



The Misfortune Cookie

Laura Resnick

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Murder by misfortune? Death by cookie?

The New Year gets off to a rocky start for struggling actress Esther Diamond when NYPD's Detective Connor Lopez, who slept with her and then didn't call, shuts down the Little Italy restaurant where Esther works between acting jobs—and arrests her!

After spending a long night in jail plotting Lopez's slow and painful demise, Esther's

luck changes when she lands a role in a low-budget indie film in Chinatown—where her friend, semi-retired hit man Lucky Battistuzzi, who escaped Lopez's sweep in Little Italy, is hiding out in a Chinese-Italian mortuary.

But Esther and Lucky soon realize that something strange is going on in Chinatown, where mysterious gourmet fortune cookies are inflicting deadly mystical curses on the hapless victims who receive them as gifts.

As preparations heat up for Chinese New Year, when the icy streets will be filled with costumed lion dancers, firecrackers, and dense crowds, Esther and Lucky summon their friend Dr. Maximillian Zadok, a semi-immortal mage entrusted with confronting Evil in the Big Apple, to help them save Chinatown—and Esther's film—from the mystical menace of a maniacal murderer.

The Misfortune Cookie Details

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Author : Laura Resnick

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From Reader Review The Misfortune Cookie for online ebook

Wing Kee says

A bucket full of Chinese stereotypes irked me.

I'm Chinese so when I say that the stereotypes found here irked me I can tell you specifically why. I'm sure the same could be said about the rest of the series but this one I can relate to the most.

World: The continuation of the world of Esther is good, her cast of characters and their slow development into the world and their little slice of New York is interesting. I will say the Chinese part of this book was a bit painful to read. It's not that it's all incorrect but there are so many cliches and stereotypes written in this that I don't know if this is parody or I should be irked. The fortune cookie is not a CHINESE thing (yes I know that book recognizes this). The stuff they did get right I enjoyed and was charmed.

Story: Chinese themed story, with the expected cliches and tropes found in the genre. There is the fireworks, the lion dance, the dim sum and mystic curses and all that. It's par for the course in this series. I did like the interaction between the characters and they are the main thing that makes this series stand out for me and having them interact is a joy to read. I found the outcome to be a bit too derivative and the idea a bit too stereotypical of asian families but oh well.

Characters: Esther is fun, still wonderful personal voice and her interactions and banter is great. Her relationship with Lopez is fun and so are the other characters involved. Not a fan of the stereotype Chinese found in the book.

It was par for the course.

Onward to the next book!

Moira says

Esther Diamond is funny and enjoyably quirky. Getting arrested just after midnight at the New Year by her ex-"I thought we were gonna be more than a one night stand" is one hell of a way to start your new year off. The mob guys as straight man sidekicks are awesome and Connor's confusion as to why a woman is upset with him then not then again is kind of hysterical.

Again I started with a middle book, but I don't think the story suffers much for it. Yes, some more background insight could have been good but I got along admirably without, and now I want to go backwards and read the beginning.

Veronica says

2.5 stars

I like this series for what it is, a light and comical urban fantasy that doesn't take itself seriously at all. That said, parts of it are starting to drag out to the point of being annoying. For one thing, I had hoped that the last book finally saw the end to the will-they/won't-they nature of the whole Esther/Lopez mess. And yes, I mean mess. We spend almost the entire book hashing out why Lopez hadn't called Esther in the week since the events of the last book went down then, when it seems like that issue is finally resolved, things get upended again. This is book six so please, with all due respect, either shit or get off the pot. And that goes double for Lopez's maybe mystical powers (that he knows nothing about). Once again we get a brief demonstration of those powers in action when Esther's life is threatened and, once again, it goes nowhere. I know this series is more comedy than anything else but even comedy has to keep building on storylines. Since this series doesn't have a long arc villain, its these smaller plot threads that tie all the books together but if nothing ever changes, well, interest fades. And that's where I'm finding myself after six books with the series, still somewhat invested but feeling myself starting to drift away.

Cissa says

I love this series. At this point, it's one of the few "urban fantasy" series that I'm keeping up with, and it's my favorite.

I did love the Chinatown setting for this one, though it did mean there were a few pretty solid info-dumps at the beginning to provide context. They were well-done info-dumps, though, and while I knew most of the info, if you didn't- it'd help.

The rest was really well done. I must say, I think it's time for Esther and Lopez wot work it out, damnit! even though the ambiguity can be pretty fun, like in one of the initial scenes here. Lopez's arc looks like it's going in an interesting direction, and I'm hoping that in the next few novels, some movement happens; right not, both Esther and Lopez are STUCK, which is not much fun.

I'm not sure whether this is one of the best in the series- and it's certainly not the place to start!- but it was a really fun novel with a good premise, and i enjoyed it utterly.

I can hardly wait for the next one!

Imjussayin says

The Misfortune Cookie : Esther Diamond 6

Read in chronological order

3 ?

In A Nutshell: Esther was out of work but finds herself in a low budget movie in Chinatown. She is of course there because she is looking into the possibility of magical murders.

The Plot: Are Chinese fortune cookies causing deaths in Chinatown? Lucky, one of Esther's madcap crew thinks so and calls on Esther to help investigate.

The Protagonist: Esther Diamond is our protagonist, and she is the antithesis of the urban fantasy hero.

Esther saves the world on the down low and without magic. It's her competence that makes Esther a winner. She does not possess killer looks although she has gorgeous cheekbones! With her wonderful sense of humour and winning personality you just have to love this crazy lady.

I didn't laugh as much as the last crazy slapstick adventure but I enjoyed this book and the build-up of Esther's relationship with John. I say no more. Go read it.

Recommended.

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Book Rating

Sexual Content: 15

Language: 18

Violent: 12

Would I read the next one ~~or reread~~?: Can't wait.

My rating system (* = star)

0* Could not finish this book (waste of time)

1* Finished the book but didn't like it.

2* Finished the book it was okay.

3* A good read worth your time.

4* An excellent read often with a novel concept or unusual plot.

5* A magnificent read. A prominent example of the genre.

Mrs Giggles says

The Misfortune Cookie, the sixth book in Laura Resnick's urban fantasy series featuring Esther Diamond, is a considerable improvement over the previous book. I had seriously thought about giving up on this series after the rigor mortis experience of Poltergeist, but this one is set in the Chinatown of Manhattan, when Chinese New Year is just around the corner. And, just look at the gorgeous cover! Okay, I can give this series one more try.

Still searching for that breakthrough role of a lifetime, Esther Diamond resumes waiting tables at Bella Stella, which remains open for business despite some recent weird things that happened there. The place is still a favorite of the Italian folks that dabble in organized crime, so it's probably not a good idea to keep working there. But the tips are great, and the guests aren't bad at all. But all good things come to an end, and the end arrives in the form of an OCCB raid, ruining all the fine tippers' meals and causing the place to go down. Needless to say, Esther is out of a job. Worse, the raid was led by Manhattan's finest, which included Detective Connor Lopez, and that SOB never called one week later, since they'd slept together. Asshole!

Her friend, Lucky Battistuzzi, lives up to his nickname when he manages to avoid getting arrested during the raid by being at the right place at the right time. Still, he has better lay low, so he holes up at the funeral parlor that he co-owned with a Chinese friend, right in Chinatown. It is there that he suspects the recent death

of a member of the Chinese tong may be caused by paranormal means - a curse contained in a fortune cookie, to be exact. Esther's buddy Dr Max Zadok confirms that Lucky's suspicion is correct after doing some magical tests on the cookie in question. Oh no, is someone in town running around giving people a bunch of cursed fortune cookies?

I know, the plot, and I think the author knows it too, which is why the paranormal elements are present in a "blink and you'll miss it" manner. Seriously, there is only one paranormal scene - Max conducting some tests on the cursed cookie - in about 390 pages of this story, and the villain runs around at the climax of the story threatening to shoot people with a gun. A normal gun.

The lack of paranormal elements is both good and bad. It's good because it allows the author to show me that she is capable of some great comedy. The bulk of this story deals with Esther's admittedly petty grudge against Connor warring with her desire to fling her underwear at his head, and there are some outrageously funny moments that have me laughing. This is especially in the first few chapters. I like funny, so I like those bits.

On the other hand, I am tired of Esther and Connor. Their romance feels drawn out for no good reason, and if they start becoming another Joe-Stephanie thing, I'm going to tip a bucket of swill over their heads. Right now, the progression of their romance moves at a snail's pace, and yet, it still manages to push aside most of the paranormal aspects of this story. If future books are going to be this paranormal-light, I don't know how I'd feel about that. I signed up in the beginning for Max and Esther. Right now, it seems like Max is just here to serve as a vessel for exposition and a deus ex machina plot device, much to my disappointment.

Anyway, back to the boring couple. Connor can be an ass in the past, but I'm amused that his continuous ability to cheese Esther off stems from oh-so-male forgetfulness mixed with "I really don't want to call and be subjected to her shrill scolding" trepidation. I suspect many guys can relate to him here, as Esther shows that she can really hold a petty grudge even after knowing that he never called, mostly because his time is consumed by his job. Do you want to call such a creature and tell her why you didn't call, knowing that she just wants to scream and shout at you? Still, Esther is funny when she's petty, I'd give her that.

Take away the comedy, however, and not much left remains that is fun.

The author still gets carried away with dumping everything she has researched into this story. When Max lectures everyone about Chinese culture, that makes sense - he's like that, after all, that's his personality. When Esther and various secondary characters start going to detailed exposition about traditional Chinese culture, however, that's when I get forcefully pulled out of the story. A Chinese character may know plenty about the topic, but having him unload everything on Esther ten seconds into their acquaintance is hard to believe. It is even more unbelievable when Esther starts delivering "Everything Laura Resnick Had Researched in Six Paragraphs or Less" exposition. How would an out-of-work actress-turned-waitress know anything about this subject to such a thorough degree?

The plot is unbelievably flat. The identity of the villain is obvious from the start, as there is only one candidate that fits the bucket of crazy profile. I was hoping that this creature is just a red herring, but as the book lumbers to page 350 and only two people have died, with no other suspect available, it's pretty obvious that the author isn't even trying to make the story even a little unpredictable. When the villain is unmasked, therefore, my reaction is like, "Yeah, yeah, now go wash my socks."

Then again, the story is funny, unlike the previous book, so perhaps there is something worth hanging around for in the upcoming books? I also find myself intrigued by the sequel hook in this story. I suspect that I will

end up checking out the next book, when it's out. As for this book, well, as I've mentioned, it's a step up in the right direction, but I would need more reassurance that this series is rebounding back to a good place.

Melinda says

This wasn't my favourite of the series, but the madness continues so I can't rate it any lower. Still love Esther and the madcap activities. Little bit less in love with Lopez. Either resolve this romance or move on!!!

Ami says

2.5 stars

Entering book 6 of a series, I am expecting a significant progress -- new power, new villain, epic war, an apocalypse, a marriage proposal, SOMETHING -- alas, this book doesn't deliver that. At all.

Truthfully, I am disappointed. I feel that there is nothing new that Ms. Resnick introduces here. Esther still cannot find a permanent job, Lopez's mysterious power is still *mysterious* and he still doesn't believe in magic, Lucky is still *lucky*, Nelli the familiar dog still growls when evil things are near, and we still have the on-again-off-again relationship between Esther and Lopez. In fact, I think almost half of this book, Esther practically moans on how Lopez never calls her, a week after they have sex. It's just a waste of time. This book feels nothing but a filler ... it doesn't add anything to the arc as a whole.

Then the mystery... man, that one is UNDERWHELMING. When I read the blurb "*and before long, Esther learns that Detective Lopez is one of the recipients*", I am hoping that it will give something intense, as Esther tries to save Lopez. Alas, Lopez doesn't even get his misfortune cookie until about 85% of the story!! It is shadowed by Esther's obsession about Lopez not calling and her wanting to be part of the movie. So LAME.

There are a couple of fun moments here and there (the part where Lopez and his partner arrest everyone at Stella's restaurant is quite a hoot! Which is the reason for my extra 0.5 stars) and it seems that Ms. Resnick is preparing an intriguing new character, judging from the ending of this book. That is why I'm still willing to give the sequel a chance. But if nothing momentous really happens in the next book, I think I'd better cut off my losses and say goodbye to Esther and the gang.

Edited to Add: March 23, 2015

Based on the reviews I read for book #7 in which (view spoiler), I decide that this book is MY LAST of this series. I had my fun but I also didn't want to end up feeling that much frustrated with the next books. So yep, cut off my losses here.

Jennifer Wadsworth says

This review is for the GraphicAudio.net version of the Esther Diamond series Books 1-7. Originally posted on 5/7/2018 at One Book Two.

I'm gonna break this Series Spotlight down into two sections: one to talk about the series and one to talk about the audio production because they both deserve their own spotlight.

Series

Esther Diamond is a struggling New York actress. While working on an off-broadway play as a chorus nymph and understudy to the female lead, the lead actress disappears.

Enter Maximillian Zadok, a 350-year-old wizard, stationed in New York by the Magnum Collegium to fight mystical evil. Max implores Esther not to take up her understudy duties for fear she will go missing, too. Once Max convinces Esther that there is mystical evil afoot, Esther rushes to help Max find and stop the culprit before she becomes the next victim.

Meanwhile, the lead actress's disappearance is also being investigated by Detective Connor Lopez, a sexy Latino with blue Irish eyes. Lopez finds Esther intriguing and would like to get to know her better. Unfortunately, Lopez doesn't believe in mystical evil, even though Esther's tried to tell him that it exists. While he is strongly drawn to Esther, he fears she's unstable, dangerous, and possibly felonious. Their involvement complicates his life and jeopardizes his job, but he has trouble staying away.

During their adventures, Esther, Max, and a number of their friends encounter evil sorcerers, demons, voodoo loa, zombies, vampires, spirits, cursed objects, missing corpses, mob hit men, death omens, drag queens, entitled young adults, harried production assistants, and narcissistic actors. The mysteries are intriguing and well written, but I think it's the main characters that really shine in the series. They are complex and layered, unique and intriguing, each with their own secrets that are slowly revealed over time.

This series has magic, mystery, and adventure, but it also has humor, friendship, and relationship tension (not everything is rosy in this romance) that builds with each book. It's more glossy than gritty, on the lighter side of urban fantasy, but the protagonists have depth, and it's easy to care about them. I highly recommend the series for a fun urban fantasy read.

If you're not an audiobook fan, you can find the Esther Diamond series in digital and print formats at your favorite online retailer.

Audio Production

I've mentioned on this blog before how awesome I think GraphicAudio is. They make audiobooks into full-production masterpieces. They're essentially radio-plays, for those of us who are old enough to have heard of those. There is a full cast of characters, so the voices are all different and the "he said" and "she said" of regular audiobooks aren't needed. There are music and sound effects in all the right places, which enhance the story greatly. As a big fan of audiobooks, I absolutely adore these productions. They are just so much fun!

GraphicAudio did a FANTASTIC job with the Esther Diamond series. I cannot imagine a better casting of voices, especially Colleen Delany as Esther Diamond, Thomas Keegan as Detective Connor Lopez, Bob Payne as Maximillian Zadok, and Tim Carlin as Lucky Battistuzzi. The voice acting is fantastic and really conveys the character personalities and emotional content of the story. The GraphicAudio actors bring each character completely to life in a way that only the very best voice actors can in regular audiobooks.

The background music and sound effects add such depth and dimension to the story that you really do feel as

if you are listening to a movie. It's that much easier to feel the tension of being stalked when you can hear the footsteps behind you, or to visualize a street fight when you can hear the impact of fists, the grunts of the combatants, and the splash of blood on pavement.

I don't think I'm capable of expressing just how emotionally involved I feel when listening to GraphicAudio productions. It is an amazing medium for some genres, and I really encourage authors, particularly indie sci-fi and fantasy authors, to consider GraphicAudio for their books before any other audiobook company. Your listeners will experience a much richer version of your creation than I think you'll find elsewhere.

A rich creation is exactly how I'd describe the Esther Diamond series on GraphicAudio. Five stars for this superb production.

Jane Bigelow says

This whole series is great reading fun. Esther Diamond is a struggling actress in New York, which would be a hard enough life without having to fight Evil. Destroying demons, or at least driving them away, is Hell on your love life as well as cutting into career development time.

Spoiler alert: I can't write about this book without mentioning events in earlier books. If you haven't read them, for pity's sake go get hold of them. I can wait.

We're in Chinatown for most of the book. That's after Esther's sometime boyfriend, the stunningly attractive Irish-Cuban cop, Connor, has arrested her in the Italian restaurant where she's "resting" between acting jobs.

They had great sex at the end of Poltergeist, and he hasn't called. The mook, as one of the restaurant's clientele exclaims. Now he arrests her? Their quarrel, with comments from other arrestees and detainees, is one of the funniest arguments I've ever read.

She gets a movie role in an indie film in Chinatown. Hurray, food and rent money! Another entry on the resume! But evil is active. The previous actress has had a horrible series of misfortunes. How Esther and Max, her several hundred year old friend and student of the occult, work to solve the problem; how Esther and Connor get together again (with reservations on both sides), lives are saved and an aging mobster is set free: well, you'll just have to read it.

For best results start at the beginning, though, with Disappearing Nightly.

Elsbeth says

I think I am done with series unless somebody tells me a miracle happens in the next book and things happen.

The only thing this book did was make me hungry for Chinese food. I skimmed to the ending, which was really weak then got a refund from Amazon.

Meh book was meh.

Olga Godim says

I wanted to like this novel, I really did. It is a spoof of urban fantasy. The premise is fantastic and original – someone in New York Chinatown is killed by a curse in a fortune cookie – but the story was too slow for me. The beginning was bumpy. The writing was average. The plot didn't engage. The characters didn't seem real. The magic wasn't explained. The mystery of a murderous cookie wasn't all that mysterious. And I didn't like the protagonist at all. She mostly behaved like a silly bitch.

Besides, I don't see why she is necessary in this story. Everyone in it has a role. She is the only one who doesn't. She doesn't do magic. She doesn't investigate murder. She doesn't love anyone but herself. She is just acting as if the entire tale revolves around her. But then, she is an actress. She is used to acting.

There is some humor in the story though, and that's the only redeeming quality of this book. It kept me reading to the end. If you prefer a light paranormal slapstick comedy with ridiculous adventures, this book might be for you.

I must admit that I like the cover art. That's why I picked this book at the library in the first place.

John says

I wasn't sure I'd like this one as much at the beginning...too much obsessing over the woman scorned, but it was finally dialed down a notch and turned into a decent read. Not my favorite of the series because of it, but not bad overall.

Do think they need to bring some of the story lines to some sort of closure moving forward soon...sort of getting old.

Jan says

This time out, Esther finds herself trapped in another mystical mystery as she tries to help her friend Lucky solve a murder in Chinatown. Everyone thinks it was just an accident, but Lucky knows magic when he sees it and he is sure that the fortune cookie left for the victim was cursed. Meanwhile, Esther is trying to stay mad at her true love, Lopez, who has recently arrested her (long story). Much fun ensues.

This series is just getting better and better. The stories are so much fun. By now I know most of the characters pretty well and I look forward to seeing them. Esther must be the unluckiest person in NYC but she always manages to survive the magical mayhem around her. If you have not read these marvelous books, shame on you. You are missing all the fun.

Clay Rylee says

As much as I love this series, I have to admit, it is getting a bit tiresome. This whole book seemed like just an excuse to create drama between Esther and Lopez while making the main plot look like a side note to the

drama. All of this drama feels like it is a vehicle being used for nothing more then to introduce a new potential relationship for Esther (or as I like to call it, more drama and angst) as well as the fact that someone Lopez works with is more then he seems and is most likely something evil.

To be perfectly honest, this is by far the weakest book in the series plot wise and has the most unnecessary drama of all the books. Yes, Esther is still wishy washy about Lopez (in fact she thinks more with her loins then any man I know)and Lopez is still an oblivious idiot who obviously doesn't trust Ester enough to open his eyes to the crap that has been going on around him.

If, in the next book 2 of these things I am about to list are not resolved, I will not be buying anymore of this series because it is quickly becoming a waste of my time... 1.Lopez's blatant disregard of the reality in which he lives, for example his blatant disregard of magic. 2.Lopez's lack of trust in Esther and his constant accusing her of being crazy 3.This one kinda ties into the last one, The relationship between Lopez and Esther needs to be resolved one way or the other, either they get together (which is hard to see considering the lack of trust) or they break it apart for good. 4.This one also kinda ties in with the last one, Esther's wishy washiness towards Lopez, it has just gotten to the point of irrationality.

I hate to give this book this kind of rating but the truth is I feel I should have given it less. The only reason I gave it what I did is because, as a whole, I really love this series. I do recomend the series to fans of Urban Fantasy but I do not recommend this book.
