



# 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.

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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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Natalie Tan's Book of Luck and Fortune

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

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.

Natalie Tan left the San Francisco Chinatown neighborhood she grew up in with dreams of attending culinary school. Years later she r 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.

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

Review to come.

## 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

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!

## Natalie Tan's Book Of Luck And Fortune Pdf

DNF at 46%

I hate to be mean but I'm pretty sure I requested an ARC, not a cookbook. While there is a certain amount of magic described by Lim and the healing art of cooking and connection as found in Chinese culture, I'm sorry to say I was bored instead of bewitched.

This would probably make a great tv adaptation or movie but it fails to enthrall as a novel.

Natalie, living in Montreal when she learns that her estranged mother has died, goes back to San Francisco's Chinatown to attend to the details. Her mother suffered from agoraphobia, and Natalie learns how much the people in the community had helped her. Natalie loves to cook (and provides the reader with many recipes), but does she have the talent and the strength of her late grandmother to reopen the family restaurant which closed many years ago? This book had so many things I liked: vividly drawn characters, a likable protagonist, a bit of magic realism, and an evocative Chinatown setting. I hope that Roselle Lim will write another book about Natalie, her community, her restaurant, and her new love. Highly recommended. ...more