writing to her editor about a forthcoming collection of personal recipes, M.F.K. Fisher indicated that she wanted “to bow firmly and openly to a list of perhaps five easily procurable and completely standard texts…Rombauer’s Joy of Cooking, The Boston Cookbook, Larousse Gastronomique, Escoffier’s Cook Book, and perhaps that near-classic by Julia Child and her associates about French cooking ‘made easy’… it is used increasingly by amateur cooks, who are my main readers, I suspect.” The year was 1966, and Mastering the Art of French Cooking (published five years earlier) was, indeed, a “near classic,” with more than 100,000 copies sold to date. Furthermore, as time would testify, the book that a young editor at Knopf pronounced as “revolutionary” not only established Julia Child’s preeminent place in the culinary landscape of the twentieth century but also gave testimony to the collaborative efforts of Julia Child, Simone Beck, and Louise Bertholle—three women who came from different cultures and dissimilar family backgrounds and educational experiences and were united only in their shared passion for food and ambition for professional culinary careers.

Although Julia Child began her culinary education at the Cordon Bleu in Paris in 1940, her introduction to Simone Beck at the home of George Artamonoff in Saint-Germain-en-Laye that same year initiated her into a career that developed in tandem with a person whose enthusiasms equaled her own and whose expertise initially was greater than her own. Well known is the story of how Simone Beck (Simca) and Julia clicked immediately and began to discuss food and how to make “a valid professional project out of it.” But, even as her relationship with Simca became the most sustained narrative of her collaboration with others, it was also a cautionary tale. For over twenty years during the writing of Mastering the Art of French Cooking, Volumes i and ii, there were frequent (almost weekly) letters exchanged between Très Chère Simca, Chatelaine de Bramafam, and Amie Chère. As time would reveal, there were also nettles, minor irritants that ultimately developed into major reasons for Julia not to pursue another collaboration of that nature.

Invited by Simca and her friend Louise Bertholle, Julia joined Le Cercle des Gourmettes, an exclusive club started in 1927 as a French women’s counterpart to the all-male Club des Cent. Along with Simca and Louise, she arrived at either a member’s home or a restaurant as early as nine thirty. The three women then assisted the chef and enjoyed a private cooking lesson before the Gourmettes’ luncheon. They worked well together, and in their company Julia realized how much could be learned from their preparing meals together.

Time reinforced her conviction. When a handful of Julia’s American friends, who either lived in Paris or were on holiday, asked her to teach them something about French cooking, she persuaded Simca and Louise to join her. The two Frenchwomen had already written a small book of recipes called What’s Cooking in France, and they planned to expand their recipes into a “big book” destined, like the first book, to be published by Ives Washburn in the States. The opportunity to teach American students with Julia appealed to them, not only because it presented an opportunity to refine their recipes but also because they needed an American partner to translate them.

As a temporary measure, they decided that the former servants’ kitchen on the upper floor of Julia’s apartment on the rue de l’Université was the perfect place to launch L’Ecole des Trois Gourmandes. Initially they taught only a few classes a month, with never more than six American or occasionally French students in the class. Planned as a practical cooking class, the sessions provided the students with the opportunity to mettre la main à la pâte (get their hands on the dough). Then, after a morning of cooking, the prepared dishes were placed on a dummy waiter and sent down to the dining room, where Paul Child decanted the wine for the communal luncheon. While the students were pleased
with the results of their labors and frequently brought paying
guests to the luncheon, Julia, Simca, and Louisette became
more and more confident in their new roles.

For Julia, especially, the classes of L’Ecole des Trois
Gourmandes were exciting sessions. She continued her
association with chefs Max Bugnard and Claude Thillmont,
who were often asked to join the Trois Gourmandes in teach-
ing the finer points of haute cuisine, and Simca introduced
Julia to renowned gourmets like Curnonsky and professional
chefs like Aimée Cassiot. Julia and Paul were also invited to
the tastings of the Chevaliers du Tastevin de Bourgogne,
and Paul’s interest in wine complemented Julia’s endeavors
to plan menus that paired wine and food knowledgeably.

Though at first reluctant to join the cookbook project
undertaken by Simca and Louisette, Julia began to weigh the
benefits. She also recognized that simply being American
might give her more of an advantage in dealing with publish-
ers than Simca and Louisette had in their dealings with
Sumner Putnam at Ives Washburn, where neither a contract
nor an advance had been offered to them. Before signing on
with the project, however, Julia insisted they carefully out-
line the cookbook they had tentatively titled French Home
Cooking, discuss its scope, and indicate they expected it
would be published in a sequence of five individual volumes.
She then requested all of the material already sent to Sumner
Putnam be returned for translation and editing. She also
thought it advisable to obtain the services of an American
representative, namely Paul’s nephew Paul Sheeline, to
handle the legal aspects of all contractual arrangements. For
all intents and purposes, Julia was literally beginning to
organize the venture that nine years later would appear as
Mastering the Art of French Cooking.

In February 1953, when Paul was reassigned to the US
consulate in Marseille, Julia’s partnership in L’Ecole des
Trois Gourmandes ended abruptly, but fortuitously her
involvement in the cookbook project intensified. In mid-
March she wrote to Simca, “Enfin, we are installed in our
little apartment, and I am at this moment sitting in the din-
ingaroom work room, with a two-masted schooner right in
front of my nose, sea gulls flying about, fishing boats com-
ing in and out, and a bright sun over all. It is heavenly. We
do need one more room, however, for us to paint and write
cookbooks in.” Julia compensated for the lacking room
by purchasing a sturdy piece of wood the size of a door to
mount on two large trunks to make a proper worktable, and
she asked Simca to go to Dehillerin and buy some sturdy
pots for her large Marseille kitchen.

If there were a few minor inconveniences, there were
also advantages to living, and especially cooking, in Marseille.
Marketing in the big covered fish market, Julia asked the
sellers questions about the names and varieties of the fish on
display before she purchased “une fraicheur exquise baby rougets
and dorades” for lunch. She also began to cook with the
Provençal “flavor base” of tomatoes, onions, garlic, and herbs,
so different from the butter and cream of the Parisian palate.

Under pressure to complete the chapter on soups and
gather more recipes for the ensuing chapters, letters went
back and forth from Marseille to Paris once or twice a week,
as Julia experimented with Simca’s recipes, altering, refining,
and sometimes completely changing them with a view to the
American market. Often Louisette had what Julia described
as nice little ideas about garnishes that were very much l’es-
prit americain. “They love novelties,” Julia wrote to Simca.
“You and I are more straight chef-type cooks, I think. We
are really, I must say, a very good combination of personali-
ties, as we do each complement the others.”

When she wasn’t marketing, cooking, or deconstructing
Simca’s recipes, she was busy arranging her kitchen with
cookware. Since her days at the Cordon Bleu, Paul had
applied his former war room expertise to the task of hanging
all of her measuring cups and spoons, pots and pans, molds,
forms, rings, and other utensils on a premarked peg board,
and as they moved from one place to another, this mode of
organization became the distinguishing feature of their
kitchens. A day spent away from her table and stove was a
day lost, and the only way Julia could justify a social afternoon
of ladies’ lunches or teas was if the occasion led to a request
to teach someone how to make an omelet or a soufflé. When
an acquaintance actually made a near-perfect dish following
her instructions, Julia had renewed confidence in a recipe
destined for inclusion in the book.

During their residence in Marseille, Julia established
other interesting contacts. When she read an article written
by the historian Bernard De Voto about his continuing
search for a carbon-steel paring knife, Julia sent him one.
And their initial correspondence led to a more extensive
exchange of letters between Julia and his wife, Avis De Voto,
a freelance editor whom Julia wrote to when she realized
that the publishing agreement with Ives Washburn had
become less than workable. Avis put her in touch with
Dorothy de Santillana, an editor at Houghton Mifflin. Due
largely to Avis’s efforts and Paul Sheeline’s advice, Julia,
Simca, and Louisette signed a contract with Houghton
Mifflin in 1953 with the stipulation to finish French Home
Cooking as soon as possible.

In mid-May 1954 Paul Child received word that he
would be assigned to Bonn, Germany, when their two-month
summer leave was over. Julia, who was in the midst of
preparing a list of things to check out in the States, wrote to Simca, “If anyone can think of a sillier way than this to try and collaborate on a cookbook! It is particularly for you that I am upset as here you are slaving away and your colleague keeps putting up one delay after another. However, I think a personal survey of the US at this point is extremely necessary so there is some good in it at least.” Julia’s determination to find out specific differences in the cuts of meat, the sizes of chickens and turkeys, the availability of soft and hard wheat flours, and the extent to which frozen food had invaded the American market propelled her from one shop to another during the time she and Paul traveled from the East Coast to the West Coast.

Julia found there was much more interest in food and cooking since the war but very little knowledge of how to cook French dishes with reduction-type sauces, marinades, and wine. She also quickly discovered eating was not a national sport in America as it was in France. Furthermore, because enough time to cook seemed to be an overwhelming problem, she concluded the recipes in the book would have to be not only tempting but, whenever possible, partially prepared ahead of time. Julia also realized American cooks would have to start with simple dishes, and then, when they had mastered certain basic techniques, they would be able to move on to more complex dishes. The Child’s two and a half months in the States were beneficial in another way as well. After spending several days in Cambridge with Avis, Julia recognized their unpaid agent had also become the strongest advocate for their book.

Returning to Europe, Julia and Paul settled into a newly constructed apartment in an American housing development outside of Bonn, and Julia soon learned in order to function, there was an intensity of purpose and a relief, they found they were more determined than ever to see the book in print. The visit was the first time Julia and Simca had discussed Houghton Mifflin’s rejection of their manuscript face to face, and to their mutual relief, they found they were more determined than ever to see the book in print. From the beginning of their collaboration, Julia and Simca had shared a passion for cooking, and they were intent on professionalizing that passion. When they worked on a recipe, Simca’s Gallic prejudices were balanced by Julia’s inventiveness. And when they shared the same kitchen, there was an intensity of purpose and a thoroughgoing give and take of criticism and good humor. While Julia always credited the Cordon Bleu for teaching personally responsible for raising Simca’s expectations.

Avis got a fuller report from Dorothy de Santillana, who had had to reconcile herself to the equation of possible costs against possible sales, which determined the decision not to publish. Distressed because she was the one who had steered the authors to Houghton Mifflin in the first place, Avis immediately called William Koshland, a senior editor at Knopf. An enthusiastic cook himself, he had seen bits of the book whenever he visited Avis and had been interested in the project over the years. As early as 1958, he had confided to Avis: “Through you I feel very close to the Childs’ project and my fingers are crossed for them. From any vantage point I naturally think that H-M are being short-sighted. Now above all time is the case for a definitive French cookbook. Never before has this country been as gourmet-minded….” And since Koshland was a vice president at Knopf, Avis wrote to Julia, he would certainly be a persuasive sponsor of the book. When he agreed to read the manuscript, Avis asked Houghton Mifflin to forward it to Knopf directly.

Julia had said over and over again she was not interested in a “gourmet” book that would merely add a touch of thyme or garlic to create an international dish. But with the rejection, she seriously wondered whether any publisher felt there was enough interest to warrant the expense of publishing the kind of book they had written. She would rewrite and cut where necessary, “but the basic principle of teaching people how to cook correctly is the only thing which interests me in this type of book. I don’t think that is a very clear statement….What I mean is that I like our basic approach and don’t want to go into Cuisine express…won’t go into it.”

Given the vagaries of the publishing world, there was nothing to do but wait and see if the manuscript that had taken more than eight years to produce would fare better at Knopf.

By this time the Childs had moved to Oslo. November brought snow, and Julia and Paul planned to celebrate the holidays with Simca and her husband in their newly acquired farmhouse, Le Mas Vieux, on a tract of land called “Bramafam” in Plascassier in the south of France. The visit was the first time Julia and Simca had discussed Houghton Mifflin’s rejection of their manuscript face to face, and to their mutual relief, they found they were more determined than ever to see the book in print. From the beginning of their collaboration, Julia and Simca had shared a passion for cooking, and they were intent on professionalizing that passion. When they worked on a recipe, Simca’s Gallic prejudices were balanced by Julia’s inventiveness. And when they shared the same kitchen, there was an intensity of purpose and a thoroughgoing give and take of criticism and good humor.
her the techniques of French cooking, she just as insistently acknowledged that Simca gave her finesse, enlarged her culinary vocabulary, and taught her what could only be described as a French attitude toward food.

Welcoming in the New Year of 1960 with Simca and her husband at Bramafam not only ushered in the New Year but also introduced the Childs to a sunny, herb-scented corner of Provence that would eventually be the site of Le Pitchoune, their retreat on the Fishbacher property. The celebration of the holiday also foreshadowed the excitement that was instantly communicated between Oslo and Paris when Knopf offered them a contract for their book in May of that year. William Koshland had sampled many of the recipes, and Judith Jones, the book’s designated editor, told Avis that the book was unique, really French, and that she knew from extensive testing the recipes in it worked. “The enthusiasts around here are absolutely convinced that this book is revolutionary, and we intend to prove it and to make it a classic.”

But there were legal matters to resolve regarding the collaboration. To facilitate matters, Julia was designated an agent for the other two authors. There was also a need to draw up a new agreement among the three women regarding expenses connected with the preparation of the manuscript and the distribution of royalties. Louisette objected to the lesser percentage she would receive and even more strenuously rejected the proposed way of crediting the authors as “by Julia Child and Simon Beck with Louisette Bertholle.” She insisted on equal billing despite the fact that Simca and Julia had tested and revised all of the recipes, written the book, and were still involved in preparing the final text.

Furthermore, Julia’s work of editing the manuscript was far from over. When Judith Jones requested a few hearty peasant dishes and an adjustment in proportions of ingredients to serving sizes, she complied. The recipe for cassoulet caused a flurry of letters between Simca and Julia because they could not agree about using goose as a necessary ingredient in the recipe. And by the time Julia had read the manuscript a second time, there were other potential dust-ups in the offing. Now that the book was accepted, Julia assumed a surer tone with Simca, deferring to her expertise regarding correct French recipe titles, but becoming impatient with inconsistencies and unnecessarily complicated procedures.

As for Louisette, Julia felt there was more than a little preposterousness in her demands but concluded to Simca, “I do not care too terribly, as I think your relationship with
her is more important than anything else….My feeling in general is that it is not at all fair that we do all the work and she gets a free ride, so to speak. And I do think that if she refuses to be reasonable in this affair, and if we must compromise with her, that this is the end of any joint authorship of the three of us (but not, bien entendu, with you, ma soeur, colleague, et plus grande amie).”10

Simca’s friendship with Louise Bertholle had been a long and complicated relationship that began in the grim months immediately after the war when Louise returned to France from Detroit, Michigan, and relayed an American friend’s suggestion that she write a cookbook about French cooking for an American audience. When she enlisted Simca’s help, the suggestion literally catapulted Simca out of private life and into the world of the Parisian gourmettes. So, it was a combination of loyalty and also of sympathy because of Louise’s difficult divorce, plus the involvement of each woman in giving cooking lessons, individually or in tandem, that explained Simca’s tolerance. Julia chose not to interfere and maintained cordial, even friendly, ties with Louise, although Paul was convinced she was up to nothing short of a game of chantage.

Royalties and authorship were, of course, the basic issues posed by the tri-part collaboration, but others arose. After the book was under contract with Knopf, Simca’s proposal to publish menus and recipes in France’s Cuisine et Vins was accepted, and the monthly articles carried the byline “Les Trois Gourmandes.” Simca and Julia continued with the same give and take they had adopted while writing the book, sending ideas for menus and dishes to each other. Then Simca sent the actual working recipes to Julia to test and rewrite. Although not contributing to the recipes, Louise received 10 percent of the payment for the articles because her name was a part of Les Trois Gourmandes.

A far less manageable issue among the three women involved teaching under the banner of L’Ecole des Trois Gourmandes. Julia had tried to copyright the name in the States but was unsuccessful, so there was no way to prevent Louise from using it independently to publicize the cooking lessons she gave from time to time. Fortunately, Julia’s concern about this matter was eliminated during the cooking lessons she gave from time to time. Fortunately, Louise was found to use it independently to publicize the States but was unsuccessful, so there was no way to prevent Gourmandes. Julia had tried to copyright the name in the involved teaching under the banner of L’Ecole des Trois Gourmandes because her name was a part of Les Trois Gourmandes.

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And Michael Field simply said it surpassed every other American book on French cooking already in print. On October 22 Simca arrived in New York to a schedule of meetings and lunches arranged by Julia and Judith Jones. The editor of Vogue met them at the Cosmopolitan Club; they lunched with Jose Wilson of House and Garden magazine the next day to plan a six-page article; and the same day they were interviewed on the Martha Dean radio show. They also had lunch with James Beard at the Four Seasons and met Dione Lucas, who offered to give them a book party at her own restaurant, the Egg Basket.

The realization, “We are in. Hooray!” propelled Julia and Simca from New York to Boston, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and then back to New York. Julia had prepared their props long before Simca arrived—white aprons with the L’Ecole des Trois Gourmandes’ monogram, French omelet pans, utensils, and sharp knives carried in what was to be the first of the many “sacred black bags.” Julia also had made all the reservations for trains and planes. Whenever possible, they stayed with friends and Julia’s relatives because the trip was strictly do-it-yourself, not subsidized by Knopf. Visiting prominent department stores, they started at 10:30 A.M. and continued nonstop all day, preparing Roquefort quiche, sole in white wine, and chocolate madeleines. They also baked their favorite reine de Saba cakes in the test kitchens of big-city newspapers as a part of their interviews. Sometimes the facilities were so unsuitable for cooking demonstrations that their pots and pans had to be washed in the ladies’ room. But Simca, Julia, and Paul had found their stride.

Before leaving New York, Simca and Julia accepted John Chancellor’s invitation to appear on the Today show. They both agreed that Simca should demonstrate how to make an omelet. “With panache, Simca,” Julia coaxed. “Toss that omelette! Ham it up, and make it visual fun for the audience.” Not only was demonstrating the technique of making an omelet with fun and flourish a foreshadowing of things to come, but Simca’s TV appearance also helped to establish a visual link between the book and the cook in action. That teaching and cookbook writing were interconnected had been demonstrated much earlier at L’Ecole des Trois Gourmandes. It was only a short step from the interaction in the kitchen on the top floor of 81 rue de l’Université or the apartment overlooking the Vieux Port or the dining room of the house on Irving Street in Cambridge to the studios of Boston’s WGBH. The occasion was the only thing wanting to make it happen.

In seven weeks Julia and Simca had seen their book successfully launched in a sequence of difficult and exhilarating events, and Julia’s first letter to Simca, who had returned to Paris, communicated the latter: “how much we accomplished. I think it was a good thing, and thank heaven you came. Without you, I would have been quite useless as a promoter, and it would have been too bad. And the fact that we are now accepted by the big food people is perfectly wonderful—we are now quelqu’un—Hooray.”

Invited to appear on a Boston public television book review show in February 1962, Julia whisked her way into a series of three pilot cooking programs, a much more extensive team endeavor than she could ever have imagined. When The French Chef series debuted on February 11, 1963, Russell Morash and, especially, Ruth Lockwood became the ultimate collaborators in the programming of Julia’s television career.

Because of The French Chef series, the sales of Mastering the Art of French Cooking skyrocketed and provided the Childs with such luxuries as their second home, La Pitchoune. And when Julia’s picture appeared on the cover of Time magazine in 1965, it boosted the sales of Mastering to one hundred thousand copies. Knopf realized the need to get a sequel into print as soon as possible.

Although Simca had been sending recipes for another book to her since 1962, Julia had become increasingly more questioning and critical of them because she was acutely aware of the need to perfect recipes for TV. She was also often distressed by Simca’s stubborn persistence on some minor points. Wanting to get well-known techniques across to her audience, she also felt it was necessary to experiment, taking notes on every method that differed from hers. She explained to Simca, “I am sure this drives you crazy, but it is the only way I can work—I want to know everything, and why, and what’s no good and why, so that when our master recipe is done there are no unsolved questions.”

By the end of 1967, Julia realized she would have to ask Simca to accept her façons de faire even though they might differ from the instructions Simca had worked out for specific recipes. One reason was Julia’s reluctance to reinvest more time on a recipe than she had already spent on it. Another, and perhaps more important reason, was the fact that Julia was the one “on the spot,” the one who got blamed if the recipes didn’t work. “If my method turns out to be wrong,” Julia did not hesitate to add, “or if your method turns out to be better, it will naturally be changed so that the final result will be correct.” But Julia increasingly felt the final decision was hers.

There were also other matters that had to be addressed in the collaboration. A series of meetings arranged by Julia’s lawyer, Brooks Beck from Hill and Barlow, with a legal representative of WGBH and William Koshland from Knopf
sought to get publication rights defined, to know “who owns what and when in the way of TV recipes based on any of our book or books.” Julia also wanted to change the informal arrangement whereby she acted as an agent for the other two collaborators so that royalties would be paid directly to each one. What concerned her most, however, was providing for control of the book in the event of her untimely death. Citing the fact that she felt The Fanny Farmer Cookbook and The Joy of Cooking had been “ruined” by commercialism and heirs who were not cooks, she felt the final control of Mastering should be in responsible hands.

The resolution of all of these matters inevitably focused on the collaborative arrangement and the delicate issue of Louisette Bertholle, now Comtesse Henri de Nalèche, who had contributed little more than the original idea for a book on French cuisine for an American audience. Although she had agreed to only 10 percent of the royalties, she had received over twenty thousand dollars during the five years since Mastering was published and an additional ten thousand dollars as a result of the sales generated by the Time article. Whether to use her name on Volume 11 or effect a suitable “buy out” settlement became a pressing question.

To further complicate issues was Julia’s renewed interest in publishing an edition of the recipes from The French Chef TV series and sharing the royalties with WGBH. She had been an unpaid publicist for Mastering for over five years, and her TV show had virtually guaranteed its continuing sales. But her plan to endow WGBH brought into play the question of remuneration for Simca and Louise. About one-third of the recipes in the planned book were from Volume 1; the rest were developed by Julia, although Simca had contributed ideas and suggestions. To resolve the issue, Brooks Beck suggested naming Julia as the sole author of The French Chef Cookbook (1968) and copyrighting all of the recipes in Julia’s name. Knopf also agreed to disperse royalties for Volume 11 directly to Julia and to Simca when a “buy out” settlement between the two authors and Louise was amicably reached.

From April until July 1968, Julia and Simca spent as much time testing recipes in Plascassier as their schedules permitted. But as happened in Volume 1, there were simply too many recipes to consider, adjust, and refine. So Julia returned to the States with a major job of editing and writing to do. At the end of August, she wrote to Simca from Maine, “I am closeted with this tiresome Vol. 11, and have been for all the time we have been here. This is the last book I shall have anything to do with, I think—too damned much work and no let-up at all.”17 When she left Maine, she organized her files and finished “clipping” all of the articles and recipes she thought might be helpful, only to find American recipes had become much more sophisticated and were written with more expertise than they had been in the early 1960s. She felt that the recipes in Volume 11 would have to be extraordinarily good to compete, and there was no realistic way to do this and still complete the book by December, as Knopf had hoped.

Although the Childs had decided not to spend the winter holidays in France, they relented and booked a round-trip flight from December 18 to January 8. James Beard decided to join them around December 30, and there were more guests waiting in the wings, and more distractions. Not content to feature holiday meals served in the dining room of her Cambridge home, photographers and journalists, including a full cast of writers and photographers from Vogue, followed her to Provence to re-create La Cuisine de Pitchoune for their readers. The Time article had made Julia’s recipes, advice, and lifestyle the most sought-after copy on the magazine circuit.

During the months after the Childs’ return to the States, a neverending series of letters, experiments, first, second, and final drafts of recipes, and suggestions crisscrossed the Atlantic. Never reticent in her role as coauthor, Simca wanted to include “menus” in Volume 11. Judith Jones and Julia felt too much flexibility would be lost if the reader felt constrained not to change or substitute anything in the stated menu. Julia continually reminded Simca to think in French and not attempt to interpret American taste, especially because Julia felt that was her area of expertise. Titles for chapters were also an issue. Julia favored “Le Charcutier-Traiteur Chez Soi” or “The Home Delicatessen”; Simca thought it frivolous. The chapter on sausages and cold meats eventually was simply called “Charcuterie.”

Not really comprehending the amount of time and work that each of her recipes and suggestions required of Julia, Simca sent more and more material with abandon, or perhaps with the hope her ideas would prevail. “Ne te décourages pas, chérie,” Julia replied in her familiar “franglaise.” “I am just being extremely difficile, which we both must be.” And she hoped Simca would not be too upset because only a small number of the milliers de recettes she had sent to Julia were actually being used in the book. “That is why it so much distresses me that you are not writing on your own, so that your own things will be done the way you want them.”15

Julia walked a fine line between professional concerns and loyalty, frequently seeking to direct Simca’s recipes elsewhere. When James Beard passed the word Gourmet was definitely interested in an article on a cocktail party française, Julia told Simca it would be a wonderful opportunity for her.
and might lead to a regular column. Julia also urged her collaborator to establish a culinary niche to display her talents, as she herself had done in American television. If the French culinary scene was limited, American magazines and culinary schools, Julia thought, could certainly provide her with many opportunities to write and teach. But when Simca simply suggested she save all of the extra recipes for a possible Volume III, Julia emphatically said no. Collaboration, especially at a distance, had proved to be too difficult. “Volume III? I have no desire to get into another big book like Volume II for a long time to come, if ever. Too much work. I can do nothing else, and I am really anxious to get back again into TV teaching, and out of this little room with the typewriter.”

Looking forward to doing more TV work with the handful of people who had enthusiastically joined her in that great “fun” project, Julia increasingly felt the need to distance herself from a Gallic attitude that had been a nonspoken irritant during the long months of both appeasing Simca and trying to reconcile their many differences. “Every Frenchman is convinced he is a connoisseur who has nothing to learn from experts….I don’t know why I have been so dumb, but it is something one can hear, but not feel viscerally because how can anyone (but the French) have such arrogant nonsense as to live by that conception. Eh bien.” Paul was more vocal in his dislike of what he considered to be Simca’s bossy, know-it-all attitude, and he wrote to his brother Charles, “Simca pays no attention to anything Julia tells her about all of the researches she’s done, the findings of the US Dept. of Agriculture, or the careful scientific comparison she’s made between the various commercial starches based on corn, rice, potatoes, etc. She drives me nuts.” What really devastated Julia was the fact Simca didn’t even bother to try Julia’s bread recipe after she had spent countless hours and hundreds of pounds of flour perfecting it. Ironically, the recipes for bread as well as puff pastry became the centerpieces of Volume II.

Getting the manuscript into print had been a seemingly endless chore. Even though Judith Jones often flew to Cambridge to spend two or three days working from eight in the morning until late in the evening, going over the proofreader’s corrections in the manuscript with Julia, there seemed to be more and more questions in the margins. The illustrations by Sidonie Coryn were more elaborate and copious than those in the first volume, and Paul also did a series of technical drawings of shellfish, meat cuts, and utensils. Because the text had to be completely in synch with the illustrations and drawings, Julia tailored her explanations...
and instructions accordingly. With firm deadlines looming for the completion of the remaining chapters, the Childs spent Christmas in Cambridge and welcomed in the New Year with a toast to Volume II, now slated for publication in November 1970.

In sharp contrast to the do-it-yourself promotion Julia and Simca undertook when Volume I was published nine years earlier, Knopf had timed the release of Volume II to coincide with the debut of the first of the color French Chef shows, and McCall’s magazine published a series of recipes from the forthcoming book as well as a major article on Julia. Recalling the publicity party in New York City, Simca wrote, “Knopf now laid on a big party in a mansion on the Upper East Side, an impressive exercise in the grand style. I recall a majestic staircase to an upper balcony and about 250 members of Le Tout New York (cuisine branch) circulating to taste the Champagne and the elaborate buffet. Julia was a celebrity, and I had my American admirers too. I felt quite proud in my black silk dress with red chiffon scarf that I bought specially for the occasion.”22 But, it must have been difficult for the proud French woman to admit Julia’s “skyrocketing success.”23

After the excellent reviews and enthusiastic praise heaped upon Volume II of Mastering, not only did Julia continue with The French Chef series through 1972, but her collaborators eventually also seemed to find their special niches. Louisette Bertholle published a handsome book of recipes from some of the French Michelin-starred restaurants called Les Recettes secrètes des meilleurs restaurants de France. Simca, with the aid of Patricia Simon, published a book of menus that incorporated recipes from the three provinces—Normandy, Alsace, and Provence—that formed the basis of her cooking repertoire. Not only did Simca’s Cuisine enhance her reputation in France, but in the States it also opened doors into cooking schools and wineries where she gave demonstrations. And then, in 1974, Simca built La Campanette on the Bramafam property and opened a cooking school that attracted many students from the States.

Julia spent the first half of the 1970s juggling both the preparing and taping of shows and writing her most personal cookbook, From Julia’s Kitchen—“My own favorite book... which is entirely my own, written the way I wanted to do it.”24 Her growing popularity, however, along with increasing demands on her time for TV appearances and demonstrations for worthy causes necessitated more and more working in concert, but her associates were specially chosen and became her team. Julia had learned the hard way that cooperating on a demanding project with another person had a downside as well as great advantages, and after Volume II was published, “NO MORE COLLABORATION had become the watchword.”25

Ironically, the book that was, literally, the cornerstone of Julia Child’s fame, and arguably, her greatest achievement in print was also the result of her most difficult professional relationship. But, then, perhaps it was precisely because of the yin and yang, the sometimes contentious dialogues, the shared passion and ambition that Mastering the Art of French Cooking became the “near classic” that would take its place alongside The Joy of Cooking, The Boston Cookbook, Larousse Gastronomique, and Escuiffr’s Cook Book.

Notes
1. Reardon, M.F.K. Fisher, 64-65.
2. Ibid., 126, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 13 March 1953, Schlesinger Library.
3. Ibid., 127, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 14 June 1953, Schlesinger Library.
4. Ibid., 128, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 16 May 1954, Schlesinger Library.
5. Ibid., 129, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 1 November 1954, Schlesinger Library.
6. Ibid., 140, Paul Brooks to Julia Child, 6 November 1959, Schlesinger Library.
7. William Koshland to Avis De Voto, 1959, Schlesinger Library.
8. Ibid., 141, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 22 November 1959, Schlesinger Library.
9. Ibid., 142, Judith Jones to Avis De Voto, 6 May 1960, Schlesinger Library.
10. Ibid., 143, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 17 August 1960, Schlesinger Library.
11. Ibid., 146, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 24 April 1961, Schlesinger Library.
12. Ibid., 147.
13. Ibid., 140.
15. Ibid., 169-170, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 31 January 1957, Schlesinger Library.
16. Ibid., 170, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 30 October 1957, Schlesinger Library.
17. Ibid., 172, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 8 August 1968, Schlesinger Library.
18. Ibid., 173, Julia Child to Simone Beck, 26 September 1969, Schlesinger Library.
19. Ibid.