



Chocolate Chocolate: The True Story of Two Sisters, Tons of Treats, and the Little Shop That Could

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When their beloved father died suddenly, authors Frances and Ginger Park (To Swim Across the World) comforted themselves with chocolates and mused on opening a confectionery shop with their small inheritance. The idea felt right to them--"a shop our late father would've loved just by virtue of its contents: chocolates and daughters"--and despite their inexperience, they decide to go for it, with their mother as silent partner. In 1984, on the day f their Washington, D.C., store, named Chocolate Chocolate, opened, they already were beset with difficulties, from crumbling walls and cracking floors installed by a shoddy, shady contractor to trying to conjure strategies to gain attention and sales. Bit by bit, their clientele grows; the sisters write fondly and often humorously of the recurring characters in their new, chocolate-centric lives, from favorite customers to the kooky sales rep who becomes an employee and dear friend. They easily move between musings on friendship and family, all the while offering inspiration and valuable lessons for budding entrepreneurs. The recipe for their house truffle rounds out this appealing, engaging memoir that's sure to appeal to a range of readers, chocoholics or not. "--Publishers Weekly"

Chocolate Chocolate: The True Story of Two Sisters, Tons of Treats, and the Little Shop That Could Details

Date : Published May 10th 2011 by Thomas Dunne Books (first published 2011)

ISBN : 9780312652937

Author : Frances Park , Ginger Park

Format : Hardcover 288 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Biography, Adult



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From Reader Review Chocolate Chocolate: The True Story of Two Sisters, Tons of Treats, and the Little Shop That Could for online ebook

Denise says

Chocolate, Chocolate is a sweet, true story about two sisters who dream of opening a chocolate store in Washington D.C. When their father dies unexpectedly just as he is about to achieve his lifelong goals, Ginger and Frances are devastated. With the small savings he leaves them they work to realize their own goal of opening a sweets stop, but it turns out to be a little harder than they expect. First they must find the perfect, jewel box storefront, but the landlord turns out to be the Evil Empire. Then they hire a charming, cheap, and ultimately useless contractor who swindles them. As they bravely open anyway Ginger and Frances find themselves in an all too often empty store with the shelves literally crashing to the floor around them and huge cracks appearing in the floor. But the two are determined to honor their father and, together, they believe the magic of chocolate will pull them through.

What really makes this cute little book are the characters constantly wandering in and out of Chocolate, Chocolate. It quickly becomes clear that the sisters like their customers almost as much as they like their chocolate! The endearing vignettes of the various people they meet and befriend are enough to make anyone envy the girls their profession. As Kahlua Lady, the Bulldog, and Our Girl Friday come and go Ginger and Frances rent a typewriter and begin writing their stories in between helping customers. Its a charming picture that they create and reading the book is like being invited to join in the fun. Chocolate, Chocolate is a sweet, feel good, easy read that goes down as smooth as a House Truffle!

Christine says

I had never heard anything about this shop or the owners before picking up this book. It turned out to be a good read and an absolute celebration of chocolate. It's also an interesting look inside a small business for anyone who has ever dreamed of opening up their own shop. These sisters had a really rocky start, but in the end they were able to fulfill their dream. The book doesn't sugarcoat their struggles and it also addresses some tough subjects such as their father's death and both of their parents' experiences in war-torn Korea. There were lots of happy moments as well and overall, it was a sweet, heartfelt story.

See more of my reviews at: <http://bucklingbookshelves.blogspot.com>

Lisette Venselaar says

A lovely true story of two sisters who start a little chocolate shop in Washington. Sounds fantastic, but it's not all 'song and dance'- they tell the truth. In fact they struggle à lot to keep thé business going. Days without customers, days with to many (&rude) customers (On Valentinesday), regulars with their Own nicknames (Kahlua lady), à battle with à terrible contractor. I love the fact that, no matter what happened, they keep positive and thank God - at least there's always enough chocolate around for à little 'pick me up'. This story covers a timespan of more than 25 years...it's Nice to see the ladies and their shop evolve over

time.

I love the fact that these ladies use the time 'when business is slow' to write. It's pays off, because after years of struggling they get published. Yeah, that's right. They do not only own a chocolate shop, but are published (awardwinning) writers. OMG!

The only thing that bothered me a little, was that the story was told in a combination of 'narrator/we' version instead of an expected 'me/we' while it is clear that they tell/wrote the novel themselves...minor detail and just my personal preference- so please don't let that stop you to read this 'delicious' Novel from these lovely ladies.

Allison says

I liked this. It's a quick read and it's full of descriptions of various yummy-sounding chocolate treats. The girls had setbacks and triumphs and it's all set in DC. The story of the beginning of the store was truly interesting because it's filled with "we found a public phone and called mom" kinds of things - funny how we forget what life was like before cell phones!

The writing style was a little difficult to get used to - "Frances did..." and "Ginger did..." then it would move to "we did..." so you never knew who was speaking. But I got used to it.

It met my basic criteria for a non-fiction book - it helped me pass the time in a pleasant manner and I learned something and it left me wanting to know more - about the sisters, their shop, their other books.

Ann Boytim says

Two sisters born of immigrant parents decide (after their father passed away) what to use their inheritance for. Reading this book and how they started their chocolate shop makes you crave chocolate. Finding the right location to begin with and also with their Korean mother's help they open up the shop and become very successful.

Book Concierge says

Subtitle: The True Story of Two Sisters, Tons of Treats, and the Little Shop That Could

When their father died of a stroke while on vacation, the Park sisters were left adrift. They were in their twenties, and still living at home in suburban Virginia with their mother when they decided to use the inheritance their father had left them to open a boutique specializing in high-end chocolates. This is the story of that "little shop that could," and of the bond between two sisters.

It's a charming memoir, but I found it repetitious. While I admit to self-medicating with chocolate, reading about that in chapter after chapter is less satisfying. Co-authored by the two sisters, it is also written in an oddly first-person-plural style combined with third-person references. So they'll write something along the lines of "We were excited..." Followed by "Francie gave the customer..." I honestly don't know how else

they might have written it, as co-authors, but for me, it just didn't flow.

Still, they have an interesting story to tell, and I really likeved their relationship with their mother and with their customers.

Triscia Smallman says

So far, it's an interesting true story about 2 women with no business experience who desire to own and operate a chocolate shop. I love anything about women who beat the odds. Still reading...

Finished! I enjoyed it and admire the Park sisters' persistence to create their dream into a reality. It made me crave good chocolate and made me more aware of the process involved in making or ordering from large chocolatiers. (It even includes a recipe at the end to make one's own chocolates)

Unfortunately, I found the character development lacking and at times the storyline fell to boring levels. I can tell they felt an obligation to include key customers who were memorable to them and probably deserved mention for keeping their business afloat, however, they felt like unnecessary distractions to the story.

It's a good read when you want to live someone else's life for a day. (or a few)

I did pick up one of their children's books that my children and I thoroughly enjoyed. Goodbye 382 Shin Dang Dong. It's a great story to reassure kids about moving houses.

Michelle says

(3.5 stars) Two sisters receive a financial legacy after their father's untimely death. Despite their inexperience in business, Frances and Ginger decide to open a chocolate shop in Washington, D.C. in the early 1980s. They chronicle their challenges in getting space, renovations, getting suppliers, and finding a customer base. The descriptions of some of the chocolates will make your mouth water, and the descriptions of some of the customers will make you laugh. The sisters grow and develop themselves, going in and out of relationships, before they find their way. Eventually, their interests lead them beyond the business into authorship, and they tell stories that have meaning to them, including their mother's journey across Korea as a young girl, and their imagined story of a family food truck. The book ends with the recipe for their house truffle.

Bookworm says

A pleasant read about a chocolate shop. After the death of their father, Ginger and Frances Park are a little adrift in life. But then they find the inspiration to open a chocolate shop in Metro Washington, DC. The book is a story of the store (Chocolate Chocolate), its origins, their customers, and some of the personal lives of the two sisters.

Overall it's a pleasant read about a small, independently owned shop. Some of it is quite predictable. The

store goes through tough times getting set up. They don't have the money. They get a skeezy contractor. The store doesn't do well at first.

But eventually they pick up business and gain loyal customers. The store is cited in newspapers such as The New York Times and The Washington Post. They get word out via customers. The sisters watch as Washington DC changes (the store opens in the mid 80's) to moving towards casual Fridays, 9/11, etc. But they are still there, and still sell chocolate.

It's a pleasant read, worth a day or a few. The writing is a little disconcerting, being both in third and first person. I get that the two are writing the book but this switch of viewpoints could have been eliminated. I also wanted to know a bit more about their family history--the Korean War took the lives of several of their relatives (as the family is Korean) but this was presented in occasional anecdotes that don't really tie into the ongoing story.

I don't think someone who is looking to open their own business will get much out of it, but as a memoir of running a business, (or chocoholics!) will probably enjoy this.

Blow Pop says

Content warnings: Mentions of Korean war, mentions of poverty, lots of talk about food, slight slut shaming, mentions of sex, mentions of death

Ok so I'm kind of a sucker for memoir type books. I really am. This book was no exception. I really enjoyed reading it. And it was really cool reading about their parent's struggles before they came to the U.S.

So this book highlights the lives of two Korean American sisters on the East Coast and their struggle to open their own chocolate shop in the 1980s. It gives background on their Korean parents and how they fared both before and after the Korean war, their eventual winding up in America(though that's more or less kind of glossed over), their meeting, and a brief overview of their lives together until the death of their father.

The book reminisces on their father and his life quite a bit. It also talks about the girls opening the chocolate shop, the types of chocolates they sold, their experience at a confectionary convention in New York, the trials and tribulations of owning your own no name store (no name meaning not part of a large corporation), dealing with contractors and real estate people, as well as getting loans from the bank, a bit of info on some of their customers as well as nicknames they gave them, and talks about them writing books together.

I really like that they stuck to their guns when it came to writing and selling the story of their mother's life and how they refused to change the ending into a happily ever after. Especially since not all stories are happily ever afters. It was sad to hear about what happened to their mother's mother but things do happen especially in countries that have had wars. At least though the mother got some sort of closure about what happened to her mother.

All in all this was a very good book that I'd definitely recommend. That during some of the chocolate descriptions gave me a toothache from how sweet they sounded. And if you're interested in chocolate this is a pretty good book too.

Barbara von der Osten says

This is a gem of a book. Two sisters bravely decide to open up a chocolate shop in Washington, DC after their father dies unexpectedly. They take us through setting up the shop, choosing which domestic and international chocolates to sell, and the type of customers they encounter. Every chapter made me want to run out and buy some new chocolate to try.

Kathy says

As the book stated, it was a sweet story. I read about the book in our local newspaper in a Sunday review, and knew I had to read it. These two women knew nothing about small business, retail or chocolate (except that they liked it)! They beat all the odds (which were quite a few), and turned this into a successful business. Just the descriptions alone, of these heavenly morsals, were enough to send me scrambling to the internet to see if they are still in business. They are! So after my next doctor's appointment, I will place an order, and will tell my nephew and his wife to make a visit the next time they are in the D.C. area. A VERY enjoyable read of friends, family and the love that apparently still sustains these beautiful ladies and their business.

Kendra says

This was more like a 4.5 stars... because of the ending (good ending - just written a little too dramatic). I also always want pictures in non-fiction works... and they didn't include any.

But, this was such a good story about a chocolate shop - and I did crave good chocolate the entire time I read it - but fun story.

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

I came across this book randomly on the "new book" shelf at my local library. I was drawn in by the adorable cover and pulled in even more once I read the inside of the cover and realized this was a book set in Washington, DC that had nothing to do with politics (YES and YES!). I've talked about how much I love books about my city of DC that aren't political. There is so much more to this city! I had never heard of Chocolate Chocolate before even though it's so very close to where I am. I'm fixing this soon after reading this book! You better believe it!

Imagine Chocolat being set in the Nation's Capital and that's pretty much what you get with this book. Armed with a dream, sisters Frances and Ginger Park start a small chocolate shop just steps away from the White House. The road is hard to make the shop successful. They contend with a bunch of issues of a small shop just starting out as well as surly bunch of DC-ers but they're able to come through it all through perseverance and relying on each other.

Each chapter is named after one of the chocolates in the story along with a little description of what the chocolate was. Oh man, what an amazing way to get the readers sucked in the story. I'm going to venture to guess that my chocolate consumption increased by, well, quite a bit as I read this book. The descriptions of

the chocolate and this charming store just really made me want chocolate! Read this book and you won't be able to help yourself either.

Bottom line: This is a delicious story!

Catherine says

Chocolate Chocolate is the name of the Washington DC shop opened in 1984 by the two authors (sisters) after the death of their father.

Their story is a rollercoaster ride with the ladies surviving various challenges personally and professionally, and delightfully cute recollections of their sometimes charming, frequently eccentric customers.

Overall the book is perfectly inoffensive and reads more like it was geared toward young adult readers. The authors have previously written children's books and the writing has that kind of innocent tone. In one word: sweet, because it describes not only the subject matter but also the prose.
