

# the Dessert Diaries

## Kiki Takes the CAKE



by Laura Dower





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Raintree is an imprint of Capstone Global Library Limited, a company incorporated in England and Wales having its registered office at 264 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DY – Registered company number: 6695582

www.raintree.co.uk  
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Edited by Kristen Mohn  
Designed by Philippa Jenkins  
Original illustrations © 2017 Capstone Global Limited Library  
Illustrated by Lilly Lazuli  
Production by Kathy McColley  
Originated by Capstone Global Limited Library  
Printed and bound in China.

ISBN 978 1 4747 2214 8  
20 19 18 17 16  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A full catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library.

All the Internet addresses (URLs) given in this book were valid at the time of going to press. However, due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, some addresses may have changed, or sites may have changed or ceased to exist since publication. While the author and publisher regret any inconvenience this may cause readers, no responsibility for any such changes can be accepted by either the author or the publisher.

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# Autumn delight



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Hello, Sweeties!

As always, a great big sugar-coated thank you for supporting the bakery these past several months. In a big city, it's sometimes hard to stand out and get the attention we crave. But so far, things have been pretty sweet. We're so glad to welcome repeat visitors who keep coming back to try all the new things we have to offer.

Which brings me to the point of today's blog: AUTUMN OFFERINGS! This month at Daisy's Desserts we're experimenting with pumpkin and spice and other autumn



flavours. Some of the cool items you'll see on our seasonal menu:

Pumpkin Cheesecake Pops

Harvest Biscuits with Cranberries  
and Orange Zest

Baked Pear Pudding Tart

Pumpcakes

Honeycross Buns

In addition to food for every autumn mood, the crew at Daisy's now has crayons and colouring books available for the artistically inclined. And if there's a sweet treat you've been wanting to try, or if you have a suggestion to make Daisy's even better, just let us know! Remember: your taste buds are my best buds. I'm always happier when I see customers with crumbs on their shirts.

Happy autumn, everyone!

xo, Daisy





## Chapter 1



### Piece of cake

“Any volunteers to tackle these questions?” Mr Galipeau asked the science class, impatiently tapping his ruler on the white board.

Does baking a cake make a chemical change or physical change?

Does the quantity or order of ingredients affect the reaction?

If you bake a fudge cake vs a carrot cake, does it make a difference in the reaction?

Kiki Booker raised her hand high. She shifted in her seat and toyed with the plaits on her head.



"Does anyone besides Kiki want to explain this for me?" the teacher asked. "Mr Lopez?"

Eduardo Lopez rubbed his buzz-cut. "Uh, Mr G., can't you give us a hint? All this problem is doing is making me hungry."

"As usual," Mr G. said and turned to a red-haired girl sitting way in the back. "Maggie? How about you?"

The girl shrugged. "I'm not totally sure, Mr Galipeau," she said. "Is it a chemical change?"

"Yes, Ms McAllister!" he said enthusiastically. "Now tell me more."

But Maggie just gave him a blank stare.

Kiki's hand was still up. Kiki loved cake, and she loved science. She was absolutely bursting to give the answers.

Mr G. turned back to Kiki and let out a sigh. "Okay, Ms Booker, why don't you explain to the class what you think I'm looking for?"

Kiki cleared her throat. How was it possible that no one else had a clue? These questions were, well,

a *piece of cake*. “When you bake,” she began, “every ingredient has a different job. Flour is the base. Baking powder makes the cake fluffy. Eggs, which are not a liquid or a solid but a *colloid*, are like the glue that binds everything together. Sugar makes it sweet, of course.”

Mr Galipeau smiled and nodded. “Go on.”

“Mixing dry and wet ingredients,” Kiki continued, “has to be done in a certain order so the ingredients respond – or react – the way they need to. The proteins in flour bond and make gluten. The baking powder releases carbon dioxide, which makes the batter bubble. The bubbles make the cake expand. The heat in an oven turns the goopy batter, which is another colloid, into something solid ...”

“How do you *know* all these things?” someone whined from the back.

Kiki smiled. This lover of all things baked was on a *roll*. “I like cake, okay?” she joked. “Anyway, I haven’t even got to the best part ...”

“Okay, Ms Booker,” Mr Galipeau interrupted.

“Let’s give some other pupils a chance to speak. Does anyone else have anything to add?”

Eduardo’s hand shot up.

“I wanna know what the question said: What’s the difference between fudge and carrot cake, besides the gross factor? I mean, who would put vegetables in a cake?”

Everyone in class laughed. But Mr Galipeau turned to Kiki again. “Ms Booker?”

Kiki flipped her plaits. “Totally. So, obviously those kinds of cakes are different because they have different ingredients. Putting carrots in a cake can make it denser. And the texture can change if you don’t add liquid gradually, or if you mix too long. And ...”

“Okay, time to wrap up,” Mr Galipeau said.

“*Psssst*,” said the boy sitting directly behind Kiki. “Do you memorize the textbook or what?”

Of course that voice had permission to tease. It belonged to Kiki’s best pal, Jesse Gordon. When Kiki looked back at Jesse, he swished his brown fringe

back with a flick of his head. "Brainiac!" he mouthed the words and stuck out his tongue comically.

Kiki didn't mind. He was just being Jesse. Some people thought it was funny that her closest friend was a boy, and hilarious that he happened to be the coolest boy in the whole year. But Kiki and Jesse had bonded way back in nursery school over play dough and lollies, and they'd been inseparable ever since.

Unlike Kiki, Jesse was no science whizz, but he was clever. He teased her because he couldn't help himself. He was born a practical joker.

Kiki rolled her eyes at Jesse and turned back to the teacher.

"That brings us to this month's project. I want you all to think more about chemical and physical reactions in the kitchen. Are you ready for a little food chemistry?" Mr Galipeau passed out a yellow sheet of paper.

Molecules in Motion

Changing State: Evaporation, Condensation,  
Freezing or Melting

Forming a Precipitate

The Rate of a Chemical Reaction: temperature,  
catalysts, chemical change

Using Chemical Change to Identify an Unknown:  
endothermic vs exothermic

Energy Changes in Chemical Reaction: pH and  
colour changes

“I want you to look over this list carefully. During the next few weeks, I want you to experiment in your kitchens. Record your ingredients, measurements and methods. Use these scientific concepts to write a report about how your chosen recipe is prepared. And it has to be edible.” Mr Galipeau looked directly at Eduardo.

“Aw, man!” Eduardo complained.

Everyone groaned. They wanted an excuse to eat food – not to write about it. But Kiki was

excited. This was *easy*. She could do this work with her eyes super-glued shut.

“The only thing I’ll cook up is a disaster,” joked Eduardo.

Kiki laughed. “Actually, that’d be cool if you could make a cake that explodes.”

A sly grin spread across Eduardo’s face. “Or a soup tsunami ...”

Class was interrupted abruptly by the lunch bell. Everyone jumped up from their seats and moved quickly to the door to head downstairs to the canteen. Kiki hurried there too. All that sweet talk had made her absolutely ravenous.

Eyes searching the lunchroom, Kiki found an empty spot and sat down with her tray. She was promptly joined by Jesse and Rob, another boy from Year 7, who belched as he sat down.

“Why are you guys – and all guys – so obnoxious?” Kiki complained.

“Aw, you’re just saying that to be nice,” Jesse joked.



“Ha! Good one!” Rob snorted.

“We’re experts in rude, right?” Jesse said, throwing his arm up for Rob’s high-five.

Kiki sighed. “Okay, weirdos.”

“Speaking of weird, how’s the Brainy Bunch?” Jesse asked with just a touch of snideness.

“What’s the Brainy Bunch?” Rob asked, shovelling spaghetti into his mouth.

Kiki frowned. “Stop it, Jesse! Please don’t make fun of me or the group. Rob, it’s *actually* called the Supernovas. And it’s– ”

“Out of this world?” Jesse cracked up.

“Remind me why I’m friends with you?” Kiki asked with a groan.

“Oh, you know I’m kidding, Kiki,” Jesse said.

And he was. Jesse knew that Kiki’s participation in the group was actually very impressive, considering the fact that the Supernovas was a science club for Year 10 pupils.

Kiki had been invited to join because of her high exam results and because

she'd won the school science fair for three years running.

Last year she'd won with a project on the decomposition of school lunches. It was actually quite scandalous – the canteen servers weren't too happy about the mould Kiki discovered in the macaroni and cheese vats! The year before that, Kiki investigated bacteria all over the school – on lockers, door handles, stair railings – which led to a new rules for cleaners. Kiki went the distance for every big idea. Often, Kiki's research led to actual *change*. The canteen workers and cleaners might not have loved her, but teachers did.

But unlike most teachers, the members of the Supernovas didn't warm up to Kiki straight away. They treated her like she was the little sister at the end of the table who gets ignored during the entire meal. And, in fact, she *was* a little sister. Her older brother Shawn was in Year 11 and served as an advisor to the group – at least he did until he got too busy with rugby practice.

It wasn't until one meeting in the canteen that the Supernovas started to pay attention to the new member. When Kiki concocted a seasoning out of ground up cheesy puffs for the group's chips, the club members *really* began to appreciate Kiki's on-the-spot skills – as well as her talent for truly “useful” science.

The Supernovas typically met twice a month. Sometimes they just did homework, which Kiki thought was great because she got to hear about the chemistry, physics or biology that the older pupils were working on. Sometimes the group competed in local science fairs, and Kiki (a science fair champ, after all) learned a lot from listening to the other members share their passions about absolute zero or surprising sources of global warming. Sometimes the club just sat around and talked about science in the news or an old episode of *The Big Bang Theory*. Kiki loved it all.

One of the pupils in the Supernovas called Bradley always told the coolest stories. He was