

Fortune Cookie Surprise!

Jacqueline Prata

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Fortune Cookie Surprise is a cute picture-book reminder that all children are loved and special.

In Jacqueline Prata's picture book, *Fortune Cookie Surprise*, a little girl discovers that she is a special part of her family, just as the fortune cookies she loves are a special part of dinner.

Emily and her parents go to their favorite Chinese restaurant for a celebration. Their favorite part of the meal is the dessert: fortune cookies. They laugh at all the silly fortunes, until Emily's mother gets one that reads, "You are loved like this cookie." Emily realizes she's like that cookie—she and it "both add the finishing touch." The story concludes by encouraging its audience to reflect: "What special gift is inside you?"

Light in its creative coupling of fortune cookies with people's inner gifts, the book hits appealing notes, if the story line itself is rather unextraordinary. Emily's realization that she's loved is important and cute, if not fully satisfying; the book doesn't ask its audience to discover the lesson for themselves. Still, the story is a reminder that everyone has their own inner genius.

Easy language and an imaginative layout make for a reader-friendly book. The text follows Prata's illustrations well. In an amusing twist, the text is written as if it is on fortune cookie strips. Pictures are creative and colorful. Emily and her family are consistently drawn. Their faces are expressive as they laugh at their silly fortunes.

Fortune Cookie Surprise is a picture-book reminder that all children are loved and special; it reinforces the importance of love.

REBECCA MONTERUSSO (August 23, 2018)

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