



Charlotte Au Chocolat: Memories of a Restaurant Girlhood

Charlotte Silver

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Like Eloise growing up in the Plaza Hotel, Charlotte Silver grew up in her mother's restaurant. Located in Harvard Square, Upstairs at the Pudding was a confection of pink linen tablecloths and twinkling chandeliers, a decadent backdrop for childhood. Over dinners of foie gras and Dover sole, always served with a Shirley Temple, Charlotte kept company with a rotating cast of eccentric staff members. After dinner, in her frilly party dress, she often caught a nap under the bar until closing time. Her one constant was her glamorous, indomitable mother, nicknamed "Patton in Pumps," a wasp-waisted woman in cocktail dress and stilettos who shouldered the burden of raising a family and running a kitchen. Charlotte's unconventional upbringing takes its toll, and as she grows up she wishes her increasingly busy mother were more of a presence in her life. But when the restaurant-forever teetering on the brink of financial collapse-looks as if it may finally be closing, Charlotte comes to realize the sacrifices her mother has made to keep the family and restaurant afloat and gains a new appreciation of the world her mother has built.

Infectious, charming, and at times wistful, Charlotte au Chocolat is a celebration of the magic of a beautiful presentation and the virtues of good manners, as well as a loving tribute to the author's mother-a woman who always showed her best face to the world.





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