



## Alexis and the Perfect Recipe (Cupcake Diaries)

By Coco Simon

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The fourth book in Spotlight's fun and delicious tween series is told from the perspective of Alexis, the most organized member of the Cupcake Club. Alexis likes everything to be exact and logical, but she's finding that when it comes to love, there's no room for logic!

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## Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

In the Cupcake Diaries series, one of the four members of the Cupcake Club narrates each book. Here Alexis, the club's business manager and a bit of a math whiz, turns her first crush into a "mathematically quantifiable experiment" complete with a hypothesis, a goal, and data recorded in a notebook. Meanwhile, her older sister's upcoming sixteenth birthday party sends the club into action, working on their most important order yet. The narrative records the pangs and insecurities of a girl's first crush with precision, though Alexis comes out of the experience with unusual equanimity. An appealing addition. Grades 4-6. -- Carolyn Phelan

### About the Author

Coco Simon always dreamed of opening a cupcake bakery, but she was afraid she would eat all the profits. When she's not daydreaming about cupcakes, Coco edits children's books and has written close to 100 books for children, tweens, and young adults, which is a lot less than the number of cupcakes she's eaten. Cupcake Diaries is the first time Coco has mixed her love of cupcakes with writing.

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Alexis and the Perfect Recipe



## CHAPTER 1

### My Sister Takes the Cake

My name is Alexis Becker, and I'm the business mind (ha-ha) of the Cupcake Club. The club is a for-profit group that my best friends—Mia, Katie, and Emma—and I started, and we make money baking delicious cupcakes!

I love figuring out how to run a business and putting together the different building blocks—math, organization, planning—that's why the girls can count on me for this kind of stuff. Plus, as you can tell, I love math-related puns! My friends are more creative with the cupcakes, so they come up with the designs and other artistic stuff. My one specialty, though, is fondant. I am very good at making little flowers and designs out of that firm frosting. Otherwise, I'm mostly crunching numbers and wondering how to make money. Mmm . . . money!

If the Cupcake Club was an equation, it would look like this:

$$(4 \text{ girls} + \text{supplies}) \times \text{clients} = \text{\$}\text{\$}\text{\$}\text{\$}$$

Or really, more like this:

$$(\text{Profit} - \text{supplies}) / 4 = \text{\$}$$

We actually have lots of fun doing it. Most of our clients are really nice people, which is much more than I can say for our latest client: my sister, Dylan. I can practically still hear her fuming.

“It is my party, I am the one turning sixteen, and I have budgeted everything down to the last party favor. I know exactly what I’m doing!” She was talking to our mom behind closed doors, but I heard every word since I was right outside her bedroom!

Dylan never gets out-of-control mad; she’s always in total control. Except that ever since she’d started planning her sweet sixteen party (which was now four and a half weeks away), she’d been cranky a lot. But she never raises her voice when she gets mad. She lowers it to a whisper, and you can hear the chill in it as if actual icicles were hanging from the words. I had to put my ear to her bedroom door to hear everything that was being said. Knowledge is power; that’s one of my mottoes, and I need all the information I can get. About everything.

My mother was sounding kind of amused by the fight, which was about two things: the guest list for the party and the cake. I had an interest in the outcome of both, since I wanted to be able to invite my best friends, and we wanted to bake the dessert for the party. (It wasn’t about the money as we wouldn’t charge a lot; it’s just that it would be great exposure for our business!)

I could picture Mom trying not to smile and to take Dylan seriously. “Darling, I know how careful you are, and I am impressed, as always, by your work,” she said. “I admire your attention to detail on these spreadsheets. However, not everything will be according to your plan, as your father and I also have a say in what works best for this family. Now let’s take a look at this guest list again.”

I grinned. Mom was on my side.

There were some muffled comments and I strained to hear them. Maybe I’d hear better if I put a glass against the wall like I’d seen people do on TV. Or maybe I should lie down and listen through the crack under the door. I pulled my hair into a ponytail, and then lay on the hall rug outside the door.

“The Taylors! Mom! The whole family? That wasn’t in my head count!” The Ice Princess was losing her cool, but I didn’t focus on that. All I could think of was that Emma’s whole family might come. And that was very interesting.

Emma has three brothers. They’ve always all been in the background of things—rummaging around their mudroom looking for a lost cleat or watching TV in the living room. They’re kind of like furniture. When we talk to them at all, it’s just stuff like “Please pass the ketchup” or “Hey! We were watching that!”

Jake is much younger, so he’s cute but not exactly a pal of mine, and Matt and Sam are older, so we don’t really pay attention to them, and they don’t pay much attention to us.

Until recently, that is.

What changed everything was that I had a little direct contact with Matt. He’s eighteen months older, but only one school year ahead (he’s in eighth grade at Park Street Middle School). Usually I am with Emma when her brothers are around, so I guess I see them from her point of view.

But this time I had to call Matt for help with something for Emma, and it wasn’t until he said “Hello” on the phone that in one strange, sudden moment, everything changed.

So what happened? First off, I am very efficient. When something needs doing, I just do it. When someone needs calling, I just pick up the phone and dial. And that was what I had done, without even thinking about

it.

But Matt's voice sounds much deeper on the phone than it does in person, and when I heard it, it threw me off and I panicked, like, Who is this person I am talking to? and Why did I call him, exactly? I kind of had an out-of-body experience. I suddenly realized I'd called a boy, and I almost dropped the phone!

But thanks to caller ID he already knew who was calling, so I couldn't exactly hang up. Then, just to confuse me further, in the course of our (very brief) conversation, Matt told me how worried he'd been about Emma, and that he felt bad for some things she was going through at the time.

I was shocked!

I didn't think boys worried about anyone! And feeling bad for someone? That is just unheard of! Suddenly Matt seemed like . . . a real person. With feelings! In the end, it was I who rushed us off the phone. I suddenly got really, really nervous and couldn't believe I'd had the guts to call Matt in the first place. You know in the old cartoons when the coyote runs off a cliff and his feet are still spinning, but he's in midair and he only falls when he realizes it? That's what happened to me.

And now, when I heard Dylan talking about the Taylors, all I could think of was Matt. And that gave me a funny feeling, like fish were swimming in my stomach.

I hope he comes to Dylan's party, I thought. Or maybe I don't. Ugh! I don't know what I want!

Suddenly the door flew open, and Dylan shrieked when she saw me lying on the floor. I blinked as the bright light from her room hit me.

"I hate this family!" Dylan wailed, stepping over me. She stomped down the hall to the bathroom and shut the door as hard as possible without actually slamming it.

"Alexis, honey, what are you doing there?" my mother asked in her "patient" voice.

I rolled up on one side and propped my head on my fist. "Just interested in the outcome of everything," I replied.

My mother smiled at me and shook her head.

"What?" I said in my most innocent voice. "I just want to make sure that we get the job."

"You'll get the job, all right, but these better turn out to be the prettiest and tastiest cupcakes you've ever baked," Mom said. She's pretty tough. She's not a CPA and a CFO for nothing.

"Mom, please. We run a very professional outfit."

Dylan came stomping out of the bathroom and glared at my mother. "This is the person you'd like to entrust my dessert to? This . . . worm, lying on the floor like a two-year-old?"

"That's enough, Dylan. Don't speak like that about your sister," Mom warned. (She went to parent training when we were little, and she has all these certain voices and techniques she uses on us.)

“Yeah,” I added. “I’m not two. Or a worm!”

Dylan drew back her leg like she was going to kick me, and I rolled away and sprang to my feet.

“Girls! Counting to three!” Mom yelled.

Dylan shook her head in disgust and stormed into her room, where she collapsed dramatically onto her bed. “The Cake Specialist said they’d even give me a discount,” she muttered. “I would be the first discount they’ve ever given. They said I drive a hard bargain.”

Mom patted Dylan. “I would expect nothing less, darling. But we need to support a business that is in our family. And I know the Cupcake Club will do a wonderful job for you.”

“Wonderful!” I repeated, raising my arms in victory.

“Argh!” cried Dylan as she pulled a pillow over her head. “Just leave me alone!” After a moment she added, “And just make sure whatever you Cupcakery propose is in my party’s color scheme of—”

My mother and I answered together, “We know, we know, black and gold!”

I put up my hand and my mother gave me a stiff-handed, silent high five. (She’s not the high-fiving type).

“I saw that!” accused Dylan from under her pillow.

My mother and I exchanged a guilty smile.

“They’d better be the best black-and-gold cupcakes you’ve ever made!” said Dylan. “Or else!”

I rolled my eyes, and we left Dylan to her moping.

“Thanks, Mom,” I whispered once we were out in the hall with Dylan’s door safely closed.

“You’re welcome, dear,” she whispered back. “But you owe me some pretty spectacular cupcakes!”

“Black-and-gold ones! Coming right up!” I said, and we laughed.

We started down the hall. I did a little cha-cha-cha step. I’m obsessed with all the TV dancing shows and like to practice dance moves whenever I can. Music and dance is kind of mathematical, which is why I love it. There’s a logical and organized pattern to everything—the chords, notes, and dance steps.

“Is Dylan really mad, do you think?” I asked. All joking aside, I did not want Dylan as my enemy. She is my only sibling, and we are usually pretty good friends.

My mother thought for a moment. “She is getting everything she wants. The place, the music, the food, the date, the decor, the favors. Everything. Now, she is contributing quite a lot of her own money to it, so she does get her say. But I think she can accommodate me on a few extra faces and a special dessert.”

“Sounds fair to me,” I agreed, and I went to e-mail the Cupcakery with the good news. All we needed was a great idea, one that would keep Dylan from killing me. Oh yeah, and it had to be black and gold!

I just wished I could e-mail them about Matt Taylor being invited to the party. But what would I say?

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Charles Greiner:**

As people who live in the modest era should be revise about what going on or data even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era that is certainly always change and advance. Some of you maybe may update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to you is you don't know what type you should start with. This Alexis and the Perfect Recipe (Cupcake Diaries) is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, since this book serves what you want and need in this era.

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#### **Candice Foushee:**

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#### **Glenn Connelly:**

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