



# Wickedly Magical

*Deborah Blake*

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**Wickedly Magical** Deborah Blake

**Known as the wicked witch of Russian fairy tales, Baba Yaga is not one woman, but rather a title carried by a chosen few. They keep the balance of nature and guard the borders of our world, but don't make the mistake of crossing one...**

Barbara Yager loves being one of the most powerful witches in the world, but sometimes she'd rather kick back in her enchanted Airstream with a beer in her hand than work out how to grant the requests of the worthy few who seek her out.

But when a man appears with the token of a family debt of honor, Barbara must drop everything to satisfy the promise owed by her predecessor—and she isn't above being a little wicked to make sure the debt is paid in full...

## Wickedly Magical Details

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Author : Deborah Blake

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Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal, Magic, Witches, Novella, Romance, Paranormal Romance

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# From Reader Review **Wickedly Magical** for online ebook

## Sara says

### A good quick read

This book was fun and endearing. I like the characters but some of the usual tropes are present. I like the world/magic rules that the author is building and I'm excited to read more. I gave it four instead of five stars mainly because it's missing some character development which admittedly is difficult in a prequel novella. Will wait to see how the next one does, I have high hopes.

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## Rhonda Stees-marcial says

First, I liked it. But the writing didn't have that special something that drives you to see the end. I felt like I knew the ending at the beginning. Also a lot of cliches that had me rolling my eyes. But I will give the next one a chance. The premise of the Baba Yagas was a fun way to think of the old stories. Plus I am a sucker for stories about witches.

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## Rosemary Potter says

Great start to a new series.

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## Sarah says

**Wickedly Magical** is a prequel novella for **Deborah Blake's** Baba Yaga series, and it does a good job of introducing readers to the world and whetting our appetites for the rest of the series. The author has put her own spin on the tale of the wicked witch Baba Yaga that many people have heard of from Russian fairytales. In this series Baba Yaga is not just the name of one witch, instead it's a title held by a group of powerful witches spread across the world, these women keep the balance and protect the borders between our world and the paranormal realm. Baba Yaga's aren't evil, they're just incredibly powerful and not afraid to use their magic to defend themselves and those they feel bound to protect. You definitely don't want to make the mistake of crossing one, however, if you can convince them you're worthy then they'll be a great ally.

There are three Baba Yagas in the US: Barbara, Beka and Bella. This novella introduces all three but is mainly focused on Barbara who will be the main character in the first book **Wickedly Dangerous**. I don't want to say too much about the plot but when Barbara is approached by a man claiming Baba Yaga owes his family a debt and asking her to help him get back his lost treasures she doesn't have much choice but to honour a promise her mentor made many years before.

I'm actually surprised by how much the author managed to pack into a 73 page story, she did a great job of introducing the three Baba Yagas and their companions, gave a good idea about the kind of magic they are able to perform and was able to wrap up a satisfying paranormal mystery. **Wickedly Magical** definitely did

it's job of hooking me in and making me want to continue reading and I'm looking forward to seeing where things go from here. I have very high hopes for the series!

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### **Kelley Kaminski says**

**Great**

It was good I mean even better than the first I really liked this one now I'm going to read the next right now

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### **Melindeeloo says**

3.5 stars. The world of this prequel to Blake's new Baba Yaga series is very original. This is not my Russian grandmother's Baba Yaga and her chicken-legged house and these Baba's are evil or not depending on the point of view of those who cross paths with them. As the start of a trilogy of paranormal romances for the three Baba's who guard the U.S., this story mostly sets up the players and the world and gives glimpses of how the Baba's have changed with the times while the first of the three 'sisters' helps a man to recover a precious treasure that was stolen from him - his daughters.

This story was entertaining, though it did have a more UF-y feel to it than the teaser for the first book that follows this story. I am always looking for something new and this twist on old folklore feels like it offers some fresh potential, so I'll be checking out the first book when it hits the shelves next month.

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### **Linda says**

Highly Recommended To Anyone Who Enjoys Witchy Urban Fantasy Reads!

"Who says wicked can't be good?"

WICKEDLY MAGICAL by Deborah Blake is a quick, fun introduction into the author's incredible world of Baba Yagas. I was recently at the Coastal Magic Convention where I was fortunate to catch this author on several panels. Her description of this series caught my interest so as soon as I got home, I picked up this prequel at Amazon to check it out. I'm happy to report that I was captivated and can't wait to read the next one! Even though this book consists of only 73 pages, it was not lacking as the storyline was richly fleshed and the characters were detailed.

The Baba Yaga was characteristically a wicked witch featured in old Russian folk tales. In Deborah's Baba Yaga series, there are multiple Baba Yagas located world-wide. They are powerful witches entrusted with keeping the natural balance and guarding the borders between our world and the underworld. Each Baba Yaga has a dragon companion and that companion takes on a form that doesn't stand out in these modern times. These new-age Baba Yagas are no longer inherently wicked, but crossing them is still very bad.

In this novella, readers learn that there are three Baba Yagas in the United States: Barbara, Beka and Bella. We meet all three herein but this particular tale focuses on just one of them, Barbara, who will also be the

primary character in WICKEDLY DANGEROUS, the first full-length book in the series. Barbara is a motorcycle-riding witch who lives in an enchanted Airstream trailer with her dog/dragon companion.

This story begins as Barbara is approached by a brave, but desperate, man who claims that the Baba Yaga owes a debt to his family. To repay the debt, he asks that the Baba Yaga help him retrieve his lost treasures. This tale was mesmerizing and I found myself alternately laughing, gasping and teetering on-the-edge of my seat as the story progressed. You should know that this prequel did not include a romantic element, but I understand that the full-length books will.

I am officially addicted to Deborah's incredible world of Baba Yagas. I've already got WICKEDLY DANGEROUS on order and have WICKEDLY WONDERFUL in my possession having won it at the convention. I would highly recommend this magical paranormal series to anyone who enjoys witchy urban fantasy reads.

My full review is published at Reading Between The Wines Book Club. Please check it out <http://www.readingbetweenthewinesbook...>

4 Wine Glasses!

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### **Judith Levine says**

I loved the concept. Leave it to Deborah Blake to come up with the idea of bringing a folk witch into the 21st Century with an Airstream and 21st Century manners (or lack thereof) and language. I love the smart-mouth dragon/dog, the things growing out of the carpet, and the Airstream's quirkiness--its special wardrobe and the appearing and disappearing door. Blake's light touch is similar to that of her nonfiction witch books, but, of course, much funnier. I loved the way she introduced the novel coming out soon. All great.

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**Jessica ❀ ➡ Silverbow ➡ ❀ Rabid Reads-no-more says**

### **Reviewed by: Rabid Reads**

I'm so very tired of getting excited about new UF series that have interesting blurbs and covers, only to get my hands on the actual book and have that hope destroyed.

It's a mean trick.

It makes me angry.

"What was so terrible about this one?" you ask.

Well . . . for starters:

*"Hmm," she said. "'Curiouser and curiouser,' to quote Alice."*

*Chudo-Yudo looked up from gnawing on the remains of his bone. There wasn't much left.*

*"What?"*

*"It's a quote from **Alice in Wonderland**," Barbara said.*

It wasn't enough to unnecessarily add, *"to quote Alice."* NOPE. We're much too dense to get the reference. Who cares that it's one of the most often quoted lines in literary history? Not Deborah Blake. So just to make doubly sure her bibliophileness doesn't get overlooked, she gave us the book title as well.

But why stop there?

*"I **know** that," the dragon said grumpily. "I've read my Lewis Carroll."*

Not only are we stupid, but we're LAZY. We can't be trusted to look up the author on our own.

Maybe I'm blowing this out of proportion, but I'm one of those readers who, when an author starts to capitalize things that aren't usually capitalized like, "The Look," or, "Big Deal," and goes on to have the character say that he or she could FEEL, or almost HEAR the capital letters . . . that annoys the crap out of me. I'm perfectly capable of recognizing emphatic capital letters without being lead by the nose, thankyouverymuch.

That whole dialogue had a similar feel, but that could've just been me. Unfortunately, that was the least of my issues.

There were the inconsistencies.

Chudo-Yudo is a dragon. Chudo-Yudo is a dragon that appears to be a dog. Chudo-Yudo appears to be a dog, b/c in this new and modern world, a dragon cannot simply walk around as a dragon, but make no mistake--Chudo-Yudo is a dragon.

Except for when it suits his purpose to be a dog . . . then he's a dog. And when I say, "suits his purpose," I don't mean when he's trying to blend into the human world. NOPE. I mean when he wants the scratches, or a bone . . .

And the writing was so . . . BLEH.

*"I'm a very lucky woman," Grace agreed, but she was gazing coyly up at Jonathan in a way that could turn him on in an instant.*

Really? Turn him on? In an instant??

\*frowns\*

Or how about this:

*"Barbara!" Bella said sharply. "What is it?"*

*"I don't exactly know," Barbara said. Even to her own ears, her voice sounded far away and dreamy. "This isn't like any other Call I've ever had. It's . . . different. Stronger. As if I can hear Fate saying my name out loud, leading me to a path that will change everything."*  
*"Change it how?" Beka asked.*  
*"I don't know," Barbara said in a quiet voice. "I only know that after this, nothing will ever be the same again."*

SO. . . this Call (<-----a kind of subliminal mental pull towards whatever problem needed her special attention) . . . It's different ? Stronger? It will change everything ? Nothing will ever be the same?

And don't get me started on the oblique justifications of Bad Guy's actions. Dude stumbled across a magical artifact that allowed him to bend people to his will, and he used it to form a cult and create a harem: yes, he did a bad thing, but *poor* guy, he was raised in foster care and only wanted a family. \*bats eyelashes\*

AND his "family" members' money . . . AND property . . . AND multiple beautiful women in his bed . . .

He convinces a lonely, old couple to sign their house over to him by taking advantage of their regret over not being able to have children.

Yeah, sorry . . . the "product of his environment" argument has never worked on me. Not for adults.

So YEP, this was pretty terrible. If I wasn't bored, I was irritated. If I wasn't irritated, I was bored. The only reason I finished it was b/c NOVELLA. DNF-ing a novella just feels lazy, and if you didn't pick up on it earlier, I'm not a fan of lazy. NOPE. I'd much rather be stubborn instead. \*facepalm\*

Not recommended.

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## **Toni says**

Wickedly Magical (novella) is the first installment in Deborah Blake's new Baba Yaga series. The short novella deftly introduces us to the three Baba Yaga that will comprise the new trilogy, while also providing a glimpse into their world, lifestyle, and magical abilities. The plot is easily resolved, but satisfying. If you are interested in the Baba Yaga legend this is a great place to start. If you are eagerly awaiting the new books, this will tide you over until the first one releases.

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## **Mandy says**

Barbara is a Russian fairy tale witch who guards the borders and keeps the balance of nature. When a Russian man shows up on her doorsteps with a token from the prior Baba Yaga she knows she needs to honor the favor. The man's wife ran off with his children joining a cult run by a man who can influence people in a magical way. Barbara sets off to honor the token and bring the man back his children as well as take care of the man with the power.

I like Barbara she lives with a dragon who takes the share of a large pit bull so already I'm a fan. I'm a huge

fan of urban fantasy characters that are Bad-ass and Barbara clearly can handle her own after all she lives with a dragon. We only had a quick tease of who Barbara is but already I know I'm going to enjoy getting to know more of her.

I've had this one for far too long sitting on my kindle but I never seemed to get around to it yet. Now that the newest one is coming out next month it's clearly time for me to read them. First off I love the cover it's what captured my attention. Growing up I remember stories about Baba Yaga from my grandma and fairy tales so this isn't a new concept to me. However the concept is a captivating world, full of magic, dragons and adventure. I've read lots of stories over the years of Baba Yaga so I was super excited to see an exciting new spin on one of my favorites. I feel that author did an amazing job putting a modern spin on a classic story. I really enjoyed the authors writing style it's beautifully done. While this is my first book by the author it won't be my last as I plan to start *Wickedly Dangerous* right away.

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### **Yolanda Sfetsos says**

I started this prequel novella yesterday and finished it this morning. It was so much fun!

Barbara Yager is one of three Baba Yaga witches living in the United States. She lives in her enchanted Airstream with her pit bull, Chudo-Yudo--who is actually a dragon in disguise. She's a travelling botanist and college professor in the human world. She also helps keep the balance of nature, guards the borders between the human world and the Otherworld, while helping those worthy enough to seek her out.

When Ivan Dmetriev, a distraught father, approaches her with the token that signals a family debt of honor, Barbara has no choice but to help him. This poor man has recently lost his family to another man, and the reason seems to be of a supernatural nature. Jonathan Bellingwood isn't compelling people with his charm, he's in possession of something that cancels out free will. To stop him, Barbara needs the help of her witch sisters...

I loved this story *so* much that I can't wait to read the first book in the series! Which I already have on pre-order, btw. :)

The use of Russian myth is intriguing, and I like how it's weaved into a contemporary setting. The three Baba Yaga witches and their dragon companions are interesting. I'm looking forward to finding out more about them.

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### **Maria V. Snyder says**

A fun novella set before the events in the first Baba Yaga book.

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### **Fangs for the Fantasy says**

Barbara Yager is one of three Baba Yagas living in the United States. Having been a baba yaga for so long, Barbara no longer considers herself to be human. When not fulfilling her duties, Barbara lives with Chudo-Yudo a dragon who has become a dog, to make himself more palatable to the human population.



Ivan has been stalking Barbara for three days, trying to work up the courage to speak to her but tired of waiting, Barbara takes the bull by the horns and approaches him. It seems that the Baba Yaga before her gave Ivan's family a magical promise of aid due to his grandmother's bravery and love. With his children taken from his custody and justice system wrongly convinced that he abuses his children, Ivan is forced to turn to the Baba Yaga for help. It seems that a human named Johnathon Billingwood has developed the ability to influence people and has not only stolen Ivan's wife away but blocked Ivan's access to his children. Considering the circumstances, Barbara feels she must absolutely become involved.

Wickedly Magical is a prequel of the Baba Yaga series and coming in at 67 pages, it's a short story absolutely designed to interest the reader in the series. As an introduction to the Baba Yaga series, Wickedly Magical more than does its job. I finished Wickedly Magical very quickly and am absolutely anxious to see where this story is going to go. Blake took great care to update some of the folklore associated with the Baba Yaga to make it fit within modern times. All of the Baba Yagas still live very secluded lives but they no longer fly around in a mortar with a pestle. Barbara's mortar and pestle now takes the form of a motorcycle. Their homes are all still made from the original chicken leg hut but have been changed to things like jet streams. Baba Yagas can still change their appearance at will and though Barbara very much presents as an average woman, she still has a bit of a long nose.

Each Baba Yaga is trained by the previous one. It seems that because the Baba Yagas are so removed from their humanity by the time they train their successor, this incarnation of Baba Yagas have some unresolved issues. Though the Baba Yagas are not blood related and have been selected to the current roles due to innate magic, they have a very strong sisterly bond and enjoy spending time together. I love that they lean on each other and get a strong sense of family from them. These women however remain isolated because of who they are and don't form relationships with human men.

The antagonist in this case is Johnathon Billingwood, and he is naturally charismatic. After finding a magical artifact, Billingwood is able to convince people to do things that they otherwise wouldn't do. An old childless couple is convinced to give up their home to him. People donate money they don't have to his cult. He specifically targets women with children because he wants to have the family he feels he was denied growing up in foster care. To some degree, the Baba Yaga's empathise with him because their childhood was also lacking but at the end of the day, Johnathon must be stopped. There is also the issue that the Queen of the Otherworld, a figure even Baba Yaga's are cautious with, will not be pleased to learn that a human has been using an Otherworld artifact. Barbara acts to right a wrong and to protect herself.

As fitting for a Baba Yaga, Barbara is suitably cranky. She also has a penchant for turning people into frogs. I like that she took the time to investigate, and use a disguise to investigate Billingwood. I loved her dragon/dog Chudo-Yudo, who acted more like the pit bull he appeared to be than the actual dragon he is. There's something amusing about a dragon begging for one more s'more. Their interactions were really fun and I cannot wait to see more of Chudo-Yudo in particular. Barbara did display a little of the maternal figure that Baba Yagas are occasionally known for when she acted in the best interest of Ivan's children.

Wickedly Magical did end with a small cliffhanger and it was clearly an enticement for readers to pick up the first book in the series. I'm normally annoyed with books which end in a cliffhanger but because all of the issues raised in Wickedly Magical were resolved and the purpose of Wickedly Magical is simply to introduce the world to readers, I'm fine with it in this case.

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**Helen Smith says**

**Next book can't wait to go.**

As always have found the most important thing in my life is a good time with you guys. I am ready for the next step and the next one in your book. Thank you very much.

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