

A dark silhouette of a woman with a large, styled hairdo and a pearl necklace, set against a textured teal background.

BOOK
CLUB
KIT

JULIA

A NOVEL



Inspired by
**THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE
OF JULIA CHILD**

BOOK CLUB KIT

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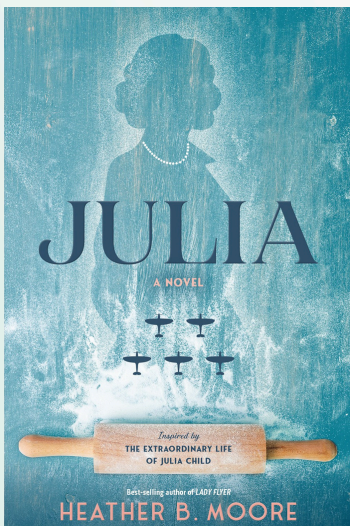
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A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader,

It was an honor to write about the vivacious Julia Child. This biographical novel covers 20 years of Julia's life, starting in 1941. Julia served during WWII in the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), which was the precursor to the CIA. Julia's assignment took her to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and there she met her future husband, Paul Child. No, Julia didn't take cooking seriously until she was married. After some cooking classes, and many trials and errors, she dedicated herself to perfecting recipes.

Once she moved to Paris with her husband for his work assignment, she promptly fell in love with French cuisine. There was no turning back for her. It would take her nearly ten years to see her coauthored cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, on the shelves. Her personality was larger-than-life, and after a guest television spot to promote her new cookbook, she was offered a cooking show series at a public television station, which would be known as *The French Chef*.

From the Afterword:

The pilots of *The French Chef* ran in August 1962, and Julia watched them at home on her new television. She wasn't overly impressed with her performance but felt determined to learn from them. Despite her self-criticism of how she looked too large on camera and how she appeared breathless, not to mention her habit of closing her eyes, the letters from the public poured in—delighted with her genuine personality.

With the pilots deemed successful, the production of *The French Chef* began in February 1963, recording at the breakneck speed of four shows each week. The debut day of the new television program was Monday, February 11, 1963, on Channel 2 at 8:00 p.m. (see this episode on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@JuliaChildonPBS>). Julia cooked the “perfectly delicious dish” of boeuf bourguignon (*Dearie* by Bob Spitz, 341). Julia might have been fifty years old, but her career was just beginning.

“

Will appeal to
Julia Child
fans, home
chefs aspiring
to a higher
level of
cooking, and
World War II
historical
fiction
enthusiasts.

—*Library Journal*

It didn't take long for Julia Child to become a household name, and by the fourth show, WGBH-TV was receiving hundreds of letters a day from viewers. Affiliates included “KQED in San Francisco, WQED in Pittsburgh, WPBT in South Florida, WHYI in Philadelphia . . .” were just a few to start (Spitz, 346).

The attention and acclaim overwhelmed Julia, especially when people stopped her in public to tell her how much they loved the show. This only made her more determined to prepare to the smallest detail and perfect each episode, with Paul as her right-hand assistant. Paul once said, “These evenings, when other folk are at the movies or the symphony or lectures, find Julie and me in our kitchen—me with a stopwatch in hand, and Julie at the stove—timing various sections of the next two shows” (Spitz, 347).

I hope readers will fall in love with Julia Child and her zest for life. Despite many setbacks, she continued to forge ahead, creating joy in life along as she followed her dreams.



Heather B. Moore



Julia Child, 1978

Photo Credit: Lynn Gilbert, Wikimedia Commons

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.

What surprised you most about Julia Child's life?

2.

What are some of the differences between Julia's outlook on life and the traditional roles of womanhood and wifehood and those around her?

3.

What were some of the challenges Julia had with her father's political views and opinions?

4.

Have you ever been in a situation where you've tried to uphold family tradition, such as when Julia went to Smith College because that was where her mother attended?

5.

Julia seemed to take international living in stride, despite not having a permanent home for many years. Would something like that interest you?

6.

Julia had amazing support from her husband, from his encouraging her years of cooking experiments to her collecting kitchen gadgets to her starting a new career just as her husband retired. Do you have people in your life who support your ambitions?

7.

Julia and Simone Beck (Simca) clashed a lot in personality and method, yet they seemed to remain friends as well as work as coauthors since they shared the same passion and goals. Do you relate to that sort of relationship?

8.

What surprised you about Julia's efforts to find a publisher for her first cookbook?

9.

What was there about Julia's personality, or cooking methods, that appealed to mass audiences and made her such an iconic figure?

10.

Is there anything from Julia's later-in-life passion for cooking that inspires you to develop your own talents?



“

This is a lovely historical fiction that draws us into Julia's world. The book . . . manages to stay warm and inviting, just as she was. Highly recommended.

—*Historical Novel Society*

PRAISE

"This well-researched novel includes little-known aspects of Child's life. . . . The characters' personalities shine through and add to the book's charm, while the third-person narration manages to express Julia's feelings beautifully. Will appeal to Julia Child fans, home chefs aspiring to a higher level of cooking, and World War II historical fiction enthusiasts."

—LIBRARY JOURNAL

"Child is an engaging figure, and her many fans, along with a new generation of foodies, will enjoy this fictionalized look at her fascinating life Teen foodies will find this an engaging entry point into the life and work of the iconic Julia Child."

—BOOKLIST

"This is a lovely historical fiction that draws us into Julia's world. While everyone knows about her cooking, the details of her life in the OSS, trusted with America's secrets during WWII, are lesser known and very intriguing. The book is well-researched, but it manages to stay warm and inviting, just as she was. Highly recommended."

—HISTORICAL NOVEL SOCIETY



Julia Child, cooking demonstration
Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons



Julia Child's kitchen
National Museum of American History, Smithsonian
Photo Credit: Rochelle Hartman, Wikimedia Commons

Glossary of Acronyms

AVG: First American Volunteer Group

BHV: LeBazar de l'Hôtel de Ville

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

COI: Coordinator of Information

ERES: Emergency Rescue Equipment Section

OSS: Office of Strategic Services

SEAC: South East Asia Command

USIS: United States Information Service

WAC: Women's Army Corps

WAVES: Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service

Additional Reading

My Life in France by Julia Child and Alex Prud'homme.

A Covert Affair: When Julia and Paul Child Joined the OSS by Jennet Conant.

Appetite for Life: The Biography of Julia Child by Noël Riley Fitch. Anchor Books, 2012.

Women of the OSS: Sisterhood of Spies by Elizabeth McIntosh.

Papers of Julia Child, 1925–1993:

<https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/8/resources/9746>

As Always, Julia: The Letters of Julia Child and Avid DeVoto—Food, Friendship, and the Making of a Masterpiece by Joan Reardon.

Dearie: The Remarkable Life of Julia Child by Bob Spitz.

About the Author

HEATHER B. MOORE



Heather B. Moore is a USA Today bestselling author of more than ninety publications. Heather writes primarily historical and #herstory fiction about the humanity and heroism of the everyday person. Publishing in a breadth of genres, Heather dives into the hearts and souls of her characters, meshing her love of research with her love of storytelling.

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