

Food as an Imagery in Laura Beatriz Esquivel Valdes' Like Water for Chocolate

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P. Sasikala

Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of English
Sakthi College of Arts and science for Women, Oddanchatram

M. Muthumeena

PG Student, Research Department of English
Sakthi College of Arts and science for Women, Oddanchatram

Abstract

The captivating novel *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel was translated into English by Carol and Thomas Christensen. This book has been a worldwide bestseller since it was published in 1993. Magical realism, love, and tradition are among the book's key themes. Tita, a young Mexican woman whose emotions and cooking are closely related, is the protagonist of the story. Her emotions are evident in every meal she prepares, and the effects it has on those who consume it are often unexpected. The constraints of patriarchy, familial expectations, and the power of passion are all explored in this book. The book tells the remarkable tale of the unique connection between the allure of food and the power of love and is available in monthly installments with recipes, romantic ideas, and DIY remedies. A genuine cookbook is stuffed with recipes that act as the chapter's epigraphs. The heightened style of magic realism portrays her unique combination of tasty sustenance and sexual excitation. *Like Water for Chocolate* is a masterpiece because of its vivid fusion of fantasy and reality, and Esquivel's exquisitely sensual language is extremely detailed. It brews and boils like an incredible spicy bouillabaisse, taking the reader on an imaginative, engaging, and engrossing journey. The story, which combines magical realism, passion, and love, takes place in the kitchen of a Mexican family. Tita, the protagonist, creates mouthwatering food that is flavored with her feelings and has an impact on every dinner. The book deftly blends history, affection, and the transformative power of food to provide readers.

Keywords: Emotions, Captivating, Engrossing, Imagination, Bouillabaisse, Epigraphs.

Introduction

Food is indispensable to everyone. It plays a fascinating role in everyone's life and is one of a living thing's basic needs. Without food, we cannot live. Everyone has a different way of preparing food. The mother is the first person that everyone always remembers. Mom's cooking will always be delicious and occasionally even act as a medication to treat illness. It gives us pleasant memories and happiness. When the aroma comes out of the vessels, the sounds during preparation and the final presentation have the ability to convert a disturbed mind into a peaceful one.

Laura Beatriz Esquivel Valdes was born on September 30, 1950-August 25, 2015 was a Mexican novelist, screen writer and politician, served as member of congress for the Morena Party from 2015 to

2018. her first novel *Como agua para chocolate* (Like Water for Chocolate) became a bestseller in Mexico and the United States. It was an award-winning film. She was born the third of four children to Julio Caesar Esquivel, a telegraph operator, and Josefa Valdes, a homemaker. Her father's death in 1999 was the inspiration for her next work, *Tan Veloz como el viento*. She was trained as a teacher. Esquivel founded a children's theater workshop, and as a teacher, she wrote and produced some dramas for the children. She got married to actor, producer, and director Alfonso Arau, with whom she collaborated on several films. Esquivel and her husband lived in Mexico City. Laura Esquivel was the preliminary candidate for the local council in District XXVII of Mexico City for the PRD in March 2009. In 2012, she was elected Federal Representative for the Morena Party. She has also served as head of the Mexico City Cultural Committee, member of the Science and Technology, and Environmental Committees for the Morena Party.

Mexican's Tradition

Through Tita De La Garza, a character in the book, the Mexican custom is depicted. The work also portrays the importance of cuisine and tradition in Mexican society. Spain dominated Mexico for three centuries, and after its independence, it had a significant impact on the country's culture and food. Mexicans often cook a wide variety of delicious dishes, as well as special ones for special occasions. They pay close attention to create a variety of tasty and distinctive foods. Esquivel focuses on Tita's limited wish to wed her partner because it goes against their cultural norms. It is customary for the youngest daughter to be single to care for their mother when she gets older. It presents the idealized picture of a young Mexican woman with all the desires that young girls have. Despite her limitations, she never expresses her dissatisfaction on purpose; instead, it's concealed and shown in the food she makes.

The novel begins each chapter with a recipe that illustrates the consequences of a few events in Tita's life. Throughout the chapters, she meticulously incorporates her repressed feelings and wants into the foods that she cooks. Tita's birth in the kitchen is where it all starts. Due to her husband's untimely passing, Mama Elena is unable to care for her daughter. The head cook, Nacha, has taken care of her. Tita also knows how to employ every single feature of the kitchen like a pro—the aroma, the tastes and their various applications, the noises of cooking, and everything else. As a result, she can pick up cooking skills and even the smallest details directly from Nacha, making her Nacha's replacement as cook. This gave her the freedom she had long desired.

The key device employed by Laura Esquivel in her book is magical realism. She has used this to highlight a woman's deep desire to fulfill all her goals and create a distinct identity for herself. It's only Nacha and Tita who know how to cook. Cooking is not something Mama Elena and her other daughters are good at. Tita has had a strong relationship with food from the day of her birth till the day of her death. The use of magical realism in Laura's portrayal of Tita's feelings during her mother's refusal to grant her want to wed Pedro Muzquiz and other incidents is particularly effective. This takes place in a cascading manner. The recipe has first been prepared. It is composed of specific flavors, textures, and the cook's attitude. This is reflected in the recipes that are made. This makes the person who eats it feel something. She reveals her joys, disappointments, and occasionally her racing thoughts through the tastes of the meal.

Food Plays as an Imagery

She expresses her grief by pouring a tear into the frosting of the wedding cake that she is forced to make for her sister's wedding to her beloved. The cake holds all the sadness, and the first taste causes the visitors to cry uncontrollably. This even affects Mama Elena, who never cried at her husband's death. Thus, the first compelling chapter made the power of a cook clearly apparent.

Seeing her beloved being married to her sister is too much for Tita to handle. Similar occurrences highlight Tita's emotional potency. The author uses this spell as an example of magical realism. Rather than seeking retribution in any circumstance, she cooks delectable meals. Gertrudis's life takes an unexpected turn thanks to the rose petal and quail dish. Following his union with Rosaura, Pedro purchased roses for Tita. Tita is concerned as Mama Elena interrupts them, but she is also going to make a rose-themed dinner. With all of Tita's affection and sensual curiosity in Pedro, something is being prepared. It turns out that this is a highly sensual dish. Pedro feels this very much, as does Gertrudis. Pedro and Tita exchange glances, but Gertrudis becomes uncontrollable. She went entirely into Pedro through the quail. The essence of the meal disturbs Gertrudis. She began to perspire after being aroused. She thinks about Pancho, the person she met a week prior. They eloped together. This place's food has fed my body and my soul. Later, she feeds Roberto, her nephew, as Rosaura does not. Pedro does not love Rosaura as much as he does Tita. She is unable to care for her son as a result. However, Tita cares for Roberto with the same love and devotion that Nacha did, providing him with wholesome food and affection. Mama Elena understood the anguish and need because she was not showered with maternal affection. Roberto brought her Happiness. Tita gave her work her whole attention. She prepared with extreme attention to detail and caution. She used the real formulas to produce the dishes. She occasionally missed having Nacha around the kitchen. The only one who was worried about Tita's welfare was Nacha. She brought her enthusiasm to life. Readers will see numerous other recipes utilized in a variety of contexts throughout the book, such as to convey love or treat illnesses. Chancha makes Ox tail soup to help Tita with her illness.

Consequently, it also functions as a doctor in a person's life. Tita uses the kitchen as her personal domain, where she is allowed unrestricted control. Despite her lack of cooking skills, Mama Elena commands others to prepare meals for her. One might consciously envision a woman's secret world through Tita's character. Tita enjoys spending time in the kitchen with Gertrudis, and she is an excellent chef. She enjoyed herself with Tita despite her lack of cooking skills. The author deftly conveys her creativity and enthusiasm for creating inventive foods. Tita paved the way for her sister's freedom. However, she is content that Gertrudis deviates from the customs established by her mother. Even though Gertrudis is now a member of the brothel, she subsequently enlists men to train to be soldiers. She also invites the men to the ranch once to see her sister's innate skill and to explain to them why she changed from a peaceful flower named Rose. This passage in the book is ironic. To fully distance Tita and Pedro from one another, Mama Elena takes the small family to San Antonio.

Roberto's health is impacted by this; he weakens and eventually dies. Tita and Chench started crying when they heard this news in the middle of making the sausage, but Mama told them to keep their emotions in check because it would ruin the food's flavor, like it did with the Chabela wedding cake. However, they cry, and Mama Elena violently attacks Tita. This displays her domination toward the ranch's female cooks. Worms make the sausage come out the worst. The author illustrates the outcome of food being prepared out of displeasure and apathy in this specific situation. As a result, food conveys feelings and the cook's thoughts. It is said that when someone lends someone a drink of water, they also lend their thoughts cooking, she had a good time with Tita. The author deftly conveys her inventiveness and love of creating new recipes. Tita paved the way for her sister's freedom. However, she is content that Gertrudis deviates from the customs established by her mother. Even though Gertrudis is now a member of the brothel, she

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Conclusion

The author has captured the intense passion and profound thought that a woman has throughout her life. Tita's personal demonstrates the depth of a person's love for their passion. A woman's

deepest wants, longings, and desires are fulfilled by food. It also aids in the creation of enduring memories and life-changing experiences. Even while it has multiple recipes, it has some memory and can transport Tita back in time to the individuals she needs to assist her mentally balance her thoughts. The inspiration for this novel came from Laura Esquivel as she was preparing a recipe that she had learned from her elder.

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