



An Appetite for Violets: A Novel

Martine Bailey

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"That's how it is for us servants. No one pays you much heed; mostly you're invisible as furniture. Yet you overhear a conversation here, and add a little gossip there. Then you find something, something you should not have found."

Irrepressible Bidley Leigh, under-cook at forbidding Mawton Hall, only wants to marry her childhood sweetheart and set up her own tavern. But when her elderly master marries young Lady Carinna, Bidley is unwittingly swept up in a world of scheming, secrets, and lies. Forced to accompany her new mistress to Italy, she documents her adventures and culinary discoveries in an old household book of recipes, *The Cook's Jewel*. Bidley grows intrigued by her fellow travelers, but her secretive and unconventional mistress is the most intriguing of all.

In London, Bidley finds herself attracted to her mistress's younger brother. In France, she discovers her mistress's dark secret. At last in Italy, Bidley becomes embroiled in a murderous conspiracy, knowing the secrets she holds could be a key to a better life, or her downfall.

Inspired by eighteenth-century household books of recipes and set at the time of the invention of the first restaurants, *An Appetite for Violets* is a literary feast for lovers of historical fiction. Martine Bailey's novel opens a window into the fascinating lives of servants, while also delivering a suspenseful tale of obsession and betrayal.

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