



Food Chain: Encounters Between Mates, Predators and Prey

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A fresh look at the laws of nature, in startling, beautiful, and at times unsettling detail.

Working with a menagerie of insects and animals she raises in her New York City studio, Catherine Chalmers makes images that ask us to examine the lives we ordinarily overlook. What we find is by turns surprising, humorous, and thought provoking.

In the series of photographs that gives the book its title, Chalmers vividly sketches the links between predator and prey, eater and eaten, from plant to insect to amphibian. Against a stark white background, caterpillars eat a tomato, a praying mantis eats a caterpillar, and a frog and a tarantula each eat a praying mantis. Another section, focused on "pinkies" (the pet-trade name for baby mice), shows with chilling clarity that the laws of nature apply equally to mammals as to the so-called "lower" life-forms. A series of photographs of praying mantises mating-during and after which the female devours the male-captures the metaphorical power and strange beauty of this infamous habit. The book includes an essay by the critically acclaimed nature writer Gordon Grice and a provocative interview with Chalmers by Aperture executive editor Michael L. Sand.

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