



Devour

David Temple

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San Francisco scenery and culture are injected in Devour, a gritty crime thriller about a vast conspiracy.

David Temple's sharp thriller *Devour* includes lost family members and an innocent man accused of a heinous murder.

Michael Rogan is a master chef who leads a charmed life. His San Francisco restaurant, Dévorer, is one of the best, and best known, in the world. Michael loves his craft, but not as much as he loves his wife, Kathryn, who was his college sweetheart, and their daughter, Natalie. The couple has an incredible mansion overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge. There is one dark spot in this rosy picture: Michael's father, who haunts the hidden areas of Michael's mind. Years prior, he killed Michael's mother in a shocking bout of violence.

When Michael's old army friend Frederick offers Michael a quid pro quo arrangement—he will use his powers as the warden of San Quentin to release Michael's father in exchange for a favor—Michael trusts his gut and says no. Then Scott, Michael's brother, is found dead with a kitchen knife sticking out of his chest at the restaurant, and the authorities suspect Michael.

Frederick, though a shady schemer, is made empathetic through the backstory of his abusive father. He is at the heart of the book's criminal conspiracy, which works because of others in it who also occupy liminal spaces between the legitimate economy and the underworld. Other occupants of this underworld, including Michael and Scott's father, are also fleshed out, though Michael is the book's main focus and drives the story forward. Though an amateur at the work, he investigates Scott's murder; he also suffers because of what's happening, and still he emerges a hero. Michael's family, who are often targeted because of him, are less addressed.

Among the book's quid pro quo schemes, money laundering, and murder—all supported, if not by intention, by cynical law enforcement agents—all is handled in a detailed manner. Each chapter outlines aspects of the conspiracy, showing the many obstacles that Michael has to overcome in order to clear his name and reputation.

Justice reigns in the book's unsurprising but satisfying end, once Michael has pieced the scheme together and thwarted attacks on his family. San Francisco scenery and culture are injected in *Devour*, a gritty crime thriller about a vast conspiracy.

BENJAMIN WELTON (September 9, 2020)

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