



The Solace of Food: A Life of James Beard

Robert Clark

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IN THE BEGINNING there was Beard," said Julia Child, and perhaps no other individual played such a central role in America's postwar fascination with food and cooking. James Beard took American food seriously at a time when French cuisine was revered above all others, and his ebullient personality, genuine culinary talents, and assiduous self-promotion (he once called himself "the world's greatest gastronomic whore") transformed the struggling actor from Oregon into a world-renowned authority on cooking and eating. First published as *James Beard, a Biography* (HarperCollins, 1993), this award-winning book was chosen as a "Notable Book of the Year" by the *New York Times Book Review* and called one of the best food books of the year by Julia Child on "Good Morning America." *The Solace of Food* is both the definitive biography of Beard and a fascinating history of food. Clark writes candidly about the "feuds and bitchery, betrayal and revenge" inside the food world and about Beard's homosexuality in a closeted period. "Clark has given us a vivid portrait of a sometimes bizarre but ultimately fascinating man of our times," said the Times, "but his real achievement is having produced a valuable and thoroughly engrossing work of contemporary cultural history."

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