



Blue Plate Special: An Autobiography of My Appetites

Kate Christensen

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From acclaimed novelist Kate Christensen, *Blue Plate Special* is a mouthwatering literary memoir about an unusual upbringing and the long, winding path to happiness.

“To taste fully is to live fully.” For Kate Christensen, food and eating have always been powerful connectors to self and world—“a subterranean conduit to sensuality, memory, desire.” Her appetites run deep; in her own words, she spent much of her life as “a hungry, lonely, wild animal looking for happiness and stability.” Now, having found them at last, in this passionate feast of a memoir she reflects upon her journey of innocence lost and wisdom gained, mistakes made and lessons learned, and hearts broken and mended.

In the tradition of M. F. K. Fisher, Laurie Colwin, and Ruth Reichl, *Blue Plate Special* is a narrative in which food—eating it, cooking it, reflecting on it—becomes the vehicle for unpacking a life. Christensen explores her history of hunger—not just for food but for love and confidence and a sense of belonging—with a profound honesty, starting with her unorthodox childhood in 1960s Berkeley as the daughter of a mercurial legal activist who ruled the house with his fists. After a whirlwind adolescent awakening, Christensen strikes out to chart her own destiny within the literary world and the world of men, both equally alluring and dangerous. Food of all kinds, from Ho Hos to haute cuisine, remains an evocative constant throughout, not just as sustenance but as a realm of experience unto itself, always reflective of what is going on in her life. She unearths memories—sometimes joyful, sometimes painful—of the love between mother and daughter, sister and sister, and husband and wife, and of the times when the bonds of love were broken. Food sustains her as she endures the pain of these ruptures and fuels her determination not to settle for anything less than the love and contentment for which she’s always yearned.

The physical and emotional sensuality that defines Christensen’s fiction resonates throughout the pages of *Blue Plate Special*. A vibrant celebration of life in all its truth and complexity, this book is about embracing the world through the transformative power of food: it’s about listening to your appetites, about having faith, and about learning what is worth holding on to and what is not.

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