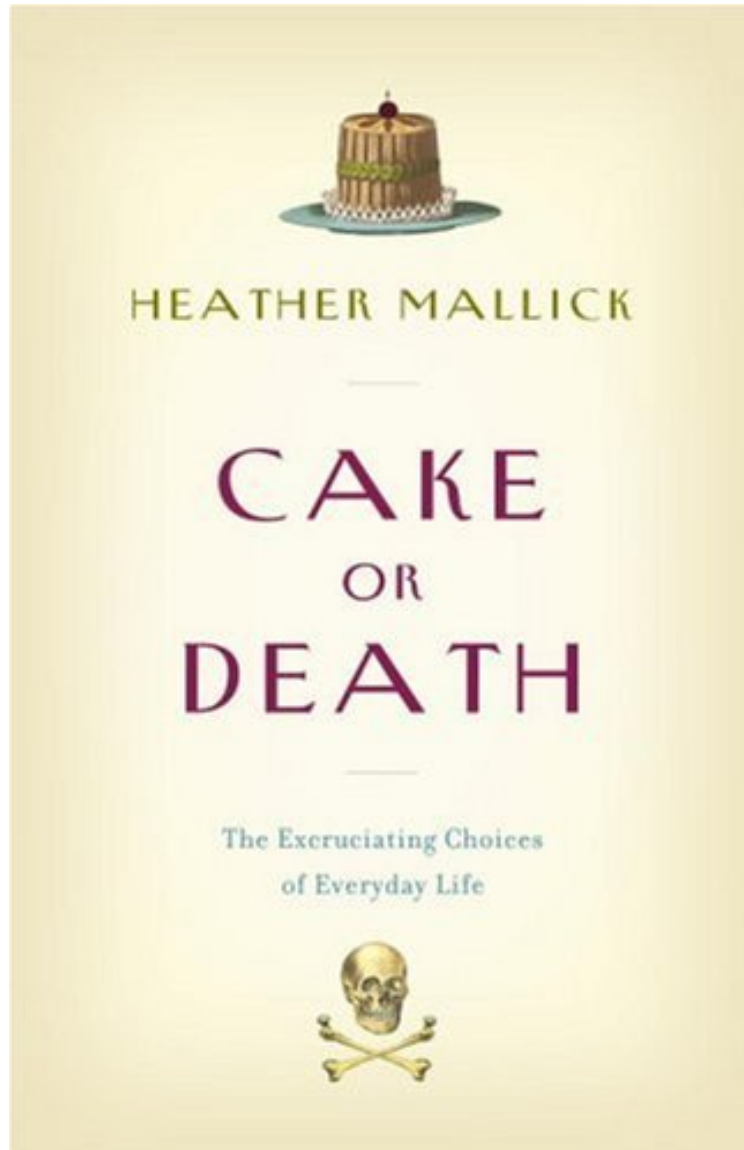


(Free) Cake or Death: The Excruciating Choices of Everyday Life

Cake or Death: The Excruciating Choices of Everyday Life

Heather Mallick

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Heather Mallick : Cake or Death: The Excruciating Choices of Everyday Life before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cake or Death: The Excruciating Choices of Everyday Life:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. laughing out loud By Dorothyanne Brown Laughing out loud while reading is a rare pleasure. There aren't many books that make you lose yourself so completely that you snort out loud, guffaw, catch yourself unawares. This is such a book. I sniggered all through it, but Heather's "Letter to my Writer's

Block" had me giggling helplessly and snorting in a most unladylike way. (Perhaps too close to home?). Yeah, Heather does rant on about Americans in a hurtful way but it's so cleverly, surgically done that I couldn't help but laugh there - and really, what WAS there to like about Bush? It's an honest book, and it made me feel like Ms. Mallick was sitting across the table from me with her second glass of wine and some home made food of the Martha variety and we were sharing laughs at the foolishness of life together. I'm on the hunt now for her other book and I am an eternal fan. Anyone who can throw together words in such a witty wonderful way has my soul for life. Bravo. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. How Do I love me? Let me count the ways. By fishface42 These essays, like Mallick's Toronto Star columns, are an endless exercise in narcissism. Her work is a churning kaleidoscope of facts, factoids and notions, the only constant being her out-sized ego. She has written that her husband is the only man she knows who is smarter than her. Kidding, not so kidding. Not surprisingly, the most common word in her writing is "I". Oh, and she despises reviews. 1 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Persuaded By N. Stratford I'm going to buy this book on the basis of the two reviews above. Never before have I read reviews that persuaded me more than I would like someone's writing. "Only a Canadian" indeed! We're more welcome, more loved and more respected than some of our neighbours (you can guess who), so we'll wear the "only a Canadian" label with our usual self-deprecating pride; it's far preferable to the overweening hubris of some in North America.

A brilliant new book from one of Canada's most popular columnists – a no-holds-barred riposte to the mess we've made of things. "Mrs. Tittlemouse is heaven in a sponge mop. I read Beatrix Potter's books as a child and love her paintings, her stories, her home-boiling of squirrels so her watercolours could be anatomically exact. But most of all, Beatrix Potter made domesticity desirable. All right, she didn't, but she domesticated me. Personal order has become my badge and it's the only thing that really works with melancholy." Heather Mallick is sorely disappointed. The world has not turned out quite the way she had hoped it would. But rather than retreat from it, she takes the world head on, fearlessly and formidably on her own terms. In a new work of entirely original writing, we have Heather unplugged (some might even say unhinged), and uncensored from the restrictions of her Globe and Mail column writing. As her many fans have come to expect from her, she is incisive and outrageous, whether she's cataloguing the many situations and items in our daily lives that we are told we should fear, teaching us how to cope with people we just can't stand (ruthless mockery is the key, really, says Heather) or writing about the valuable life lesson to be learned from one of her childhood heroes: Mrs. Tittlemouse, the original domestic goddess. A candid reflection on the complicated state of our lives and our world today, viewed through the lens of Heather's inimitable wit and outlook on life, *Cake or Death: The Excruciating Choices of Everyday Life* will provoke and delight readers.

"Mallick delights in being out of step, which is highly attractive. . . . Her playful collusive style . . . lures you in." —The Globe and Mail Praise for Heather Mallick: "Mallick has an engagingly skewed way of looking at the world. . . . At times her puckish, macabre sense of humour in these snippets echoes Atwood or early Jeanette Winterson." —Quill Quire "Frank and funny, Mallick is titillating and makes you laugh at things that you might normally consider inappropriate." —Hour (Montreal) From the Trade Paperback edition. About the Author Heather Mallick's first book, *Pearls in Vinegar: The Pillow Book of Heather Mallick*, was a national bestseller. She has worked as a reporter and columnist at the *The Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*, as chief copy editor at the *Financial Post* and as review editor at the *Sunday Sun* in Toronto. She lives in Toronto. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Mrs. Tittlemouse—Why we clean, an essay to grease the -elbows I am so bloody depressed. And the awful thing about it is that gloom used to be something to be ashamed of. I was very good at being ashamed of it and had a variety of slogans to use as cricket bats on my head. "Just get on with it" was one. "Mustn't grumble" was another. Until I realized that I was earning a fine income doing just that, that is, writing newspaper columns that were essentially me grumbling for 850 words every week. "Just do it" was very good, the only thing for which Nike deserves -credit. But the slogans don't work any more. Stephen Fry once wrote that just as they have laugh tracks on television comedies, so should they have weeping tracks on the news. And he wrote that during the first Gulf War and he hadn't even had his nervous breakdown, which culminated in him sitting in a car in Bruges contemplating the other use for an exhaust -pipe. There isn't anything on the news to cheer anyone. One response would be to stop watching it, but look what happened to the United States when the citizens of that huge -once--rich--now--debtful--I--just--don't--know--what--to--do--with--myself country stopped paying attention. The place exploded, then imploded, and bits started falling off, like New Orleans soon followed by the rest of Louisiana. In 2004, the nadir was reached after George W. Bush's second alleged election. An American student was reduced to setting up a website called *sorryeverybody.com* and stacks of smart Americans rigid with shock and coated with pessimism sent in pictures of themselves holding up signs apologizing to the -world. I cried as I watched it online, but by 2004 I was crying pretty -easily. The trough of melancholy in which we live now is a shallow grave. My husband, whom we shall call S., is British and doesn't understand the concept of depression. Every day spent outside his homeland is a holiday, according to him. When I tell him how sad I am, he asks why. Foolishly, I tell him. There's an awful phrase about how you have to "take things on board," meaning hear them and live with them. Clearly, I cannot take things on board. Because I tell S. that these men called the Janjaweed

are kidnapping children in the Sudan -and . . .S. is humane. He understands the wrongness of the Janjaweed but does not grasp why I am devastated by the wrongdoing of mad people in a faraway country not only of which I know nothing but that I can't even pick out of an atlas. We know this because he has brought an atlas into the bedroom where I am -curled. "You know that song 'Every Little Thing You Do Is Magic'?" he says. I nod, but don't rise to this as I know he hates Sting. Presumably because Sting is a Brit who still finds a reason to live in Britain and is a prat and poseur. "If you were writing that song," he says, "it would go, 'Every little thing you do is rubbish.'" He laughs. I don't. I think I know why we are still conjoined. We couldn't be more different. I like this. I wish I were him. We were watching the Springsteen tribute to Pete Seeger the other day and he, who loathes hip hop, said, "The progress of American -music--from Hoedown to Down, ho." And he sat there grinning at his own cleverness. I wish I could come up with lines like that. But I am gloomy, and somehow I admire the fact that my deep gloom is a source of amusement to him. (On the other hand, he doesn't understand North American ethical laxity. The other day in a seafood restaurant, he actually said to me, "Why did you order that if you weren't going to finish it?" Seriously. "I guess it just worked out that way," I said.) Anything can set me off. In 2004, I felt so desperately sorry for Blue State Americans, those nice people, a credit to a nation that was about to go all excremental. And there's no going back, they realized that, and on that website, they sent out telegrams of shame and sorrow, a student dorm arranging their apology in the form of track shoes, people's babies holding up signs (I normally disapprove of -this--your baby has no opinions on stem cells, -lady--but those babies were going to grow up with the consequences). You poor kid. Some -blue-eyed Democrat guy in Texas looked grim, saying he had voted behind enemy lines, and he might as well have been a Resistance fighter in France in the Second World War, sending a coded message on his little radio hidden in a -baguette. An American tourist in Canada visiting what looked like Lake Louise wrote "I'm sorry you have to live next door to us" and my face got all crumple and wet, like a sodden piece of paper towel. Then Canadians accidentally voted a bit too -right--wingly and I felt sorry for that young woman in retrospect. She no longer had us as her hideout. We were Narnia full of goofballs, and suddenly we were mean goofballs with bellies crawling with -complaints.