

Dear Reader,

I always wanted to be a city kid. I grew up in farmland-covered suburbs, positive that I could have a much more exciting and adventurous life if only I lived in the city. Both my parents were city kids; my mom was born and raised in Chicago and my dad's a New Yorker. They even met (on a blind date) and started their lives together in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn.

It didn't help my city-kid aspirations that my mom worked in New York City. She commuted every day on the Greyhound bus for her job as an architect for the City of New York's public schools. There was a constant hum of accents at her office; it seemed like everyone who worked there was from somewhere else and had an elaborate tale about how and why they ended up in New York.

I've heard endless stories about the boroughs she worked in, the rafters she'd had to climb, and the rooftop garden she'd stumbled across that you'd never guess was there from the sidewalk. The magic of the city always felt so obvious to me and, after reading this book, I hope it's obvious to you too.

I created the School for Unusual Magic series and the Brooklyn School of Magic at its center from a place of deep love and admiration for where my family comes from. Rose, Amethyst, and Lav are living out my city-kid dreams, but their everyday struggles feel all too real: the devastation of friend fights, the constant seesaw of family expectations, and the endless desire of wanting to belong.

While you may not be trying to master a new spell or prove you're good enough to move on to Middle Magic, I hope their journey still resonates with you, and that the world becomes a more magical place because of it.

Love always,
Liz Montague



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