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TITLE INFORMATION

FORTUNE COOKIE SURPRISE!

Written and Illus. by Jacqueline Prata

Rosebud Publishing (32 pp.)

\$14.95 hardcover

ISBN: 978-0-692-94522-3; July 20, 2018

BOOK REVIEW

In this debut picture book, a girl realizes that, like a fortune cookie, she has gifts hidden inside.

Emily and her family like to celebrate by going to the local Chinese restaurant. To Emily, Chinese food makes an event special, particularly when it comes time to eat the fortune cookies. When she opens her fortune, it's a silly instruction meant to make her laugh—and she does. Her father's is equally amusing. Emily's mother's fortune is more serious: "You are loved like this cookie." Soon Emily begins to compare herself to a fortune cookie. She brings her family closer together; children add a finishing touch to their families. And, Emily thinks, like the cookies, kids have special gifts inside. Prata, 15, based this heartwarming story on an essay she wrote about fortune cookies, and while the tale is plot light and message heavy, the moral is simply stated and not overdone. The author's illustrations combine pencil drawings and watercolor backgrounds and feature Emily's Caucasian family. While the family's adoption of a food outside of its own heritage for its celebrations may give readers pause—and while there is a lack of acknowledgement of the fortune cookie as a possible Asian-American stereotype—Prata's text reads as genuine and heartfelt.

A sweet story by a teenager about the importance of children—which may inspire other young writers.

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