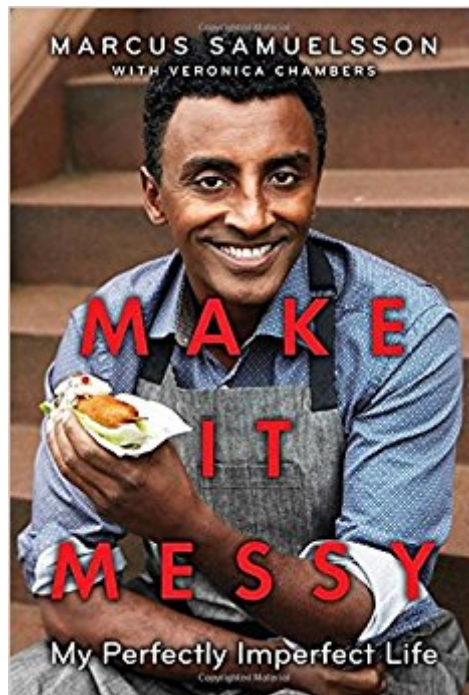




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# Make It Messy: My Perfectly Imperfect Life



## Synopsis

In this inspirational autobiography, world-famous chef and owner of Red Rooster Harlem, Marcus Samuelsson tells his extraordinary story and encourages young people to embrace their mistakes and follow their dreams. Based on his highly praised adult memoir, *Yes, Chef*, this young adult edition includes an 8-page black-and-white family photo insert. Marcus Samuelsson's life and his journey to the top of the food world have been anything but typical. Orphaned in Ethiopia, he was adopted by a loving couple in Sweden, where his new grandmother taught him to cook and inspired in him a lifelong passion for food. In time, that passion would lead him to train and cook in some of the finest, most demanding kitchens in Europe. Samuelsson's talent and ambition eventually led him to fulfill his dream of opening his own restaurant in New York City: Red Rooster Harlem, a highly acclaimed, multicultural dining room, where presidents rub elbows with jazz musicians, aspiring artists, and bus drivers. A place where anyone can feel at home. "Step up to the challenge; don't avoid it. Win or lose, take the shot." Samuelsson neatly serves up inspiration and food for thought. --Kirkus Reviews "The perfect book for teen foodies and a great choice for others, thanks to its . . . compelling story . . . and sound advice." --VOYA "A delightful read. . . Samuelsson effectively connects his love of food to his personal journey." --School Library Journal

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

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Hobbies & Games > Cooking #89 in Books > Teens > Biographies > Cultural Heritage #284 in Books > Children's Books > Children's Cookbooks

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up – Aspiring chefs and fans of the Food Network will appreciate learning about the incredible journey of celebrity chef Samuelsson from this new edition of his autobiography *Yes, Chef* (Random, 2012), adapted for a teen audience. Samuelsson's perfectly imperfect life began in Ethiopia. An orphan whose parents died of tuberculosis, Samuelsson and his sister were adopted by a couple living in Sweden, where they thrived under the warmth and protection of their new parents. The Samuelssons instilled in him a strong work ethic, while his beloved grandmother nurtured his interest in food and cuisine. Devastated by his failure as a soccer player due to his slight weight and stature, Samuelsson instead decided to train as a chef. His incomparable work ethic would help him rise to the highest echelons of European cuisine, while a chance opportunity would elevate him to become the youngest chef ever to receive three stars from the New York Times. This new edition is a delightful read, and Samuelsson effectively connects his love of food to his personal journey. He is a clear and thoughtful storyteller, conveying his frustration about how his race made him an outsider. His refusal to quit amid adversity is admirable. In adjusting his book for teenage readers, however, Samuelsson leaves out many compelling chapters about his life, including the experience of meeting his biological family in Ethiopia and winning the coveted award for the best chef in the United States. VERDICT While this is an enjoyable memoir, libraries would be better served by purchasing *Yes, Chef*. – Maria Alegre, The Dalton School, New York

"'Step up to the challenge; don't avoid it. Win or lose, take the shot.' Samuelsson neatly serves up inspiration and food for thought."--Kirkus Reviews "The perfect book for teen foodies and a great choice for others, thanks to its . . . compelling story . . . and sound advice."--VOYA "A delightful read. . . . Samuelsson effectively connects his love of food to his personal journey."--School Library Journal "Samuelsson asserts . . . that three things have stood him in good stead: he is humble, he works hard, and he loves food. This smoothly written account, coauthored with [Veronica] Chambers, brings the drama of the kitchen to vivid and memorable life."--Booklist

Boring ass book.

Not the most stunning piece of prose I have ever read!

Very nice read. Like the story very much also. Thank you for sharing your story. I really liked it.

It is nice to read about someone who has made a name for themselves.

Kept feeling I had the wrong book because this present book is so like his memoir. Read this one first before the others!

MAKE IT MESSY tells the story of chef Marcus Samuelsson, who was born and orphaned in Ethiopia and adopted by a couple in Sweden. As a child, he knew one thing for sure: he wanted to be a professional soccer player. He practiced with every free hour he had and was accepted into Gothenburg Athletics and Sports Association (GAIS). With soccer, he felt that the subject of race wasn't as prevalent as it was in his school. He loved every second --- until he was kicked out of GAIS. Marcus was too short to continue playing in his prestigious league; he was devastated. Cooking was Marcus's Plan B. He learned to cook from his Swedish grandmother, Helga. Every Saturday, the smell of baking bread and spices captured his imagination as he made dinner with her. At 15, he went to a vocational school called Ester Mosesson and, shortly after, he started interning at restaurants. However, these businesses felt starkly different to him than cooking with his sweet grandmother; they felt more like *The Iron Chef*. Nevertheless, he was a hard worker and quickly started climbing the ranks until he was the executive chef and earned three stars for the restaurant. He now owns his own restaurant in Harlem called the Red Rooster. At 16, I have a lot of big dreams, just like Marcus did. A lot of my friends know exactly what they want to do, and some have no idea. The mere idea of the future scares me a little. What if I fail? What if I'm not good enough? Marcus failed at soccer, and he says that "even now, all these years after GAIS let me go, I sometimes think of myself more as a failed soccer player than an accomplished chef" (p.63). The idea of failing at something that I worked so hard for sounds horrifying --- yet Marcus's Plan B brought him joy and success. MAKE IT MESSY taught me that through hard work, determination and flexibility, I can find my way like Marcus did. If something doesn't work, I can try another door. I must say, throughout the book I was craving good food. I would put the book down and look up how to make meatballs and various jams. Our oven currently doesn't work, so I tried variations on the stove top and tried to use the spices that Marcus suggested. I would have loved if the book included a couple recipes for me to try at home, so I wasn't so lost trying to replicate the tastes from the book. He used ingredients from all over the world, and the tastes and smells practically came off the pages. This is a book for someone questioning their Plan A or even their Plan B. MAKE IT MESSY is for people who love to cook or eat and who love their dreams. Reviewed by Maya B.

An interesting account of Chef Marcus Samuelsson's unlikely rise to "great chefs of the world" fame. His journey was anything but typical. Chef Samuelsson has performed every kitchen job imaginable in his quest to fulfill a lifelong passion for cooking. However, he started out wanting to be a professional soccer player. Follow along as he moves from job to job until he lands a restaurant kitchen of his own. Fun, 8 page photo insert included.

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