

## Bittersweet: Lessons From my Mothers Kitchen



Matt McAllester lost his mother, Ann, long before she died, as mental illness snatched the once-elegant woman away and destroyed his childhood. In this beautifully written memoir, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist chronicles the journey he took to forgiveness, which brought him straight to the place that evoked his happiest memories of his mother: the kitchen. Recounting the pleasures of his early days, culinary and otherwise, McAllester weaves an unforgettable tale of family, food, and love. At first, Matt McAllesters childhood was idyllic, a time when his mother placed heavenly, delicious food at the center of a family life brimming with fun and laughter. Then came the terrible years, years when he had to watch helplessly as his warm, quick-witted mother succumbed to an illness that was never properly diagnosed or understood. Desperate to escape, he eventually found work as a foreign correspondent, hiding in the terrors and tragedies of other people as he traveled to the most dangerous places in the world, from Beirut to Baghdad. But nothing he saw on the battlefield prepared him for his mothers death - and his own overwhelming grief. In the weeks and months that followed, Matt found himself poring over old family photos and letters, trying to reach out for the beautiful, caring woman who had now vanished for the second time. But as he looked anew at her long-cherished collection of cookbooks, it occurred to him that the best way to find her was through something they both loved: the food she had once lovingly prepared for him, food that introduced him to a thousand sources of joy - from spare ribs to the homemade strawberry ice cream that seemed in memory the very essence of happy times. With a reporters precision and a storytellers grace, McAllester guides us through a long season of grief - cooking, eating, and remembering - at the same time describing his and his wifes efforts to

conceive and nourish a child of their own. Complete with recipes to delight body and soul, Bittersweet is a memoir of extraordinary power, at once a moving tribute to his mother and a dazzling feast for the senses.

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