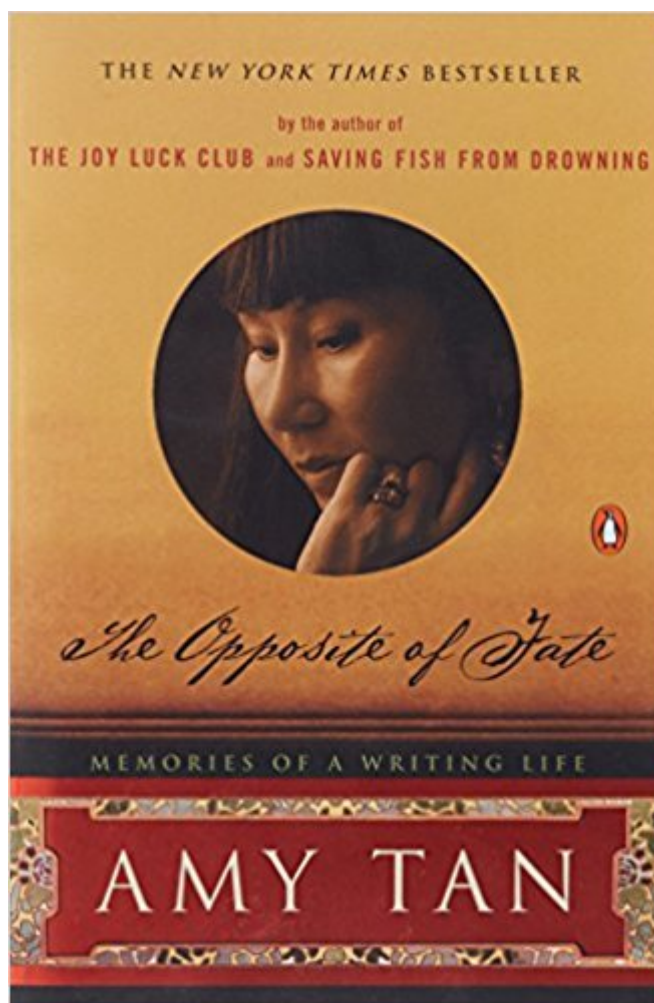


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# The Opposite Of Fate: Memories Of A Writing Life



## Synopsis

Delve into the stories from Amy Tan's life that inspired bestselling novels like *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Valley of Amazement*. Amy Tan has touched millions of readers with haunting and sympathetic novels of cultural complexity and profound empathy. With the same spirit and humor that characterize her acclaimed novels, she now shares her insight into her own life and how she escaped the curses of her past to make a future of her own. She takes us on a journey from her childhood of tragedy and comedy to the present day and her arrival as one of the world's best-loved novelists. Whether recalling arguments with her mother in suburban California or introducing us to the ghosts that inhabit her computer, *The Opposite of Fate* offers vivid portraits of choices, attitudes, charms, and luck in action--a refreshing antidote to the world-weariness and uncertainties we all face today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Amy Tan begins *The Opposite of Fate: A Book of Musings*, a collection of essays that spans her literary career, on a humorous note; she is troubled that her life and novels have become the subject of a "Cliff's Notes" abridgement. Reading the little yellow booklet, she discovers that her work is seen as complex and rich with symbolism. However, Tan assures her readers that she has no lofty, literary intentions in writing her novels--she writes for herself, and insists that the recurring patterns and themes that critics find in them are entirely their own making. This self-deprecating stance, coupled with Tan's own clarification of her intentions, makes *The Opposite of Fate* feel like an extended, private conversation with the author. Tan manages to find

grace and frequent comedy in her sometimes painful life, and she takes great pleasure in being a celebrity. "Midlife Confidential" brings readers on tour with Tan and the rest of the leather-clad writers' rock band, the Rock-Bottom Remainders. And "Angst and the Second Book" is a brutally honest, frequently hysterical reflection on Tan's self-conscious attempts to follow the success of *The Joy Luck Club*. In a collection so diverse and spanning such a long period of time, inevitably some of the pieces feel dated or repetitious. Yet, Tan comes off as a remarkably humble and sane woman, and the book works well both to fill in her biography and to clarify the boundaries between her life and her fiction. In her final, title essay, Tan juxtaposes her personal struggles against a persistent disease with the nation's struggles against terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. She declares her transformative, artistic power over tragedy, reflecting: "As a storyteller, I know that if I don't like the ending, I can write a better one." --Patrick O'Kelley --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In her first collection of essays, Tan explains that she writes stories to understand "how things happen." These musings, as wide-ranging as a graduation speech at Simmons College and a childhood contest entry, offer insight into how her family history has shaped the questions she chooses to ask. Tan herself reads the essays, which suits the intimate, self-congratulatory tone of the collection. Several of the pieces focus on Tan's tragedies—her father and brother died from brain tumors, her mother suffered violent bouts of depression and her best friend was murdered—but her successes also receive a fair amount of space. One can almost hear the pride in Tan's voice as she talks of her associations with other famous writers, how her name has been used as a question on *Jeopardy* and how *The Joy Luck Club* appears alongside "Bill" (Shakespeare) and "Jim" (Conrad) in *Cliff's Notes*, a fact that Tan uses to launch into a tirade about current perceptions of multicultural and Asian-American literature. The essays work best when Tan is telling a story, as when she relays her battle with Lyme disease or describes her mother's final days. Still, there's no denying that Tan has every right to be proud, having led a peripatetic and extraordinary life. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It has been years since I read my first Amy Tan book. I have had a couple of tough years and have again found solace in books. I bought and downloaded this one and several others but didn't get to it for some period of time. Maybe that was fate as she mentions. It has been a great distraction for me in my current state of health. It has been fascinating to hear her very personal thoughts on the

events of her life. Her directness has been wonderful to read. I had the sense that she was sitting here sharing her life experiences with me. They have put some perspective into mine for which I am very grateful. I do wonder at what she shares and how many people's stories I have learned of through many years, especially women's stories, how common all of her seemingly extraordinary life events are. At least it is possibly her talent in how she writes them that gives me a feeling of the commonalities people live through. For she does have a great talent and ability to share them in such a way that I could easily relate to her feelings about events such that the commonality may be more of how people interpret events than the actual events themselves. I love that she is brave enough to share how vulnerable we all are in this life; that she has been able to show the possibility of successfully navigating through life's events even with depression. Her sharing has left with me a renewed sense of hope. A desire to be stronger and more resilient. This is a very worthwhile read.

Wonderful book. Amy Tan's description of her efforts to have Lyme Disease diagnosed saved me. I knew I was sick but did not know what was wrong with me. As I read her description of symptoms, it clicked. I took her advice and had a Doctor who was open to his patient's experiences send a blood specimen to the tick born disease specialty laboratory in California. I was diagnosed and treated according to the guidelines of Lyme Disease experts. As I hear of others who had to suffer for years without getting a diagnosis and who now suffer from disease not treated in time, I can only give thanks to Amy Tan and the Grace that guided me to this book.

In a beautiful, witty, and human voice, Amy Tan discusses and relates anecdotes from her life. The tales that Tan tells cover all of the subjects that make a novel juicy: love, death, illness, war, murder, rock bands, and a quirky family. Only these tales aren't fiction, they are parts of Tan's own life. Tan also shares some insight into the life of a writer and publishes several speeches she has given over the years. "The Opposite of Fate" is a wonderful collection of short recollections. If you are expecting a coherent story out of this book, then you will be disappointed. While the recollections are grouped together by Tan, it is not a continuous narrative. Do not let this point deter you from reading this book. It was truly excellent. Tan is funny and honest. She bares a portion of herself that her readers have seen peeking at them from her works for years. If you are in the mood for something a bit different, but completely wonderful, definitely pick up a copy of this book!

I had seen this listed many years ago and had not purchased it thinking that a "dry" non-fiction would not interest me. Boy was I wrong! This book is a wonderful compilation of Amy's life,

challenges, and opinions, including some insightful thoughts on how critics may unwittingly manipulate book markets, authors and other critics. I found it gave me great insight into the whole publishing world, the author as a person, and as a writer. It gave me a much deeper appreciation of her and her work. I highly recommend it. It provides a "taste" of all her other works. It would be a great "starter" book to build onto. I've ordered the Joy Luck Club which was the only one I had ever skipped over as I had already seen the movie. Silly me! I'm very much looking forward to it.

One could almost compare this one to Stephen King's "On Writing" although Amy, of course, is obsessed with her mommy. Still, she's an incredibly insightful and witty writer, and this memoir is no exception. Less mommy and more other good stuff would work for me...but...thumbs up. I'd really like to give her an extra half \* for being a common-sense, regular girl! Love the way she reacts to the politically correct critics who tell her "Oh, you mustn't depict any poverty in China," and "Oh, you must present Chinese men only as positive, wholesome role models!" and "Oh, what else will you teach us about Chinese culture?" Amy says in response that she's an AMERICAN writer and--in much politer words--tells them to take their political correctness and stuff it. Good for her! She's a writer who does her best to seek truths.

If you have been wondering what Amy Tan has been up to, here are all the parts she is willing to share. It's not a chronological autobiography, but a series of chapters, stories, and texts from presentations. So, there is a little of her personal life; a little about the writing; and some of the interesting bits about her public life that you may have missed. For example, did you know she was in a rock band called the Remainders? She also writes about her struggle with getting treatment for diagnosis and treatment for Lyme disease, which will be very informative to others who may have an undiagnosed health issue or may be getting treatment they feel is not working. I wish her all the best and hope that her health will allow her to continue writing.

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