



## Sous Chef: 24 Hours on the Line

*Michael Gibney*

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## **Sous Chef: 24 Hours on the Line** Michael Gibney

The back must slave to feed the belly. . . . In this urgent and unique book, chef Michael Gibney uses twenty-four hours to animate the intricate camaraderie and culinary choreography in an upscale New York restaurant kitchen. Here readers will find all the details, in rapid-fire succession, of what it takes to deliver an exceptional plate of food—the journey to excellence by way of exhaustion.

Told in second-person narrative, *Sous Chef* is an immersive, adrenaline-fueled run that offers a fly-on-the-wall perspective on the food service industry, allowing readers to briefly inhabit the hidden world behind the kitchen doors, in real time. This exhilarating account provides regular diners and food enthusiasts alike a detailed insider's perspective, while offering fledgling professional cooks an honest picture of what the future holds, ultimately giving voice to the hard work and dedication around which chefs have built their careers.

In a kitchen where the highest standards are upheld and one misstep can result in disaster, *Sous Chef* conjures a greater appreciation for the thought, care, and focus that go into creating memorable and delicious fare. With grit, wit, and remarkable prose, Michael Gibney renders a beautiful and raw account of this demanding and sometimes overlooked profession, offering a nuanced perspective on the craft and art of food and service.

## **Sous Chef: 24 Hours on the Line Details**

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## From Reader Review **Sous Chef: 24 Hours on the Line for online ebook**

### **Vonia says**

Sous Chef gives anyone interested in the dining world a unique inside look at what working the line is like. Maybe more notably, it will create that interest in everyone else! Being a lover of all things food, from both sides of the kitchen door, cooking as well as dining, I am most definitely in the former category. I love to try new dining establishments whenever I can, from the tiny diner no one even notices to the upscale five star celebrity chef establishment. On rare occasions I even like our national chains. Whenever I can, especially if they have some accolades, I try to meet the chef where I am dining. This book was a short cut to a sort of dream of mine, working as a Chef in the heat of the kitchen in a fine dining establishment in a dining paradise such as New York City.

Told in second person, this is one of the first book I have read in which the unlikely point of view not only did not hinder the storytelling with awkwardness but actually worked very well. It provided a sort of Choose Your Own Adventure feel; readers are able to easily imagine themselves donning the Chef's coat.

The main thing that makes this experience believable as well as realistic, though, is the candor apparent in the writing. This book is not even an endorsement for the culinary industry. In fact, it could be said to be the opposite. Illuminating the down sides of working in the industry with no apologies, any reader considering entering the industry might reconsider after reading this account. But that truth is better learned now than later. And, besides, makes for a great memoir. After all, true life is made of the stuff we could not even make up if we tried. Bravo, Chef Michael Gibney.

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### **Sean says**

Let's get this out of the way: I'm a food nerd. I've worked in restaurants, I had a subscription to Gourmet magazine for a decade (RIP), I love to cook at home, I consider Mark Bittman one of my idols and I unabashedly love every cooking reality show (even the bad ones like "The Taste" and "Master Chef". Don't judge me.) So when I saw this title pop up on Amazon's new releases, I had to bite, as it were.

Sous Chef follows 24 hours in the life of a New York City sous chef. Author Michael Gibney, once a Big Apple chef himself, writes the book in 2nd person so 'You' are the main character. It's a ballsy literary technique that old 80's book hounds might remember from Jay McInerney's 'Bright Lights, Big City.' Like that book, Sous Chef is a slick, hipster thrill ride. Gibney clearly knows his turf and deftly gives a play-by-play of how a sous chef in a starred dining establishment spends his hours. Hungover cooks, a temperamental head chef, sexy servers and VIP diners are all here but not really developed as the focus on this book is the Sous Chef and his job.

Taken as a no-frills look at that position, Sous Chef works. It's a fast, enjoyable read with an inside look at the fine dining world.

But I couldn't help but wanting more from the book. More food description, more technique secrets and more finesse when it came to the prose as a whole. Too often Gibney relies on well-worn chef cliches and stilted dialogue to propel the story when his personal knowledge and perspective is more than sufficient. Gibney shines a food enthusiast and educator. His fantastic glossary of cooking terms in the back of book is worth

the cover price alone. Being a food nerd, I'll probably read his next book considering Gibney's smarts and skill even if *Sous Chef* didn't completely satisfy.

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### **Snotchocheez says**

The single biggest thing I miss from leaving Los Angeles more than a decade ago is its vast array of restaurants. My preference usually swings toward those purveyors of the *outré* dishes as delectably described by Pulitzer Prize-winning food critic of the LA Times Jonathan Gold, rather than the trendy bistros and brasseries that garner Zagat raves and Michelin Stars. (Quite frankly, there's just nothing more gastronomically appealing than scoring a Korean taco from a mobile truck, or discovering the tiniest mini-mall *nasi goreng* parlor.) That doesn't mean, though, that I'm not interested in the fine dining segment of the restaurant industry. Though I cringe at the idea of frequenting \$75-per-cover establishments, I'm certainly interested in those with a passion for food (and its preparation). You (er, I) read frightening statistics of how over 90% of non-corporately-owned restaurant start-ups fail in their first year, and wonder why anyone would even bother trying to succeed in a field where the cards are so stacked against you. Or if you've worked behind the scenes in the corporate restaurant industry (as I had when I was in LA, working in the HR department for a mid-to-low-end full service Mexican restaurant chain), you know those that work in the back-of-the-house are compensated shittily, and work like dogs (12-to-15-hour days are not uncommon for employees exempt from the Wage And Hour Law, like Managers, Chefs and Sous Chefs) to keep their establishments running. Who the hell would be crazy enough to subject themselves to that kind of torturous career move?

Michael Gibney, in his fascinating book *Sous Chef*, which is informed by his more than a decade working in the fine dining service sector, endeavors to explain why. Unlike the myriad cooking shows proliferating of late featuring superstar chefs flaunting their successes like Bobby Flay, Gordon Ramsay, or (\*cringe\*) Guy Fieri, Gibney takes us in the trenches, showing us 24 hours in the life of a sous chef in a successful West (Greenwich) Village eatery. He inserts the reader front and center, using the patois and argot of the industry (thankfully explained in the back of the book with an extensive glossary), of the restaurant's nerve center, the kitchen. It's a gruesome portrait Gibney paints, and would probably scare the crap out of anyone with less than an undying ardor for the Culinary Arts, but it's one of the truest, grittiest looks at the food service industry you'll likely ever read.

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### **First Second Books says**

This book is a fascinatingly constructed nonfiction narrative -- instead of the personal and emotional memoir, or the action-packed nonfiction personal narrative, it tells the story of the life of the chef through the eyes of the everyman (or every-chef, as it may be) going about a day of ordinary business.

It's like the grown-up version of *Busy Town, Busy People!*

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### **Alex Givant says**

2nd time was much better than 1st one. I like second-person perspective - you fill like you in the kitchen,

doing all of this stuff. Michael Gibney shows what it takes to be a chef and to produce excellent food plate after plate. I will help me to appreciate the cook job from now on. I would like to read more books like that about different profession (doctor, pilot, store clerk, bus driver) - if you have any good suggestions please let me know.

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### **karen says**

24 hours in the life of a sous-chef.

this is a really fun book for foodies, although in a way, it might be akin to carnivores reading *Eating Animals*. for people who want to retain the mystery and ignore the warts of what happens behind-the-scenes at restaurants, this might take away the glamorous candlelit magic of the dining experience. not that this is in any way an exposé - everything in this book reinforces restaurants' strict adherence to the health code and the pure love that goes into food preparation, but just like the necessarily-suppressed guilt of the carnivore (of which i am one) when looking at a cute pig scampering around, you will understand reading this that people have worked hard and suffered so you could eat some food.

the hook of this book is that it is written in second person. but this is a gimmick that works particularly well for its subject matter - it brings a sweaty immediacy to the situation. you are making this food! you are in the weeds! you are managing your staff! you are ruining some filberts! you are not having enough time for your girlfriend!

and i really enjoyed thinking of this book as a long apology letter to the author's girlfriend. a "babe, i'm sorry i had to blow you off, but you see what i am going through here??" even though she seemed pretty understanding and cool about everything, being in the industry herself. and i felt very lucky, in the second person contrivance, to have such a special lady in my life.

i enjoyed the food-porn, especially the cheese-porn:

*The Brinata - the queen piece, wrapped in white paper with a pink ribbon - summons you. You gently lay the cheese in the middle of the desk and begin to undress it, slowly peeling away the wrappings to reveal a semihard mound with delicate curves and moon-white skin. To use your fingers would be uncivilized. You trace the tip of a knife across the surface in search of the right place to enter. In one swift motion, you pierce the rind and thrust into its insides. You draw the blade out, plunge in again. You bring the triangle to your lips. It melts when it enters your mouth. Your palate goes prone; gooseflesh stippling your neck.*

the moments of food science:

*You roll the pork to reveal a golden brown sear. You spin the monk and it's the same. It's pure science: when the surface of a piece of food reaches approximately 300°F, certain sugars in the food begin to react with certain amino acids in the food and they rearrange to produce a series of nitrogenous polymers and melanoidins, which are responsible for a variety of luscious flavors and aromas. It's called the Maillard reaction. When it happens before your eyes, though, it blows your hair back.*

and the other various things i learned:

*Whole fishes must be sitting upright in the ice - dorsal fins to the sky as if they were swimming - in order to preserve their anatomical constitution. Laying a whole fish on its side predisposes it to bruising, bone breaks, bloodline punctures, uneven air circulation, and a host of other unwanted conditions that compromise the integrity of the fish.*

how to test if foie gras-wrapped monkfish is done (not that i will ever need to in my tiny home kitchen, but it is fantastic)

*The way you do this is with a cake tester, a thin metal pin about the length of a pencil. You insert the cake tester into the center of the fish and hold it there for ten seconds. When you remove it, you place it directly against the underside of your lower lip. If it is warm, the food is done. This technique has been around for hundreds of years, and it has a provincial flair to it, but it happens to be complexly scientific as well. The temperature at which most bacteria die, and at which protein begins to denature in such a way that it becomes cooked, is approximately 130°F. The temperature at which human skin begins to detect contact with heat is roughly 120°F. Empirical evidence suggests that a steel pin will, on average, undergo a ten-degree temperature decline in the time it takes to transfer it by hand from the interior of a cooked product to your lower lip. Ergo, when the cake tester is warm on your lip, the monkfish is thoroughly cooked.*

amazing.

what meat glue is:

*Meat glue - known as transglutaminase in more sophisticated kitchens, or Activa in the purveyors' catalogs - is an enzyme that, when applied to two different cuts of meat, activates a covalent bond between the proteins, joining them together, in theory forever\*. The most notable feature of this transaction is its thermo-irreversibility - the fact that the bond formed is capable of withstanding the application of heat\*\* - which means that your meat-glued product will not break apart when you cook it, which makes the technique perfect for the monkfish roulade.*

but mostly i just enjoyed the frenetic pacing of it - the exhaustion of a job that doesn't pay terribly well (nor, i have learned, does it provide health insurance), but attracts strong personalities who genuinely love their work and become, in the close quarters of the kitchen, a passionate, multi-lingual family attuned to each other in the dance of the kitchen and each contributing parts that make the delicious whole.

*We are here to cook for people. Alimentation: the provision of nourishment - this is what we do. And we continue doing it long into the night, not because we favor adversity, but because we know that in doing so we get the chance to create with our hands something that sustains people and brings them joy. And because we know that in all the details, all the minutiae, all the intricate flourishes, difficult and tedious as they are, can be seen the sincerity of what we do. And even though our days are hard and congested and misaligned, we know that through persistent focus and discipline and effort and care, we have the continual opportunity to do something genuine.*

thank you for making me food, restaurant staffs of the world. it was fun briefly being one of you.

\* hear that, sting?

\*\* ditto!

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## Sara says

OMG, is this book boring!

Like, really boring.

Maybe that is a rather illiterate book review but it's an honest one. Kitchen Confidential is so much better but thinking about Anthony Bourdain just makes me too sad right now to even try a comparison.

This book goes into detail about working in the kitchen of a high end restaurant. All the smoking, the cussing, the prep, the hangovers. . . Glad its not my world. I did appreciate the end where the sous chef parties too hard and sits outside, thinking of his career and his girlfriend.

Still, so happy the book is over.

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## Diane says

Parts of this book were so intense I felt like I was hunkered down in a restaurant kitchen with dozens of orders during a massive dinner rush.

*Sous Chef* describes 24 hours in the life of a cook in an elite New York City restaurant. The book starts on a Friday morning, with the crew spending the day prepping for dinner service, and then the pressurized hours on the line from when dinner service starts at 5pm through the exhaustive "second seating" at 8pm, and then the final meal tickets after 10pm. After which the crew cleans up and begins prepping Saturday brunch. You're either prepping orders, making the orders, cleaning up from the orders, and then prepping orders again. It feels like it never ends.

Parts of this book were very well-written. My favorite sections were the scenes detailing kitchen life during day prep and the dinner rush. I cared less about the after-hour bar visit, or the long characterizations of the other cooks on the line. To help the novices, the author included a nice illustration of the kitchen floor plan, a chart with the kitchen's chain of command, and an extensive glossary of cooking terms. While reading it, I thought this book was so descriptive it could be used as a training tool for new restaurant staff.

Overall this is a solid effort, and I would recommend it to foodies and restaurant workers. (And if my brother the chef hasn't read this by Christmas, he's getting a copy.)

## Favorite Quotes

"A good cook almost never misses a shift. He takes ownership of his work; he takes pride in it. He understands how important he is to the team and he will avoid disappointing his coworkers at all costs."

"With all these individuals scampering around during service, much can go wrong very quickly. It's a plate-spinning act, which could topple over in pieces at any moment. A chef's goal during any given meal period is to prevent this from happening — to sustain a fusion of all the moving parts, to keep the team together, to

keep the bus driving straight. There will always be the clatter of pots and pans, the din of voices — professional cooking is a loud racket — but when service is performed fluidly, artfully, all the noise can be mistaken for silence. There's a certain harmony to the sound, and it's almost as though you don't even hear it."

"Of all the conditions that can disrupt a kitchen's harmony, anger is probably the most dangerous."

"Cooking is an exercise in kinetic awareness, economy of movement, mastery of the senses. You can smell when a sauce is scorched; you can hear when a fish is ready to come off the plancha. You must trust these senses to help you through the night. Your whole body must remain active. No matter what receipts you know, no matter how much experience you have, each piece of fish in each pan presents a unique set of circumstances to which you must react, based on the sensory information at hand in the moment. You must take what you have before you and make something lovely out of it. And while it might be the same thing every day, it's something new every second."

"Cooking is the last true meritocracy. All that matters is how well you can do the job. And with what level of finesse."

"At the end of the day, what matters is the guest. That person on the other side of the kitchen door. The one you'll never meet, the one who has no idea what you look like or what your name is. The one who trust you to keep her safe, the one who is about to ingest what you have made. The one you are nourishing, taking care of looking after — she is what matters. Chefs come and go, and restaurants and coworkers, too. Your time at any given place, with any given crew, is fleeting. But that guest? She will always be there. She is the constant."

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## **Petra X says**

This book could never be a film or even the beginning of a new series of 'Chefs' for Food Network. It is unusual in concept being a combination of the existential and stream of consciousness all tied together under the accurately descriptive but mundane title "24 Hours on the Line".

Superficially this is a chef describing what it is like to be the second-in-command in the very busy kitchen of a top restaurant. But bubbling along with the management duties are the preoccupations of a chef, his concerns, worries and dreams, professional and personal in a stream of consciousness rather messy at times but saying a lot more than the usual chef-story that feeds our collective foodie-boook addiction.

Thinking back on it, it would be easy to dismiss this book as a slightly different take on the chef story, but there is plenty to think of. The absolute all-consuming nature of the chef's life. It's not a rewarding one for most, the money isn't there for the hours worked. The drive for perfection is at every moment rather than for a project worked over weeks or months where if anything goes wrong, there is a meeting and 'lessons are learned'. No, every dish has to be perfect and there is a full house waiting for meals, the adrenaline flows, this has to be the best ever, good enough is never good enough.

When everything goes well in a kitchen, it's called 'the dance'. And so it is, it's like a ballet with all the years of hard work, experience and day-to-day exercise of skill that implies. And like the ballerina in her pretty tutu looking so full of feminine grace rather than the sweaty athlete she really is, so there is the dish sitting now in front of the diner, beautifully garnished, showing not a hint of the back story of sweat, the heavy

cleaver and years of cooking experience that got it there.

The writing lags at times, but this is more to do with the editing and I would like to have seen pictures, black and white ones of the bustle and top-of-the-line equipment (I looked up the custom designed Bonnet stove, wow). Definitely worth reading if foodie books are your thing. I don't know if Gibney will ever make it into the ranks of the top Michelin-starred chefs, but I hope he's not a one-book chef, I'd like to read more from this talented author.

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### **Serge Pierro says**

Disclaimer: I won this book via Goodreads Giveaways

Having worked in a restaurant, I find these types of books fascinating. Michael Gibney does a fine job describing the inner workings of a professional kitchen. However, it lacks the vitality of books like Anthony Bourdain's "Kitchen Confidential" or Bill Buford's "Heat". I found myself not caring about any of the people mentioned within. Excellent kitchen detail, but, flat two-dimensional characters. There were also passages of Spanish dialogue - with no translation... which only helped to alienate the reader from being able to understand the relevant situation. It was a nice touch to have the kitchen floor plan at the beginning of the book and an excellent section on kitchen terminology in the back. Overall, it was an enjoyable book, and would be interesting to those who haven't read the aforementioned Bourdain or Buford books.

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### **Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says**

I've always been fascinated with chefs. I'm a bit stalkerish as I watch or read anything I can get my hands on with them in it.

Rawr! They have food! Good food! And they make the magic and make dishes that I would never dream of. That I don't have to clean up after.

Not that I can afford to eat in the 75 dollar per person restaurant.

I used to sorta fantasize about doing it myself but the hours are just unreal. Even if I wasn't an old lady with a million kid. AND I know that all restaurants aren't dream jobs. They work your butt off for low pay and no compensation.

This book gives you 24 hours in the life of a sous chef. Not the high glamour one that you see on TV. (Thank gawd)..this is the real deal.

You are with him when he goes in that morning to check the coolers.

Then when the pandemonium of service finally begins..you are in the heat of the action. I felt like I needed to be cutting up some vegetables at this point. Really, really fast.

Then when the day ends..there really isn't much of a break.

I loved this inside look. The author addresses the reader as "you" so you feel like it's you that observing and participating in this high action world. Now I just wish I could have tasted some of that food.

*Booksource: Netgalley in exchange for review*

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### **Jenny (Reading Envy) says**

"Even if you didn't work with them you'd be able to tell. It's a certain way of carrying oneself that secretly helps any cook recognize one of his own. An outward air of strength and mental toughness, tempered by some undeniable tinge of anxiety."

The second person narrative is a bit grating in this book, but if you can get past it, this is a great capture of what the kitchen of a busy fine-dining restaurant is like. Not just the kitchen but the culture of the people working in it, inside and out.

I've worked in restaurants. I think it is incredibly difficult to communicate the stress, the rush, the sheer amount of exhausting work, the creative energy, the smoking breaks, the energized exhaustion, the passion, the alcohol... unless you have lived it, it would just be too unbelievable. Gibney is smart to focus on one 24-hour period in the life of a sous chef (somehow played by "you") because summarizing it doesn't get at how it feels and how much goes by in a single day. I felt like I was back in it, like on the night where we had 250 graduation reservations and our head cook dumped boiling water over his head and we had to figure out a way to make it work. Or when everyone got drunk during Mother's Day brunch.

"It might bring you joy to think that these guests are happy because of something you've provided them, but sheer exhaustion prevents your thoughts from wending that way."

Gibney has memories like this and more, and this is a reflection of his experience. As one-time executive sous chef of Tavern on the Green, he has worked in some big places. There are moments where he waxes poetically about the call of the kitchen, the service, the joy, and it may read as false. It's important to understand that there is a deep-seated reason cooks and chefs end up where they are. It really isn't just a job, not for people who are willing to put the time and effort in to making it to positions of significance like "Chef." *Sous Chef* is an accurate reflection of just how long and hard that path will be, even for a talented and well-trained cook.

For people who haven't worked in restaurants, there is a very helpful "Selected Kitchen Terminology" at the end of the book. Scanning through it, I realized that in my year and a half in the culinary world, I learned a new language. Readers coming from the dining room of restaurants and not the back of the house may need to refer to this list to have some terms explained.

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### **Jillyn says**

Four and a half stars, rounded up.

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*Sous Chef* is a nonfiction book that lets the reader experience what it is like to be a sous chef in a kitchen for a twenty-four hour period of time. The pressures, defeats, victories, and the massive amount of work are all beautifully illustrated in the text, immersing the reader in the culinary world and all it has to offer.

When I saw this book, I knew I had to read it. In addition to being a foodie to the core, I'm also the daughter of an executive chef. I've pretty much grown up in the kitchen and in the industry, and I'm no stranger to just how intense things on the line can be. I was curious to gain this first hand experience from a chef himself about what a typical day was like, and I was not disappointed.

I'm actually really surprised by what I'm about to say, but I loved that this book was written in second-person. It made it completely easy to sink yourself into the story and become the character in the book. It enabled me to feel things like guilt or pressure personally, as though the head chef was really mad at ME or that I actually did a great job cooking, even though I was reading a book on a train.

The writing itself is vivid and descriptive. Whether Gibney is talking about the other kitchen workers or the delicious dishes being prepared, you can picture it clearly in your mind and damn near smell the food on the fire and hear the familiar hum of a kitchen working in sync.

Though personally I knew most of the culinary terms or phrases, Gibney includes a glossary in the back in case the reader is unsure of things like foods or cooking techniques. It's extremely helpful and explains a lot that can help with comprehension of the story.

Honestly, I wish it didn't end. I knew the twenty-four hours were up, but I didn't want them to be. I read this in one sitting, and was so sad when I ran out of pages. To me, that's the ultimate sign of a great book. I recommend it to foodies and cooks alike, and even those who are just interested in learning more about the life. Fans of *Kitchen Confidential* should check it out especially. There is profane language at times but it's true to the kitchen life.

Thanks to Netgalley, Ballantine Books & Goodreads Firstreads for my copy[ies] of this book. This review can also be found on my blog, *Bitches n Prose*.

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## **Emily says**

This book was SO MUCH FUN! If you like watching *Chopped*, have ever imagined yourself on a cooking show while dicing vegetables, or just generally enjoy eating fancy food, then this is for you.

*Sous Chef* is written in second person, which is a great twist because it makes the story seem so immediate. You are the chef that will make or break dinner service, and you're the chef who knows exactly how to fillet a monkfish and test the preparation of the *foie gras*. You know the kitchen hierarchy and what the chefs really think about the front wait staff. You're also so good at describing the food that you're cooking that it made this reader's mouth water:

First are the gambas, because they take the longest. You lay them on the hottest part of the plancha so that they can Maillardize without overcooking in the center. Then come the green-lips. You pour them into a steaming hot copper pan, hit them with a knob of butter, drop in four fingerfuls of shaved fennel, a spoonful of garlic confit, a splash of wine, and a dollop of soubise, then cover them with an inverted *sauteuse* and let it ride. You flip the gambas and

drop the herring on the plancha.

Because this is actually 24 hours in the life of a sous chef, the ending gets a little too maudlin and philosophical for me. After dinner service is over, you're out to the bars to pontificate on the nature of service - which is fine, but is in such contrast to the earlier rush of cooking descriptions that it almost feels out of place. *Sous Chef* is obviously very gimmicky, but that's nowhere more clear than when dinner winds down and "you" wander home to Brooklyn. I could have done without that part of the book and read about the brunch service instead - even though that breaks up the 24-hours-on-the-line idea.

The only way that this book could have been better is if it were a choose your own adventure book. Granted, the kitchen would be in flames before I even started cooking the specials, but it would be fun to go through even more variations of this day. (Are you listening, Michael Gibney??)

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### **Erin says**

ARC for review.

I'm a sucker for foodie books. Now, don't get crazy, I'm not actually going to COOK anything, so I'm not that interested in cookbooks, but I love me good food that someone else makes, so reading about life in restaurants is incredibly fun for me. Therefore, I knew I would enjoy *Sous Chef* and I did. However, learn from my mistakes! I spent an enormous amount of time using the wonderful dictionary, Wikipedia and translation tools on my Kindle without realizing there was a glossary in the back (but the Spanish used is not included and using the translation tool to get a literal translation of the insults hurled by the dishwasher is great - I highly recommend it). So, I don't cook AND I'm an idiot.

Note two - this book is written in the second person, so, basically, YOU are the sous chef and Gibney is just a benevolent elf looking over your shoulder, telling you how you are screwing all this up. I mention this only because I know that second person drives some readers insane...if you are that person it might take you outside this great book, which would be a terrible shame, because second person really works here - because you FEEL the tension of getting everything done correctly and quickly. I mean, this is your JOB on the line here. Get your shit together! It just takes a bit to get used to it: Book: "Fluke is your favorite fish" (357) Me: "No, it's not." Book: "I don't want to hear your sniveling, I just told you fluke is your favorite." Me: "OK. Fluke, then. I'm good." So, I also learned that I smoke a lot, especially when things get tense.

The book is set up over about a twenty-four hour period of working in the restaurant. For fans of these types books you'll be well aware of some aspects (the hierarchy of the kitchen, for example) but covering the depth of all that occurs in the time period gives a level of detail that was new to me (use of the sous vide method, prepping the fish, the division of labor and the disgusting-sounding spoon water). So, super interesting, engaging and now I'm DYING for some violet mustard, guanciale, and boquerones sauce. Highly recommended.

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