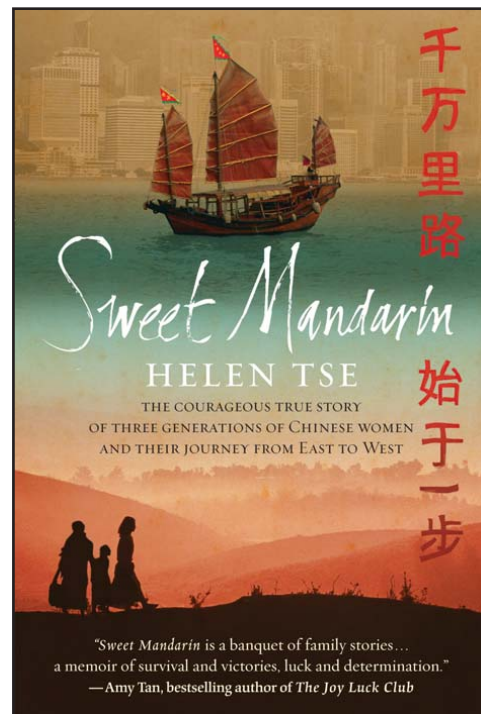


“Sweet Mandarin is a banquet of family stories... a memoir of survival and victories, luck and determination”

—AMY TAN, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE JOY LUCK CLUB



SWEET MANDARIN by Helen Tse

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www.SweetMandarin.com

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**SUMMARY:**

Spanning almost a hundred years, this rich and evocative memoir recounts the lives of three generations of remarkable Chinese women. Their extraordinary journey takes us from the brutal poverty of village life in mainland China to the United Kingdom.

Helen Tse's grandmother, Lily Kwok, was forced to work as a wet nurse after the murder of her father, until she left Hong Kong in the 1950s, to open what became Manchester's (UK) earliest Chinese restaurants. But gambling and the Triads were pervasive in the Chinese immigrant community, and tragically she lost the restaurant. It was up to author Helen and her sisters, the third generation of these exceptional women, to re-establish their grandmother's dream. The legacy lived on when the sisters opened their award-winning restaurant Sweet Mandarin in 2004.

*Sweet Mandarin* shows how the most important inheritance is wisdom, and how recipes can be the most valuable heirloom.

**SAMPLE THESE QUESTIONS:**

1. Throughout *Sweet Mandarin*, the story of the old man and the mountains being leveled re-emerges. Why is this story used and how is it relevant to Helen and her family?
2. Does Lily's father, Leung, seem to behave as a typical Chinese father of his time? Do you think some of his beliefs and values are embodied by Helen and her siblings? If so, which ones and how?
3. How do you think Lily was influenced by the events of her early life? Her father's success, the move to Hong Kong and then the loss of her father?
4. Lily feels she has no option but to let her daughter, Ah Bing, be raised in another family. How do you think they both wound up dealing with the separation? Can you think of similar situations in contemporary American culture?
5. Tradition plays an important role in Chinese culture. How do you think the author feels about tradition and what or who do you think may have influenced her perspective?

**"EXTRA, EXTRA"...**

Reading Group Gold goes beyond questions to bring you...

- A Conversation with Helen Tse
- Recipes of Dishes Featured in the Book, including Lily Kwok's Curry and Mabel's Claypot Chicken
- Map of the Tse Family's Journey

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

HELEN TSE grew up in Manchester, UK. She studied law at Cambridge University and went on to work as a finance lawyer in London, Hong Kong, and Manchester. She opened the restaurant Sweet Mandarin with her two sisters, Lisa and Janet, in 2004, following the culinary footsteps of her mother and grandmother. Helen Tse is the first British born Chinese author and *Sweet Mandarin* is her debut.



Photo by:



“Read this book. It is the story of an amazing family and their sweet and sour, hot and bitter lives.”

—Xinran, author of The Good Women of China

