

= Kitchen Princess =

Kitchen Princess (Japanese : ????????? , Hepburn : Kicchin no Ohime @-@ sama) is a sh?jo (targeted towards girls) cooking , romance manga series , featuring full professional recipes for every dish at the end of each chapter , written by Miyuki Kobayashi and illustrated by Natsumi Ando . Appearing as a serial in the manga magazine Nakayoshi from the September 2004 issue to the October 2008 issue , the forty @-@ seven chapters were compiled into ten bound volumes by Kodansha , and published from February 2005 to November 2008 . The series marked the first time that Ando illustrated a manga that was not also written by her . Set in modern @-@ day Japan , Kitchen Princess follows Najika Kazami , a cheerful thirteen @-@ year @-@ old who searches for her " flan prince , " a boy who rescued her from drowning as a young girl and brought a little happiness to her life after her parents ' death . In March 2008 , Kodansha published a related light novel , Kitchen Princess : Search for the Angel Cake , written by Kobayashi and illustrated by Ando .

In 2006 , Del Rey Manga licensed the series for an English @-@ language translation in North America . It published the ten volumes from January 2007 to July 2009 . Following Kodansha 's decision to publish in North America through an imprint , Kodansha Comics USA released a four @-@ volume omnibus edition from June 2012 to June 2013 . The series has been well received by English @-@ language readers , with the appearance of three volumes and one omnibus on various bestseller lists and the series appearing twice on ICv2 's annual list of the top twenty @-@ five manga properties . Critical reception ranged from positive to lukewarm , and the series won the 2006 Kodansha Manga Award for children 's manga .

= = Plot = =

Set in modern @-@ day Japan , the plot centers on Najika Kazami (?? ??? , Kazami Najika) , a cheerful thirteen @-@ year @-@ old with an excellent sense of taste who hopes to become a chef . In her backstory , it is revealed that a mysterious boy rescued her from drowning in Hokkaido as a young , recently orphaned girl and gave her flan to cheer her up . Before he left , she promised to make him the best @-@ tasting dessert in the world . Now on a journey to find her " flan prince , " as she calls him , Najika attends Seika Academy in Tokyo , after she learned that the silver spoon her flan prince left her is unique to the school . There she befriends Sora Kitazawa (?? ? , Kitazawa Sora) , the substitute director of the academy , and his younger brother Daichi Kitazawa (?? ?? , Kitazawa Daichi) . Although teen model Akane Kishida (?? ? , Kishida Akane) initially dislikes her , they eventually become friends after Najika heals her eating disorder by making her her grandmother 's recipe . Najika periodically competes in cooking competitions , both formal and informal , while working at the diner run by the skilled , yet lazy chef Fujita (???) .

Najika falls in love with Sora , after he tells her that he is her flan prince . However , he soon dies after being struck by a truck while on a journey to deliver some ingredients to Najika , and , in his final moments , admits that he lied about being her flan prince , having fallen in love with her . She loses her sense of taste out of sorrow , although she quickly recovers it . After Sora 's death , Daichi is unable to bring himself to act on his love for her , though he gives in to his father 's demands to protect Najika from being kicked out of the school and becomes the student body president to replace Sora . Wealthy and conceited junior pastry chef Seiya Mizuno (?? ?? , Mizuno Seiya) also begins to attend the school , where he clashes with Najika , whom he had watched bake as a young girl at the orphanage . Seiya eventually falls in love with her , and tries to romantically pursue her , although he gives up when he realizes that she loves Daichi . After Daichi recovers a repressed memory of his mother 's death during a family trip to Hokkaido ? which Sora attempted to protect him from by lying about being Najika 's flan prince ? he remembers that he is actually her flan prince , having given her a flan made by Seiya , and accepts her feelings for him . Joyful , she fulfills her promise to him by making him a cr?me br?l?e .

= = Development = =

The writer of Kitchen Princess , Miyuki Kobayashi , is a novelist published under Kodansha 's X Bunko Teen Heart label . When deciding on a story , she first creates the names , then the plot : Najika 's name ? meaning " seven " , " rainbow " and " fragrance " ? was designed to be " ethnically ambiguous " and carry a sense of nature , while Daichi and Sora 's names , meaning " earth " and " sky " respectively , were meant " to match hers " . Akane 's name , which means " deep red , " was intended to evoke the evening sun for the reader . Kitchen Princess marked the first time that manga artist Natsumi Ando illustrated a manga that was not also written by her . Despite this , she did make some changes to the original script ; she suggested to Kobayashi that Hagio , the head of the orphanage , be an elderly woman and Fujita , initially an elderly woman , a " rugged man " . Ando made it a personal rule to have each of the splash pages contain an illustration of food .

= = Media = =

= = = Manga = = =

Written by Miyuki Kobayashi and illustrated by Natsumi Ando , the forty @-@ seven chapters appeared as a serial in the sh?jo (targeted towards girls) manga magazine Nakayoshi from the September 2004 issue to the October 2008 issue . Kodansha collected the chapters into ten bound volumes , and published them from February 4 , 2005 , to November 6 , 2008 .

At the 2006 Comic @-@ Con , Del Rey Manga announced that it had licensed Kitchen Princess for an English @-@ language translation in North America . Del Rey published the volumes from January 30 , 2007 , to July 7 , 2009 . Following Kodansha 's decision to publish its titles in North America through an imprint , including those formerly licensed to Del Rey Manga , Kodansha Comics USA later published a four @-@ volume omnibus edition of Kitchen Princess from June 5 , 2012 , to June 18 , 2013 . Digital editions of the series have also been published by Kodansha in the United Kingdom . The series has also been licensed in Hong Kong , Korea , Thailand , and Taiwan .

= = = Light novel = = =

On March 19 , 2008 , Kodansha published a light novel written by Kobayashi and illustrated by Ando , Kitchen Princess : Search for the Angel Cake (?????? ?? ?????????? ?????????? ? , Nakayoshi Bunko Sh?setsu Kitchin no Ohime @-@ sama Tenshi no K?ki o Sagase !) . Comprising four story arcs named after the seasons , the novel follows Najika 's quest to duplicate a recipe for white cake for a classmate 's grandmother . Del Rey published an English @-@ language translation on November 10 , 2009 .

= = Reception = =

Kitchen Princess was well received by English @-@ language readers , with three original volumes and one omnibus volume placing on either BookScan 's list of the top twenty bestselling graphic novels , or The New York Times manga bestseller list . The sixth volume placed eighteenth on BookScan 's list for May 2008 . The seventh volume appeared at the fifteenth spot for BookScan 's list for August 2008 . In 2009 , the tenth volume debuted at the seventh place on The New York Times manga bestseller list for the week of July 5 to 11 ; during the following week , it dropped to the eighth place and remained there for another week . In 2012 , the second volume of the omnibus edition appeared at the ninth place for the week of October 14 ? 20 . The series placed nineteenth on ICv2 's top twenty @-@ five manga properties for 2008 , dropping to the twentieth spot a year later . The series also placed seventh on ICv2 's list of the top ten sh?jo properties for 2009 , and appeared at the eighth spot of the ten bestselling sh?jo series for the first quarter of 2010 .

Kitchen Princess won the Kodansha Manga Award for children 's manga in 2006 . The series has

received a range of reviews , from positive to lukewarm . Publishers Weekly enjoyed that Najika was not given a magical power and had to keep improving her cooking skills . Although the reviewer for School Library Journal described the series as " a perfectly ordinary romance manga , " he praised Nunzio Defilippis and Christina Weir 's adaptation of the manga . Deb Aoki of About.com listed the manga as one of the best sh?jo series . Jason Thompson rated the series 3 @.@ 5 out of 4 stars , describing it as " [a] quick , delightful read . " Another reviewer for Publishers Weekly , Johanna Draper Carlsen , wrote that she found the manga reminiscent of the romantic comedy film *Simply Irresistible* (1999) and that the manga contained conventional sh?jo aspects . In a later review of the second volume , she described the series as " entertaining enough , but it ? s fluffy and forgettable (like so many of the mousse items and drinks Najika makes) . The volumes already feel familiar , even as I ? m reading them for the first time . " Mania Entertainment 's Sakura Eries expressed her lukewarm feelings towards the first volume , writing that the reader 's suspension of disbelief was vital to enjoying the manga . She disliked the two @-@ dimensional characterization and Ando 's illustrations of the characters , although she felt that the food was well @-@ drawn . Comparing the series to others in the cooking genre , she wrote that it differed in that " cooking is Najika 's expression of self and her means of creating relationships and drawing others to common ground (like the estranged Kitazawa Brothers) . " In follow @-@ up reviews of the second and third volumes , she remained lukewarm to the series ; she praised Kobayashi 's portrayal of Akane 's eating disorder , though she disliked how Najika 's quest to find her flan prince seemed to become more of a side @-@ plot . Carlo Santos of Anime News Network praised Najika as a likeable protagonist and the characterizations as believable . He enjoyed the plot and recipes , although he wrote that the character designs lacked creativity , and criticized the plot clichés and the antagonists ' weak characterization . He had mixed feelings about the fourth volume 's emphasis on conventional sh?jo romance and plot twists at the cost of its cooking aspect . He found the artwork conventional , though able to convey emotion . He wrote that the fifth volume finally balanced the romance and cooking elements , although he disliked the inclusion of a side story , preferring another chapter instead . In his review of the seventh volume , he concluded : " this series takes the hoariest elements of the romance / drama / cooking genres and still manages to come up with something greater than the sum of its parts . "

Reviews of the light novel varied . Draper Carlsen wrote that the characters and premise lacked the strength to make the novel compelling , though she felt that the response of others may differ . Grading the novel a B , Eries wrote that the novel would appeal to fans of the manga , although she found the story arcs varying in quality and content , from junior @-@ high school romance to philosophy on death .