

# A PLACE AT THE TABLE

*A Novel*

By Susan Rebecca White

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Taking a bold leap of the imagination, Susan Rebecca White narrates this book from three points of view: Alice Stone, a famous African-American chef whose past is a mystery to those who know her; Bobby Banks, a gay southern man looking for acceptance in New York City; and Amelia Brighton, a newly-divorced Connecticut woman whose life will be upended by a family secret. Sweeping from North Carolina in the 1920s through New York's mid-century cafe society and the devastating AIDS epidemic of the 1980s to the mansions of Old Greenwich Connecticut, *A PLACE AT THE TABLE* connects these characters to each other as they come together in the understanding that when you embrace the thing that makes you different, you become whole.

While *A PLACE AT THE TABLE* is a work of fiction, White's imagination was sparked after reading about Edna Lewis, the legendary African-American chef and author of the classic *A TASTE OF COUNTRY COOKING*. Further research led White to New York's real-life Cafe Nicholson, the Sutton Place salon Edna Lewis opened with Johnny Nicholson in 1949. During those glorious post-war years, Cafe Nicholson was the epicenter of Manhattan's culinary and literary elite and a favorite haunt of luminaries such as Truman Capote, William Faulkner, Marlon Brando, Gloria Vanderbilt, and Tennessee Williams. Lewis left her indelible mark on the cafe's culture and cuisine. Is it any wonder that she would continue to lead a fascinating life that defied convention, include her late-life friendship with chef Scott Peacock, a young, gay, white southern man? Scott and Edna's connection, spanning age, race, and sexual orientation, inspired White in her creation of the friendship between two of the main characters in *A PLACE AT THE TABLE*, Alice Stone and Bobby Banks.

## PRAISE FOR THE BOOK



“No writer should be able to write smoothly and cleanly from three very different perspectives about lost love, betrayal, pound cake, fear, family ties, racism, Baptists, ‘the other,’ Episcopalians, the South, and New York. But Susan Rebecca White has—and **without a false note or a single sentimental pink bow**. All this in **her new and best novel yet**. The story will bring you face-to-face with all sorts of demons and lovely things—and with some very real people whom you just may recognize as family.” – Clyde Edgerton, author of *The Night Train*

“A story of outsiders in this world, **this fantastic book defies convention in plot, characterization, and even narrative structure, to forge something amazing in its pages: new identities, relationships you have not seen before, new stories, characters you will never forget**. Like a brilliant new recipe: it works! Savor this confident storytelling—you’ll know you’re in good hands from the first page. A book you’ll devour quickly and then want to share with friends!” – Lydia Netzer, author of *Shine Shine Shine*

“Susan Rebecca White is a **first-rate talent whose work is like good bread: it rises, and it leaves us filled**. *A Place at the Table* is a love story written for expats and orphans, for all those who seek home and find it in the most beautiful, the most unlikely place. This is a **glorious novel, told in a pitch-perfect voice**. I love this book.” – Joshilyn Jackson, author of *A Grown-Up Kind of Pretty*

**A PLACE AT THE TABLE (Touchstone / Simon & Schuster; June 4, 2013; 978-1-4516-0887-8; \$25.00)**

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# Susan Rebecca White Biography

## *Short Version (found in books)*

Susan Rebecca White is the author of the critically acclaimed novels *A Place at the Table*, *A Soft Place to Land*, and *Bound South*. She has taught creative writing at Hollins University, the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), and Emory University. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

## *Long Version (found on website)*

Born and raised in Atlanta, Susan Rebecca White earned a BA in English from Brown University, then moved to San Francisco, where she taught and waited tables for several years, before moving to Virginia to earn her MFA in creative writing from Hollins University. At Hollins, she was a teaching fellow and the recipient of the James Purdy prize for outstanding fiction.



Susan's debut novel, *Bound South*, received wide critical acclaim and was shortlisted for the Townsend Prize. *Bound South* was followed by *A Soft Place to Land*, also critically acclaimed and a Target "Club Pick." Susan's third novel, *A Place at the Table*, is receiving early praise and is on the American Booksellers Association "Indie Next List" for June of 2013. The Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance (SIBA) selected *A Place at the Table* as a 2013 Summer "Okra Pick."

Susan has been invited to festivals and book events around the country and has spoken at numerous academic and cultural institutions, including SCAD Atlanta, the Carter Center, the Margaret Mitchell house, and Birmingham's Hoover library. Susan appeared in the February 2011 issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine, in a photograph and accompanying essay celebrating women authors living in Atlanta. In summer of 2011, Susan lived in Manhattan to gain on-the-ground knowledge of the city and research in greater depth the history of Café Nicholson, the real-life restaurant that inspired Café Andres in *A Place at the Table*.

Susan currently lives in Atlanta, where she teaches creative writing at Emory University. During the winter of 2011 she was the writer-in-residence at SCAD Atlanta. She is married to Sam Redburn Reid, also an Atlanta native, meaning she and Sam both grew up eating Varsity hamburgers and riding the pink pig at the Rich's downtown.

**Website: [SusanRebeccaWhite.com](http://SusanRebeccaWhite.com)**

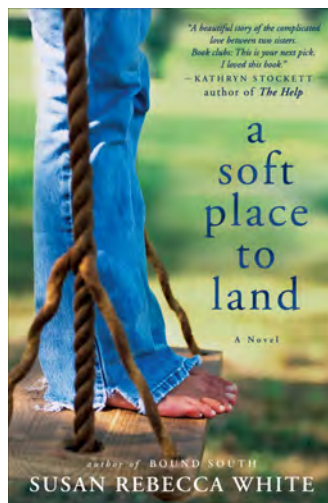
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# Novels by Susan Rebecca White

## Praise for *A Place at the Table*

"The story of troubled souls finding their way and making a place for themselves through the magic of the big city and a love of cooking." – *Booklist*



## Praise for *A Soft Place to Land*

"A beautiful story of the complicated love between two sisters. Book clubs: This is your next pick. I loved this book."  
– Kathryn Stockett, author of *The Help*

## Praise for *Bound South*

"White fearlessly tackles complex issues of class, race, gender, money, and the dark side of family life - all those things southerners are not supposed to talk about."  
– Lee Smith, author of *The Last Girls*



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