

The Brown Bean Coffee Shoppe



Brown Bean Coffee Shoppe is the setting for most of the tales of adventure. High ceilings, a hallmark of 1940s architecture, feature intricate metal plates that reflect the warm glow of heavy iron paddle fans. A rich aroma of freshly ground coffee beans fills the air, mingling with the sweet scent of baked goods displayed under glass domes on the counter. This vintage ambience creates a welcoming atmosphere for visitors. Nestled on a side street in a working-class commercial neighborhood, the charming café is in a picturesque coastal Georgia town. Angled parking is available in front, while a back door provides access to a parking lot.

The walls are a harmonious blend of exposed brick and aged wood, lined with shelves displaying an assortment of coffee brewing equipment and quaint memorabilia, including antique coffee pots, that hint at a rich history. The earthy aroma of freshly ground coffee beans fills the air, mingling with the sweet scent of baked goods from the display case.

Large front windows allow natural light to pour into the shop, illuminating cozy seating areas furnished with wooden chairs and vintage tables. Somewhere a radio plays a local cool jazz station.

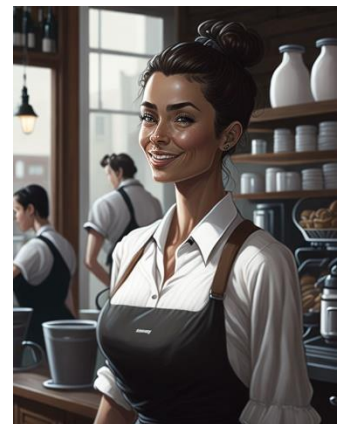
Behind the counter, the baristas move with practiced ease, preparing orders with a smile and engaging in friendly conversation with the patrons. The overall atmosphere is a perfect blend of old-world charm and modern-day hospitality.

Characters

Samantha Wilson:

This book is a collection of short stories depicting the adventures of Samantha Wilson, a young single woman in her mid-twenties. She arranges her chestnut-brown hair in a messy bun on top of her head. When Sam discovers she has certain paranormal abilities, she faces the realization that her talents extend beyond creating the perfect morning beverage for her customers.

Georgiana Phillips:



Georgiana is an aspiring television reporter in her early twenties. She interned in Atlanta as a news writer before accepting the job as an outside reporter for the channel 27 noon and early evening reports. She often operates the camera and drives the news truck. Her goal is to become a studio news anchor.



Detective Ronald Johnson:

Detective Ronald Johnson becomes involved in several of Samantha's adventures. A seasoned veteran of the police force, Johnson has dedicated his life to law enforcement. Now in his late 40s, he is a hardened investigator with a face etched by years of relentless casework. Though open-minded about Samantha's paranormal abilities, he remains discreet, keeping his "secret resource" hidden from his superiors. Johnson maintains a professional, confidential relationship with Georgiana, frequently serving as her trusted source of information.



Margaret Garrett:



Marge, the coffee shop manager, plays a supporting role. She is the consummate organizer, tending to details, and not above cleaning tables. We come to know Marge as a woman in her late forties. She is fastidious and efficient and works from noon until closing.

David Dillon:

David is a college student who works in the mornings and attends college classes in the afternoon. He is tall and athletic with blonde hair and blue eyes. He lives in an apartment above the coffee shop. David is now the assistant manager.



Sandra Smith:



Sandra is a part-time afternoon worker. She is a single mother in her thirties, supporting teen twins. Sandra Smith wears her dark hair in a bun. The Brown Bean is just one of her two jobs. At her other job, she is a secretary at an auto parts warehouse across the street. She met her boyfriend, Daryl, at the café.

All people and events depicted in these stories are fictional.

The Story:

'Twas just after the noon hour before the night of Halloween and all through the Brown Bean Coffee Shoppe, Samantha, and Marge were setting up Halloween decorations.

Delicate strands of fake spider webs clung to the corners of the menu board above the front counter. Each table was set with holiday centerpieces featuring plastic pumpkins and fall leaves. Napkin holders held bright orange napkins. Small witches rode magical broomsticks across the front windows. A small signboard listed seasonal beverages, including Ghostly White Chocolate, Witch's Brew Smoothie, Monster Cookies, and, of course, not to forget the obligatory Pumpkin Spice Latte.

Marge wore a witch's hat and a black cape while Samantha dressed up as a lady pirate, complete with a three-cornered hat and patch over one eye.

Sandra arrived a little early for work as Samantha and Marge were finishing the decorations.

"You didn't leave anything for me to do," Sandra feigned a protest as she stood behind the counter, taking it all in. "It all looks really nice!"

Some of the regular customers joined in the spirit of the occasion as well.

A tall, slender woman entered, dressed as a classic vampire. Her long black gown flowed elegantly to the floor, with a high collar framing her pale face. Dark red lipstick accentuated her features, while her long dark hair cascaded down her back, flowing over a cape that billowed as she walked.

Approaching the counter, she spoke in a smooth and theatrical voice, "I'll have a blood orange latte, please, and make it extra spooky!"

Sandra smiled, "And how are you today, Miss Walker, " recognizing the familiar voice of the local English teacher. "Try not to bite anyone while I get that for you."

Moments later, a woman walked in wearing a costume that resembled a giant pumpkin spice latte. The outfit comprised a brown tunic with orange accents, complete with a foam-like headpiece intended to look like whipped cream with just a sprinkle of cinnamon.

Sandra laughed. "How about a pumpkin spice latte to match your costume?"

"It's Alice," the woman said, "and yes, please."

"Yes, I know," Sandra said smugly, looking back at the counter as she turned the handle of the espresso machine to fill the cup. Next, it was time to add the pumpkin spice sirup. She then poured in the steamed milk and held back the foam with a spoon while she sprinkled in a dash of cinnamon and cocoa powder. When it was done, she delivered the drink to the counter and rang up the sale.

A mother and daughter arrived. Alicia, a mother in her thirties, dressed as a classic witch, complete with a flowing black dress and a pointed black hat. Her

makeup featured a touch of green face paint. Mia, her six-year-old daughter, had her own witch costume. Mia's dress was a mix of black and purple, topped with a miniature witch hat as she carried a small cauldron-shaped candy bucket already containing a few wrapped candies. Marge reached into a jar on the counter and dropped a small bag of candy pumpkins into her bucket.

"Mom, can we get the ghost cookies?" Mia asked, her eyes wide with anticipation as she gazed into the display in the glass case on the counter.

Meanwhile, a man at a corner table waved to each customer as they arrived. His elaborate steampunk costume included a brown leather vest over a gleaming white shirt, with a pair of goggles perched on his forehead. He had a pocket watch dangling from his vest and he leaned a cane with intricate carvings against the table.

The bells on the door rang as a tall figure in a flowing white sheet entered. The classic ghost costume included cut outs for eye holes.

Sandra spoke to the newcomer in a friendly but firm tone.

"Welcome to the Brown Bean. I'm sorry, but we have a policy against full face coverings. Could you please lift your sheet?"

The ghost did not respond, and instead moved closer to the counter

Marge, who had been arranging the pastries in, moved beside Sandra, her voice calm but authoritative.

"We need to see your face, for security reasons."

Customers took notice of what was happening. Samantha, amid arranging table decorations, paused as her focus shifted to the activity at the register.

The ghost remained silent for a moment and then spoke in a low and muffled voice.

"I don't think so."

In a swift motion, the figure reached a white gloved hand into the folds of the costume and pulled out a handgun. Pointing it at Sandra and Marge, he announced, "This is a robbery. You will please open the cash register and stand away."



A collective gasp rippled through the cafe.

The steampunk adventurer half-rose from his seat but froze when the ghost swung the gun in his direction.

Marge slowly raised her hands. Sandra stood, stunned, her shoulders raised and her hands at her side.

"Okay, let's stay calm," she said as she reached towards the register. "I'm going to unlock the drawer now."

"Do it!" the ghost ordered, waving the gun.

Marge carefully turned the key that released the cash drawer. The drawer opened.

"Both of you get away from the counter," the ghost ordered as he slipped behind the counter.

Samantha's eyes squinted as she focused her concentration on the open cash drawer. Suddenly, the cash drawer began moving on its own, slowly sliding shut.

Startled, the ghost looked around the room in confusion.

"Hey, open it back up," he demanded.

Bewildered, Marge stepped forward hesitantly. As she reached for the drawer, it slid open again of its own accord.

Sandra's eyes widened as she glanced at Samantha, who was trying to suppress a knowing smile. Sam pressed a finger to her lips.

The ghost, clearly unnerved, reached for the cash. Just as his hand was about to touch the money, the drawer slammed shut with a loud bang.

"What's going in?" the ghost demanded, his voice rising in panic. He waved the gun wildly. "Is this some kind of trick?"

Samantha concentrated harder, and the drawer began to rattle and vibrate. The ghost stumbled backward and lowered the gun.

"This place is haunted!" he cried out as he turned and ran, the white sheet billowing behind him.

For a moment, the Brown Bean Coffee Shoppe was silent. Then a burst of relieved laughter and excited chatter broke out.

The vampire lady fanned herself dramatically with her cape.

"Well, that was more excitement than I bargained for with my latte!"

A man in a skeleton costume approached the counter. "That was amazing! How did you make the drawer move like that?"

Marge, thinking quickly, forced a smile. "We installed a remote control. For, uh, security purposes."

"Wow! That's quite a trick! You sure spooked that spook, didn't you. You folks have a safe Halloween now!"

With that, he waved goodbye and left the shop.

As the excitement died down, customers returned to their conversations. Samantha continued wiping tables. Sandra caught her eye, and Sam responded with a sly grin. Sandra's face revealed a dawning realization.

Marge began to catalog some things she had been observing about Sam.

She approached Samantha's table and spoke in a hushed tone. "Sam, was that ... you?"

Sam glanced around to be sure no one was listening, then nodded slightly.

"I'm not exactly sure how, but ... I just wanted the drawer to move, and it did."

Marge shook her head with a broadening smile. "No!"

Samantha slowly nodded.

Sandra approached to see what they were talking about.

"Don't you suppose we should tell Detective Johnson what happened?"

Marge parsed her lips and tilted her head. "No, I don't think we need to do that. After all, there was no robbery, was there?"

Sandra looked at Samantha and back at Marge.

"I suppose you're right. Nothing happened, did it!"

Samantha handed Marge the cloth she had been using to wipe down tables, raised her eye patch and said, " Then, I guess it's time for me to get my purse and go home."

They all laughed together.

Just another day at the Brown Bean Coffee Shoppe!