

Roux the Day

Peter King

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For six generations, the Belvedere family dominated the culinary landscape of New Orleans, a city that boasts what is perhaps the most vibrant, exciting, and authentic cuisine in America. But each generation relinquished control of the family restaurant-best known for its world famous Oysters Belvedere-only after succumbing to the madness that has plagued the dynasty since its arrival from the Canary Islands. Now, after the business' doors have remained closed for years, the next scion of the Belvedere clan has determined to seize his birthright . . . if only he can find the annotated family cookbook, which has mysteriously disappeared!

Only one man can help.

That man is the Gourmet Detective.

Returning for his seventh foray into the bizarre nether-regions where haute cuisine meets high crimes and misdemeanors, Peter King's beloved sleuth reluctantly agrees to track down the book. But this decidedly out-of-print classic isn't going to turn up on any remainder shelf! And when he finds its supposed new owner-a used book dealer-stewing in a puddle of his own blood, the Gourmet Detective knows that, once again, he's in for more than he bargained for.

Soon, he's "kidnapped" by the WITCHES, a mysterious cadre of New Orleans' most ambitious and talented female chefs-and they want the book too. In fact, it seems like everyone does. And getting it will have the sleuth staring down con-artists and book forgers on an old-fashioned paddle boat, careening through the colorful streets of the French Quarter in a mule-drawn carriage, and hunting down leads in the vibrant fishing shanties of Algiers.

All of this, while exploring the very contentious differences between the proponents of Creole and Cajun cuisine, and sampling some of the most spicy and succulent treats he's yet encountered: from blackened redfish, fresh from the Gulf and coated in garlic, paprika, cayenne and an assortment of spices, then seared in an extraordinarily hot cast-iron pan . . . to turtle soup, dark, rich, seasoned with onion, oregano, and thyme . . . to Pheasant Casserole . . . to Gumbo, catfish, crawfish . . . and that's just a taste!

Roux the Day Details

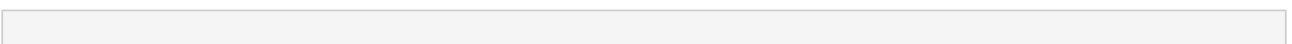
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From Reader Review Roux the Day for online ebook

Faith says

Peter King's Roux the Day is a nice, light read. I enjoyed the New Orleans culinary and cultural history that's dabbled in as we try to find the whereabouts of the chef's book.

Chris Leuchtenburg says

I had looked forward to spending another few hours with Peter King, but as I continued reading, I found the light banter tiresome and the characters uninteresting. I think that part of the problem is that the detective has no continuing relationships, and many of the chapters featured a particular suspect with little to tie them together nor to the detective.

Not terrible, maybe just not what I was in the mood for.

lee says

entertaining. cooking. New orleans, liked it.

Sarah Hoffman says

I really enjoyed the punny name and the random food related allegories included in the text. The concept itself is quiet novel... "... The Gourmet Detective. I seek out lost recipes and rare spices, find substitutes for disappearing or suddenly expensive food ingredients. I advise on topics like the food to serve in a film set in the seventeenth century or at a suitable 'theme' banquet for the fiftieth anniversary of a department store." but the description of recipes and dishes included in the book are boring, bland, and slow the detective story down. The detective story itself had a motive that was a tad trite - especially given the multiple murders. This book is one in a series.

Kathy Moberg says

I've enjoyed all of the Gourmet Detective mysteries. The main appeal is to foodies. Peter King's knowledge of ingredients, cuisines and travel locations is impressive, and he describes it all very well. A mystery ties it all together. Character development is minimal. The books are nonetheless fun for the right audience.

Cissa says

I admit I read this series only for the descriptions of food; much of the rest either irritates or bores me. Still, I do read them.

The food descriptions are lush, as usual, and make me want to cook ALL the things. I'm not a traveller, but if I were, New Orleans would be high on my destination list, because of all the idiosyncratic foods that all sound heavenly!

In this book, the plot is ... sketchy. At least Our Hero does not bed all the fair damsels he meets; in fact, some of them pull something of a reversal there! I'm sure King did research into NO history, and tends to use info-dumps to acquaint us with some of it. And the food descriptions are lush.

However- yet again, he got some facts wrong- one of which is key to the "resolution" of the mystery, and thus a really significant error. I can't describe it more without spoilers- but the DANGEROUS foodstuff turns out not to be as lethal as all that, and indeed is now legal here in the US; it had more of a rep than it deserved, historically. And getting addicted via food made with it? please. It's like if poppyseed bagels were the same as shooting heroin!

Another stupid flaw: having an Asian chef tell Our Hero that wood ears/tree/ears/black fungus are "Unknown in the US and Europe. This was published in 2002, and at that time I had a small but treasured supply that I cooked with- me, an American home cook. (And I just got a HUGE bag of the things- the size of a pillow!- and that makes me happy!) But "unknown"? no. I bought the admittedly small and overpriced box at our local supermarket.

Thus, I am not sure how much I trust his NO history, either; when food info is the author's "thing", and he regularly gets aspects seriously wrong- how am I to believe anything else?

Still, the descriptions of food are lush and inviting, and Our Hero is not quite as much a jerk as he has been in some previous novels.

Suzanne says

This was the first book I read in this series; I read it for a mystery club "Foodie" theme month. The Food Detective is a novel approach within the food mystery genre. A very clever mystery and lovable sleuth.

Dan says

Okay, hmm... I've read the whole series now. I'm not going to do individual book reviews, some of them are better than others, but they're all enjoyable, quick reads. Then again, throw gourmet food and wine into anything and I'm likely to add some points to it in my mind. Bizarrely, though, given that I gave all the books three stars, I don't know that I recommend them. Had they been written fifty years ago, I'd give them some more slack, but here are my issues with, well, all of them:

The gourmet detective himself, our protagonist, is an unlikable twit. He's a middle aged, pretentious white man, with delusions of self importance. He fancies himself a ladies man and, of course, manages to get one or another into bed (trailed off, never portrayed, just make sure we know it happened, wink, wink) in all or

almost all the books. He's misogynistic, racist, and classist. He fancies himself a connoisseur of all things food and wine, and throws about names and terms, most of which the average reader will not have heard of, and will probably just move past without much thought. The problem is, he's pretty much clueless and the mistakes in his descriptions of various ingredients, dishes, and bottles of fermented grape juice are legion.

In short, and yes, I realize I'm generalizing and could be accused of bias myself, he's the sort of detective that a 70+ year old retired upper middle class British metallurgical engineer (who apparently at some point went to the Cordon Bleu cooking school to be trained as a chef, though my bet is he just took a few cooking classes for home cooks, then again, who knows, but it seems he did it after retiring at some point in his 70s) would reimagine himself to be if he were to become a food detective. In short, a sort of Walter Mitty alter ego.

Susan says

The Gourmet Detective does New Orleans. King's nameless detective is hired to buy an old cookbook at auction. Instead, he finds two dead bodies. A group of women chefs also wants the cookbook, too, and he has to check out the specialties of each of their restaurants. Yet he and a friendly police officer manage to find the culprit in a perhaps too confusing finale.

Al says

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