

LORGNETTE

Quarterly Review of Children's and Young Adults' Books

Author

Liao, Jenny

Illustrator

Illustrated by Dream Chen

Reviewer

Baker, Laura

Pages

Unpaged

Price

\$18.99

ISBN

978-0-593-42542-8

Publisher & Date

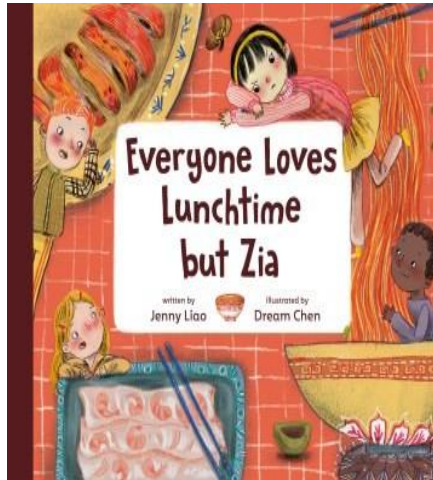
Knopf, 2023

Classification

Fiction

Grade Level

2-4



Book Review: EVERYONE LOVES LUNCHTIME BUT ZIA

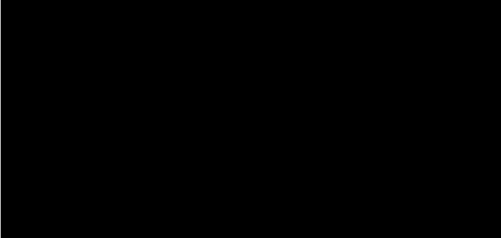
Most kids love lunchtime, but not Zia. She is Chinese and brings homemade Cantonese lunches from home. The kids question how Zia's food looks, and even though Zia loves the familiar dishes at home, she wishes her school lunches looked like everyone else's. One week, her parents promise to make something special. Each day, her lunch will be food that has a unique cultural meaning. The first day, Zia gets tong yun, symbolizing togetherness. Zia doesn't eat it and ends up sitting alone at lunch. The next day, she has cha siu bao, tiny stuffed pork buns that represent treasure. After eating them, the school librarian says that the book Zia has been wanting to read is available. Treasure, indeed! As Zia excitedly eats her lunches and looks forward to experiencing the meaning of the food, her classmates gradually become interested, too. The week ends with Zia's parents bringing a whole selection of Cantonese food to school to share with everyone for Zia's birthday.

This is an interesting take on experiencing culture through the venue of lunchtime. The illustrations use warm colors to show renderings of the dishes. Pages at the end list each food mentioned in the story as well as a few others and tell how to pronounce them. The short but descriptive sentence about the food is guaranteed to have readers ready to try each one. Perhaps this is why the author also includes a recipe for the Yi Mein



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noodles traditionally eaten on one's birthday. Use this book as a way to explore culture through food and to talk about other dishes that represent different countries or special traditions.



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