



VINTAGE

EAT ME
LINDA JAIVIN

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About the Book

Julia is a photographer; Chantal edits a fashion magazine; Helen is an academic, and Philippa is writing a novel. The best of friends, they meet at trendy cafes and restaurants to eye the passing talent and to swap stories about their wilder sexual encounters. But what is fiction and what is fact in these wild erotic exploits? Can we believe the tales these women are telling?

About the Author

Linda Jaivin is a freelance writer and lives in Sydney. *Eat Me* is her first novel.

for David

Linda Jaivin

EAT ME

VINTAGE BOOKS
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‘eat me’

She ran her fingers over the fresh figs. Surprising little sacs they were. Funny, dark and wrinkled, yet so exquisite on the tongue. Mother Nature had surely been thinking of Father Nature when she invented figs.

Ava looked up, tossing back her long black hair and glancing around with ice-blue eyes. It seemed she had the whole supermarket to herself. Sarah, the one cashier on late-night duty, had just checked out the only other customer and was absorbed once more in her Mills and Boon. All that could be heard was the hum of the refrigerator cabinets and the uninvasive beat of the muzak. The artificial chill of the heavy-duty airconditioning took the edge off what might otherwise have been an almost unbearably lusty cornucopia of smells, from the sweet ripeness of the bananas to the citron pungency of the lemons and limes. Everything was cold in supermarkets—the shiny mop-polished floors, the gelid steel of the shelves, the polar fluorescence of the lighting.

Ava picked up a fig from the pile and sniffed it. She stuck out her tongue and licked it. If milk is for pussies, why not figs? Slowly, she hiked her short black skirt up above the lace tops of her stockings. She wore no underwear. She never wore underwear. What was the point? She touched herself, and found that she was warm and wet. With her other hand, she brought the fig down between her legs. She teased the mouth of her cunt with it, gently at first and then with vigour. She could feel the skin of the fig burst. Some of the sticky seed spilt out, adhering to the lips of her cunt and the secret places on the inside of

her thighs. She put the fig back in her mouth. Salty sweet. She sucked it dry.

Ava dropped the spent fruit back onto the shelf, and advanced upon the strawberries. Large, red and firm, they knew exactly where they belonged. High inside her. She took a few tight steps, placing one stilettoed foot in front of the other, concentrating on the sensation the strawberries created as they slipped and crushed against each other. She thought she could distinguish each ticklish green stem. Then she stopped, leaned back against the shelves, closed her eyes and pulped.

Adam, the store detective, swallowed hard. He tried to get a better view of Ava from behind the piled bags of crisps where he'd concealed himself. The lump in his throat travelled down his thick neck and into the top of his tightly buttoned shirt. He had been standing there, behind the snack foods, when she strode into the fruit and veg section. He'd seen everything. He knew he ought to have apprehended her when she performed that act with the fig, but he found himself paralysed with...what? A shudder went through him now. He hitched up his khaki trousers and ran an awkward hand over his crewcut. His movements were clumsy. A shiny packet of low-cholesterol, all-natural blue corn chips crunched to the floor with a clamour that made his heart skip a beat.

If Ava noticed, she didn't let on. Her expression hadn't changed. It was rapturous. She hitched her skirt higher, up above her suspender belt. Thrusting two fingers deep into her own, soft fruit, she plumped and prodded, soaking them in juices fresh and tangy. She pulled them out slowly, and placed them in her mouth, sucking on them between pursed lips. A dollop of strawberry-coloured cream adhered to her chin. She fished in her purse for her pocket mirror. Bending down, with her arse pointed in Adam's direction, she held the mirror between her legs and, parting her labia

with her fingers, studied herself with intense concentration.

Grapes. This was the thought that struck Ava now.

She selected carefully. Firm fruit in a tight bunch. Large round purple ones. She turned around so that she was facing, once again, in Adam's direction, and leaned back on the shelf. Opening her legs wide, tracing little noughts on her clitoris with one hand, she pushed the grapes up herself with the other, a little at a time, pulling back a bit before each new thrust. The stems scratched and tickled, and she liked that.

Without warning, Ava lifted her head to look straight into the eyes of the man who'd been spying on her all this time. A smile played on her blood-red lips. Of course she knew he was there. Smirking, she extracted a single, dripping grape and offered it to him. Adam stood frozen as a TV dinner. She shrugged. Puckering her lips, she ingested the grape with a great slurping sound and put the rest of the bunch back on the shelf. Never once releasing his gaze from hers, she felt around behind her until she located a ripe kiwifruit. She held it up in front of her face, still looking hard into his eyes, and dug her fingernails into the gooseberry flesh, rupturing the skin. Green liquid ran down her fingers. Her eyes bored into his. She inserted the ragged fruit into the still-hungry maw between her legs, now running with juices of every description.

Adam took a single, tremulous step in her direction. She pretended not to notice. Calmly, she extracted the kiwifruit and proceeded to eat half. Ava held out the other half to the detective and arched an eyebrow. He was striding towards her now. Taking the fruit. Eating with rapture. Dropping to his knees in front of her.

She widened her stance. In one swift movement, she reached out and, grabbing him by the back of his head, brought his mouth up to her cunt. He gasped.

'Eat me,' she commanded.

‘No, I...’ he mumbled, panic in his voice.

‘Eat me, you filthy spud,’ she repeated, threateningly this time.

‘I...’

Ava fumbled in her bag with her free hand until she found her whip. The compact one she always kept in her purse. She cracked it against the floor next to Adam.

He shook his head, but his thick short hair only excited her as it brushed back and forth against her sensitive and swollen sex. The stubble on his chin grated engagingly on her inner thighs.

‘Eat me, you coffee stain. You slice of mouldy cheese. You slab of five-day-old horsemeat,’ she taunted, teasing the back of his neck with the handle of the whip.

‘No!’ he protested. ‘No, I won’t! And you can’t make me! I’m a good boy!’

‘Naughty boy,’ Ava contradicted. ‘Naughty as extra-large chips with vinegar and salt. Naughty as Heavenly Chocolate Cake.’ She yanked him closer.

‘Not true!’ he gasped, clutching onto her legs with both hands. ‘I’m as unsullied as Sara Lee, as pure as buckwheat pasta. I won’t—*ouch!*—participate in your disgusting little game.’ She tugged his ear, hard. He whimpered and stopped his struggle.

‘All right,’ he whispered inside her. ‘All right then. I will eat you. I will. You will be my paté, my calamari, my pumpkin risotto, my roast and three veg.’ He ate now, ate like a man who was starving. He devoured her with his tongue, his lips, his teeth and his hands. He ate every last trace of fig and strawberry and grape and kiwi, transformed by her love blender into a warm and salty tropical fruit yoghurt.

Ava dropped the whip. Her hand closed on a bunch of bananas as she slid down to the floor. Adam was kneeling between her legs now, still feeding at her goluptious trough. He reached out, grabbed her hands and pinned

them to the floor with his own, forcing her to release the bananas. She raised her head and glared at him. Struggled, but to no avail. He was smirking now. At his own, torturously slow pace, he returned his attention to her cunt. Moaning, she came in his mouth, kicking hard with one foot and sending a high-heeled shoe skimming down the aisle in the direction of the breakfast cereals. Still lapping, he released her hands, which lay limp by her side. He fumbled for the bananas and peeled one. She drew in her breath as he pushed it inside her. He scrambled to his feet, and watched out of the corner of his eye as, with well-timed thrusts, she brought herself to orgasm again. She didn't stop until the banana disintegrated into pap.

'You disgusting bitch,' Adam spat, walking towards the vegetables. He returned with a Lebanese cucumber. She'd stood up and picked up her whip again.

'What did you say?' Her tone was imperious, if a little shaky. 'You little piece of rat-trap salami,' she spat huskily.

'You disgusting bitch,' he repeated, with slightly less conviction, his eyes on her whip hand. 'I despise you more than tinned minestrone, more than, than...more than angel cake mix, more than sliced cheese.'

'Take off your trousers, Chiko-face,' she said, fondling the leather.

'No way, cod-feet.'

'Take off your trousers, I said, full-fat.'

'Bitch. Cunt. Soupbones.'

Ava snapped the whip with a sudden movement. The end licked Adam's thigh.

His nostrils flared. He pulled down his trousers, revealing that he wasn't wearing any underwear either. He had a massive erection. Ava gently flicked at it with the whip. She sneered. 'So curd-cheeks. You've been enjoying this all along.'

Adam refused to meet her gaze.

'Bend down.'

‘No.’

‘Don’t make me angry.’

He scowled as he bent down, arse to her, balancing with his hands against the shelf with the fruit.

‘Give me that cucumber.’

Turning his head, he watched as Ava lubricated it in her vagina. Slowly, she insinuated it up his arse. He groaned and twisted with pain and pleasure.

Suddenly, there was a silence. Someone had turned off the muzak. Ava and Adam froze, as with a slight electronic crackle and a clearing of throat, Sarah’s voice came over the p. a. system. ‘Attention, shoppers. The store is about to close. Please make your final selections and pay for them at the counter. Thank you for your co-operation. Please shop with us again.’

Ava removed the cucumber from Adam’s anus and tossed it back over into the vegetable section. It landed right next to all the other cucumbers.

‘Good toss, cupcake.’

‘Thanks.’ They laughed, a little harshly, and quickly straightened their clothing. Ava retrieved her shoe, folded up her whip and put it back in her purse. ‘I’d better buy something,’ she whispered, thinking randomly of coconut milk and small packets of tarragon.

‘See you next week, honey pot?’ asked Adam. ‘Usual time, usual place?’

‘You bet, sweet pea.’

‘Bye for now.’

‘Bye.’ Adam watched as Ava sauntered down the aisle to the cashier. Sarah looked up at her, wondering how one of Ava’s stockings had fallen to her ankle. Hadn’t she noticed?

‘Good book?’ Ava asked Sarah as she handed over her purchases.

‘Yes, very,’ sighed Sarah, her eyes on Ava’s bare thigh. ‘I love romances. Do you?’

‘Of course,’ Ava answered, winking. ‘Have them all the time.’

veal

'Delicious,' purred Chantal, narrowing her dramatic green eyes and running her tongue suggestively over bee-sting lips. A man striding past their cafe table came to such a sudden halt at the sight that he nearly fell over his own feet. Even in the smorgasbord of Darlinghurst, Chantal stood out like a designer entree: elegant, colour co-ordinated, piquant. She looked every inch the fashion editor she was. If she noticed the man, she gave no sign, and he quickly moved on in embarrassment.

To Chantal's left sat Julia, her small pointed chin balanced on folded hands. Her dark eyes were closed and a dreamy smile curved her soft mouth. Her warm olive skin glowed in the sunlight and her long raven hair cascaded in a frozen flow down her back. So still was she sitting that not a single item of her abundant silver jewellery jangled.

To Chantal's right perched Helen, a wholegrain loaf of a woman in beige and brown, seeded with freckles. Behind tortoise-shell spectacles, her eyes were a dark mustard. Helen glanced down at the manuscript, the pages of which lay scattered on the table in front of them. She shook her head appreciatively. 'Chantal's right, Phippa,' she enthused to the fourth member of their little group, who was seated opposite Chantal. 'Delicious is the word.'

'Yeah, they're, uh, supposed to be pretty good for you too,' Philippa replied, deadpan, holding up half an apple-and-walnut muffin and pretending to study it. 'No sugar, no animal fats, no artificial ingredients.'

'No shit, Phippa,' Helen cut in, rolling her eyes. 'We're not talking about the muffins. We're talking about your

story. And you know it. It was wonderful finally hearing you read some of your work to us.'

'Did you really like it?' Philippa grinned shyly, looking down, sweeping the pages into a pile. She shook them out for crumbs, and then fed them into the mouth of her cavernous shoulder bag, which she replaced on the back of the chair.

The four were having breakfast at Cafe Da Vida on Victoria Street, their favourite hangout. It was a gorgeous Sydney spring morning, all the more perfect for being a late Saturday morning at that. The native fauna of Darlinghurst, dressed to thrill, were sloping through the urban jungle towards their favourite coffee holes. Actors, artists, sex workers, junkies, nurses, actors who were also junkies, artists who were also sex workers, sex workers who pretended to be nurses, gays, straights, bis, straight-acting gays, gay-acting straights, immigrants with Hungarian accents, young English and German and French backpackers. In pairs and packs they came. There were loners, too. Though some carried just the big black bags underneath their eyes, others toted much-thumbed journals, the weekend papers, or slim books by fashionable authors.

Philippa wanted, more than anything else, to be one of those fashionable authors. There were two things about the publishing industry that she knew favoured her chances. One, sex sells; two, she'd look great in the photograph on the dust jacket. In real life, she was afflicted by a kind of physical awkwardness born of shyness about her tall, big-boned frame. But in photographs she looked a sultry vamp, the quintessential femme fatale. She had thick black hair, which fell to her shoulders, grey eyes and creamy skin. She tended towards black turtlenecks worn with dark jeans. She secured the jeans with wide black belts and anchored them with heavy black boots. It was a look that drew inviting glances from dykes in the leather scene as well as

a certain kind of neurotic male artist. Glances she returned. But rarely—so far as her friends could tell, anyway—did anything about. Philippa appeared to be single-mindedly devoted to her writing. She worked part-time as a journalist in a government department and full-time on her erotic fiction. I am, she would declare, mistress of the v-words: vicariousness and voyeurism. I have, she would insist, an excellent and satisfying sex life, but it's in my head, not my bed.

'Helen.' Philippa suddenly looked anxious. 'You're up on these things. What's the latest line on pornography among feminists? I'm a bit worried. Think they'll take a dim view of the story?'

'Oh, look, it's not that clear, really,' Helen answered. 'Some feminists still maintain that all pornography is representational violence against women. But I think that kind of line can hardly apply to women's erotica. Particularly when it involves a woman stuffing a Lebanese cucumber up a man's arse. No, I thought the story was fabulous,' she affirmed. 'Really. I found it, uh'—she raised her eyes to heaven and paused, as though interrogating God as to how She would have put it—'both erotic and empowering.' Helen liked words like 'empowering'. She was a feminist academic and film critic, and terms like that came with the turf. She paused, primly smoothing her longish skirt over her knees, and added, 'I think you could've done more with the whip, though.'

Chantal pursed her lips and lashed at the pavement with an imaginary whip, startling a rollerblader. An older European at the next table stared, utterly rapt, over the rim of his espresso.

Philippa nudged Helen, and pointed at Julia with her chin. Chantal looked over at her too. 'Wonder what she's thinking about?' Philippa mouthed to the others.

Sex. That was what Julia was thinking about.

Julia had recently had one heaven of a night. As much as she'd tried to concentrate on Philippa's story, her own steamy little narrative insisted on replaying itself in her head and she was having trouble finding the off button. She was up to the scene where she was watching Jake spoon up the final morsels of beef chilli khadi with the last of the naan. She smiled to herself. She was glad she'd taken a punt and called him.

Jake was on the dole, a struggling musician with a clapped-out car that was about to be repossessed and a troublesome band so beset with internal strife that he referred to it as 'Bosnia'. He lived in a grungy share-house in Newtown and called his dreadlocks his only accomplishment in life. Julia had met him at a party she and Philippa had attended last weekend in Glebe.

At the party, she and Jake had danced. Afterwards, he'd gone into the kitchen to fetch some beer. He'd pressed the cool can against her neck before handing it to her, and suggested they find somewhere to talk. Snuggling into a sofa in one of the less populated rooms, they'd asked each other most of the usual questions and a few unusual ones as well. He told her about his band, she told him about her photography. She mentioned her fascination for China; he said he'd once thought of learning Mandarin. Their legs just touched. His seemed to go on forever under his grey Levi 501s; he was almost improbably long-limbed. Jake had smooth, honey-coloured skin, warm brown eyes, a small neat nose, a wide mouth, and a dry, laconic wit. He seemed sincere when he said he'd like to see her photography. When Julia had laughed loudly at something and rocked forward in her mirth, causing her long black hair to fall in front of her face, Jake had reached out and flipped it back over her shoulder in a surprisingly intimate gesture. He sent her Latin blood racing.

In the style of his generation, which, depending on how you counted, was one or two behind hers, he was so laid

back that she wasn't sure what his intentions were, or if he had any intentions at all. When an old acquaintance of hers approached with an endless list of have-you-seen-so-and-so-latelys, Jake excused himself and slipped off into another room. Julia hid her disappointment but felt consoled by the fact that—at her instigation—they'd already exchanged phone numbers. She caught sight of him later, but he was deep in a conversational scrum in the kitchen.

Eventually Philippa approached to ask if Julia wanted to share a taxi home. Philippa lived in the Cross; she could drop Julia off at her warehouse in Surry Hills on the way. In the cab, they talked about the party. Julia neglected to mention her meeting with Jake. It wasn't that she didn't want Philippa to know. But she was superstitious about such things and believed that telling tales too early on might put a jinx on the whole enterprise.

Anyway, there they were, five days later, in a discreet Indian restaurant on a side street in Glebe. After a brief stocktake of the dishes to check that nothing edible remained, Jake suppressed a burp and extended his hand across the table to cover hers. She let her middle finger curl lightly into his palm.

'Glad you're not a vegetarian, Julia,' he said after a silence.

'Why's that?' Julia asked.

'Oh, I dunno. It's not really vegetarians I'm afraid of so much as vegans. But maybe I shouldn't tell you. Not now, anyway.'

'But you've got me all curious.'

'Later.'

Oh well. She liked the sound of that word, 'later'. 'Promise?'

'Promise.'

She looked down at his hand now. She often marvelled at hands—all nerve endings and capillaries, sensation and blood. And those of younger men could be so beautiful, so

tender and supple. With her fingertip, she explored and tickled. He shivered, almost imperceptibly, and leaned forward. She kissed him over the table and, under the table, caressed his leg with her foot. After a minute, he whispered, a little hoarsely, 'I have a raging erection.' She smiled and caught the attention of a passing waiter. 'Could I've the bill please?' she said.



Chantal smirked. 'Lights are on. Anyone at home? Oh, Joo-li-ya!' She sang out Julia's name, syllable by syllable, re-re-do.

Julia's eyelids flew open and panic shined briefly in her eyes.

'Well,' asked Philippa after a significant pause, 'Did you like my story?' Suddenly self-conscious, she mumbled, 'Of course, you don't have to, you know, say you did if you didn't.'

Julia caught a quick shuttle back to Planet Earth. She blinked. 'Uh, yes, of course I did,' she stuttered. 'Put it this way,' she continued, slowly, recovering her poise. 'I've got the cream. All I need now is another cup of coffee. It was orgasmic.'

'You're not faking it?'

'Fake it? Me? Never.' Julia smiled charmingly.

'Now I'm really worried.' Philippa nibbled at her muffin and frowned. 'Do you think "no animal fat" means no butter? How can you bake with no butter?'

Julia scanned the street as she sipped her latte. 'Hey,' she alerted the others. 'Potential victim.' Taking care not to look too obvious, they turned to look in the direction Julia had indicated, and performed a quick inventory.

Lightly tanned skin, dishevelled brown hair with big blue eyes half-hidden under dense lashes. Late twenties. White Bond t-shirt. Lightly muscled, well-defined arms. Black jeans covering but not concealing lean but muscular legs.

'Clothes horse,' Helen approved.

'Maybe, but check out the hooves,' observed Philippa. 'Think his farrier's made a bit of a mistake there.'

Docs. Not the boots but the shoes. With white socks.

'Ee-ew,' said Chantal, turning up her beaked nose and patting her champagne-blonde beehive. She was terribly pleased with the beehive, a new item on her head's endlessly revised agenda. It came courtesy of her best male friend and confidante, Alexi, a hairdresser. Alexi and she shared stories, news and views about men. They even gave each other the *All Men Are Bastards* desk calendar each year. Chantal hoped, what with her natural style and Ab-Fab job with *Pulse*, Sydney's bible of style, that she would someday soon become a camp icon. One of her fantasies was to be plucked from the sidelines at the Mardi Gras parade by a float-illa of gorgeous, half-naked men. They would place her on a throne, and thrust and grind and gyrate moistly around her while she waved to the crowds like a prom queen in an American movie, or rather, just a queen. They'd think she was the most divine trannie they'd ever clapped eyes on, even more divine than Terence Stamp in *Priscilla*. Doing nothing to disillusion them, at the post-parade party she'd gently push some obliging slave over onto his knees. Steadying herself with one hand on his waist, she would bend over invitingly with her arse in the air. A series of spectacularly muscled and shiny gym queens would then take her from behind. 'I want *you* now, and then *you*, and then *you* and *you* and *you*,' she'd say, crooking a slender, perfectly manicured forefinger at each in turn.

'You've got a milk moustache,' Helen informed Julia, who quickly wiped it off with the back of her hand.

'Why do they always put so much froth on lattes?' Julia wondered.

'I'm glad you all think it works, anyway,' inserted Philippa, steering the conversation back to her story.

Chantal tapped another cigarette out of her pack.

‘What are you calling it?’ asked Helen.

“Forbidden Fruit and Veg,” I think. What do you reckon?’

‘Bit obvious,’ pronounced Julia, after a pause. ‘You know, Adam, Ava—you might as well call it “The Market Garden of Eden”.’

Philippa blushed. ‘You’ve got a point,’ she conceded.

Putting her cigarette to lips the colour of Courage (from the Poppy collection, of course), Chantal glanced around briefly to see if there was anyone worth bumming a light from. There wasn’t. She fished her lighter out of her purse and lit up. She blew a few smoke rings into the air. ‘How about—thinking of Jule’s, uh, reaction—“Creme Fraiche”?’ she proposed.

‘I’d just call it “Eat Me”,’ suggested Helen.

A rather stunning waiter emerged from the cafe to deliver another round of coffees—latte for Julia, cappuccino for Helen, short blacks for Chantal and Philippa. As he strode handsomely back inside, Philippa remarked, ‘Have you ever noticed how all the waiters in Darlinghurst cafes look like supermodels?’

‘Yeah, and the ones in Double Bay, Double Pay look like bankers and gazumpers,’ Helen replied. ‘No kidding. I went bookshopping the other day at Nicholas Pounder’s and then stopped in a cafe around the corner. It was seriously weird. They even wear striped ties. You expect their mobiles to start ringing while they’re taking your order.’

‘The waiters carry mobiles?’ gasped Julia.

‘Julia, for a photographer, you’re very literal. I meant, they look like the types who would carry mobiles.’

‘Oh.’

‘Have you shown the story to anyone else?’ asked Helen.

‘Just Richard.’ Richard was the charismatic man who ran the writers’ workshop Philippa had been attending, as faithfully as any churchgoer, every Sunday for years now. None of the others had ever met him, but they felt they