



The Sushi Chef

David De Bacco

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“In order to receive love, we must first love ourselves.” Every self-help book on love and relationship tells us this basic principle. Intellectually we know it’s true, but what happens when one man embraces it with his heart and soul, attempting to make it a real, living force in his life? Meet John Clute, an aspiring writer who supports his craft by working as a waiter in 1992, New York City when the gay revolution struggled with the AIDS epidemic, when advances in research meant that men stopped dying suddenly from the gay cancer and started to stay alive. Madonna had just released *Erotica* and *Sex*, her takes on sexuality through music, word and photography. To many, it was the relighting of this sexual culture that had been so damaged by the onset of the epidemic. Clute works from paycheck to paycheck but in spite of all his efforts, an eviction notice is slapped on his apartment door. If only Clute wasn’t too proud to ask for help. The one person who could possibly help him is the man he fell in love with years ago, the sensual and handsome Toshio, a sushi chef, who has perfected the arts of both geisha-like sensuality and virtuosic Japanese cooking. However, Clute and Toshio’s on-again-off-again odd romance is plagued with secrets, stultifying cultural differences, and underlying fears fueled by years of not speaking the truth. Tired of this dead cycle, Clute seeks to make a change no matter what the risk, uncertain of Toshio’s ability to change and grow with him. Told through the mind and heart of John Clute, *The Sushi Chef* by popular food columnist and restaurant connoisseur David De Bacco, intertwines the hero’s struggle of life and love with enchanting—and ironically quite symbolic—explanations of the art of sushi. The result is a novel with a message that has the power to touch lives. Many souls come to New York with a dream. Some find what they seek while others do not. But John Clute shows us with tender-hearted humor, openness, and a bit of RuPaul flair, that often it’s how one lives and not necessarily achieving the “dream” that makes a life worth living. David De Bacco has worked in New York, London, Tokyo, Paris and Milan for some of the world’s most acclaimed chefs and restaurateurs including Nora Pouillon, Chef “Nobu” Matsuhisa, Drew Nieporent, Iron Chef Masaharu “Morimoto” and actor, Robert De Niro. He also created MEGU, a modern Japanese restaurant in Manhattan for Japanese restaurateur, Koji Imai and Hollywood’s celebrity haunt, Geisha House for actor, Ashton Kutcher’s Dolce Group. David currently lives and celebrates life in Los Angeles where he is a freelance writer for Edge Publications, AOL’s Patch.com and is the creator of *Cookin’ with Mama*, a foodie blog. *The Sushi Chef* is his first novel.

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