

Lilla's Feast



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At the end of her life, Frances Osborne's one-hundred-year-old great-grandmother Lilla was as elegant as ever—all fitted black lace and sparkling-white diamonds. To her great-grandchildren, Lilla was both an ally and a mysterious wonder. Her bedroom was filled with treasures from every exotic corner of the world. But she rarely mentioned the Japanese prison camps in which she spent much of World War II, or the elaborate cookbook she wrote to help her survive behind the barbed wire.

Beneath its polished surface, Lilla's life had been anything but effortless. Born in 1882 to English parents in the beautiful North China port city of Chefoo, Lilla was an identical twin. Growing up, she knew both great privilege and deprivation, love and its absence. But the one constant was a deep appreciation for the power of food and place. From the noodles of Shanghai to the chutney of British India and the roasts of England, good food and sensuous surroundings, Lilla was raised to believe, could carry one a long way toward happiness. Her story is brimming with the stuff of good fiction: distant locales, an improvident marriage, an evil mother-in-law, a dramatic suicide, and two world wars.

Lilla's remarkable cookbook, which she composed while on the brink of starvation,

makes no mention of wartime rations, of rotten vegetables and donkey meat. In the world this magical food journal, now housed in the Imperial War Museum in London, everyone is warm and safe in their homes, and the pages are filled with cream puffs, butterscotch, and comforting soup. In its writing, Lilla was able to transform the darkest moments into scrumptious escape.

Lilla’ s Feast is a rich evocation of a bygone world, the inspiring story of an ordinary woman who tackled the challenges life threw in her path with an extraordinary determination.--From the Hardcover edition.

作者介绍:

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