



Raising Steaks: The Life and Times of American Beef

Betty Fussell

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In *Raising Steaks*, Betty Fussell saddles up for a spirited ride across America on the trail of our most iconic food.

When we bite into a steak's charred crust and pink interior, Fussell finds that we bite into contradictions that have branded our national identity from the start. We taste the colliding fantasies of British pastoralists and Spanish ranchers that erupted in land wars between a wet-weather East and a desert West. We savor the ideas of wilderness and progress that clashed when we replaced buffalo with cattle, and then cowboys with industrial machines. We take in the contradictions of rugged individualism and the corporate technology that we use to breed, feed, slaughter, package, and distribute the animals we turn into meat. And we participate—as do the cattlemen and chefs, feedlot operators and rodeo stars, boot makers and scientists Fussell talks with—in the mythology that inspires cowboys to become technocrats and presidents to play cowboy.

Raising Steaks is a celebration of, and an elegy for, a uniquely American Dream.

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