

Rubi Ramos's Recipe for Success

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Rubi had her future all laid out for her, but being waitlisted by Alma throws those plans in jeopardy. Have you ever had a certain vision for your future that didn't go as planned?
2. Rubi feels the pressure of the expectations and pride her parents have in her accomplishments and her future, deeply. How does she handle this throughout the novel, and how do expectations of each character change throughout the novel?
3. Do you think the book would have turned out differently if Rubi got accepted into Alma initially? Or fully rejected? If her mother had never put the Ban on Baking in place? What do you think would have happened if any of these events had gone differently?
4. Baking and food mean more to Rubi and her father than just a hobby or a job. They are ways of connecting—to themselves and to family. Is there any activity, job, or interest you have in your life that holds a deeper meaning for you, and in what way?
5. The idea of family presents in different ways throughout this novel. How does Rubi's relationship with her mom shape her? Her dad? How do her friends act as a support system when she feels she can't tell her parents about Bake-Off?
6. Rubi and Ryan are both struggling with advocating for their passions. Do you think Rubi or Ryan would have been able to speak openly about what they loved doing without the influence of the other?
7. Look five years in the future. What is Rubi doing now? Did she stick to the plan she had as the book ended? What role is baking playing in her life?
8. Madeline and her sidekicks often direct comments Rubi's way that are meant as microaggressions. How does Rubi handle this? Have you experienced this, and did you handle those experiences similarly or differently?

9. Madame Terese and Johnny Oliver are both surprised by Rubi's baking skills and moved by the emotion she puts into her baking. How is Rubi's experience made different by having judges that react this way, rather than only prioritizing technically perfect bakes time after time, but with no heart or story behind them? How do you feel about how they judged the competition, and do you think story and emotion matter when it comes to baking and cooking?
10. Rubi has a lot of reasons to avoid competing in Bake-Off, but she still chooses to. Have you ever made a choice where, on paper, it was a bad idea, but it ended up having a positive impact on your life?

