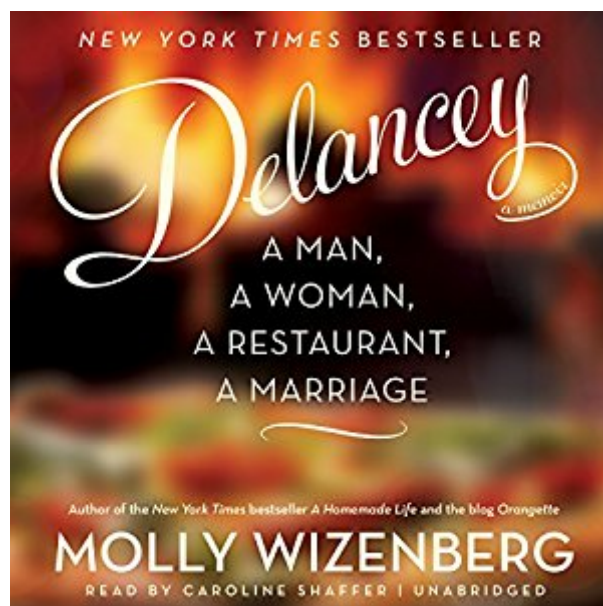


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# Delancey: A Man, A Woman, A Restaurant, A Marriage



## Synopsis

In this funny, frank, and tender memoir, the author of the New York Times bestseller *A Homemade Life* and the blog *Orangette* recounts how opening a restaurant sparked the first crisis of her young marriage. When Molly Wizenberg married Brandon Pettit, he was a trained composer with a handful of offbeat interests: Espresso machines, wooden boats, violin-building, and ice cream-making. So when Brandon decided to open a pizza restaurant, Molly was supportive - not because she wanted him to do it but because the idea was so far-fetched she didn't think he would. Before she knew it, he'd signed a lease on a space. The restaurant, *Delancey*, was going to be a reality, and all of Molly's assumptions about her marriage were about to change. Together they built *Delancey*: Gutting and renovating the space on a cobbled-together budget, developing a menu, hiring staff, and passing inspections. *Delancey* became a success, and Molly tried to convince herself that she was happy in their new life until - in the heat and pressure of the restaurant kitchen - she realized that she hadn't been honest with herself or Brandon. With twenty new recipes for the kind of simple, delicious food that chefs eat at home, *Delancey* is a moving and honest account of two young people learning to give in and let go in order to grow together.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I absolutely loved *My Korean Deli: Risking It All for a Convenience Store* by Ben Ryder Howe. So I was looking forward to this read that promised a similar, riveting story about a young couple whose marriage is stretched (almost to the breaking point) when they decide to open a pizzeria. But, sadly,

the narrative is bland and gets bogged down in details. It starts out great, as the author sketches out her personality and that of her hobby-loving (but usually hobby-abandoning) husband. But soon after her husband announces his intention to open a pizzeria, the book descends into long passages about learning to make pizza, scouting for a location and opening and running a restaurant. The author, obviously a blogger, includes very few viewpoints from anyone else, including her husband. She talks about her husband, but scenes and dialog including him are sparse, almost nonexistent, except for one dramatic moment when he wants to back out. I was hoping for more of these moments, but like many blogs turned books, the book has little narrative drive and no story arc. Editors should have had her turn some of the narrative into scenes and dialog, to give the story energy: the old adage "show, don't tell" should be every storyteller's goal. The author does describe the train wreck the restaurant almost made of her life, but it's buried in all the verbiage about restaurant ownership. If you're interested in what it's like to open a restaurant, go for it. But if you're looking for a compelling story of the twists and turns of a young marriage, this isn't it.

I was very excited to read *Delancey: A Man, a Woman, a Restaurant, a Marriage* because I highly enjoyed reading the author's first book, *A Homemade Life: Stories and Recipes from My Kitchen Table*. Historically I haven't loved memoirs by bloggers because more often than not, they haven't seemed to translate well to the page. But I found *A Homemade Life* to not only be one of the best memoirs by bloggers I had read, but a genuinely wonderful book in its own right. I also love behind the scenes accounts of restaurants, so I was very curious to read Wizenberg's experience of opening a restaurant with her husband. Unfortunately after reading *Delancey*, I just didn't love it as much as I did her first book. I found the writing early in the book felt a little dry and clinical to me, vs. the more lyrical, emotional and evocative writing in *A Homemade Life*. And since, as Wizenberg admits in the book, the restaurant is more of her husband's project, I found myself longing to read parts of the book from his point of view (it was all written by Wizenberg), especially since Wizenberg wasn't even present for some of the scenes she retells. Written entirely from her point of view, it just felt less compelling and engaging. I think her retelling of the departure of an employee was a final straw for me. It felt a tad vengeful and left a bad taste in my mouth.

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