



The Catastrophe

Ian Wedde

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Christopher Hare has done well for himself: one of the world's top food writers, he has travelled to the best restaurants in the most exotic locations, accompanied by the chic dining companion known to readers of his lavish books as Thé Glacé. But when the credit crunch ushers in a new age of austerity, it's uncertain whether his audience will still have an appetite for his thoughts on Robuchon and caramelized quail. Certainly Christopher's editor has had his fill. One evening, as he explores the budget options in a mediocre restaurant in off-season Nice—alone, for Thé Glacé, his erstwhile wife Mary Pepper, has left him to find international fame and fortune as an art photographer of pornographically eroticized foodstuffs—Christopher witnesses an assassination. Impulsively, he throws himself into the action, and becomes the almost-willing victim of a political kidnapping. Will his ex-wife come to his rescue? Will the harshly beautiful Palestinian pediatrician Hawwa Habash soften toward her accidental prisoner? Suffused with culinary delights and political menace, this funny, fast-paced novel uses a fascination with food as a metaphor for an age obsessed with excess and the ultimate rejection of it.



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