



Banana Heart Summer

Merlinda Bobis

Download now

Read Online ➔

Banana Heart Summer

Merlinda Bobis

Banana Heart Summer Merlinda Bobis

In her lush, luminous debut novel, Merlinda Bobis creates a dazzling feast for all the senses. Richly imagined, gloriously written, **Banana Heart Summer** is an incandescent tale of food, family, and longing—at once a love letter to mothers and daughters and a lively celebration of friendship and community.

Twelve-year-old Nenita is hungry for everything: food, love, life. Growing up with five sisters and brothers, she searches for happiness in the magical smell of the deep-frying bananas of Nana Dora, who first tells Nenita the myth of the banana heart; in the tantalizing scent of Manolito, the heartthrob of Nenita and her friends; in the pungent aromas of the dishes she prepares for the most beautiful woman on Remedios Street. To Nenita, food is synonymous with love—the love she yearns to receive from her disappointed mother. But in this summer of broken hearts, new friendships, secrets, and discoveries, change will be as sudden and explosive as the monsoon that marks the end of the sweltering heat—and transforms Nenita's young life in ways she could never imagine.

Banana Heart Summer Details

Date : Published May 20th 2008 by Delta (first published 2005)

ISBN : 9780385341127

Author : Merlinda Bobis

Format : Paperback 272 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Coming Of Age, Fiction

 [Download Banana Heart Summer ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Banana Heart Summer ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Banana Heart Summer Merlinda Bobis

From Reader Review Banana Heart Summer for online ebook

Kwesi ??? says

While reading this book, you'll remember everything what your mother told you when you were young. Her old classic stories and the tragedies that she embark growing with her own family. My mother lived in a barriotic place of Mindanao, somewhere were gadgets and even electricity were never a hindrance to their living. She always talks about her siblings and the days that they enjoyed in there small kitchen cooking, chatting and revealing secrets like the old tale of *The Red Tent*.

She talks mostly about food, they are the family of best chef. From local delicacies to there own invented recipes, to the sweetest or the most bitter dish they ever made. I must be envy of her past and her siblings but all I can do for now is to concentrate and read the story of Merlinda Bobis while she travels her own character to Bicol, where two Gods meet face-to-face with the powerful power of food and passion from her book *Banana Heart Summer*.

After reading this book, I must be dreaming eating *Atchara*, a Philippines condiment cooked from pickled papaya and usually served as a side dish. Every time Inday fried or grilled a fish, chicken or a pork, she always served pickled papaya to increase our appetite. Cooking a delicious papaya pickled a person must have the power to supply the joy and sadness of the local delicacy, from chopping, boiling up to preparing the pickled papaya to be exiled in a sealed container.

Like the life of **Nenita**, a 12 year old girl who quit school to sustain the needs of her family. She ventured to the one way street of there town looking for job and met people whom she enjoyed and loved until their last breath. She enjoyed cooking like the other girls, she enjoyed every movement, every gesture and every meaning of every sound she heard. From the bubbling hot oil that she experienced and heard the sound of joy.

She must be parallel to *atchara*, from the day she was born and prepared for the development of her life, the vegetables and the fruits that nurture her and the vinegar who gives sourness. Slicing every ingredients to be prepared, slicing native onion is like sadness, sadness that will never be forgotten from the first touch to the last little piece of large sliced onions. Squeezing the sap of ginger and the papaya, makes you suffer of body pain from working day and night. The smell of the boiling solution of salt, vinegar and ginger sap makes you dizzy and fall from every trap that appears at your side and lastly, the mixing of fresh ingredients like fresh memories and the sourness of the vinegar solution creating a balance taste of a perfect side dish, *atchara*. A Filipino delicacy that will be never forget by the person who first sinned by the apple.

This book was like a straight line, no humps, no curves not even a small dirt of pen can bent. While reading this book, I must confess that the book was lack of what we call climax and rising action. I can't feel my body get excited reading every prose she wrote but my salivary gland nonstop from producing sticky mucus. Mentioning hundreds of local delicacies makes my tongue jump and lick every pages of the book, I may be crying remembering my mother, how sweet and bitter a life can be.

Before you start reading her novel I must invite you guys to enter her *Fruit Stall*, a short story she wrote for Filipino especially the beautiful body of the papayas, who work abroad and lost counts of there dignity and wishing a better future. A story of an OFW who sold by her father to a foreigner and become a prostitute to send small little grapes to her family. A shameful Filipina, lost her own dignity and name.

[image error]

I must confess that I love eating my mother's cooked food especially adobo or pork soaked in soy sauce.

OMG! I want to eat adobo tonight and the atchara I made yesterday with my friends. We must be proud of our own food!

Rating - *Banana Heart Summer* by Merlinda Bobis, **4 Sweets** and the passion of cooking. (A *merienda* must serve and a cool iced tea to enjoyed reading this book, don't forget to ask for *atchara*. Next time if you want to have a food trip here in the Philippines you must order *pork adobo*, a not-to-be-miss here in the island of Philippines! Complimentary copy from Anvil and special thanks to **Fanta** and **Gege** of *Flips Flipping Pages* .)

Challenges:

Book #20 for 2011

Amanda says

This was a bittersweet coming of age story about a poor girl in the Philippines. Born out of the union of a wealthy mom disowned by her family and a dad who was a mere mason, her life at home with five other siblings meant that there was not often much to eat. The story chronicles life on their little street, with vignettes about their neighbors and their happenings.

The book is also centered around the theme of food, and its effect on the body and spirit, how there is never enough, etc. At times the writing style didn't work well and I was left confused - felt as if I was missing something.

I really grew to like the characters, especially Manolito Ching and Miss VV, in contrast to the main character. It showed that even if you have enough to eat and it seems like the world is on your side, everybody has their own personal demons that they have to face.

Not the best book, but a quick read that I don't regret.

Heather says

This was a wonderful little book. It's a coming of age story set in a tiny, impoverished villiage in the Philippines. The main character is a 12-year-old girl. She's the oldest of four children. The author does a great job of weaving local folk tales (especially those regarding food) into the story, which gives it an almost mythical air. But at its core, it's a story about a daughter's quest for her mother's love. Beautifully written!

Michelle says

I'm not going to give a description of this book because I think the description given by GoodReads fits this book to a T. The novel was just that -- lush and descriptive. In fact, I could smell the food Nenita was cooking just as well as I could visualize the scenerios in Nenita's life.

I will discuss the comparison made between this book and *The House on Mango Street*. I saw that they were compared, so I read *Mango Street* first and *Banana Heart* second. I enjoyed both of the books. They were both well written, poetic coming of age stories. The greatest similarity was that the setting in each novel took place on a street; Esperanza told her story from Mango Street while Nenita told hers from Remedios Street. How perfect and true to life -- when you're young everything of importance happens in your neighborhood, on your block, on your street.

Now, for me, the difference between these two books was the writing. Cisneros's writing in *Mango Street* remained poetic yet very straight forward, but lacked somewhat in plot as it was written in vignettes and not as a whole. Bobis' novel seemed to focus more on the multi-sensory descriptions before the plot, yet the plot was continuous. Because the writing styles were so different, I can't really say one was better than the other. I think they're both worth a read and I'm happy that I became acquainted with each of them.

Isa Oraa says

this book makes me realize how hard your life would be if you don't have someone to lean on, having family or a true friend. They are the reason why you do that, do these things. Just like you wake up for them. I felt pity for her for the hurt and pain she had, physically or emotionally, at the same time, I'm proud because she has that good trait that a girl/sister/daughter like her should possess. Being patient, hard-working, loving and caring. She'd do everything for her love ones' Moreover, the Filipino cuisines.. I have tasted some .. Absolutely delicious. ! Not hard for me to imagine . haha!

Now I hope that I will be able to answer all the questions in my Popular literature midterm examination regarding this novel. :)

Yayeyyy! Banana <3 Summer

K.D. Absolutely says

Merlinda Carullo Bobis (born 1959) is a Filipino-Australian poet and novelist. She was born in Legaspi, Albay, studied in the University of Santo Tomas and the University of Wollongong and now lives in Australia. She is now a professor at Wollongong University teaching dance and visual art. This book, *Banana Heart Summer* won her the Gintong Aklat Award (Golden Book Award, Philippines) in 2006.

What I liked about this book is Bobis' poetic prose that reminds me of Isabel Allende. The poetry in her storytelling makes the reading enjoyable if not mesmerizing. The lyrical prose blends well with her colorful setting (Manila in the 60's) and sumptuous recipes (Filipino dishes described in mouth-watering details). However, the story is supposed to be narrated by a twelve-year old girl, **Nenita**. So I was confused at times who was narrating: the 12-year old character or the 47 year old Bobis? If it were the 12-y/o girl, the narration should have been replete of the witty lines, mature eroticism and with matching expansive vocabulary. Rather, it should have been funnier and probably innocent the same as the protagonist in Bebang Siy's *It's a Mens World* (3 stars) or Cyan Abad-Juico's *Salingkit: a 1986 Diary* (3 stars).

Was that area in Remedios Circle (Ermita) in the 60's as laid back as how Bobis depicted it in this book? I am younger by 5 years than her and was also born here in Manila. I could not remember if we had enough vacant lots in my part of the city. Vacant lots that would have made having trees bearing fruits a bigger possibility. Fruit trees that could have been climbed by children to pick fruits. In the 60's, all I could

remember are malls, too many people, warm weather, pollution, houseflies floating in the air especially during early morning. Bobis might have just assumed that the growing up years she had in Legaspi would have been the same as if she was raised in that area along Remedios Circle in Manila. Too much romanticism just to make the story more appealing to the senses. There is nothing wrong with using one's imagination to exaggerate the beauty of the surroundings as reading is more often than not, a way to escape the drudgery of our routine lives. However, having some semblance to the true milieu is of course not really too much to ask for especially if you want to imagine how some places looked like many years ago.

But the food! I was salivating while reading those descriptions. Don't read this book if you are on a diet. Glorious food! Nothing beats Filipino dishes. They say that we always prefer the food that we grew up with and that the best cook ever is always our own mother (or maid). These are all so true in my case. Sorry, wife but even after being married for 20 years, I still miss my mother's cooking.

Librocubicularist says

I only read this book because it was our requirement. I really find it boring at first but as I'm reading it and nearly coming to last part I started to like it and realized that it was just more than a normal story that we can predict the ending. This novel taught me a lot of things in life. I learned how to appreciate and give importance about everything that you have.

Alicia says

I was first attracted to this book because of my ridiculous love for Pinoy food, and was delighted with the array of foods selected as the muse for each chapter. The book follows the life of a young girl struggling to support her 6 younger siblings as both her mother and father struggle to support their still growing family, as well as the constant ek-ek (drama) of the rest of the villagers. As much as I appreciated the lush descriptions of some of my favorite foods, I often got lost in the analogies and felt the storyline just dragged along. Not a complete waste of time, but certainly wouldn't be at the top of my list to recommend to friends.

Laila says

I liked the setting and the description of food, not much else.

Jay Salvosa says

What can I say? I'm a sucker for stories about food. Every chapter features a local dish (with a phrase or two describing its preparation).

If you hunger for a story about Bikol, the region's culture, and -- of course -- her pantheon of gustatory offerings, this book will surely satiate such cravings.

Merlinda Bobis, I am a instant fan. Your prose is smothered with bittersweet metaphors.

Barbara says

I'm about halfway through this book, and so far it's such an interesting story. Nining, the protagonist/heroine is really a very sweet girl. The story is told from her point of view, in retrospect; that is, her older self is retelling the story, and this would account for the kind of language that I am pretty sure a poor, 12 year old girl in the Philippines with a middle school education would not use.

Merlinda Bobis's language is very poetic, and I think this is appropriate, as I knew of her as a poet before she published books of prose. As well, I think Nining's older self, who is 20 years older and living abroad, recalls her childhood with an almost predictable nostalgia for the homeland she's left.

The neighborhood in which she grow up is very self-contained, with its regular fisherman selling his catch, the tindahans, the poor families' little homes squished in between the wealthy families' larger homes. The neighborhood is also well-contained metaphorically, with the large imposing Catholic church at one end, and the volcano at the opposite end; the people have lived and continue to live squished in between the colonizer's God and their native deity.

The narrative of Nining's life is, again, well-contained within the book's structure of a recipe or particular food item per chapter title. So Bobis provides us with all of these neat containers, and I don't really have a complaint about this. It's neat, and it's meticulous. My only complaint so far is that there must be a way to write food preparation in the narrative without sounding like the instructional portion of the recipe. As it stands, these instructions are inconsistent with the lush, vivid, beautiful, mostly childlike descriptions of the land, the people, the food, the human interactions.

The last thing I will say for now is that this book is about the girl's hunger. There is the physical hunger as she is the eldest daughter of a very, very poor and large family. As the eldest daughter, there is also the hunger to help support the family as her ineffectual and emasculated father cannot do so. Then there is Nining's hunger to win her mother's love, her mother being this rage-filled woman, who curses her fate for having been disowned by her wealthy family for getting knocked up by the poor stonemason, and who views and treats Nining as the manifestation of this fate.

[Additional thoughts upon finishing the book are here: <http://bjanepr.wordpress.com/>]

Talya says

The book uses food as an introduction to each chapter, along with mouthwatering descriptions of the dishes. The protagonist, Nenita (which means "little girl" in Spanish) lives in a poor barrio in the Philippines in the 1960's. She is the oldest of five and decides to drop out of school at 12 to work as a maid for a wealthy woman. Nana Dora, the local cook, who teaches Nenita how to cook also tells her the legend of the Banana Heart, where if someone eats it, they will never be hungry. She starves for her mother's love and often uses food to get a connection with her family. Nenita's coming of age happens during one dramatic summer where she finds her own banana heart.

I loved this novel. Merlinda Bobis is a poet and you can tell that with her gift of language. I couldn't find any information that the book was translated and think it is amazing that people can write beautifully in a

language that is not their native tongue. I loved all the Filipino used in the novel, I am not sure if it was Tagalog because I don't recognize, but I could figure out what was said through the context and the bit of Spanish that is used in the Filipino languages. I can't wait to be able to eat real food again so I can try some of these dishes, in small quantities of course.

Steph says

I read this in order to fulfill a reading challenge for the year. I really did not care for it. At first, I thought the food descriptions were okay, but they got old really fast. I understand that the author wanted to give the reader a vivid description, but it was really annoying, especially when she paused in the middle of a thought just to describe what the person was eating and how it may have been cooked.

I didn't care for the story itself. Although in all fairness, this may have been due to the many unnecessary food distractions mentioned above. The novel is about Nenita, her useless parents, and her entire neighborhood in general. I felt that some characters were introduced simply to give you a glimpse of a story that would never evolve. I thought many of the conflicts were resolved too rushed and left me feeling unsatisfied.

If I wanted to read a novel about food, I would pick this one up, otherwise no. 2.5/5

Salve says

This book evoked so many memories, but I'm not sure if the memories were all my own. Some of them may have been fragments from other people's stories. That many of the chapters' names had to do with food inspired recollections of a different sort, most of them comforting. All in all, it was a good read for the past few days that have been cold and rainy.

Grey says

The book's language is lush and descriptive. That's about all it has going for it. I wanted to read it because it had been compared to Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, one of my favorite books. I can see vaguely the reason behind the comparison, but Merlinda Bobis is no Sandra Cisneros.

Reason for the one star? It's boring! I made a pact with myself that if it didn't get better by the beginning of Part Two, I would give it up. Once I got to that point, I couldn't will myself to keep going. Life is too short and there are too many other books out in the world to enjoy.
