



## Dearie: The Remarkable Life of Julia Child

Bob Spitz

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It's rare for someone to emerge in America who can change our attitudes, our beliefs, and our very culture. It's even rarer when that someone is a middle-aged, six-foot three-inch woman whose first exposure to an unsuspecting public is cooking an omelet on a hot plate on a local TV station. And yet, that's exactly what Julia Child did. The warble-voiced doyenne of television cookery became an iconic cult figure and joyous rule-breaker as she touched off the food revolution that has gripped America for more than fifty years.

Now, in Bob Spitz's definitive, wonderfully affectionate biography, the Julia we know and love comes vividly — and surprisingly — to life. In *Dearie*, Spitz employs the same skill he brought to his best-selling, critically acclaimed book *The Beatles*, providing a clear-eyed portrait of one of the most fascinating and influential Americans of our time — a woman known to all, yet known by only a few.

At its heart, *Dearie* is a story about a woman's search for her own unique expression. Julia Child was a directionless, gawky young woman who ran off halfway around the world to join a spy agency during World War II. She eventually settled in Paris, where she learned to cook and collaborated on the writing of what would become *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, a book that changed the food culture of America. She was already fifty when *The French Chef* went on the air — at a time in our history when women weren't making those leaps. Julia became the first educational TV star, virtually launching PBS as we know it today; her marriage to Paul Child formed a decades-long love story that was romantic, touching, and quite extraordinary.

A fearless, ambitious, supremely confident woman, Julia took on all the pretensions that embellished tony French cuisine and fricasseed them to a fare-thee-well, paving the way for everything that has happened since in American cooking, from TV dinners and Big Macs to sea urchin foam and the Food Channel. Julia Child's story, however, is more than the tale of a talented woman and her sumptuous craft. It is also a saga of America's coming of age and growing sophistication, from the Depression Era to the turbulent sixties and the excesses of the eighties to the greening of the American kitchen. Julia had an effect on and was equally affected by the baby boom, the sexual revolution, and the start of the women's liberation movement.

On the centenary of her birth, Julia finally gets the biography she richly deserves. An in-depth, intimate narrative, full of fresh information and insights, *Dearie* is an entertaining, all-out adventure story of one of our most fascinating and beloved figures.



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