



Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune

Written by Roselle Lim

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Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune

By Roselle Lim

Natalie Tan's Book Of Luck And Fortune

At the news of her mother's death, Natalie Tan returns home. The two women hadn't spoken since Natalie left in anger seven years ago, when her mother refused to support her chosen career as a chef. Natalie is shocked to discover the vibrant neighborhood of San Francisco's Chinatown that she remembers from her childhood is fading, with businesses failing and families moving out. She's even more surprised to learn she has inherited her grandmother's restaurant.

Natalie Tan's Book Of Luck And Fortune By Roselle Lim

The neighborhood seer reads the restaurant's fortune in the leaves: Natalie must cook three recipes from her grandmother's cookbook to aid her struggling neighbors before the restaurant will succeed. Unfortunately, Natalie has no desire to help them try to turn things around--she resents the local shopkeepers for leaving her alone to take care of her agoraphobic mother when she was growing up. But with the support of a surprising new friend and a budding romance, Natalie starts to realize that maybe her neighbors really have been there for her all along.

On sale now! Review first posted on Fantasy Literature:

A bitter, ongoing quarrel with her mother about her career plans to be a chef led Natalie Tan to leave her San Francisco home in anger. Seven years of stubborn silence and globe-wandering later, Natalie is called home by a neighbor at her mother's passing. She still deeply desires to be a chef and to have her own authentic Chinese restaurant, like her grandmother Qiao had done many years earlier, and now she'll have the chance: Natalie has i

A bitter, ongoing quarrel with her mother about her career plans to be a chef led Natalie Tan to leave her San Francisco home in anger. Seven years of stubborn silence and globe-wandering later, Natalie is called home by a neighbor at her mother's passing. She still deeply desires to be a chef and to have her own authentic Chinese restaurant, like her grandmother Qiao had done many years earlier, and now she'll have the chance: Natalie has inherited her laolao's (maternal grandmother's) long-abandoned restaurant below their apartment. It's still operable, though dusty and dirty, but their Chinatown neighborhood is fraying, with family-owned businesses dying and a steep rise in real estate prices causing Chinese families to move away.

A psychically-gifted neighbor returns Qiao's old, handmade recipe book to Natalie, along with a prediction: if Natalie cooks three recipes from the book to help three of her neighbors, as her laolao did many years ago, and is able to save these neighbors, her restaurant will be the jewel of Chinatown and the neighborhood will be revitalized. Natalie is initially dubious and reluctant -- she feels like her neighbors had let her down when she was struggling to deal with her mother's agoraphobia years ago -- but she soon enters into the spirit of the endeavor, and magical things begin to happen when her neighbors eat her food. As I watched, fractures ran along the surface of their skin, reminding me of shattered porcelain. The cracks deepened as they ate. Once they were finished, tiny streams of glittering gold filled the cracks: mending, repairing what was broken, and transforming it into something far more beautiful. It was similar to a piece of kintsukuroi I'd picked up in Tokyo, repaired pottery that had been mended with gold. As Natalie begins cooking in Qiao's restaurant, the scent of fried dumplings even leads a handsome young man to her restaurant and her life. But neither love nor her quest to help the neighborhood is as easy as Natalie had expected.

Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune is a charming, sweet tale with a dash of magical realism. I

Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune

expected something like *The Joy Luck Club* or a Chinese-American version of *Like Water for Chocolate*. What I got was more like a literary version of a Hallmark TV romance movie. It's so lightweight as to approach being fluffy, though the immersion in Chinese culture and food serves to give it some heft and make the story more memorable. Several Chinese recipes are included in the novel, and they and the luscious descriptions of Natalie's cooking made my mouth water. The romance subplot wasn't particularly well-developed or romantically satisfying; I got far more enjoyment out of reading about the "plump prawns" and "tender steamed rice noodles and crunchy golden fritters."

Debut author Roselle Lim incorporates a few serious issues into her tale, including mental illness and the loss of ethnic urban neighborhoods. Her writing is sometimes clunky; phrases like "gathering fog brewed at the base of the gate the way steam rises from a perfect bowl of noodle soup" and "hoping the fog would thicken like salted duck congee to conceal my arrival" struck me as unintentionally humorous.

Natalie Tan's *Book of Luck and Fortune* is a warmhearted tale with an authentic Chinese voice, if not as deep and literary as one might hope. Don't expect too much from this book and you may enjoy it.

Thanks to the publisher and NetGalley for the ARC! ...more

Natalie Tan's Book Of Love And Fortune

I absolutely loved this book. It's warm and bubbly and filled with magic, community, and great food. They need to make a movie of it, and you want to read it. And then watch it.

“Wishes are worth nothing because there’s so many of them. If they turned into stars, there will be no sky left.”

“There is something magical about books in the magic realism genre, I mean not literally because that would be obvious but I mean in my relationship with these books. The first book I read in this genre was a big NO for me, the same for the second when I decided the genre is just not for me and I won’t be reading more books in it. I read 3 books after that because I always realize “Wishes are worth nothing because there’s so many of them. If they turned into stars, there will be no sky left.”

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Disclaimer: I received an ARC of this book from the publisher through Edelweiss in exchange of an honest review.

“This book is about Natalie Tan’s adventure to restore her grandma’s restaurant including all the challenges, secrets and relationships that she will face. It is a book about food, but much more than that!

“I liked Lim’s writing, she seems experienced and not an amateur, it didn’t feel like a debut for me and I am reading more adults books now which is a good thing because I am enjoying them more and more. The book has some recipes that I felt eager to go and try and it put me in the mood to make some food! It is not a cook book so you can just skim the preparation pages! Be ware that you shouldn’t read it while you are hungry though.

“The characters were good too, I liked Natalie’s character and how she was human, she had perseverance but she also had her bad moments, all of which made her realistic and not too perfect! The romance is kind of an insta-love but it is not central to the story so I could overlook that!

“The magic realism part did not add much and I think the book would have been better if it was realistic without magic, some of the magic is that the food she cooks can bring effects to those who eat it such as happiness and romance | etc. There is also another magical part but I will skip it because I

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am keeping this spoiler free.

Summary: the book is well written and did not feel like a debut, it was not perfect but I think it is a very good book for those of us who appreciate food, there were magical elements that were un-necessary but an enjoyable experience all in all! ...more

Natalie Tan's Book Of Luck And Fortune Review

Such a cute, whimsical read! 🌸 🌸 🌸 🌸 🌸

Natalie Tan is a chef, though her mother never accepts the idea of that career. The two have been estranged for more than seven years when Natalie finds out her mom has passed away.

When Natalie returns home to her beloved Chinatown in San Francisco, she finds it not as exciting and well-performing as it was in her youth. She also finds out she's the beneficiary of her grandmother's restaurant.

Natalie visits the neighborhood seer who reads her tea leaves. Such a cute, whimsical read! 🌸 🌸 🌸 🌸 🌸

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Natalie visits the neighborhood seer who reads her tea leaves. She says that Natalie must cook three recipes from her grandmother's cookbook in order to help her neighbors, as well as the restaurant.

Natalie has mixed feelings about helping these people who did not help her or her mother when she was growing up. Natalie makes a friend who opens her eyes to those same neighbors and maybe gives her a change of heart about them.

Oh my goodness, what a fun, charming read. I loved the recipes included and the sweet romance. Food and cooking almost become characters in the story, and I love that. I also enjoyed all the cultural aspects included.

Overall, Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Good Fortune is as cute, whimsical, and charming as its cover.

I received a complimentary copy. All opinions are my own.

My reviews can also be found on my blog: www.jennifertarheelreader.com ...more

This book was a delightful surprise. Light, enjoyable, magical and, above all, delicious, as food and savouring food is an integral part of this wonderful debut novel by Roselle Lim.

Natalie Tan gets the worst kind of telephone call. Her agoraphobic mother Miranda was found dead just outside their family house in Chinatown of San Francisco. Natalie left home seven years ago, having committed the worst sin in her culture, the sin of not respecting her mother's wishes. Natalie has always dreamt of This book was a delightful surprise. Light, enjoyable, magical and, above all, delicious, as food and savouring food is an integral part of this wonderful debut novel by Roselle Lim.

Natalie Tan gets the worst kind of telephone call. Her agoraphobic mother Miranda was found dead just outside their family house in Chinatown of San Francisco. Natalie left home seven years ago, having committed the worst sin in her culture, the sin of not respecting her mother's wishes. Natalie has always dreamt of being a cook and having a restaurant of her own, while her mother thought she would never be able to cook as well as their formidable Laolao Qiao (grandmother). In the seven years Natalie spent away from her home community, she enrolled in and failed culinary courses, which left her with no formal qualifications and evergrowing self-doubts. She also left a lovely, gentle man at the altar. You see, she and her mother were abandoned by Natalie's father before she was even born, so running away has become Natalie's default mode: beter leave before being left.

Back in her home community, she is helped to organise the funeral rites for her mother. The neighbourhood itself seems to have lost all its colours. The shops are failing as only rare customers find their way to Natalie's street and a real-estate agent-vulture is ready to sink her claws into whatever business property is left. Natalie finds out she has inherited her grandmother's restaurant which has been closed after her laolao died but still has all the necessary equipment. Miranda left her daughter her blessing to follow her dream, as well as her grandmother's book of recipes. For her restaurant to become successful, Natalie has to cook three dishes from this book for three neighbours who are in need of help. Laolao's food had magic healing properties that Natalie is only happy to try to recreate. Natalie gradually discovers that these people never abandoned Miranda in her time of trouble. They brought her shopping and kept her company for all the years Natalie was away. This is not the only discovery she makes. She finds out more about her family and the reasons for their choices in life: My mother taught me to let your love make their own choice. My laolao taught that you needed to honor it.

Natalie's road to fulfilling her dream and bringing joy and harmony to her community is not straightforward, but that's what makes this novel such a wonderful read. Her first attempts to cook for her neighbours backfire and she needs to work out where she went wrong and what to do to make things right. There is also an added element of mystery (Why did severely agoraphobic Miranda step outside on the day she died?) and romance.

If you love food and believe in cooking with all your heart in order to take care of people around you, this is a book for you. Food is one of the protagonists of this novel. When Natalie describes what she eats or cooks, she engages all your senses and focuses on colour, sound of crunching, texture, complimentarity of tastes. She makes you imagine sunshine of a spring day and delicious smells of Sunday breakfast cooked by your mom.

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If you think 'no man is an island' and we should all help each other (sometimes just by listening and respecting the other's wishes and choices) to succeed, you'll find Natalie's neighbourhood full of incredible individuals who know the true meaning of the word 'community'.

On a separate note, writing about depression and its influence not just on the person who is suffering from it, but also their family and friends. Roselle Lim's portrayal of Miranda is sensitive and full of love and understanding. The use of magical realism - the bowl of tears, the criss-cross cut wounds of angry words, the magic flutter of birds flying away to mark and celebrate the feeling of freedom- all these images add to the beauty of the novel and make it even more memorable.

Definitely recommended. I'll be looking forward to reading Roselle Lim's future books, hoping they will be as enjoyable as her debut novel.

Thank you to Edelweiss and Berkley for the ARC provided in exchange for an honest opinion. ...more

Natalie Tan's Book Of Luck And Fortune Vk

This was a cute story that worked quite well as a lazy Sunday afternoon read. And while the cultural aspects certainly enhanced the story, I do think some other elements fell flat in terms of providing substance. I guess what I'm trying to say is I didn't feel a meaningful connection to the main character and storyline as much as I assume the author was aiming for.

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Natalie Tan left the San Francisco Chinatown neighborhood she grew up in with dreams of attending culinary school. Years later she returns after the death of her mother and is shocked to discover the neighborhood is falling apart with families leaving and businesses failing. Natalie has some animosity towards some of her mother's neighbors as she feels they provided no help in assisting her with her mother's agoraphobia. But with plans to reopen her grandmother's restaurant, she's going to need their help and she might get some assistance in ways she least expected.

I do love the role cooking and food played in the story. I've been very fortunate and have had the opportunity to travel to many different countries and some of my favorite memories are tied into all the delicious food I gotten to try. So it was cool to see how passionate the main character was about cooking and recognizing food really can feed your soul. While I did like the inclusion of recipes within the story and the notes that followed, I do think perhaps there were a few too many. I probably would have loved them though if measurements were provided rather than just ingredients and vague instructions. Regardless, the strengths of the story were for sure food and the cultural aspects.

I thought the story could have used some sprucing up as not everything felt fully developed. I almost wish Daniel would not have been included as there really weren't that many interactions with him so his presence didn't feel all that necessary. In general, this was a decent read but I wish there was a bit more here so this would have been a memorable read.

Thank you to First to Read for the opportunity to read an advance digital copy! I was under no obligation to post a review and all views expressed are my honest opinion.

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Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune

Many thanks to Berkely for sending me a copy in exchange for an honest review

Such was the beauty of sadness. It turned the hollowness of the heart into something as beautiful as the loss it suffered.

Well, this is awkward. Being sent ARCs is such a blessing that I can't even begin to describe but it always makes me feel so bad whenever I end up hating a book I'm sent. That said, they ask for honest. And they're about to get it. (sorry, Berkley)

So, what's this book about?

Natalie Tan's Book o

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So, what's this book about?

Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune follows Natalie who has traveled back to her childhood home after her mother died. Being back is digging up old memories that she wished would stay buried. She doesn't want to be there at all. That is, until she finds her grandmother's old cookbook. She soon begins to cook recipes from it and starts to think about keeping up her grandmother's legacy and re-opening her old restaurant. I was expecting hijinks, hilarity and hot kisses but I did not get that.

Natalie - Oh my word. I really, really hated her. I think that what was meant to endear me ended up just annoying me. For instance, she bakes a ton, which is fine, but when she starts to cause chaos with her baking (which.. What? We'll get into the magical realism in a minute), instead of stopping. She thought My baking is f**king everyone up. You know what would help? bAkInG! Like, b*tch! did you not go to preschool?? Aside from her stupidity we also have her dumb trust issues. I mean, I get trust issues. I appreciate them being shown in a character as long as they're explained and the character grows or at least realizes they need to. First off all, Natalie's trust issues are never really explained. It doesn't make sense or endear the character if we don't know why! Also, she never owns up to them. I'm not asking for perfection. I just wanted her to, at least once, think: Hmm, maybe I shouldn't be such an anti-social jerk. Like, she left her fiance on the f**king alter and we never know why and she never apologizes or anything. F**king ridiculous.

Another staple for any good book is a plot. The bones of a novel that keep it from falling apart. This book did not have that and thus fell apart. All the milk in the world wouldn't make this book's bone strong enough. Yes, there were points where things happened but there was no overarching story, no end goal and nothing to look forward to. Nothing to root against or for.

Though we get a inkling of what she wants, we never truly know what Natalie really wants. In almost every (good) book I've read, the main character has some deep wish, some dream but in this there

Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune

really isn't anything. Natalie's dream storage is emptier than my bank account.

And another thing, this book is marked as romance by a lot of my friends and on Goodreads. This book is not a romance novel. Yes, there is some slight chemistry between Daniel and Natalie but it doesn't amount to anything. I wished that could have been developed more because it had potential but it was kicked to the curb by Natalie's selfishness.

On the note of genres, this book wasn't marked as magical realism which made me even more confused. It heavily implied that the cookbook and its recipes have magical qualities. As well as the fact that everyone around her also believes in the magical food. That said, it never said out loud that any of the stuff is magic which could have been okay. Like is it real or is it not kind of situation. But something about the way that it was done just made it feel off and confusing.

Finally, I'd like to end on the positive. To begin, the writing is gorgeous. I don't think I have ever read a book, let alone a debut, with such prose and talent that I found in the novel. If I didn't know, I never would have pegged this as a debut. If I had to guess, I would say this person has been writing for years and years. Also, even though the book and plot as a whole didn't make much sense, somehow, it was still generally captivating and enjoyable.

Overall, I didn't enjoy this book. That said, I know a lot of other will so don't let my opinion slow you down from reading this bad, albeit well written, book.

Bottom Line:

2.5 Stars

TW: Agorophobia

Cover: 4/5 Characters: 2/5 Plot: 2/5 Audio: 1/5 (She kept pausing after almost every sentence and it bugged me so much.)

Genre: Contemporary/Magical Realism

Publication Date:

Publisher: Berkley

Best Format: Hardcover/Paperback

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Natalie Tan's Book Of Luck And Fortune Epub

Culture, family, romance, magic, and food. Oh, the food! Everything about this story can be felt and tasted, and it was such an enjoyable reading experience. I especially appreciated the generous attention given to the importance of preserving heritage and community as shown throughout these pages. However, this review does come with a warning: You most certainly will experience intense cravings for the fragrant dishes referenced here. But some risks are worth taking. Check it out.

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My favorite quote:

"Such was the beauty of sadness: it transformed the hollowness of the heart into something as precious as the loss it suffered."

Thank you to Berkley Publishing Group and Goodreads Giveaways for the opportunity to win an advance reading copy (ARC) of Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune.

Note: Quote was checked against a final, published edition. ...more

Review to come.

Natalie Tan's Book Of Luck And Fortune Pdf

Buddy read with Madalyn & Melanie!

3.5 stars. I truly enjoyed a lot of the aspects of this novel - the depictions of food and the process of cooking, the culture that wove itself into the tale, the mix of characters as well. I do think it might translate even better as a film, because it would be so fun to see all the cooking parts in front of my eyes!

With each new debut author from this publisher comes an even more gorgeous cover that just invites the reader to pick it up.

Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune was a sweet and charming debut novel.

It was light on romance, which doesn't make this a traditional romance novel, but also just confirms that illustrated covers can be a bit misleading. Also the romance is built on insta love which was surprising to me - I never would have expected it in this novel. But it makes sense since the romance With each new debut author from this publisher comes an even more gorgeous cover that just invites the reader to pick it up.

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It was light on romance, which doesn't make this a traditional romance novel, but also just confirms that illustrated covers can be a bit misleading. Also the romance is built on insta love which was surprising to me - I never would have expected it in this novel. But it makes sense since the romance isn't really the focus of this story. Instead the author highlights Natalie's friendships and encounters with her neighborhood and customers.

And the way food was presented in this novel was a delight - I was constantly craving Chinese food. And I really enjoyed the aspect of magical realism, that came into play anytime Natalie cooked one of her mother's recipes.

The vibrant and poetically way the author wrote this book would relate wonderfully into a movie. The food, the descriptions, the neighborhood - a feast for the eyes.

Overall I wanted to love it more, but the writing didn't 100% click with me, and the low dosage of romance factored into my overall feel for the book.

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ARC generously provided in exchange for an honest review.

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