



TREYF: My Life as an Unorthodox Outlaw

Elissa Altman

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From the *Washington Post* columnist and James Beard Award-winning author of *Poor Man's Feast* comes a story of seeking truth, acceptance, and self in a world of contradiction...

Treyf: According to Leviticus, *unkosher and prohibited*, like lobster, shrimp, pork, fish without scales, the mixing of meat and dairy. Also, *imperfect, intolerable, offensive, undesirable, unclean, improper, broken, forbidden, illicit*.

A person can eat treyf; a person can be treyf.

In this kaleidoscopic, universal memoir of time and place, Elissa Altman explores the tradition, religion, family expectation, and the forbidden that were the fixed points in her 1970s Queens, New York, childhood. Every part of Altman's youth was laced with contradiction and hope, betrayal and the yearning for acceptance: synagogue on Saturday and Chinese pork ribs on Sunday; Bat Mitzvahs followed by shrimp-in-lobster-sauce luncheons; her old-country grandparents, whose kindness and love were tied to unspoken rage, and her bell-bottomed neighbors, whose adoring affection hid dark secrets.

While the suburban promise of *The Brady Bunch* blared on television, Altman searched for peace and meaning in a world teeming with faith, violence, sex, and paradox. Spanning from 1940s wartime Brooklyn to 1960s and '70s Queens to present-day rural New England, *Treyf* captures the collision of youthful cravings and grown-up identities; it is a vivid tale of what it means to come to yourself both in spite of and in honor to your past.

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