



The Love Goddess' Cooking School

Melissa Senate

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Camilla's Cucinotta: Italian Cooking Classes. Fresh take-home pastas & sauces daily Benvenuti! (Welcome!)

Holly Maguire's grandmother Camilla was the Love Goddess of Blue Crab Island, Maine—a Milanese fortune-teller who could predict the right man for you, and whose Italian cooking was rumored to save marriages. Holly has been waiting years for her unlikely fortune: her true love will like sa cordula, an unappetizing old-world delicacy. But Holly can't make a decent marinara sauce, let alone sa cordula. Maybe that's why the man she hopes to marry breaks her heart. So when Holly inherits Camilla's Cucinotta, she's determined to forget about fortunes and love and become an Italian cooking teacher worthy of her grandmother's legacy.

But Holly's four students are seeking much more than how to make Camilla's chicken alla Milanese. Simon, a single father, hopes to cook his way back into his daughter's heart. Juliet, Holly's childhood friend, hides a painful secret. Tamara, a serial dater, can't find the love she longs for. And twelve-year-old Mia thinks learning to cook will stop her dad, Liam, from marrying his phony lasagna-queen girlfriend. As the class gathers each week, adding Camilla's essential ingredients of wishes and memories in every pot and pan, unexpected friendships and romances are formed—and tested. Especially when Holly falls hard for Liam...and learns a thing or two about finding her own recipe for happiness.

The Love Goddess' Cooking School Details

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From Reader Review The Love Goddess' Cooking School for online ebook

Darth J says

I read this a few years ago and I guess this is like the Hallmark Channel version of *Practical Magic* (the movie version, not the book). That is to say that it has elements of magical realism and cooking but there's something too soft, too *milquetoast* about it. Everything seems to wrap up too neatly in the end, and despite being about cooking none of the characters have much flavor to them. The "magic" here comes from coincidences and the grandmother's fortune telling stones, but again it was really lacking in that department as well.

^This is *sa cordula*, the big hubbub of this book. It was foretold the person who enjoys it will love the MC because it's **disgusting**. From what I remember, there's some inadvertent hijinks that ensue that lead to the male lead eating it. I'd say *spoiler alert* but you see it coming from a mile away.

Susan says

What a lovely novel! I treated myself to THE LOVE GODDESS' COOKING SCHOOL after a crazy deadline. Then my cat got sick, which didn't exactly alleviate the stress. So I was very grateful for Melissa Senate's new book, which (like those old Calgon commercials), took me away for awhile. It was a pleasure meeting Holly Maguire and learning about her relationship with her Italian grandmother Camilla. Holly just broke up with a man she thought she was in love with and flew to Maine to see Camilla before her grandma passed away. She inherits Camilla's Cucinotta on Blue Crab Island, although she barely knows how to cook. But she practices working on her grandma's handwritten recipes daily and keeps the business alive. She even gets enough confidence to run a cooking class, as Camilla had for many years. Her first group of students includes a 12-year-old dying for her divorced parents to get back together, a woman who's lost her only child, a thirty-something woman looking for love, and a divorced man who can't seem to please his daughter. Through their cooking classes--always adding a pinch of memory or something equally magical to the mixture--the students and Holly grow and find what their lives have been missing. This was a very sweet novel that I could recommend to all readers. Let THE LOVE GODDESS' COOKING SCHOOL take you away for awhile, as it did me. You won't be disappointed.

Lisa says

Good Chick Lit

1 lost character named Holly
Dash of magical realism
At least one hot guy
Several interesting characters

Secrets, angst and a fun plot to keep readers interested
Delicious recipes to make your mouth water
I wish

Kerry says

There is a genre of books where a group of people (usually women with one lone guy thrown into the mix) gather together in some sort of club or class (knitting, quilting, Jane Austen books or in this case, cooking) and by the end of the book, they have formed close friendships and had a major problem in their lives resolved through the magic of whatever interest had drawn them together in the first place. Sometimes, this genre can produce a good book or even a good series of books (for example - The Elm Creek Quilt series). And sometimes, it can result in books that are a little cotton candy-ish. By that I mean, they are light, fluffy, fun to consume but really don't have much substance.

The Love Goddess' Cooking School is one of the better examples of the genre. It sort of reminded me of the Friday Night Knitting Club meets the Under the Tuscan Sun (more the film version than the book itself but still) with little hints of Laura Esquivel or Joanne Harris thrown in for flavor.

While it does end in the typical "everything-worked-out and everyone-is-perfectly-matched-up-and-happy" sort of way, it doesn't cut corners getting there. The characters and the plotlines felt honest and realistic. And while The Love Goddess' Cooking School will never be considered great literature, it was a fun, easy-going and satisfying read.

Kat says

"Holly Maguire gets her heartbroken and moves from California to Maine into her grandmother's house and kitchen. Her grandmother, Camilla, is known in town as the Italian cooking teacher and even more so, as a fortune teller. When her grandmother passes away and leaves her house and kitchen to Holly, she decides to continue with the cooking classes although she is not as gifted with cooking, or fortune telling, as her nonna.

I wanted to read something fun and got something boring instead. Everything was pretty predictable from the beginning. I can see this being turned into a made-for-television movie, probably airing on Lifetime. I was also surprised at how many grammatical errors and double words I found while reading. The author should get another editor/publisher. I think the one thing I liked about this book was how there are a few of the recipes included in the back, which I will try. Hopefully they are better than the story."

Melissa says

I have to admit that "The Love Goddess' Cooking School" was the first book by Melissa Senate I've read

since "See Jane Date" (back in 2002), which I loved. I have her other books but haven't had a chance to read them yet. I don't think anything was keeping me from reading them, but now that I've finished this book, I definitely will be reading more from Ms. Senate.

"The Love Goddess' Cooking School" is about Holly, a woman who loses a serious relationship, gets fired from her job and is kicked out of her apartment within a short period of time. She flies across the country, back to her grandmother's home and cooking school in Maine. Her grandmother passes away shortly afterward, leaving her home and cooking school in Holly's care. However, Holly doesn't know how to cook the way her grandmother did. It doesn't help that her grandmother was a fortune teller, a skill that Holly does not possess, which also set a reputation for her with the townsfolk and Holly's own mother. With the help of some new friends, Holly learns how to navigate the world of cooking, teaching and even love in this heartfelt and romantic story.

This novel flowed beautifully with a strong female voice, sympathetic characters, delicious sounding food (except for sa cordula, of course) and breathtaking descriptions of an island in Maine. I loved everything about it and had a difficult time putting it down. I stayed up last night just so I could finish the rest of it in one sitting. There was a sensitive topic that was tackled during the story, which was hard to read about as a mother. However, Ms. Senate handled it gracefully and made it more comfortable for the reader to handle. (Seeing that she's a mother too, I couldn't even imagine her doing it any other way.) The dialogue was natural and realistic throughout the story and each character was portrayed vividly, making them even more dynamic and interesting.

The only criticism I have is that Ms. Senate's editors weren't careful before letting this go to print. I found some spelling and grammatical errors scattered throughout the story. (If she needs an extra set of eyes in the future, I'd be glad to help.) This did not detract from my enjoyment of a truly wonderful story that I hope everyone gets the chance to read.

originally posted here: <http://chicklitcentraltheblog.blogspot...>

Jessi says

I liked this as a nice and easy read that just makes you feel good. But I don't enjoy the references to current pop culture. It dates it. No matter what, in ten plus however many years, someone reading this book will say "Edward Cullen/Miley Cyrus/Hannah Montana - who?".

Maria says

I must confess I have a thing for books that are somehow related to Italy. And when it's through food? Even better! Oh, the wonders of testing a recipe you have read about.

Reading a Melissa Senate book is like sitting down for a long conversation with a best friend. We talk about everything and nothing. There are ups and downs, smiles and tears, laughs and silences that long ago stopped being awkward.

Some might call it a light reading, an easy escape, but I believe *The Love Goddess' Cooking School* is whatever you *need* it to be (and whatever you are *ready* for). It can be just another chick lit (even though I quite dislike that expression), or a revelation...

You find yourself rooting for these characters for, at some point in your life, you have been in their shoes, you have been one or all of them at the same time. We all have doubted ourselves and others, we all have had to let go of something we once thought to be the only thing we truly had, we all have had to get up after running into a *brick wall* that we were so enchanted by that we didn't recognize it for what it was... Life plays its tricks on us and we all have different ways of dealing with said tricks. I usually find that writing them down or reading them/seeing them portrayed by a character makes it easier to acknowledge them for what they truly are, something you can overcome.

If I had to come up with just one word to describe *The Love Goddess' Cooking School* I would have to go with *hope*. It's impossible not to feel it.

And now... now I am off to buy the ingredients to give *Camilla's Cucinotta Tiramisu* a go!

Jennifer says

I always have a hard time reading romances because they tend to be plot driven instead of character driven. This is not one of those occasions. *The Love Goddess' Cooking School* is a wonderful, romantic Food-Lit and I can't wait to share it. I think Melissa Senate's writing is much like Sarah Addison Allen without the magical realism... and you all know how much I love Sarah Addison Allen.

Melissa Senate has created characters that are incredibly easy to identify with - flawed but redeemable. It's been a long time since I read a novel where I felt connected with almost every character. Ms. Senate does an incredible job of making them empathetic. I loved them all. From Liam, the single dad trying to keep his daughter's world from crumbling without her mother, to the recently divorced Simon who is finding his way as a 'weekend dad', to Mia who is trying so hard to figure out where she fits, to Tamara the frustrated serial dater, and Juliet the heartbroken -whose story definitely struck a chord. It's Holly, however with whom I identify the most. Holly can't seem to find a place for herself, falls for the wrong guys, and sometimes sets too much stock in fate and destiny. I love her determination and her desire to see things through. I love that she chose to continue her Nonna's legacy, even though it meant facing her fears and striking out on her own.

As I mentioned, this book is not plot driven, but the unfolding of the character's lives pulls the reader through it at a wonderful pace so that I wasn't racing to see what was going to happen next, but enjoying what was happening now. Did I know where the book was headed? Yes. But it was one of those rare times when I wasn't in a hurry to get there. I was just enjoying the world of Blue Crab Island and it's inhabitants.

The only thing that seemed a tad out of place were the recipes at the end of the book. Not that they weren't related to the story, they were certainly recipes for the meals made at the cooking school. Perhaps it was because the story was so fabulous, but, in the end, the recipes seemed a little superfluous. I can see not wanting to break the continuity of the story by placing them at the ends of chapters, but I think to be included, they needed to be incorporated into the book somehow because it came off feeling like an afterthought. Though not a bad afterthought and that is only my opinion...

I've used the word loved a lot in this post but that's because I thought this book was marvelous - I'm actually running out of synonyms for excellent. This review has been difficult to write because I don't want to gush about it, I'd rather just curl up inside it. It's the perfect balance of love, friendship, and of course, good food.

<http://girlsjustreading.blogspot.com/...>

Melodie says

Holly has just had her heart broken. What better way to lick her wounds than to fly home to her Nonna's place in Maine? Her Nonna is a culinary teacher with on Blue Crab Island. For years and years she has welded her culinary magic with comfy Italian food and told fortunes on the side.

After Nonna's passing, Holly finds herself the proprietress of her business. However, Holly doesn't possess the magic touch that her grandmother had with food and definitely can't see the future.

Determined to pay homage to her grandmother, she pulls herself out of her self induced funk and starts to practice her inherited recipes. Her road to success is predictably bumpy. Her cooking class is full of lonely hearts like herself, so their camaraderie is assured. One of her students is a tween named Mia that Holly takes under her wing. Of course Mia has a hunky single dad. The reader can see how this goes.

However formula driven this story is, I found it charming and was easily immersed in the atmosphere and the characters. The food descriptions were mouth watering and selected recipes can be found in the back of the book.

Diane says

This is such a fun and charming book! It's the story of Holly, who moves back into her grandmother's home after a bad breakup, and then has to find a new direction in life when her beloved nonna dies. Fortunately, Holly learns to love cooking and is able to take over her grandmother's Italian cooking class.

I don't read much modern chick lit, but I'm glad I gave this one a try. I could see this book being turned into a delightful movie. And if you like romantic comedies or stories about food, you'll enjoy this book.

Leah says

Holly Maguire's grandmother Camilla was the Love Goddess of Blue Crab Island, Maine—a Milanese fortune-teller who could predict the right man for you, and whose Italian cooking was rumored to save marriages. Holly has been waiting years for her unlikely fortune: her true love will like sa cordula, an unappetizing old-world delicacy. But Holly can't make a decent marinara sauce, let alone sa cordula. Maybe that's why the man she hopes to marry breaks her heart. So when Holly inherits Camilla's Cucinotta, she's determined to forget about fortunes and love and become an Italian cooking teacher worthy of her grandmother's legacy. But Holly's four students are seeking much more than how to make Camilla's chicken alla Milanese. Simon, a single father, hopes to cook his way back into his daughter's heart. Juliet, Holly's childhood friend, hides a painful secret. Tamara, a serial dater, can't find the love she longs for. And twelve-year-old Mia thinks learning to cook will stop her dad, Liam, from marrying his phony lasagna-queen girlfriend. As the class gathers each week, adding Camilla's essential ingredients of wishes and memories in every pot and pan, unexpected friendships and romances are formed—and tested. Especially when Holly falls hard for Liam . . . and learns a thing or two about finding her own recipe for happiness.

People have been telling me for ages to read See Jane Date by Melissa Senate but I've never gotten around to finding myself a copy. When I saw Melissa had a new book coming out called The Love Goddess' Cooking School, I loved the sound of it and when a preview finally came up on Amazon, I had a quick sneak peek and I thought the book sounded like my kind of thing so I bought myself a copy. As soon as it arrived, I quickly finished my previous book and got stuck into this one. It took me about a week to read, but not a moment of it was dull.

The Love Goddess' Cooking School has a wonderful plot, and I was drawn into the book immediately as we find out that when Holly Maguire was told her fortune by her grandmother Camilla and all that she's told is that the great love of her life will like Sa Cordula, an Italian dish made of lamb intestines that nobody likes. It was a great way to start the novel and I was sad I couldn't dedicate more of my time to the book. We learn Camilla has recently died and left her business Camilla Cuchinotta's to Holly so Holly rapidly has to learn how to cook her grandmother's famous Italian dishes so she can teach Camilla's cooking class as well as sell her wares. I thought the cooking class plot was fantastic and I enjoyed getting to know Holly and her students, Tamara, Simon, Juliet and young Mia. Throw in Mia's dad Liam and we have a fantastic and well-rounded cast.

I truly didn't know what to expect from the novel. Just because the Amazon preview I had was good didn't mean I would necessarily love the rest of the novel so I was pleased to find that I did enjoy immersing myself in the book. I thought Camilla's recipes were wonderful, and I liked the way Senate made them unique by making sure every time Holly or one of her students cooked, they added in a memory or a wish to help it along the way. During the novel we also have some diary entries by Camilla written way back when she first started her fortune telling and Camilla's Cucinotta and I found them incredibly interesting. In fact, I could have read an entire book dedicated to Camilla's diary during the 60's at Blue Crab Cove. I must also mention where the book is set, in Blue Crab Cove in Maine. It's fictional, but it sounds like a wonderful place to live.

I was thrilled that I took the chance on the book. I loved it so much that I've ordered myself another Melissa Senate book and should I love that, too, I'll definitely be getting Melissa's other books. The setting was perfect, the plot was everything I expected and more and I absolutely loved each and every one of the characters and was rooting for them to get their happy endings. I would hugely recommend the book to all Chick Lit fans. It's a very sweet read, and one I am so so glad I took a chance on. It's lovely when you buy a book and it ends up being a fantastic read.

Min Li Li says

Di?er kitab? kadar çok sevdim bu kitab? da.

A?k vard? ama ondan da öte dostluk vard?.Hem Holly'nin büyükannesinin günlüklerini okumakta güzeldi.

Her karakteri çok sevdim.Simon ile Tamara birlikte olsun diye dua ettim okurken ve sonunda beraber olduklar?n? görünce çok sevindim tabi. :D

Holly ile Liam'da çok tatlıyd?,gerçi Liam'a bir konuda k?zd?m ama neyse sonu tatlıya ba?landı?.

Pamela says

A friend sent me this book in exchange for the Cookbook Collector which I lent to her. Warning: this is extreme chick lit. Not the least bit literary. Very formulaic and presses all the comfort, female fantasy buttons-- romantic guy, very nice, self-deprecating woman without a penny to her name who inherits house and business on the coast of Maine, lots of hot baths, good food and wine, nurturing, loneliness blossoming into friendship. Good read for rainy November Sunday afternoon. Watch the number of typos-- was this book thrown together without copy editing?

Caitlin says

Once again I am won over by a book that transcends its genre and makes me think I should be more broadminded about that genre - chick lit. I've pretty much hated every chick lit book I've ever read. So much of it is about women who care most about shopping, getting into the latest hot new club, their weight, their makeup, and snagging that enormous diamond ring and great big expensive wedding. These characters tend to be so shallow and the books tend to be so thinly written that I end up loathing them. One exception to this is *The Devil Wears Prada*, although I probably adored the wrong character - I think Miranda Priestly is a goddess and loved that the book was filled with the kind of couture that transcends fashion and becomes art. *The Love Goddess' Cooking School* by Melissa Senate just made this list.

The best thing of all about this book is how simple it is - a good story, simply told. No unnecessary embellishments, no cliches, no stereotypes, just an honestly told story about being in your thirties - a time of life when for most people everything is up for grabs. Everyone in this book is at a crossroads in their lives with their old life down the toilet for whatever reason and the course of their new life still uncertain.

It made me think of the time after my divorce when I had to try to sort out who I was going to be, how I was going to live. It was a hard time for me, for my son, and for my ex-husband. Although I never thought it would come to where it has today, it did work out for the best.

The thread that runs throughout this book is all the ways that cooking and eating and sharing both things bind people together and how having a strong connection to the past, like the one Holly has with her grandmother, is so essential to grounding you in the present. The cooking in this book isn't highlighted in any special way, but rather is a constant in the book, as it should be in real life. It's full of as many burnt bechamel sauces as it is sublime risotto. It acknowledges that the fun is in the process, not necessarily in the product (although it never hurts when the product is great, too). There's an important message here about not being afraid to risk, not being afraid to fail that really resonates with me.

The other thread is Holly's relationship with her recently deceased grandmother. They had a very special relationship and that touched my heart. It made think of my grandmothers, both gone now, and how much they each meant to me and how many things I learned from each of them even though they were very different from each other. They were both an enormous part of helping me become the person I am today and I miss them both almost every day.

This is a warm and beautiful book with an honest simple story that is filled with the good smells of garlic and onion and olive oil filling the house with love and companionship. I adored this book.
