



Fortune Falls

Jenny Goebel

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Welcome to Fortune Falls, a magical town where superstitions are real. Four-leaf clovers really do bring good fortune, and owning a rabbit's foot is the secret to success.

However, there aren't enough charms in the universe to help Sadie Bleeker. She can't pass a ladder without walking under it, and black cats won't leave her alone.

That's because Sadie is an Unlucky. And things will only get worse as she gets older, which is why Unluckies are sent away at age twelve to protect those around them.

Sadie can't stand the thought of leaving home, so she and her friend, Cooper, devise a plan to reverse her bad luck. But when their scheme accidentally results in a broken mirror, the situation turns dire. Because for Sadie, seven years bad luck isn't an inconvenience-it's practically a death sentence.

Can a girl who's never so much as found a single lucky penny change her fortune? Or will she be forced to celebrate her twelfth birthday by saying farewell to everyone she loves?

Fortune Falls Details

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From Reader Review Fortune Falls for online ebook

Ellie says

I loved this book. I keep coming back to the characters and the town and thinking, "Wow, I am so grateful to have found this book," because it really gave me a different perspective on lucky and unlucky. But is anybody really unlucky if you have friends? I would so recommend this book to lovers of Natalie Lloyd's *A Snicker of Magic*, and also to fantasy and magic gurus. Here is a summary:

11 year old Sadie Bleeker lives with her mom and little brother, Petey, in a town called Fortune Falls. There, when all students are 12 years of age, they take the luck test, which determines if they are unlucky or lucky. The lucky students (Luckies) are transferred to a day school called Flourish Academy, while the unlucky students (Unluckies) are shipped off to Bane's School for Unlucky Students, a dreadful boarding school. On the way, they encounter a lucky black cat, ghosts, graveyards, and sassy girls. Follow Sadie as she and her best friend Cooper try to break her unlucky streak and send her to Flourish.

Great for 10-13 year olds, I would so recommend this book to everybody!

Karen Arendt says

I loved Sadie's character. She is determined, strong willed and cares deeply for her family. But she isn't perfect. The story was exciting and left room to question whether we have control over luck. A great read for 4th-6th graders.

Diane says

"Even in Fortune Falls, luck has very little to do with the charm and everything to do with perception."

In the town of Fortune Falls, luck is everything. Never has "step on a crack, break your mother's back" had more importance than in this town. It's not just a saying ... it's a way of life. You see, there are Luckies, Unluckies and Undetermined. Those who pass the luck test get to go to *Flourish Academy* for the rest of their academic career. Those who fail go to *Bane's School for Luckless Adolescents*. That way they can't cause any misfortune to others.

Sadie is about as unlucky as they come, though she hasn't taken the test yet. She was born on Friday the 13th and her 12th birthday is also on Friday the 13th. What chance does she have in passing a luck test. "Even my younger brother was starting to see me the way everyone else did - as a vacuum for bad luck, a magnet for misfortune."

Best friend Cooper, who has already passed his test in the fall, has moved to the Luckies class. Sadie can't help but think that the Luckies "have it made." But Cooper sees it from a different perspective. "Nothing is a challenge (for the luckies) but it's almost like they want one, you know, because things are *too* easy." To Sadie, the worst part about being declared an Unlucky will be losing Cooper's friendship. It will be too dangerous for him to remain friends with Sadie. But Cooper doesn't let that bother him. "It seemed that

danger held a sweet appeal for those whose lives had never truly been marred by it." And though his parents are against Cooper hanging out with Sadie, he is trying his best to help her pass the luck test. He even takes her to Lucky Charmz, the black market shop for all things luck related.

Then there's Felicia , the "mean girl", who is Undetermined but bound to be a Lucky soon. "For whatever reason, she would always use her luck to push down those with less luck." She wants to make sure that Sadie never forgets just how unlucky she is. But Sadie has a secret weapon. Her dad always told her "Even if you aren't lucky, you're smart, and that's more important." And if anyone can figure out a way to fix this problem, it's Sadie. Even if there is a black cat seemingly stalking her around every turn. What makes something lucky or unlucky anyway? Can something be unlucky just because we think it is? Does that mean if we think differently about it, things could change? If you expect bad/good luck, will you get it? Does bad luck really exist at all? As Sadie starts to ponder some of these questions, she begins to realize that she is in more control of her luck than she thought. "... all thanks to my perception of what she should be, not what she was."

This is a very entertaining book with some important themes running through it. Superstitions can be paralyzing; Love can overcome the perception of bad luck. In addition, for more sophisticated readers, the parallels this book has with segregation and the Civil Rights Movement would make an interesting discussion. "We don't have room for hapless upstarts in this town ... if the Unlucky think that just because someone shows pity on them, they can attend the same schools, even show up at our dances, they're wrong." (That gave me chills!)

Most fun line to quote: "Felicia, however, had obviously never been forced to progress past the toddlerhood mentality."

Ms. Yingling says

ARC from Young Adult Books Central and reviewed there.

Fortune Falls is a great place to live if you're a Lucky, but Sadie Bleeker is probably not. She hasn't turned 12 yet, so she is still Undetermined, but since she has so many bad things happening to her, she doesn't hold out a lot of hope for the Luck Test. Her best friend, Cooper, will probably be Lucky, and they would then go to different schools. Sadie wants to marshal all of her resources and wishes to use to pass the test, but when her dog, Wink, runs into a graveyard and can't be found, she doesn't want her brother Petey to miss him. Sadie's family has had a run of bad luck ever since her father died in an accident a year ago, so Sadie is very protective of Petey. It doesn't help when Cooper gives her a telescope for her birthday, and she manages to break the mirror inside of it. In Fortune Falls, that means seven years of bad luck... if you survive that long! Sadie and Cooper venture into the magical store, Lucky Charm Z, in order to perhaps find some way to turn Sadie's luck around. Can they do that before it's too late?

Fortune Falls is an interesting place, and there are lots of good descriptions about the way of life that depends of magic being real. Many of the mothers are wearing halo collars because their hapless children have stepped on cracks and broken their backs, the street outside the grave yard is littered with cars because people don't hold their breath going past it and get into accidents, and there are few black cats or rabbits around because the latter are exterminated as being bad luck and the former are killed for their feet! This is a

fun way to take superstitions and bring them to life.

It's nice to see that Sadie and Cooper get along so well even though their lives are likely to take different paths. It's also clever how they work together to try to get their entire class to pass the Spring Luck test despite the meddling and meanness of the evil Felicia.

Reader who enjoy the healthy dose of magical realism found in Pyron's Lucky Strike, Wendy Mass' Willow Falls books or Myracle's Willow Hills series, or even the everyday magic of Ruth Chew's books, will find Fortune Falls to be a somewhat scary but interesting place to be!

Jaina Rose says

This review is also available on my blog, [Read Till Dawn](#).

Wow. This book is so, so good.

I mean, I thought it would just be a fluffy kid's book. That's what it looks like from the cover and the page count, isn't it? And yet this is one of the coolest premises I've read about in a long time, and it's more well-written and engaging than many books that are supposed to be written for older kids.

Everybody's always talking about retelling fairytales, but how come no one ever came up with the idea of playing with superstitions before now? Maybe I'm just ignorant and this has been done in the past, but I for one had never seen it before and man - it was like a breath of fresh air. There was a whole new world to explore, a world where walking under ladders or crossing a black cat's path could spell ruin, a world where Unluckies who break mirrors usually wind up dead, a world where stepping on a crack literally breaks your mother's back . . . and the potentials are endless! I really love how Goebel builds her story on such an awesome premise.

But it's not just the setting that I loved about Fortune Falls; the characters were great as well. The stereotypical mean girl (who of course is a brat about the upcoming test to weed out the Unluckies) aside, all of the characters are well-developed and realistic. Sadie's friend Cooper, who already passed the test as a Lucky, is so determined to make sure Sadie can keep coming to school with him that he disobeys his snobby parents' orders to stay away from her so he can help her find a way to be lucky. It's really very sweet of him, and I would totally love to have a friend like Cooper! Sadie's younger brother Petey is also a great character, a mixture of adorable and infuriating that perfectly encapsulates the essence of younger brothers everywhere, and the supporting characters - like Sadie's mother, and the kids at school - are all drawn with strong strokes.

I don't know what else there is to say about Fortune Falls, other than that I highly recommend it and my fingers are totally crossed that there's going to be a sequel. And who knows? With this book, maybe crossed fingers really will help!

Jessica Pinkman says

SPOILER ALERT!!

Summary:

Sadie Bleeker is as unlucky as they come. If there's a ladder, she's walked under it. If there's a black cat, it has crossed her path. This isn't just by any coincidence however. Sadie is considered and "unlucky". In her town of Fortune Falls you are labeled 'lucky' or 'unlucky' by your 12th birthday and if you're an 'unlucky' you're sent away for yours, and everyone else's, safety. Though Sadie is technically undetermined until she turns 12, everyone in town knows she has the worst of luck. But Sadie and her best friend Cooper are determined to change this before her 12th birthday (which falls on Friday the 13th). When their plan backfires drastically, resulting in a broken mirror, Sadie and Cooper are forced to find whatever way possible to change her luck.

Will Sadie change her luck? or will she be deemed unlucky forever? Read on to find out!

Activity:

Have your students reflect on the ending of the story where Sadie decides to trade in a lucky rabbit's foot for a whole patch of 4 leaf clovers to help her friends. Then have them rewrite the ending to what they would've done. Have them tell you what they would've traded the rabbit's foot for (if they trade it at all) why, and how it changes the whole ending.

Goebel, J. (2016). Fortune Falls. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Ashlyn Morton says

Book 12

In the book "Fortune Falls" everyone has rules to follow. The have to follow rules like don't step on a crack or you'll break your mothers back, and hold your breath when you pass a graveyard. The story follows a young 11 year old girl named Sadie. Sadie is turning twelve. When you turn twelve you have to take a luck test. This test decides if you are lucky or unlucky. Those who are lucky go to flourish academy, and those who are unlucky go to banes a school for luckless adolesents. With all the bad stuff going on in Sadie's life how could she not fail the test and go to banes, but Sadie has a plan. Will Sadie pass the luck test and go on to flourish academy or fail and go to banes. Find out in "Fortune Falls"

In the book "Fortune Falls" many things go on. One cause and effect that happens in the book is when Cooper, Sadie's best friend gives her a telescope. Sadie leans in to hug Cooper and ends up breaking the mirror inside the telescope. Because Sadie broke the mirror she is cursed with 7 years of bad luck. Another cause and effect that happens in the book is Felica tells Sadie that she is going to the friday the 13th dance with cooper. Because Felica told Sadie this, Sadie yells at cooper and slams the door in his face.

I liked this book a lot it was really fun. I like how Sadie realizes that things aren't always what they seem to be. I like the black cat in the book. I love how Sadie cares about her brother enough to rise her life for him. The one thing I don't like is all of the cemetery ghost parts. This is an excelent book for any age.

Scott Shamblin says

Sadie, the main character of "Fortune Falls" has a strange test to take. Well, not that strange in this town. Everyone has to take a test to determine whether they are lucky or not. If they fail, they have to go to the school for the luckless! I couldn't wait to find out whether Sadie would pass the test or not! For a while, it

seemed like black cats were trying to make her cross their path!

--Scott

Annie says

Sadie is an Unlucky. That means she is unlucky all her life. In her world, lucky charms are actually lucky. There are two different kinds of human, a Lucky and a Unlucky. Luckies are the ones that are very lucky and get to have everything they want. A Unlucky wears ripped clothes, and is always Unlucky. Sadie knows she is an Unlucky but in reality she is an Undetermined. That means she will have to pass a test. Can she become extremely lucky and passed the test as Lucky to go to the best school, or will she become an Unlucky and be sent away in an awful school, away from everybody?

Miss Kate Reads says

I was immediately engrossed in the story and the characters here. It was absolutely terrifying to think of all the different superstitions these townsfolk had to keep up with in order just to survive. Sadie is one brave girl and I loved watching her wrestle with big questions.

Luck in this town is almost synonymous for money and there's a lot to learn here about compassion and responsibility of those less fortunate - in this case literally - in these pages without it being terribly overt. There's also a bit about being careful about your perception of things in the form of a black cat that isn't so unlucky afterall.

I found this story very exciting for all that the plot almost sounds mundane - pass a test or you go to the wrong school may not sound particularly absorbing, but so many of these superstitions are life and death or at least promising of bodily harm making the stakes quite a bit higher.

(view spoiler)

Amy says

Summary: Sadie's town of Fortune Falls is as superstitious as can be. Step on a crack, break your mother's back. Rabbit's feet and horseshoes are expensive. And students at age 13 are tested for their luck. The Luckies get to go to Flourish Academy, while the Unluckies are sent to Bane's School for Luckless Adolescents.

Sadie is approaching age 13, and her life so far has been a big unlucky streak. Lots of accidents, a parent death, not to mention a Friday the 13th birthday. What will happen when she turns 13?

Appeal: I could tell before I looked up the publisher that this was a Scholastic book -- because it reads like one. It's intended to be reader-friendly for tween readers and it has a sprightly main character voice with some common MG themes like crushes and mean girls tossed in. I liked the soft social commentary about segregation here, and little details about how the Unluckies were restricted -- for example, they couldn't

participate in some extracurriculars and they had a different bell schedule -- could resonate to real-life ways in which opportunity and access are restricted. And it's short! 200 pages even.

Possible issues with comprehension: I don't know how much readers who aren't already familiar with American superstitions will get out of this one. Sometimes the superstitions are explained, and sometimes the writer assumes the readers know that crossing a black cat's path is bad luck. It may be difficult for some readers to understand why Sadie is hesitant to leave her house when a black cat stands outside, for example.

Also, the plot lost some focus and has lots of little elements in it. There's a spelling bee, a crush, a mean girl, a dead father, a whiny little brother, a lost dog, not to mention the question of whether Sadie will become a Lucky I could see this being a difficult book for readers who struggle with plot tracking.

Recommended for: Fans of soft magical realism like Kate Messner, Wendy Mass, and Lisa Graff. I don't think Jenny writes as well as any of those three other authors, but I thought this book had a terrific concept and an ending that I really rooted for.

Kylee says

Book 2

So, Sadie lives in Fortune Falls, a place where you need to mind the rules like, "Don't step on a crack, or you'll break your mother's back." And "Hold your breath when you pass a graveyard." Along with many more. Sadie has a problem, she has to pass the Luck Test, if she doesn't she will be considered and unlucky and be sent away to a different island. Her best friend, Cooper has been told by his parents to not hang out with her anymore because her bad luck could spread to him. Do you think she will pass the Luck Test? At the beginning Sadie knew she was bad luck, everything was always bad for her. And it was so obvious, her classmates were starting to notice. But, she lost a lot of stuff, and then realized that she had it good it wasn't bad luck that Cooper couldn't hang out with her anymore, at least she got to hang out with him before, and stuff like that. But will she become a lucky or unlucky? Read to find out!!

I liked the idea of the book. It was a really clever setting that the author that came up with!! It was a really fun book to read because my generation grew up listening to all these fun little games/rules! I didn't like how short it was, I want to read more! And I also wish that it was a series about fun little things like this, I really liked this book and hope that in the future there would be a second book!

Meredith says

Great concept, but I'm not a huge fan of the execution. That being said, I think my kids will really like it.

Hoover Public Library Kids and Teens says

Think YOU are unlucky? Think again.

Kyleen Roush says

Good
