waverley family in Bascom, North Carolina. All of the Waverley women have special gifts: Claire has magical culinary skills, Sydney has magical hair-styling skills, and her daughter, Bay, has magical organizing skills.

I will pause here to say that all of Allen's novels contain some magical realism, with varying degrees of success. Her books also have some romance and Southern charm, which can be delightful. In the past I have enjoyed dipping into her stories when I needed a light read, but "First Frost" was too silly and just didn't gel. I caught myself dreading picking up this book, which should never happen with a supposedly fun read.

If you would like to try an Allen book, I recommend starting with "The Peach Keeper" or "Lost Lake."

Dana Al-Basha ????? ?????? says

[Thursday, ?August ?28, ?2014] No way! No way! No way!! OMG!! I'm so excited!!!! I wanted a second installment the first time I finished the book!! :D

A few years ago I read Garden Spells, and afterward read it multiple times, for the pleasure reading it gave me, since then Allen became one of my favorite authors, I've been pre ordering her novels ever since.

I didn't want to finish reading First Frost, I wanted to slowly enjoy it, I always rush through a good book, and First Frost was so good that as I flipped the last page I said loudly: "Third book coming soon?"

I don't think I'll ever tire of the Waverleys story or the world Sarah creates in all her books. I want to be a Waverley and I want ALL those cooking books and recipes. I loved how everyone grew but kind of stayed the same.

Another gem.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Everyone needs a little magic in their life and that is exactly what I receive when I read this author. A return to the Waverley's of Garden Spells, this amazing family all with their own individual special talents. Who wouldn't like to have an apple tree that tosses apples at those she feels are interfering, which blooms at first frost and signals new beginnings, like a reset button? Doors that stick or won't open at all if they do not want to let someone in. Wonderful characters, enchanting story lines.

Light, feel good reads, this author has mastered the art of writing this type of book, a book that entertains and surprises.

ARC from NetGalley.

Nikoleta says

Αυτ? το βιβλ?ο ε?ναι χαρο?μενο, ρομαντικ? και αισι?δοξο σαν παιδ? που ακ?μα ελπ?ζει και πιστε?ει στη μαγε?α...

Britany says

What a perfect book to read this time of year. First Frost takes place around Halloween, and is a book that I read at the right time. I fell in love again with the Waverley's, and their quirks. The book was magically descriptive and made me wish that I lived on the same street so that I could taste Claire's candies, and join in at the First Frost party. Light-hearted with the perfect amount of mystery stirred in. I want to go back and read it all over again.

Starla says

What sets Sarah Addison Allen apart is that, while there is always a touch of the whimsical and magical in her stories, the magic isn't merely a bystander. Instead, the magic is actively used to help tell the story in a very real way. The magic explains feelings, sets the scene, defines the mood, highlights a point, or moves the plot forward. The magic is so expertly woven through the story that it never overshadows the story or the characters; rather, it accentuates them.

The characters are deep and complex and they wrestle with universal human struggles. The struggle to find oneself. The struggle to be oneself. The struggle to belong. The struggle to be loved, or even to simply be remembered.

All of the above combines to create a book that is astonishingly more than the sum of its parts. If I could pick the work of one modern author that I believe should endure and be read and taught and cherished a hundred years from now, Sarah Addison Allen would be that author.

?Karen says

The Waverleys of Bascom, NC, have an apple tree in the backyard that lies dormant each fall until the first frost appears, usually sometime in late October. Then it blooms all winter and bears pink apples throughout spring and early summer, throwing, not dropping, the apples all around. Now, if you think this is odd, so are the Waverleys. And so is this story, although very much as expected from this author.

Autumn's first frost is much anticipated here, as a time when wrongs right themselves and one can have a fresh start again. Fifteen year old Bay is yearning for a certain boy to fall for her. Her mother wants another pregnancy. And her Aunt Claire wants to stop feeling overwhelmed by her thriving candy business. Only then there comes a stranger to town....

The Waverleys, all female and all magical in their own ways, are an endearing bunch, as is their story. I am not particularly fond of all the fairy and fantasy stuff, and thought it could have been a fine story without it. On the other hand, the magic and fairy dust make this story what it is--rather special. Courtesy of NetGalley and the publisher.
