

KATE ROBB



THIS SPELLS LOVE

a novel

BOOK CLUB KIT

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR



DEAR READER,

Have you ever lain awake at night and wondered about a decision you made? If you'd made a different choice, would your life have ricocheted off in a different direction? Or would you have somehow found yourself in the very same spot, only to have taken a slightly different path to get there? This idea has kept me up at night, and also planted the seed for the story that eventually became *This Spells Love*.

In the pandemic, after my breadmaking phase, I hit a point where the only entertainment I could consume was '90s-era romantic comedies (or grisly murder books). I binged all of my favorites: *While You Were Sleeping*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, and *My Best Friend's Wedding*. I loved that each and every time, I was guaranteed a laugh and a satisfying happily ever after. My rom-coms never hurt me. They left me feeling safe. From that feeling, Gemma Wilde was born. Too risk-averse to see that the love of her life has always been in her passenger seat. Her handsome and charming ride-or-die has been secretly pining for her all through her lackluster relationship with her ex. It would take a small miracle for Gemma to acknowledge her feelings . . . or a love spell.

And no rom-com is complete without a wacky cast of side characters. Gemma's aunt Livi, a quirky bookshop owner who may "see" more than she lets on, and Kiersten, Gemma's tell-it-like-it-is older sister, provide the perfect peers to give Gemma the push she needs to cleanse her ex from her life. In a *Practical Magic* "Put the Lime in the Coconut" moment, the three, along with Dax, perform a spell that will make Gemma see her life and her relationships from a whole new angle.

I set this novel in Hamilton, Canada. It's a city about an hour west of Toronto that's undergone a bit of an extreme makeover over the last few years. Its up-and-coming downtown is the perfect setting for two city-savvy millennials to open their custom sneaker shop and clean beauty supply store (while still having the historic Victorian architecture to support a possibly magical bookshop). I loved infusing the bits of Canadiana culture. From music to food (you must try ketchup chips!) to recreational curling (my goal was to write the horniest curling scene ever to be published by Penguin Random House).

I hope that you enjoy it—and all of Gemma and Dax's adventures—as these two lovebirds learn that the best risks in life are the ones you take with your heart.

Thank you for picking up *This Spells Love*. I hope it makes you laugh (or hug your sister.)

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Which romance or rom-com tropes did you notice in this novel?
2. Which characters resonated with you the most, and why? What did you think of the relationship between Gemma and Dax?
3. What are the themes of *This Spells Love*? How would you describe this novel to a friend?
4. The dialogue. The plot. The setting. What did you love most about the novel, and why?
5. Gemma gets a chance to see what her life would be like if she'd never met her ex. Did you ever have an event change the course of your life? If you could cast a spell like Aunt Livi's, would you?
6. What surprised you most about the alternate timeline Gemma experiences? How is her life, and the lives of those around her, different?
7. If this book were being made into a movie or TV series, who would you cast as each character?
8. In each timeline, Gemma has different priorities and things she sacrifices to reach other goals. What is the book saying about success? What does a successful life look like to you?
9. How did you feel about the book's ending?
10. What do you think happens to Gemma, Dax, and the other characters after the book ends?

CAST OF CHARACTERS



GEMMA

A routine-oriented achiever who casts a spell to erase her ex from her life—and winds up erasing a lot more than that.

DAX

Gemma's best friend. Her very handsome best friend who she's definitely not into. At all. When Gemma's spell accidentally removes him from her life, she'll do whatever it takes to get him back.

KIERSTEN

Gemma's older sister, and the person she's closest to. Tends to act like a mama hen, given their 10-year age difference.

STUART

Gemma's ex who, according to Kiersten, has the personality of a cardboard box. You could give the man 31 flavors of ice cream, and he'd always choose vanilla.

AUNT LIVI

Gemma and Kiersten's elderly aunt, who owns a bookshop-slash-curated collection of weird and wonderful things, including crystals, incense, and the biggest collection of monster erotica in the northern hemisphere.

THE SPELL: LOVE CLEANSE

From Practical Magic: A Complete Guide for the Modern Mystic



To cut the cord of the one who has wronged you, follow these simple steps.

Once lovers, now enemies,
Soon to be strangers with some memories,
This love cleanse will rid you of your woes.

But if you wish to wipe away,
The memories of the very day,
A choice was made,
A path was taken,
Another lifetime, long forsaken.

Light the wick,
Curse the day,
Cut the cord,
Send away,
The one that wronged you,
under Waning Gibbous
But be forewarned—



The final step, do not remiss,
Is to seal your fate, with a kiss.

PLAYLIST



ABC (THE WILD REMIX)
THE WILD, GAYLE

COCONUT
HARRY NILSSON

I PUT A SPELL ON YOU (FEAT. JOSS STONE)
JEFF BECK

TOM'S DINER
ANNENMAYKANTEREIT AND GIANT ROOKS

CALL ME MAYBE
CARLY RAE JEPSEN

COULD I BE YOUR GIRL
JANN ARDEN

BANANAS
NO FRILLS

BOYFRIEND
JUSTIN BIEBER

CAN'T FEEL MY FACE
THE WEEKND

IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME NOW
CELINE DION

THE NIGHT WE MET
LORD HURON

LOVERS IN A DANGEROUS TIME
SAM KAISER

RECIPE

Aunt Livi's Moonlight Margaritas

Some nights require a strong cup of tea. Others, a brisk walk or a quiet moment of reflection. But when the moon is just right, sometimes you get a night where the perfect potion is one of my famous moonlight margaritas.



FOR THE SAGE-INFUSED TEQUILA:

- 1½ cups Casamigos Reposado Tequila (the handsome George Clooney really does make a delightful tequila, but any reposado will work)
- 3 sprigs of fresh sage (promotes wisdom and healing, also gives a lovely little zip!)

FOR THE MARGARITA:

- 2 tbsp. sage-infused tequila
- 1-½ tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tbsp. orange juice
- 1-½ — 2 tsp. agave (to taste)

FOR THE RIM:

- Mix equal parts sugar, orange zest and salt (I like a nice coarse sea salt for its purifying and healing properties)
- 1 wedge of lime

DIRECTIONS:

1. Pour your tequila into a glass jar and add the sprigs of sage. Seal and store in your refrigerator to let it steep for 24–48 hours (the longer the trip, the bigger the zip!).
2. Rim your glass using a lime wedge and salt/sugar/orange zest mixture.
3. Combine the margarita ingredients with a few cubes of ice in a blender and blend.
4. Garnish with a sprig of sage, lime wedge, or orange slice.
5. Drink, dance, and share all your troubles with the moon.