



A la Carte

By Tanita S. Davis

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SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD LAINEY DREAMS of becoming a world famous chef one day and maybe even having her own cooking show. (Do you know how many African American female chefs there *aren't*? And how many vegetarian chefs have their own shows? The field is wide open for stardom!) But when her best friend—and secret crush—suddenly leaves town, Lainey finds herself alone in the kitchen. With a little help from Saint Julia (Child, of course), Lainey finds solace in her cooking as she comes to terms with the past and begins a new recipe for the future.

Peppered with recipes from Lainey's notebooks, this delicious debut novel finishes the same way one feels finishing a good meal—satiated, content, and hopeful.

From the Hardcover edition.

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A la Carte By Tanita S. Davis Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up—Seventeen-year-old Lainey has an uncommon dream: to be the first African-American celebrity vegetarian chef. She shows promise, helping out in the kitchen at her mother's Bay Area restaurant and concocting mouthwatering dishes in her spare time. (Hand-written recipes are included.) Cooking is her salvation; she turns to the kitchen when things aren't going well, particularly in her precarious relationship with Simeon Keller. While she cares for him as a friend, she overlooks the way he uses her. When he runs away from a bad situation at home, she offers him brief sanctuary in her home, giving him \$500 and food before he jets out of town. Lainey's mom hounds her for details about his disappearance, details that she withholds for weeks. When Sim returns, months later, she's more self-assured and certain of her own plans for success. While Davis's first novel at times suffers from awkward wording and slow moments, it's still a book with a lot of heart. Readers will relate to Lainey, who doesn't always say the right thing, who has a love-hate relationship with her mother, and who finds her dreams realized at the novel's end. Secondary characters, like Lainey's formerly dorky family friend, ring true and add depth to the novel.—*Jennifer Barnes, Homewood Library, IL*

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From [Booklist](#)

How many African American female chefs have their own vegetarian cooking shows? High-school senior Lainey, with help from her mom's gourmet restaurant and St. Julia (Child), is well on her way to being the first. Though she never wavers in her dedication to her culinary future, Lainey suffers a blow when her lifelong friend, Simeon, borrows \$500 and runs away. Sim's departure leaves Lainey feeling alone and strains her relationship with her mother, who disapproves of Lainey's loan. When Sim finally returns, thoughtful, likable Lainey faces the truth about her friend's character and the role she really played in his life. Davis' first novel shows much promise for good things to come. Too few novels feature well-drawn, well-educated, middle-class African American characters like Lainey and her family. The text is seasoned with Lainey's original recipes, and Lainey's use of cooking as a means of meditation and self-expression may encourage readers to embark on their own kitchen experiments. Grades 7-10. --Heather Booth

Review

"Davis's debut offering is as delightful and fulfilling as the handwritten recipes in progress included at the end of each chapter."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"A book with a lot of heart. Readers will relate to Lainey, who doesn't always say the right thing, who has a love-hate relationship with her mother, and who finds her dreams realized at the novel's end." —*School Library Journal*

"Davis's first novel shows much promise for good things to come. Too few novels feature well-drawn, well-educated, middle-class African American characters like Lainey and her family." —*Booklist*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Barbara Richardson:

The experience that you get from A la Carte is a more deep you excavating the information that hide inside words the more you get considering reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to know but A la Carte giving you excitement feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in specific way that can be understood simply by anyone who read the idea because the author of this e-book is well-known enough. This book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. Making it easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having that A la Carte instantly.

Herbert Haubrich:

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Byron Angle:

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