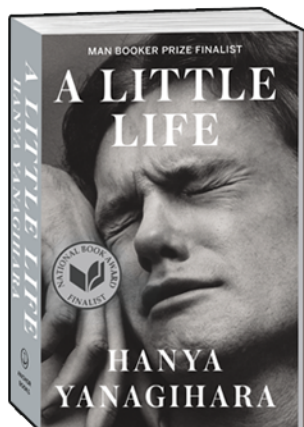




JUDE'S SUGAR COOKIES



Food plays a central role in the lives of the characters in *A Little Life*. Early in the novel, Jude is working at a bakery when his boss requests that he fulfill an order for sugar cookies decorated like bacteria:

"I thought you of all people might be able to figure this out," she said. "The customer's wife's a microbiologist and he wants to surprise her and her lab."

"I'll do some research," he said, taking the page from her, and noting the customer's name: Harold Stein. So he had, asking CM and Janusz for their advice, and had made cookies shaped like paisleys, like mace balls, like

cucumbers, using different-colored frosting to draw their cytoplasm and plasma membranes and ribosomes and fashioning flagella from strands of licorice.



The sugar cookies dazzle Harold, who eventually becomes a very important person in Jude's life. Your reading group is sure to be as impressed Harold when you whip out these sweet treats out at your next meeting.

INGREDIENTS:

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups ($2\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) chilled unsalted butter,
cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces

1 cup sugar
1 large egg
1 large egg yolk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
[Royal Icing for decorating](#)



METHOD:

1. Whisk salt, baking powder, and 3 cups flour in a small bowl. Using an electric mixer on high speed, beat butter and sugar until well combined, about 3 minutes. Add egg, egg yolk, and vanilla; beat just to combine. Reduce speed to low and gradually add dry ingredients; mix just to combine. Form dough into two $\frac{3}{4}$ "-thick disks; wrap in plastic. Chill at least 2 hours.

2. Place racks in lower and upper thirds of oven; preheat to 325° . Let 1 disk of dough sit at room temperature until softened slightly, about 5 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured sheet of parchment paper until about $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick, dusting with flour as needed. Using a template (see next page), trace out bacteria shapes and cut with a paring knife. Repeat with other disk.

3. Bake cookies, rotating baking sheets halfway through, until edges are golden, 12–16 minutes, depending on size. Transfer to wire racks and let cool. Repeat with scraps and remaining dough. Decorate cooled cookies with royal icing to look like bacteria.

(Makes about 2 dozen cookies)



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COOKIE TEMPLATES

