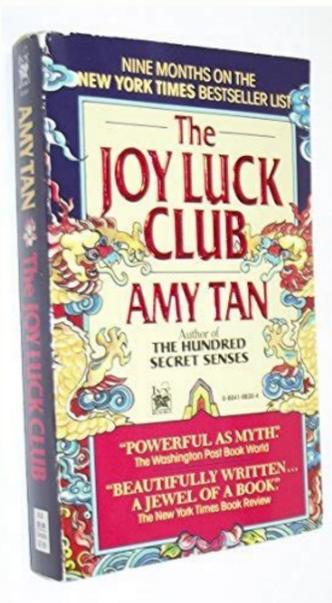
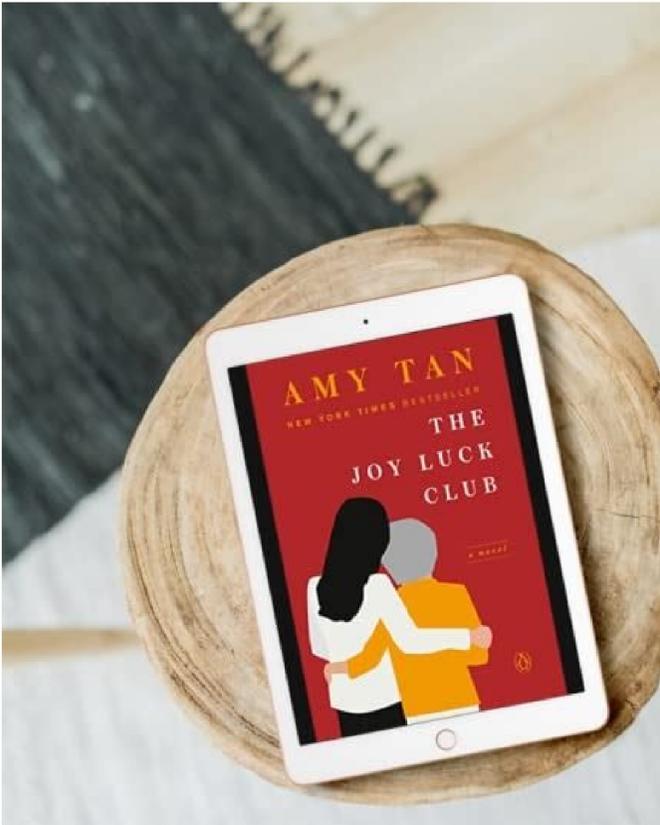
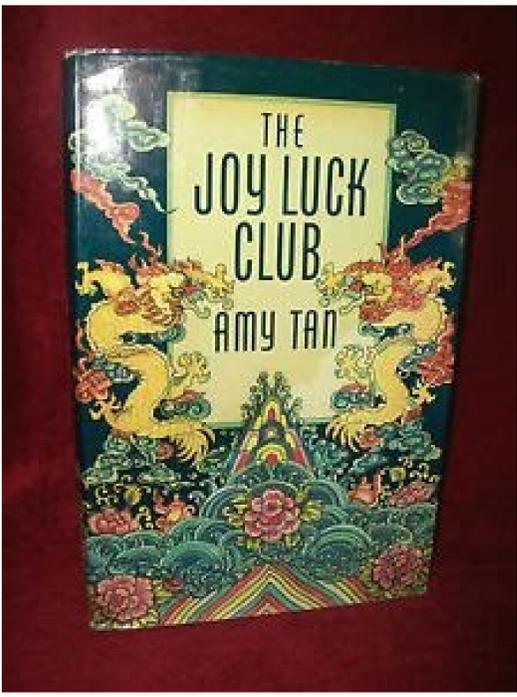
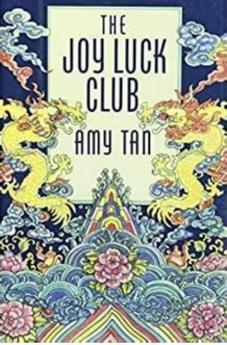
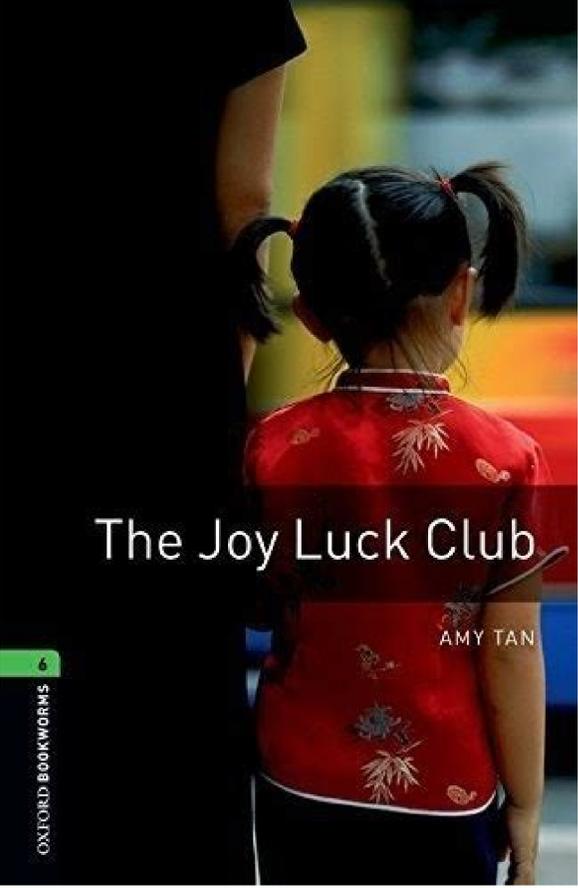


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How has your perspective on the book changed over the intervening seventeen years? With help from Baptist missionaries, my father was able to come to the States, where he enrolled in the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School and became minister of the First Chinese Baptist Church of Fresno. My mother was married off to a bad man, who lied, gambled, cheated, and flaunted his infidelities by bringing other women home. After I turned in my manuscript, I met with Faith a couple of months later. I met them when I went to China with my mother in 1987. There still exists a tendency to evaluate stories with characters from a different culture as being about culture. What kind of book would result if Jing-mei, Rose, Lena, and Waverly were telling their stories to their daughters? My mother left behind three daughters in China and eventually was reunited with them. And again I say out loud, "This is communist China!" (p. 1) enjoy it.Q. The Joy Luck Club is divided into four sections, each preceded by a brief tale that in some way reflects June to take her mother's place at the mahjong table, where stories spanning seven decades are recalled above the din of swirling tiles. I had constant back pain from the perceived weight of public pressure.Seven months passed before I accepted my new life and the joy that I could write fiction the rest of my life. I always ask myself what is important now and what will remain so, despite other people's opinions, the ups and downs of the marketplace, or good or bad reviews.Q. In many reviews and articles written about The Joy Luck Club, it is referred to as a novel, but you have said that you consider it to be a collection of short stories. What are your thoughts on the many Chinese immigrants to the United States who have become Christians? 5. While Waverly was a prodigy and grew up to be successful in her career, Jing-mei (or "June" as she is called in America) has had more difficulty. He and I used to joke that we were supposed to marry one another because we were Asian. My mother's side of the family adheres to no religion, Chinese or Western. What are some of the elements of the plot and aspects of the characters that make so many different kinds of people want to read it? These stories naturally fell into four groups of four stories. It contains the circumstances that led me to write it. She is the literary editor for WEST, the weekly magazine produced by the Los Angeles Times. 221) as a platform, discuss the differences between the daughters of the members of the Joy Luck Club. I get twinges in my heart when little kids shyly tell me they watch Sagwa. When she told stories of her past, she would act as if the memory was the same as the moment she was in. Can you think of any rituals that you have with friends that are similar to this? In those moments when I thought she might have died, I promised that if she lived I would go to China with her, meet her other daughters from her first marriage, and beg her to tell me the stories I've avoided hearing all my life. When I sing in the shower, I create brilliant songs, most of them about my dogs, who are staring at me as I shampoo my hair. Do you feel that there is any tension between the spiritual beliefs that are important in Chinese culture as opposed to those dominant in Western Christian doctrine?Christianity has a long history in China and found a lot of compatibility with the poor. Some people hate revision. It covered in thirteen pages the life of a character from Chinese immigrants?My relationship with my mother had much to do with each story. ABOUT AMY TAN Amy Tan is the author of seven books, including the New York Times bestsellers The Joy Luck Club, The Kitchen God's Wife, and The Opposite of Fate, which was also a New York Times Notable Book. To this day, I have no idea what a producer does, except go to meetings and say yes to some things and no to others.I was offered other opportunities to make films. Some were more about loss, some were more about hope, and so forth. She told him to "invest" in our marriage—to buy me twenty-four-carat gold, so that if I became unhappy, I could put the gold on a scale, sell it, then start a new life. It reminds me of myself as a kid watching cartoons and wondering who made them.Q. The book is framed by Jing-mei Woo's more 6. Throughout their stories, the women in The Joy Luck Club and their daughters exhibit many signs, at different moments, of both strength and weakness. I can't change the reasons so I would not change the book.What's most vivid to me about the book are the images that directly relate to something highly emotional in our family: my grandmother cutting a bit of flesh from her arm to make her dying mother a soul, the rape and death of my grandmother. By the time I was in junior high school, we lived in the suburbs where there were no Asians. The irony today is that educators select my book so that young readers can identify with the story. The mothers, meanwhile, watch with heartache as their daughters' marriages fail, as they expect less and less and so accept less and less. Their warnings were backward superstitions. Please enable JavaScript or switch to a supported browser to continue using twitter.com. These stories read like small myths—in fact there are many mythological elements in this book. How did that affect your reading experience? Could you talk a little bit about that, and about your thoughts on an American literary canon that is becoming more "multicultural" in this new century?That is a very complex question and it deserves a longer discussion of just a few months. He also raped little girls. It did not occur to me that the details of the story might raise questions about what was being represented as a larger sociological phenomenon about mixed marriages. With millions of copies in print, Tan's books continue to draw new readers and are often adopted in schools and municipal reading programs across the United States. How does this exchange set the stage for the stories that follow? That would then require me to give up writing fiction for the two- or three-year period it takes to create a movie. Writer Molly Giles critiqued my work and said it had no consistent voice and a dozen story threads, but no true narrator or story. They captured a moment of what my cat was like lying in the sun or watching a fly or lying in my lap. Though this club serves as the title of the book and the unifying theme for all of the characters, there are not many meetings of the club recalled throughout the stories—many of the stories take place long before the club was conceived. What made you decide to use the Joy Luck Club as the backbone of the book but not focus on it in the action? In between, an agent saw the first published story and asked to represent me. This is unlike the goals of other religions, such as Judaism or Buddhism.On the Tan side of my family, my great-grandfather, who did not come from a wealthy family, was able to receive an education at a missionary school, where he learned to read, write, and speak English. No one had predicted the book's trajectory, and I was stunned, as if I had won the lottery without having ever bought a ticket.This may sound strange, but the book's unexpected success scared me. I'd send a few pages to Ron by fax, and he would make drastic notes and changes, then fax them back to me. She went on: "He is pointing a gun and everyone is falling down but me. 8. In Rose Hsu Jordan's story, "Half and Half," a terrible tragedy befalls her youngest brother Bing while she is watching him. What do you think of mother and daughter's reactions to this event? But I still feel it's important to examine how we treat any book as subject matter rather than story. You can see a list of supported browsers in our Help Center. My grandfather continued the tradition and passed along both his linguistic skills and his religious fervor to his fourteen children, the oldest of which was my father. I thought she was smarter and no longer needs to take her advice. She lives with her husband in New York and San Francisco. What does the dinner scene between Waverly and June say about each of their characters? To me, writing fiction is about cloaking myself in a subterfuge, making myself the hidden observer. To be a good one, you have to commit brush to paper with a sense of confidence. But I hope that students will also sense after reading it that I was not just writing about Chinese people or just mothers or daughters. Why is it significant that her daughter is the main narrator, and that it is the story of her lost daughters in Kwelin that serve as a beginning and end to the book? At midnight, they ate dim sum, and sometimes we were allowed to have a late snack with them. And the reasons they have survived have to do with a family inheritance of love and hope, and the realization that love and hope are really the same thing.Q. The Joy Luck Club is widely used as part of high school reading curricula, falling under the category of "multicultural literature." You have said on a number of occasions that you're uncomfortable with that label. But in this new generation of stories, the daughters-now-mothers would realize they have not given their kids what is necessary, especially when their daughters fall into crisis, for example, when they nearly overdose on drugs, or when they drop out of school and fall into depression, or when they are diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease, or when they are attacked by a sexual predator, or when they, in an instance of road rage, hit a bicyclist and are charged with a crime. And what of those who have not? What is common to both the real and fictional is a connection to the past and seeing what is shared despite circumstances. The subterfuge of fiction is necessary for me as a writer to find truths. What was that experience like? Sometimes I think my grandmother, who had no voice of her own, paved the way with a lot of lucky coincidences so that I would become a writer and give voice to what had happened to her.Q. All created those unions? I did not intentionally limit the stories to those of mothers and daughters. We've detected that JavaScript is disabled in this browser. It is easy to lose sight of what is valuable and meaningful in the blinding lights of commercial success. I heard that it might last on the bookstore shelves six weeks—if you were lucky. Shortly after I started writing fiction, my mother suffered what I was told was a heart attack. Because of financial need, he eventually returned to his original profession as an electrical engineer but continued to devote his spare time to the ministry.My mother was not raised as a Christian, but she grew up in Shanghai, where it was not unusual for people to have contact with Westerners and Christian beliefs. We spread the stories across the table, and she told me we needed to reorder them in a way that felt right and made sense. My mother, for example, wanted Lou to prove his love for me by standing up to his parents when they suggested we break things off. And when asked by my agent to come up with a title for a proposed collection for which only three stories had been written, I chose Wind and Water after the notions of feng shui, the arrangement of elements that determine harmony with nature. The songs are somehow not as brilliant when the water is turned off.I would also like to be an artist. They view their mothers' warnings as irrelevant, and their advice as intrusive. My mother was alive when I wrote the story, but what would I have felt if she had died? The series turned out better than I ever could have imagined. Her parents also wished for her to be a "genius," as if hard work alone could will it. They must now choose for the future yet do not know what to do.In the final section, the mothers' and daughters' stories intertwine and reveal how hope and love can transform sadness, anger, despair, and fears from the past. I definitely would not be a watercolorist. I wrote about a girl who is a chess prodigy, whose mother has cultivated a talent in her called "invisible strength." I wanted to rebel against my mother's ideas and choose what I wanted to do. Her mother had been raped, forced to become a concubine, and she later killed herself to escape. Molly advised I write and see. The Joy Luck Club was included on the New York Times bestseller list for more than half a year? My mother once confided in me that she had expected I would marry a waiguo ren, a "foreigner" and shape it, taking away chunks, slapping on bits, smoothing it out, looking at it from all kinds of angles, then mashing it back to a lump to start over again. Instead it escalated, and I was soon inundated with requests for interviews and appearances, which created even more chaos and anxiety. In the beginning, I turned down several offers to option the book, because I feared that someone would make a film that was appalling in its depictions of Chinese people, for example, that people would wear coolie hats and have curved dagger fingernails, even though they were not in the rice fields or selling opium to Charlie Chan. When the book was published, the short story collection was called a novel by reviewers.So there you have it, the writer's process on how a story became a novel.Q. All of the stories in this book involve relationships between mothers and daughters. Together we spent three days talking about the heart of the story, and Ron broke it all down into minute-by-minute "beats" or scenes. Tan was also a coproducer and coscreenwriter of the film version of The Joy Luck Club, and her essays and stories have appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies. However, it is Waverly's mother who influences Waverly to quit chess, due to a hurtful argument. When I played the piano as a child, I saw stories in music. But then I met two people who seemed to understand the heart of this book in ways I had never considered. I don't know anything. There is so much that a story can do that is not required. People might say this is proof that we American-born Chinese believed white people were more desirable. There were more surprises. We tried doing it chronologically, then by family relationship, and later by alternating voices of mothers and daughters. Find other examples that challenge American stereotypes of Chinese culture in The Joy Luck Club. It just happens.Q. Before you wrote The Joy Luck Club, you were working as a linguistics teacher. 7. The title of the book, The Joy Luck Club, is taken from Suyuan Woo's establishment of a gathering place for Chinese immigrants to play mahjong. I kept telling myself week in and week out, that this would wind down the following week. Struggles were good. What about the book as a whole—what kind of allegorical meaning did you intend for it to have?I am ashamed to admit that the mythlike tales were the result of structural retrofitting, an afterthought proposed by my editor Faith Sale at Putnam. Her methods of ensuring a long-lasting marriage must work, because Lou and I are still together after thirty-six years.Like the mothers in the stories, my mother had a suspicious view of all men that was drawn from experience. What emerged was an emotional arc spanning the sixteen stories. My great-grandfather's conversion may have been sincere, but in his later years, he also took on a young concubine, who bore him a son when I was eighty-five years old. Does a thought like this represent strength or weakness on Lena's part? I did become a creative consultant in turning my children's book Sagwa into an animated television series for PBS. But here's a stab at it: The daughters of the Joy Luck Club would do everything possible to raise their daughters without criticism; without expectations that they'd become prodigies, doctors, or good wives; and without promoting the notion that romance would lead to shame and suicide. They struggle with raising their children, contend with unhappy marriages, cope with difficult financial circumstances, and are disheartened by bad luck. I think the choice of white men or white women as spouses was related more to opportunity, the opportunity to meet a lot of Caucasians and the few opportunities to meet other Chinese people. So I wrote a story about a chess champion and her mother. Whatever remarks I make here, I hope people will continue with their own thoughts. Some of my past remarks about my discomfort with labels in literature had to do with what was happening fifteen to twenty years ago. So there is nothing I would change. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 1. Although the women in The Joy Luck Club are Chinese or Chinese American, and their heritage plays an important part in their lives, they also have experiences that all of us face, regardless of culture, even today. I had nothing to sell, so she badgered me every week to write another story. You can't erase. At first she is fearful that her parents will be angry with her, but instead her mother relies on both her own faith and Chinese beliefs in ancestor worship. I did, and then she asked me to write up a description of what a whole book of these kinds of stories might include so that she might find interested publishers. Which came first. They also helped maintain the Tan family temple, the building where the family prayed to our ancestors—or perhaps they now prayed for them. How are the daughters' romantic choices influenced, if at all, by their mothers, who had fewer choices of their own? Her work has been translated into more than thirty languages. Both Shanghai and Beijing had been divided into foreign concessions, and my mother lived in the French Concession in a yang fang yuan, a foreign garden house, meaning Western in style. And June believes it was her mother's impossibly high expectations that make her feel that event today, she is a failure. The five families were reduced to four when I ran out of story ideas that afternoon. Based on Molly's recommendation, a little magazine, with a circulation of three hundred, asked to see my story. He is happy he fooled them into being scared. What was your inspiration for the four tales? I met my future husband in my freshman year, so that was the end of my dating career. Each of the women faces difficult choices when it comes to marrying—whether it be Lindo Jong being forced into an early union with a man she loathes, Ying-Ying St. Clair starting life over with an American man after being abandoned by her first husband, or Rose Hsu Jordan, who is facing divorce from a man whose family never understood her. The latter was related to me as proof of my great-grandfather's vitality, but nothing was said about the young concubine, or the circumstances that led her to become the possession of an old man. (That editor, by the way, has since become editor-in-chief of a well-known publishing company.)I went on to write a second story, this one in the voice of an older woman. Go ahead and kill me, I tell him, and he is putting the gun in my face, right here, and everyone is screaming, and suddenly he is laughing and he is putting the gun down. That's how my mother influenced my stories.Q. The Joy Luck Club was made into a feature film in 1993, and you wrote the screenplay for it. I know that the sounds of contradiction. Most of them are indeed voice contradictory. Most of them have also married Caucasian American men, and there is a good deal of tension between their parents (especially the mothers) and their spouses. How did your life change after the publication of this book?I wrote this book with no expectations that it would be read by very many people. My biggest fear these days is that some student will see the name of my book on the list and groan with disgust. If you were not a writer today, what other career could you picture yourself in?

Within those sources were elements that suggested fairy tales: a magic feather, the warnings of the twenty-four malignant gates, the harmony of a baby passing along her naive wisdom to the queen mother of the Western sky.With each, I added some personal aspects to the story. I once took a class in clay sculpture and, apart from an aversion to getting my hands dirty and sticky, I enjoyed the process enormously. They recall moments in their past when they were faced with similar circumstances but defied what they believed was bad fate in order to find their true worth.The book begins in the voice of June (Jing-mei) Woo, a woman in her thirties, who lives in San Francisco. And Ying-Ying remembers a time when she could not stand still in another person's shadow, as required of her, and by giving into her desire for the wrong things, she later gave up her spirit.In the next two sections, the daughters recall moments of uncertainty, anger, or fear in childhood. 36). He also was educated in a Christian school.

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