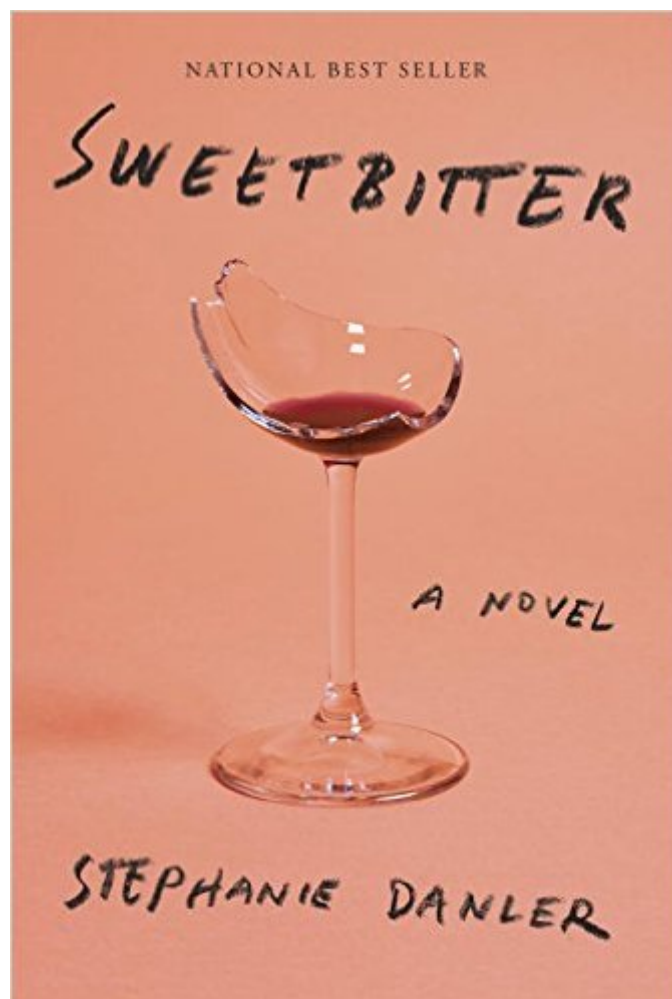


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Sweetbitter: A Novel



Synopsis

INSTANT NATIONAL BESTSELLER * A thrilling novel of the senses and a coming-of-age tale, following a small-town girl into the electrifying world of New York City and the education of a lifetime at one of the most exclusive restaurants in Manhattan. Perfect for readers of Kitchen Confidential and Blood, Bones and Butter. Twenty-two, and knowing no one, Tess leaves home to begin her adult life in New York City. Thus begins a year that is both enchanting and punishing, in a low-level job at the best restaurant in New York City. Grueling hours and a steep culinary learning curve awaken her to the beauty of oysters, the finest Champagnes, the appellations of Burgundy. At the same time, she opens herself to friendships and love set against the backdrop of dive bars and late nights. As her appetites sharpen for food and wine, but also for knowledge, experience, and belonging Tess is drawn into a darkly alluring love triangle that will prove to be her most exhilarating and painful lesson of all. Stephanie Danler deftly conjures the nonstop and purely adrenalized world of the restaurant conversations interrupted, phrases overheard, and suggestions below the surface. Evoking the infinite possibility of being young in New York with heart-stopping accuracy, Sweetbitter is ultimately about the power of what remains after disillusionment, and the wisdom that comes from experience, sweet and bitter.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've been keeping my eyes open for this novel since the hullabaloo surrounding the bidding war for the rights to publish it. Now that I've read it, I confess I'm bemused. Not because I think Stephanie Danler lacks talent -- she is one of those writers with an eye and an ear for the precise turn of

phrase and knack for sometimes (if not always) knowing just when to whip it out and knock the reader back on his/her feet -- but because at its heart, this is a rather banal novel. It's a roman à clef, in which Danler draws on her own experience working in a top-flight Union Square eatery to recount the messy lives of the serving and cooking staff -- the kind of stuff that those of us who might eat there (always referred to politely as "guests", Danler's protagonist, Tess, is instructed on her first day on the job) never see a glimpse of behind the shiny, polished exterior. Very "Kitchen Confidential", only more so. Throw in some "young ingenue comes to NYC and gets tangled up in messy relationships and discovers the city and food" and you've got the gist of it. Danler's writing redeems a lot; when she nails it, she knocks it out of the park. Jake, one of the key players in Tess's increasingly chaotic emotional landscape "hated bars where the bartenders were young. All the bartenders he knew had names like Buddy Buster, or Charlie -- anything you would want to name a loyal dog." Tess spends half a paycheck on a dress for a party, looks in a mirror, and realizes "I was meeting myself decades from now, when I had grown unconquerable." Eating an omelet with chanterelles, she sees "whole peaceful countries built on perfect omelets and white wine spritzers.

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