

J. Ryan Stradal

(AUTHOR)

Kitchens of the Great Midwest

(BOOK TITLE)

DATE

TIME

08 JUN 2021

**8:00PM ET**

HOLLY FURTICK

*Book Club!*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR - J. RYAN STRADAL

Lives in California. Has published 2 books, Kitchens of the Great Midwest and the Lager Queen of Minnesota. He has also worked producing on several show such as the deadliest catch and storage wars

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Kitchens of the Great Midwest is a loosely connected set of eight short stories that are each focused on a single dish as well as a single point of view of someone who, to some degree, orbits the world of a legendary chef. The common denominator between all of the linked stories is Eva Thorvald, whom we see or hear about from tough childhood through amazingly successful adulthood. Over the period of thirty or so years, we see the people in Eva's periphery discuss her, or subjects that relate to her and her life.

## SETTING

Midwest

## THEMES

Food

Family

Friendship

## CHARACTER/CHAPTER CONNECTIONS

*Each chapter told from a different character's point of view and then a cliffhanger at the end*

LUTEFISK (Loo duh fisk)

POV: Lars

CLIFF: What happens to Lars?

CHOCOLATE HABANERO

POV: Randy

CLIFF: What happened to Eva after her life is “pushed forward into a particular direction”?

SWEET PEPPER JELLY

POV: Braque

CLIFF: Did Braque keep the baby?

WALLEYE

POV: Will

CLIFF: Will Will get over Eva?

GOLDEN BANTAM

POV: Octavia

CLIFF: What becomes of Eva’s dinner parties?

I felt like the purpose of this chapter was to make you love adult Eva

VENISON

POV: Jordy

CLIFF: Where does Jordy end up/Does he end up taking Eva up on her offer?

BARS

POV: Pat

CLIFF: Does Pat get arrested for her son’s marajuina? (or simply “What happens to Pat?”)

THE DINNER

POV: Cindy (aka Cynthia)

CLIFF: Does Eva seek out Cindy one day?

## **MEMORABLE SCENES**

Lars’ death.

Eva’s suspension from school.

The Truth Chili.

Fishing date with Will.

Pat at the baking competition

Jordy making margaritas for his mom.

When Cindy hears Eva’s name for the first time.

The final dinner.

When Cindy meets Eva.

## **QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS**

How long did it take you to get acclimated to the style of the book?

Which chapter/character was your favorite?

“When Lars first held her, his heart melted over her like butter on warm bread, and

he would never get it back. When mother and baby were asleep in the hospital room, he went out to the parking lot, sat in his Dodge Omni, and cried like a man who had never wanted anything in his life until now.”

How did you feel about the ending?

Was there anything J Ryan left you wondering about?