



Liquor

Poppy Z. Brite

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New Orleans natives Rickey and G-man are lifetime friends and down-and-out line cooks desperate to make a quick buck. When Rickey concocts the idea of opening a restaurant in their alcohol-loving hometown where every dish packs a spirited punch, they know they're on their way to the bank. With some wheeling and dealing, a slew of great recipes, and a few lucky breaks, Rickey and G-man are soon on their way to opening Liquor, their very own restaurant. But first they need to pacify a local crank who doesn't want to see his neighborhood disturbed, sidestep Rickey's deranged ex-boss, rein in their big-mouth silent partner before he runs amok, and stay afloat in a stew of corruption in a town well known for its bottom feeders.

A manic, spicy romp through the kitchens, back alleys, dive bars, and drug deals of the country's most sublimely ridiculous city, author Poppy Z. Brite masterfully shakes equal parts ambition, scandal, ?lé powder, cocaine, and murder, and serves **Liquor** straight up, with a twist.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Liquor Details

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Author : Poppy Z. Brite

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From Reader Review Liquor for online ebook

Bert Edens says

Prior to "Liquor" the only books from Brite I had read were in the horror genre. So I wasn't really sure what to expect. But, being a foodie and being appreciative of Brite's writing style, I thought I would give it a whirl.

I am very glad I did. Brite does an outstanding job of creating characters that have depth, ones you care about, and even those you despise. Plus, all the foodie details in the book gave me lots of ideas for future forays into the kitchen.

This reads like a cross between "Kitchen Confidential" and a drama / mystery. You know something bad is going to happen. You just don't know what and when. And meanwhile as things spin along, you get exposed to a lot of detailed behind-the-scenes looks at restaurants, their kitchens in particular.

Not surprisingly for a Brite book, the main protagonists are gay, and it's fairly subtle in the book, with no sex scenes and just two hints at it. But their love for each other is easy to feel, which shows the chops of a good author.

This is definitely recommended for anyone who enjoys foodie fiction, books about New Orleans, or just a good fiction read.

Mandapanda says

I loved this tale of two line cooks who live their dream amid a cast of colourful characters in the Big Easy. It totally immerses you in the atmosphere of New Orleans and the culture of restaurants and food preparation. There is a little touch of romance and some mystery thrown in. Great writing. I love Rickey and G-Man and will definitely read more of their adventures. More for fans of general fiction novels than m/m romance, although the first book in the series The Value of X is much more romantic, being the story of how our two heroes fell in love.

Bark says

The story begins in a pre-Katrina New Orleans with two out of work line cooks sitting in a tree while getting drunk. So far, this book is a big departure from Brite's earlier work. So far no explicit sex or gore just lots of great descriptions of New Orleans and food and life as a line cook (a job I'm glad I never tried out!).

The two out of work drunkards concoct a business idea that might actually work out, a liquor based gourmet restaurant. The book mainly concerns these two, their offbeat acquaintances and the trials and tribulations of starting a business from the bottom up. It was a good foodie read but I have to admit that I greatly miss the old over-the-top Poppy Z. Brite of days gone by.

Megan says

Attention foodies: This is your kind of book!

Liquor is about two friends/partners that are tired of working for someone else as cooks in New Orleans. When they get fired from "Tequilatown", the franchise-y, crappy food restaurant owned by the country singer Jesse Honeycombe,(Can you say Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville?) they come up with an idea to start their own restaurant.

It's not going to be just any restaurant. It's going to be called Liquor. And all of their dishes will contain... you guessed it! Liquor!

This book is the first one I've read by Poppy Z. Brite, a New Orleans native. There are other restaurant-based books that I want to read (Prime and Soul Kitchen), but Brite also has written some supernatural type books I want to check out (Lost Souls, Exquisite Corpse, etc.).

This was a quick read. It was a fun book. To be honest, I am not what you would call a "foodie." I probably would be too chicken to try half of the dishes served up at Liquor restaurant. (Who am I kidding? They all have booze in them!) I found myself having to Google certain fancy dishes.

I particularly enjoyed the book's setting, which was in New Orleans. I love any book written about New Orleans (well, as long as it's written by a Louisianian or someone who isn't just making stupid stuff up or promoting ridiculous stereotypes.)

I enjoyed reading about Rickey, the yin with the mood swings, and his partner, G-Man, who is the yang who balances with Rickey with his calmer and more thoughtful demeanor.

If you enjoy reading about food, New Orleans, alcohol, or even what it's like to work in a restaurant, I recommend this book to you!

Deborah K. says

PZB goes from writing cult teen horror novels to writing about chefs in New Orleans? We'd passed around Drawing Blood in high school like it was treasure, savoring the angst and the blood and the angsty sex and the artsy blood and gore, and then I was 30 years old and in a tourist shop in New Orleans and her new series was featured on a prominent table? PZB featured in a gift shop full of mainly southern tourists? Never mind that Anne Rice is writing about Jesus in the first person. Is this an alternate reality? Am I that old? Despite serious misgivings, and probably only due to the fact that New Orleans had worked its magic on me and that it was February, the worst month in San Francisco or just about anywhere, I decided to give it a try. It was actually good. I really enjoyed it. The perfect light, pick-me-up read. I may just rip through the rest of the series.

Abi Walton says

4.75 Stars because I dont give 5 stars very often. I am so glad that I found this gem of a book! PZB wrote

something truly unique and special with this novel I haven't read anything else by this author but I truly fell in love with Ricky and G-Man. And foodie novels who knew that was a thing! They are amazing why haven't I read or heard of more?!! This book description of food was perfect as though I was with Ricky and G-Man in the kitchen tasting their ideas with them. in Liquor PZB really captures the New Orleans culture so much so that I wanted to board a plane and go to experience it myself. This novel is a great mixture of New Orleans culture, crime and mystery, and of course Ricky and G-man's relationship which was subtle and and moving making the scenes where they are together truly special and sweet.

As characters, Rickey and G-man were so different but they both balanced each other out so perfectly that I couldn't help wanting them to succeed and be happy.

Overall a perfect gem of a book and even though it was the second book you wouldn't have known, I would like to read the other books in the series but don't know if they may ruin this one as to be this book was so perfect.

D says

Yeah, I've been pretty meh about the writer these days (nothing to do with his lifestyle choices, just so you know; it's more of a personal thing) so I'm not sure what made me pick these books up again, but damn I still love me some PZB.

I always love foodie novels, and the thing that made the publishers drop them (too niche) is exactly why I love these novels so. There's food, restaurant culture, New Orleans culture, crime and mystery, and of course, the relationship between Rickey and G-man. So I'm guessing the foodie-mystery-novel guzzling public isn't exactly ready for the protagonists to be gay, but that's a shame, because these books are amazing.

And also makes me hungry as hell.

Patricia Voigt says

I read this several months after returning home from a Hurricane Katrina-induced exile. Maybe it was the heightened emotions of that time period, but I found myself alternately laughing out loud, nodding vigorously, and even wiping away tears while reading this book.

It's like *A Confederacy of Dunces*: if you're from New Orleans, or have lived there, you'll get it. You'll recognize ya Mam an' ems. You'll say, uh huh, I know these people. Know that guy. Yeah, know that guy too. Oh gawd, I know that place! And it's gone now....

The chapter where Brite lists the restaurants that open and shut down over the course of a few months, and the reasons why, had me in stitches. I recognized many of them and remember eating at the African place where there was no A/C and only one small floor fan.

If you're not from NOLA, you probably won't get it. But maybe you'll salivate over the food porn.

Ames says

I'll admit to having been a fan of PZB's gore-filled goth horrors in my angsty teen years and, whilst that

familiarity is what drew me to this book initially, I feel that the author has changed, almost as if she (like me as a reader) has grown up.

In *Lost Souls* and *Drawing Blood*, we saw rich, moody, characters and were drawn into *Missing Mile* almost as if by enchantment. Those stories for me were categorised by their graphic violence and gore, which was stomach-churning at times. They were shocking, but shockingly beautiful.

In the 'Liquor' series, we see a different Brite. Glimmers of her old writing style remain: the characters are like old friends, the setting seems somehow familiar and, immediately upon delving into the first chapter, Brite's magical tendrils have drawn us in to life within the novel, this time with Rickey and G-Man. *Liquor* and its sequel are no less intense or passionate as the earlier novels set in *Missing Mile*, but that intensity has been channeled elsewhere: instead of the sex and violence of *Missing Mile*, Brite paints a love affair with a pre-Katrina New Orleans, with food and the restaurant scene, and between our two protagonists, Rickey and G-Man.

As well as being a rich portrait of restaurant life in NOLA, the novel is part-thriller, part mystery, with these elements keeping the reader turning pages. Even after a number of readings, the novel is compelling. This is also a book which left me hungry: hungry for the food described, hungry for experiences in this great city, and hungry for more. Fortunately, there is more to be had, as Brite has written sequels "Prime" and "Soul Kitchen", which are equally as enjoyable.

Christine says

This was my first PZB book, and I must try another soon. I've never read a book about the restaurant "life", and it was a great change to my typical reads.

Sherry says

I really like the direction of Poppy Z. Brite's more recent novels--dark fiction, as opposed to horror. The NOLA backdrop, characters to which you can relate, and the food-centric story are all win in my book. Can't wait to read the other books she's written with these same main characters.

James Berry says

This book was lovely, and I know that isn't a great adjective - in fact, myriad people would be loathe to hear their work described as "lovely" - but this book really was *lovely*. I say that because this book is the coziest piece of fiction by Poppy that I've ever read. A couple of books before this, I read *Exquisite Corpse* and nearly burnt the book after finishing it, such strong distaste for the subject matter I felt. So yeah, reading about *Liquor*, Rickey, and G-Man was a nice break from the dark, putrid tales Poppy usually weaves (and I usually enjoy).

Jennifer says

I've been following Poppy Brite's blog (docbrite.livejournal.com) since not long after Katrina hit New Orleans, but this is the first of her books I've actually picked up.

I read it in a day, but I had a hard time putting my finger on what was so gripping about it. The writing is passable, certainly not outstanding. Some of the characters are rather flat. But Brite captures a place and a mood and a time so vividly that it's hard to stop reading.

The book is about two New Orleans cooks who decide, sort of, to open a restaurant. There are beautiful descriptions of food and very accurate depictions of restaurant work. The plot moves along at a fairly spritely pace.

Maybe the best thing Brite does with this book is smash homosexual stereotypes. Her two male protagonists are in a long-term committed relationship. They love and support each other, shore up the other's weaknesses and get so busy they forget to have sex. This is not a gay book at all; it just so happens that the main characters are gay.

A really fun read. There are two more in this series (so far -- Brite hasn't been writing due to a serious depression, but I hope that she is able to return to it eventually) and I'm looking forward to them.

Sarah says

This is an excellent series. Gritty, real and from one of my favourite authors.

Kassa says

Liquor may not be perfect but like any great drink with ingredients that shouldn't go together but do, you simply enjoy the ride and ignore the aftertaste. The mix of fantastic New Orleans setting, great foodie descriptions, an intimate knowledge of the underbelly of the cooking scene, and some interesting characters combine to create a fun book with a hefty dose of classic New Orleans style. On the downside, the characters are flat and predictable, from beginning to end, and the mystery is so obvious it's painful; yet the easy prose and great setting carry this book. Reading at the beach, this is the perfect light story with enough interest to keep me reading and flavor that I enjoyed, flaws and all.

Liquor introduces Rickey and G-Man, a couple of cooks in New Orleans bouncing from job to job, paycheck to paycheck. Rickey has ambition though while G-Man is the more stabilizing force of their partnership. When Rickey comes up with the idea to base a restaurant around liquor, because after all New Orleans' natives do like to drink, they soon find themselves on a fast train with backers, employees, and even a murder mystery. The mystery of the disgruntled lunatic ex-boss is obvious from the start and not really the focus. It's annoying to read sometimes since it's a distraction and not the strength of the book. I personally wished they'd gotten that issue out of the way early on and just focus on the various characters as they get the restaurant running. Perhaps not the most exciting aspect but the stalker/mystery aspect didn't help much in my opinion.

What really works is the description of pre-Katrina New Orleans. Anyone who visited or is familiar with the

area will instantly recognize the setting in an intimate way. The city is perhaps the best loved, most important character of the story. The city is essential and the book wouldn't have been nearly as successful for me if it hadn't been included at this level. Additionally the great descriptions of the culinary world are simply fascinating. The cover quote mentions a similarity to Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential* and that's very apt. The hard drinking, hard working, drugging, crass, rough and tumble nocturnal life that makes up kitchen professionals is offered here with clear knowledge and detail. From the various restaurants to the owners to locations, the cooking world is the second best developed character after the city.

These two aspects are enough to carry the story for me. The high entertainment factor combined with clean prose and a quick pace make the pages fly by and enough interest and flavor to always make me want to read. The characters are decent and memorable and the story does a good job of differentiating the large cast from each other. Unfortunately they all feel flat and predictable. The typical evil stalker does everything you'd think he would and makes every obvious choice. This ties into the mystery aspect which is meant to keep tension in the story, which it does, but this is one of the weakest parts. I found it annoying whenever the story focused on the stalker but thankfully the strengths of the story kept the pace going.

The characters of G-Man and Rickey are fun to read. They're not well developed and there is a lot of weight and depth missing from them. They're best friends and lovers and have been together since they were young kids. There is a sense of permanency to their relationship and they simply can't or won't do without each other. Their personalities balance and compliment well, creating a fun duo of men that are interesting to read. Yet the entire time I wanted more from them. I wanted to know more about them individually and together. They felt like a normal couple with dry spells, frustrations, arguments, and romance but also with a sense of two men that are in love and this is it for them. Perhaps since this is the first book in a series, they'll develop and evolve as the series continues.

The themes of friendship, love, cooking, and the city setting are what really offer a great read. It's not perfect and there are some things that may turn off readers. There is some head hopping with the point of view, extraneous characters and details, but for the most part I didn't notice these issues very much. The story engaged and entertained me from the start. This is easily a book I'd re-read several times and I'm looking forward to continuing with the series. If you're a fan of New Orleans and find the cooking profession fascinating, check this out. I think you'll really enjoy it as I did.

Lightreads says

Two New Orleans gay chefs live the dream and open up their own restaurant. There's also a vague crime/danger plot, but mostly this is just a book about food. This book made me want to eat things *I don't even like*.

I needed this today. It's fun and soaked in restaurant culture, with a generally interesting M/M long-term relationship around the edges. A light-weight escapist good time.

Georgiann Hennelly says

The story begins in a Pre Katrina New Orleans with two out of work line cooks getting drunk sitting in a tree. They concoct a business idea that might actually work out. Aliquor bases gourmet restaurant. The story is mainly about them and their off beat acquaintances and the problems and trails of starting a business from

the ground up. It was a good read.

Red says

Fun book The main thread of the story was just OK and a bit predictable, but what really shined was the clear love the author has for New Orleans and the food culture there. The bio says she is married to a chef, but she must have at least waited on tables or worked in kitchens somehow because there's stuff in here that I don't think someone could just research. The relationship between Ricky and G-man is nice and established, with just enough backstory you can get the sense of them.

Would definitely look into other books in the series.

Chris says

Very good gay fiction about a couple who are line cooks in New Orleans and are approached by a financier interested in helping them open a restaurant. I especially enjoyed reading this while in New Orleans.

Ami says

Poppy Z. Brite was one of the names I was aware of when I first tried the gay-fiction/MM romance genre back around 4-5 years ago. His books were always been on the list on the Amazon.com "recommended for you" feature. So I have been wanting this one for such a long time, only to buy it just now using Kobo discount code (since the ebook price is more than \$10).

I wholeheartedly enjoyed this -- it was more of gay fiction, with a dash of suspense, not a romance. Rickey and G-Man were an established couple who worked in restaurant in New Orleans. When they were fired (not due to their complete fault), Rickey was dreaming that they should open their own restaurant, whose menus based solely on liquor (because apparently people of New Orleans love to drink -- I might need native New Orleans to confirm that). The suspense of this one man who had it for Rickey, and trying to sabotage the plan, added the touch of action.

The whole description about lives of restaurant staffs and the passion of creating menus, and food preparation, along with the wonderful atmosphere of New Orleans, made this one engaging read. I was biting my nails, hoping that Rickey and G-Man's restaurant came to life. I felt so immersed with their dream, that I wanted to be able to go inside my Kindle and tasted the food myself -- until I remember, as a Muslim, I don't drink alcohol (darn it!). But maybe I can try the salad and Napoleon Death Mask desert (without the liquor though).

As characters, Rickey and G-Man also engaged me. I loved how different their personalities were. Rickey was the more outspoken of the two, he was the one with the dream and with more emotional temper. G-Man, on the other hand, was the more pragmatist. He grounded Rickey though -- and it made great team.

I definitely will read the next book (still had a Kobo discount code to be used, so yay!)
