



The Dim Sum of All Things

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Have you ever wondered:

Why Asians love "Hello Kitty"?

What the tattooed Chinese characters really say?

How to achieve feng shui for optimum make-out sessions?

Where Asian cuties meet the white guys who love them?

Then you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll realize this book is better than a Broadway production of Cats when you read scenes that include:

twenty-something Lindsey Owyang mastering the intricacies of office voicemail and fax dialing

an authentic Chinese banquet where Number One Son shows off his language skills by speaking "Chinglish"

dating disasters with grandsons of Grandma's mahjong partners

the discovery that the real China looks nothing like the pavilion at Disney World

karaoke

And all the while Lindsey is falling in lust with the "white devil" in her politically correct office. But will Grandma's stinky Chinese ointments send him running? Or will Lindsey realize that the path to true love lies somewhere between the dim sum and the pepperoni pizza?

The Dim Sum of All Things Details

Date : Published January 20th 2004 by William Morrow Paperbacks (first published 2004)

ISBN : 9780060560751

Author : Kim Wong Keltner

Format : Paperback 344 pages

Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Literature, Asian Literature, Romance, Cultural, China

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pinkgal says

There are plenty of Asian-American-struggling-to-reconcile-two-cultures books out there. This wasn't bad, but it wasn't all that great either. One memorable part, however, is the kitty-chan toaster and the drinking of ovaltine. =) Read to find out what I mean. If you're looking for a book about that particular struggle (and oh, I've read plenty of them) Gish Jen's *Typical American* is a good choice. Another one I'm quite fond of is, unsurprisingly, Amy Tan's *The Joy-Luck Club*.

Joanie says

There were a few funny moments in this book but overall it wasn't that great. It's about a Chinese-American girl who begins dating a white guy. The back cover sounded so funny, I was really disappointed.

Laura says

I love books that make me laugh out loud, prompting my husband to ask, "What's so funny?" There are so many funny moments, funny because they're believable, that I feel like I read almost the whole book out loud to him.

Juliana says

The main character was not likable in the least. It's hard to understand how a mid-twenty something year old can act so childishly regarding her crush. Also, the way this novel deals with stereotypes is confusing. I'm not sure if it's trying to reinforce the idea of Asian stereotypes or trying to break them down. Either way I was very disappointed in this book and how it portrayed immigrant families and Asian Americans. The writing became tiresome with too many metaphors and similes that hardly made sense. Overall, I would not recommend.

Dana says

Not funny or insightful, or even particularly well-written. The protagonist spends the book trying to avoid white men who have a fetish for Asian women but falls for one anyway. She doesn't spend any time at all examining why she (a Chinese woman) is attracted to white men. In fact, she and her (also Asian) best friend have never dated Asian men. Seriously, one girl tells the other, "I hear they (Asian men) have small penises." This book is the Dim Sum of unexamined interracial dating. Avoid.

Sherese says

Disappointing fiction about young Chinese woman's struggle to intergerate her Chinese racial/ethnic identity with her typical Middle Class American upbringing in San Francisco. Four words - " Hoarder of All Things Asian", the author loves this phrase to describe white men who seek and only date Asian women because they want the "stereotypical" Asian female. What's disturbing is not this concept, because I believe there is some merit to this, but the fact the lead female character Lindsey could be described (even at the end of the book) as a " Hoarder Of All White Men". She won't even entertain the idea of dating a Chinese (or in general an Asian man), she quickly dismisses & stereotypes every single last Asian male character. As a observant outsider and non-Asian, but trained social scientist this speaks volumes to me and reitierates current mating/dating trends within our society. As my old Multi-Cultural Psych Professor (who happened to be half-Japanese) used to say, " The highest rates of unmarried individuals are Asian men and Black women. You all should get together and stop being lonely." But for obvious socio-cultural reasons, I don't see this trend changing at all so it might be time for someone to start a dating service for Asian men seeking Black women and vice versa. Good Luck!

Alena says

The protagonist of this book, a young Chinese-American living in San Francisco, is extremely annoying. She's whiny, self-absorbed, and is at the same time obsessed with and disdainful of her heritage. I don't think that was the author's intention in writing this book, but that's certainly how it came off to me. The author also overuses adjectives and other descriptive phrases, oftentimes repeating herself. The ending is pat and corny and the character has barely grown over the course of the book. I definitely don't recommend this one!

Joyce says

Amy Tan she is not.

A "3rd generation" Chinese woman growing up in SF and her world viewpoint. I thought it might be funny and interesting to relate to Lindsey's story.

Turns out there is no story. I think the *aim* was for a Bridget Jones genre love story.

Plenty of authors don't have a story per se (David Sedaris), but Wong Keltner had little ability in creating a character. She merely listed observations of a Chinese woman's viewpoint with a wee bit too much snark and not enough humor. The book is also written in the 3rd person, which distances the reader further from any possible relation to Lindsey.

Brand name dropping, for no purpose: I felt like I was standing under a tree at Costco for fear I'd get bombed again.

Most annoying, she made use of waaay too many similes.

Nikki says

Keltner's wry observations kill me. I'm not sure if it's an Asian-American thing, but I see a lot of myself in her words. Her detailing of life as a product of two cultures is simultaneously extremely specific and completely universal and makes for a really enjoyable summer read!

Kenneth Horner says

I really liked this book but not necessarily for the actual writing of it but due to one simple reason. It is slightly like how me and my wife got together in book form. We are a mixed race couple. My wife Chinese and myself Caucasian. There was some racial barriers put in front of us that we got over. So I can relate in a way to the characters.

David Schwan says

Not a particularly deep book but fun to read. Set in San Francisco it covers a lot of the culture of the city. A fair amount of the novel is set in Chinatown, and we are presented with a good view of working (non tourist) Chinatown--at least 2-3 times a year I go shopping on Grant street. The novel starts well but the last 100 pages seem rushed, as if a page limit was looming or a deadline for publication was looming. The comedy found earlier in the book was not sustained. The hippie ABC Aunt was an interesting character, the author could probably write an interesting book about her.

Melissa says

1.5 stars. Never judge a book by its cover. *sigh* It was the cover and the little blurb on the back that had me buying this at a library book sale a while back. I should also stop with the habit of needing to finish books that I start! The book had potential, but the overly-flowery prose and the quick-to-judge, insecure, superficial main character was just too much. She goes around labeling any white guy she meets who seems slightly interested in Asian culture as a "Hoarder..." (and yet she only dates white guys). She also comes across as one of those people who would be nice and friendly to you one-on-one but then ignore you and pretend she doesn't know you when she's around a 'better' crowd. 1/2 a star for being set in San Francisco, a few words of Cantonese here and there, and the last fifth of the book, where Lindsey finally learns more about her grandmother's past. But, for me, it was too little too late. Incidentally, people who know nearly nothing about Chinese culture might get something more out of the book -- a lot of time is devoted to describing red envelopes, lion dances, etc.

Sara says

At first I was thinking of saying that this book is Asian Chick-Lit, but it is so much better than that. It is the

humorous tale of an American Chinese woman in her early 20's, still trying to find herself. She lives with her grandmother in San Francisco and she has a crush on a white guy at work and she's not sure how that will be received by her family. She is a woman in two worlds, trying to come to grips and embrace her Chinese heritage and also realizing she is totally American. It was interesting with a fast moving, funny plot. Plus, I learned some things about Chinese culture I was previously clueless about. I would definitely be interested in reading more from Kim Wong Keltner.

Jocelyn says

Absolutely hilarious. I finally feel like I am reading about someone I can relate to. This fictionalized ABC (American Born Chinese) and her (mis)adventures in dating, work, family and life in general ring far-too-true for comfort at times.

I cringed at my OWN memories while reading the equally cringe-worthy (though much more amusing as it wasn't happening to me) experiences she had while finding the right guy (what does she call those yellow-fever types again?) among other job and family related (is) fiascos (too strong of a word?).

Any person, whatever their ancestry or upbringing, who has felt misplaced and misjudged in their environment because of a concept of how things are "supposed to be" will enjoy this book. A light-hearted look at the weirdness that is being one of many "types" in this even weirder melting pot we live in.

BarbNZ says

I lost patience with this book. Started promisingly enough and I enjoyed the subtle incorporation of explanations of Chinese culture. But... the main character lacked likeability and I found her a bit insipid.
