



# Cake at Midnight

*Jessie L. Star*

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## **Cake at Midnight** Jessie L. Star

Giovanna, Zoë and Declan have always been a trio - their fierce friendship has seen them through every heartbreak and hardship and helped pave the way to brighter futures. Gio is a passionate baker of cakes, pastries and all things delicious, Zoë a take-no-prisoners beauty, and Declan an ambitious businessman on the way up.

Best friends forever, Gio thinks - until Gio's lifelong crush on Declan is exposed, leaving her humiliated, and Gio realises she needs to cut him loose to get over him once and for all.

Enter Theo, Gio's neighbour ... She's never met anyone like him before. He doesn't talk much, but he's kind, he's sexy, he's generous and he's often awake in the middle of the night, like Gio. Theo has a sweet tooth and a mysterious history and Gio can't seem to stay away.

Thanks to the power of sleepless nights and chocolate cake, Gio thinks she's finally over Declan, but then his whole world turns upside down. Gio knows she can't desert Declan in his time of need, but how can she explain a lifetime of love to Theo?

Letting go of the past isn't so easy when your heart is breaking.

## **Cake at Midnight Details**

Date : Published January 15th 2018 by Pocket Star

ISBN :

Author : Jessie L. Star

Format : Kindle Edition

Genre : Romance, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance

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# From Reader Review Cake at Midnight for online ebook

**Sandy S says**

4.25 stars

About the book: Release Date January 15, 2018

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REVIEW: 4.25 stars--CAKE AT MIDNIGHT by Jessie L. Star is a stand alone, contemporary, new adult romance story line focusing on Australians twenty-two year old pastry chef Giovanna 'Gio' Koppelman, and twenty seven year old acquisitions and mergers manager Theo McKillop.

Told from first person perspective (Giovanna) and third person (Theo) CAKE AT MIDNIGHT follows the building relationship between new neighbors Giovanna Koppelman, and Theo McKillop.

Giovanna, Zoe and Declan are lifelong best friends who grew up together on the wrong side of the tracks struggling against abuse, neglect and a history of addiction. Giovanna, for all intents and purposes, has had a crush on Declan O'Connor for most of her life, a crush that will quickly dissolve when their friendship is abused one final time. Enter Theo McKillop, Giovanna's neighbor and the man with whom our heroine will fall in love. Humiliated and stunned by the man she has known most of her life, Giovanna will welcome Theo's acceptance of her quirky ideas including a 'midnight witching hour' wherein Giovanna finds solace in Theo's company and home-made cake. What ensues is the building relationship between Theo and Giovanna, and the potential fall out when their time together comes to an end.

CAKE AT MIDNIGHT focuses on friendship and family-the dysfunctional family dynamics not only of Giovanna, Zoe and Declan's present and past, but that of Theo's eccentric, well to do, and outrageous family whose behavior is fodder for the socialites, gossip magazines, and paparazzi fanatics. Theo has kept his

familial identity a secret for most of his life but workplace jealousy, and bitter family kinetics become the breaking point for a man who is unable to let go of the past. While Giovanna accepts all that is Theo including his unconventional and heart breaking family, Theo will struggle with Gia's relationship to a man who continues to break her heart. The sex scenes are limited, passionate but mostly implied.

We are introduced to Giovanna's best friends Declan O'Connor, and beautician Zoe; Gio's boss Celeste, and co-worker Maya; as well as Theo's best friend, and executive assistant Ari; Theo's parents Philomena and Harvey, and sister Lena Leventis; and Theo's ex-fiance Vanessa. I am hoping the author has plans for future story lines involving Declan, Zoe, Ari and Lena.

CAKE AT MIDNIGHT has a little bit everything: romance and love; jealousy and betrayal; friendship and family; heart break and acceptance. The premise is engaging and entertaining; the characters are charismatic, realistic and dynamic; the romance is intimate and romantic. Jessie L Star writes an emotional and inspiring story about two people pushed together by circumstance, fate and love.

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[www.thereadingcafe.com](http://www.thereadingcafe.com)

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## **Wit & Wonder Books says**

**\*\*ARC provided by the author in exchange for an honest review\*\***

Completely impressed with *Cake at Midnight* by Jessie L. Star! A sweet, charming love triangle sort of relationship revolving around a childhood friendship of Gio, Zoe and Declan, that turns into something more for Gio.

Gio has had a crush on Declan for quite sometime. When the truth comes out her feelings are not reciprocated and she is beyond crushed. Even though her heart is shattered that Declan doesn't feel the same, he continuously takes advantage of her knowing she won't say no to him. Finally seeing Declan's ways, Gio takes a 30-day no-contact break from him to resolve her feelings. Her friend Zoe is beyond happy that Gio is finally seeing Declan's true behavior and is branching outward. Zoe has always known this and is finally joyful that her friend is finally taking a stance.

Enter the new reclusive neighbor, Theo, whom Gio develops a unorthodox friendship with, as each night both are awake at the "witching hour". Gio, the wonderful baker that she is, tempts Theo with the most delicious cakes earning his sacred friendship. Their friendship evolves to which both help each other out in ways they both least expect, but feelings and attractions start to arise. As Gio learns more about Theo, she discovers that her feelings for Declan are nothing compared to how she feels about Theo.

Theo has a lot of secrets that are slowly revealed throughout the book. The question is will these two

continue on their own paths, or choose to risk it all and become something more.

I was captured with Jessie's illustrated characters with rocking emotions. I was amazed how Theo's character evolved as his friendship with Gio progressed. I was happy to read how Gio's self-esteem increased the longer she spent time with Theo. To me that was empowering! I will note, my favorite character in the book is Zoe. She is independent, has a great attitude and does not put up with anything. I hope the author writes another book starring Zoe.

As the story progresses, an event occurs that proves that friendship overrides everything else. When one of the trio needed the others, they dropped everything to help. I loved how this story shows that friendship overcomes all. I would encourage you to read this book and laugh and cry along with the story like I did.

4 stars

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### **Bree T says**

I loved this!

Gio, Zoë and Dec are childhood friends who refer to themselves as Baker, Beauty and Brains. They have a long standing friendship although it was complicated when Gio kissed Dec, who doesn't return her romantic feelings. In the time since, Dec has been taking advantage of Gio's feelings for him, resulting in Zoë distancing herself from him. When Dec invites Gio last minute to a work function at his fancy firm, she's surprised to find someone she kind of knows there.

Gio refers to Theo as "Nod Next Door" – they live in apartments on the same floor and she's taken to saying hi to him when she sees him, only to receive a nod in reply. Theo rescues Gio when she overhears something humiliating and all of a sudden he's talking, rather than just nodding and disappearing. Soon they're spending their nights together (innocently) – Theo works and Gio hangs out on his couch. She's determined that she get over Declan once and for all and she might've found the perfect way to do it.

This was sooo much fun! Gio (short for Giovanna), Zoë and Declan all grew up in a rough neighbourhood and although Gio had a loving home life, Zoë and Dec definitely lacked that. Their childhood bond keeps them tight and even though Zoë and Dec aren't the closest of friends these days, she'll still drop everything when he needs her. Gio has been in love with Declan for years and although he doesn't return her feelings, he does use them in order to get her to do things that he wants, to Zoë's chagrin. Gio has never really seen it until her feelings are very hurt when she overhears something at Declan's work party. It makes her see him in a whole new light and she decides that she really does need to move on from this crush. He doesn't have feelings for her and he never will and she's wasting her life pining after him when nothing is ever going to happen. Declan has the best of both worlds – women to date and Gio as permanent back up to step in whenever required so she needs to remove that from the equation.

I absolutely loved Gio and Theo together! I liked their early interactions – Gio is friendly and quite bubbly so she always offers a cheerful greeting whereas Theo is more reserved, nodding politely and moving on. As they spend more and more time together, at night in his apartment, you get a better picture of Theo and what

has made him the man that he is. Gio is the perfect counterpart, baking sugary treats, providing a down to earth presence in a life that has been filled to the brim with drama. Despite Gio's angst over Declan, she's not particularly dramatic and her determination to move on seems to ground her. Weirdly, I never noticed until I began writing this review that Theo and Gio rhyme (I think because in the book he calls her Giovanna all the time). Like their names, they fit together.

I also loved Theo's backstory, a lot of it was really unexpected. He's wealthy, with an important job which was expected but the secrets in his family, his employment history were all really nice surprises, helping to construct his character in multiple layers. Gio's support of him in difficult moments is something he really appreciates and is I think, not used to. Theo's family are truly quite awful selfish people and it's sort of both unbelievable and also incredibly unsurprising that he turned out the way he did. I also really appreciated that the book is told two ways – most of the narrative is first person from Gio's point of view but at the end of each chapter is a brief portion that's third person from Theo's perspective which really helps round out the narratives and give the reader a better insight into his thoughts in the early stages.

Basically I just loved this from start to finish. I found Gio really easy to relate to, her crush on Dec and her resolution to get over it – well, who hasn't been there? I liked Theo, even when he did silly things because I understood why he was doing them and that's important. And did I mention this book talks about food a lot? Gio is a pastry chef (in training kind of) and she bakes lots of things. She shares a lot of them with Theo and this book made me crave rich chocolate cake so much. Definitely going to be looking out for more from this author in the future.

\*\*A copy of this novel was provided by the publisher for the purpose of an honest review

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### **Michelle says**

[Like with Gio running to Dec's side when his dad died, I was worried Theo would take it poorly, but he didn't (apart from it confirming for him that Gio didn't need him anymore), and Gio didn't react badly about Theo leaving for Singapore (like, she was

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### **AusRomToday says**

#280CharacterReview "A shining example of contemporary #romance that shows the intricacies of friendships, romance, & heartbreak. Jessie L Star writes beautifully & perceptively presenting strong characterisation & great story development" #AusRomToday

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### **Jessica says**

It's been a while since I sat down and read a romance novel. I open with that thought because you need to understand why it took me a while to settle in to *Cake At Midnight*. Expecting a fun and food filled romance, I was instantly smitten with Gio and her glowing personality. However as soon as Declan entered the picture, well, let's just kindly say that I didn't get their connection. This book has a lot more drama than I expected and, while that's not necessarily a bad thing, I felt like it took me a while to really get on board with it.

Before anything else though, let me praise Jessie L. Star for creating such a wonderful character in Gio. Her passion for baking, her deep love for her friends (even when they might not quite deserve it), and her endlessly glowing personality all had me smitten. Gio is the type of main character that we'd all love to be friends with. She's the character who you cry for, cheer for, and yell at all in the same ten minute span. In other words, Gio is a human. I loved her for that.

In the same respect, despite my disdain for Declan, all the other characters feel distinctly human as well. They love, they loathe, they make mistakes, and they forgive. It's no surprise that Theo steals center stage once he's introduced. Starting as the stoic "Nod Next Door", and slowly moving towards someone that Gio genuinely feels for, he was definitely someone that I adored. It's always nice to see a relationship on the page that isn't perfect, and takes real time and work to create. While I didn't agree with all of the choices the characters made in this book, I can say that at least I understood them.

My biggest issue with this story was that it felt slightly too long. The drama that unfolded between Theo and his family, and then between Declan and Theo, started to feel a little forced. That and I'm not sure I was entirely satisfied with Gio's growth by the end of the book. She started as a character who was too willing to let her friend walk all over her, and she ended not too far from where she started. I understand happily ever after endings, I just wish Gio had gained a bit more backbone. I know, it's romance. I'm being nitpicky. Still, I admit that would have made me extremely happy.

Overall, this was a sweet and well-written read. If you're looking for a foodie romance, with realistic characters, add *Cake At Midnight* to your reading list.

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### **Jess says**

This was so good! It felt like a slow build for all that it wasn't, and I liked the decency of the characters. Add in a messy friendship situation, and it was my own brand of catnip. Really hope there are follow up books for Zoe and Declan, if only because I want to see how you make Dec an attractive hero.

I like Aussie romances. I wish there was an easy way to find more of them.

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### **Sam (AMNReader) says**

I honestly don't know how to characterize this decent book that was almost good. Almost really good. I almost kind of sort of like it?

It was on the longer side, it seemed, with heavy set-up on a trio of best friends making their way in the world in their mid-20s. One of the friends is in love with another, which leads to all kinds of things. Things that almost made me stop reading. The heroine (Gio) felt weak, the love interest/friend (Dec) abusive, the other friend (Zoe) continually telling her that he didn't deserve her time and efforts and she was right. Zoe was so committed to that, she basically ended her own friendship with Declan. Gio, in effect, is a fallback girl for Declan, and their relationship reads very co-dependent. It clearly messes with her agency and her self-confidence, and we are given many many reasons that this isn't worth it for her. Gio doesn't see this for herself until he insults her so horribly at a party, she hides away, calls a 30 day break to get over him, and I'm confused...I thought it was a friends-to-lovers. And also weak heroine. This book nearly lost me after 20% -

after all that's some pretty hefty groundwork for a...

## NEIGHBOR ROMANCE.

But honestly, this is why this book glimmered. Despite the choppy, awkward start with the annoying MC (Gio) it did set her off on a journey. One with a nicer, steadier guy who didn't need her and take her for granted. Star built their intimacy, tension and relationship quite nicely, but that undercurrent of waiting for the other shoe to drop (i.e. the re-intro of Declan) was irritating. I felt like I couldn't move on from that raincloud of her old, unhealthy friendship. As Gio gains her agency though, and as her relationship with Theo grows, I appreciated the depth to which all the characters seemed to be explored. And in the end, I appreciated the way the friendships were fleshed out. Neither perfect nor healthy, but striving for both. Theo was a steady, quiet, sexy type. He also made mistakes. It was enjoyable to see how much he appreciated Giovanna in the end, and how he worked with and through his own baggage.

So why not quite three stars? Cause doesn't this sound almost great? Well, really, that first 20% were crazy making, the Declan subplot was irritating, the writing at times felt juvenile and wasteful. It just wasn't a tightly knit story-I felt too distracted. So, despite the strong secondary characters and the admirable development and growth for the relationships and friendships and our main characters, I just can't give it more than a 2.47. It just felt a little too all over the place even though sometimes that lent to the strength of the book, it was absolutely the major detractor too.

\*\*BTW, I love the colors on the cover, and that's why I read it. Good times.

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## ☆ BJ's Book Blog ☆Janeane ☆ says

ARC received from S & S Australia for an honest review

Not going to lie, I sat down and ate a muffin at midday as I read *Cake At Midnight*.

This is a beautiful story of love, friendship, and moving on.

Gio, Declan and Zoe - Baker, Brains and Beauty - have that kind of friendship that can get through anything. Well, almost.

I adore Gio, all her quirks just make her all the more adorable. I hurt along with her as she tries to move on from her lifelong crush, Dec.

Ugh, Dec. I am not sure if I am supposed to really, really dislike him most of the book, but I did. He is an ar5e, a complete douche to his friend, and I just couldn't with him.

Enter Theo... oh my! I couldn't help but fall for this guy next door, right along with Gio.

It was great to see her spread her wings and take flight.

I laughed, I hurt, I craved cake. In fact now, as I am writing, I am wanting cake. Can someone go get me some cake?

[image error]



This is only the second book of Ms Star's that I have read, but it definitely won't be the last. The story flowed, there was such wonderful imagery that I could picture myself sitting with our lovelies.

Ms Star has impressed me with both of her I have read to date, and I can't wait to see what she brings us next.

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## **Christi Snow says**

My Review:

Be prepared...this is a long story, and there were times that it was slow reading because of that. But that didn't stop me from falling in love with Gio and Theo. I loved watching their journey to finding the "something" that is missing in each of their lives, but they never even knew it.

Gio has been in love with her best friend for years. But when she overhears him slagging on her at a company party that he invited her to, she's through worshipping him. She gives herself 30 days to get over him.

At that same party, she officially meets Theo...her neighbor who's renowned for just nodding at her instead of speaking to her, but at the party he comes to her rescue to get her out of an uncomfortable situation with Dec. From there they form an unusual friendship...one that forms at midnight when Gio can't sleep. She'll show up at Theo's apartment and reads one of his boring books as he works. This goes on for a while and they begin to form a friendship...one that truly neither one of them ever saw coming.

And as that friendship deepens, they each discover that the other is one of the most underestimated people they know. I loved that!

Gio and Theo are so different, they really work as a couple. He's controlled and restrained. She's messy and refreshingly honest. He's been hurt by pretty much everyone in his life and trusts no one. She is a nurturer and gives her heart to whomever needs it, usually to the detriment of her own well-being.

But within each other, they find the person that completes them. For both of them, they find someone who appreciates their qualities rather taking advantage of them.

There's a lot of story lines going on here...Dec's screwed up life and how that intersects with Gio's inability to stay away from him. Theo's screwed up family and work life where everyone has trampled over him...even though he's darn good at what he does. Gio's friends who are her family, but like family...they don't always treat her the way she should be treated. Then there's the whole complexity of them developing emotions for one another when they agreed that wouldn't happen.

Overall, it was a fantastic read. A tiny bit of lagging in the pacing in the beginning and middle, but the

ending made the journey of reading this book well worth it.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in return for an honest review.

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## **Lauren says**

Jessie L. Star's *Cake at Midnight* gave me all the feels!

Going into this I was expecting to like it. I mean, it's a foodie romance, and seriously, what's not to like about that? However I ended up **LOVING** it. The romance, the characters, the writing, the **CAKE**....everything was top notch. Honestly, if Sarah Dessen wrote contemporary romance instead of YA I think it would look a lot like *Cake at Midnight*.

*Cake at Midnight* introduces Gio, a young pastry chef with a bad case of unrequited love, and Theo, Gio's new neighbor.

I loved Gio from the moment she was introduced. She's sweet, trusting, and vastly hopeful. I admired that she wouldn't give up on people, no matter how tough times got. I also adored Theo. When he was first introduced I didn't truly understand him. I wondered why he was so aloof and mysterious as well as so unwilling to ever fully smile. His need, though, to help Gio in tough times was adorable and sexy! I loved when he went all macho man. I won't say much about his family history and past because I think it's important to experience it first hand, but I will say Theo is just such an incredible guy. He's had a tough past but he always stays resilient and hardworking.

I'll admit that I was worried that Gio's case of unrequited love would get on my nerves. Luckily it didn't. I could 100% understand it, actually, because the type of unrequited love that Gio has (for a long-term friend who has been giving her mixed signals for years) is one I think most readers will find relatable. I know I did! It did frustrate me at times, though, that Gio wasn't always quick to call Declan out for leading her on and in the process treating her like dirt; however, she got better at it as the book went on it so I couldn't be too mad.

Additionally, I loved the romance in *Cake at Midnight*. Gio and Theo's relationships is the epitome of slow-burn. The build-up was fantastic. There was hilarious yet awkward moments (the one where Gio hits her head off of Theo's door is my favorite!), late night hangouts involving cake, and some big and epic romantic gestures. I was swooning the whole way through!

I could honestly go on about *Cake at Midnight* all day, but I'll cut it off here and leave you all with this. *Jessie L. Star's Cake at Midnight* is one of my favorite romances of the year (and possibly of all time!). So if you love romance (and cake and big oh-my-goodness revelations!) as much as I do, this **NEEDS** to be on your TBR! I promise you'll thank me later!

Book Blog\ Twitter\ Bloglovin\ Goodreads

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## **Giedre says**

3.5/5

I really liked the writing and characterisation a lot, and I would have rated *Cake at Midnight* higher... if not the heroine. At times, she made me roll my eyes so hard they almost rolled out of their sockets. However, it wasn't because she was a badly written character. She just rubbed me the wrong way. Other than that, this is a really good contemporary romance. I really liked that it's set in Australia, too.

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## **Lovey Dovey Books says**

Published on Lovey Dovey Books

Not only did this story leave me craving a big helping of chocolate rum cake, but I need more from Jessie L. Star, like yesterday! Set in Australia, *Cake at Midnight* is a foodie romance that centers around a trio of childhood friends and a sweet, budding romance.

Since Gio initiated a kiss with her best friend Dec, their trio has been strained. Zoe doesn't speak to Dec since he started taking advantage of Gio's unrequited crush, and Gio can't help but put his needs first. One night he takes it too far and Gio finally sees the light. She intends to cut him off for 30 days in an effort to get him out of her system. Enter Theo: tall, brooding, and incredibly honorable. Gio's neighbor is quite the opposite of Dec and full of secrets. His character adds layers to the plot that kept me intrigued and unable to stop reading.

Jessie L. Star strikes the perfect balance between quirky romance and foodie romance. The foodie aspect is a part of Gio's character that works along with the plot and there isn't too much foray into the technicalities of baking. Theo's family is outrageously scandalous and adds an interesting air of drama. *Cake at Midnight* is more than I expected it to be. It's a quirky, fun, and humorous read that adds heartbreak as a softening touch. You'll cry tears of sadness and laughter as much as you would from a Kristan Higgins novel!

\*ARC provided in consideration for review\*

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## **Chris C - A Midlife Wife says**

It's an interesting dynamic to have two best friends, especially when one is male and you have a serious crush on him. In this book the author takes on this delicate balance as we explore the life of a group of friends in Australia.

Dealing with heartache and heartbreak can be tough. But at least there's always cake to help commiserate over.

The author leads us through old friendships and crushes in this well told story. With plenty of well-developed characters and interest, it's hard not to get overly attached the story.

The awkward feelings that we tend to have around guys we like is alive and well in this book. Ms Star brought back plenty of memories and feelings I had towards my own crushes at that age. Somethings never change.

But she also deals with the inadequacies we may feel due to our upbringing. That connection we build with

friends who become our family whenever our family is not enough or just not capable of support or any engagement in life. She also shares the other side – the rich side of life and how greed and hate can consume everything.

The author managed to craft a delightful read that brings back your own memories of first loves. With intricate detail and plenty of trials, tribulations, and comfortable sweet romance, the story is a fresh look at friends and family. She then served it up with a bit of the bitter taste of life, but gave us a sweet dessert to help you over the rough spots.

\* copy received for review consideration  
full review - <http://amidlifewife.com/cake-midnight...>

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### **Kaetrin says**

Reviewed for Dear Author. 4.5 stars.

<http://dearauthor.com/book-reviews/ov...>

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