

Reviews and Praise for THE SON OF GOOD FORTUNE

A Recommended Book From:

USA Today* * *The Chicago Tribune* * *Book Riot* * *Refinery 29* * *InStyle* * *The Minneapolis Star-Tribune* * *Publishers Weekly* * *Baltimore Outloud* * *Omnivoracious* * *Lambda Literary* * *Goodreads* * *Lit Hub* * *The Millions

FINALIST FOR THE JOYCE CAROL OATES PRIZE WINNER OF THE NEW AMERICAN VOICES AWARD

"Tenorio's insistence on the specificity of his characters' dreams and longings is its own kind of argument for their right to be here.... An affecting portrayal of just how potently a parent can shape the expectations of her child.... His story is a tribute to the extreme inner strength it takes to make any life decision look like fate." — ***New York Times Book Review***

"Sharp and compassionate.... Tenorio is a gifted, expressive writer about the Filipino American diaspora.... A powerful story about what it takes to uncover a sense of oneself when you've been forced to keep it under wraps." — ***USA Today***

"Lysley Tenorio's funny and poignant second novel, *The Son of Good Fortune*, couldn't come at a better time.... Tenorio skillfully wrings high comedy from his characters' boxed-in lives in a country that doesn't know what to do with them.... Timely." — ***San Francisco Chronicle***

"When you don't belong where you are, where exactly do you belong? Lysley Tenorio's engaging and comic first novel about immigration and identity asks this question with compassion and savage humor." — ***Minneapolis Star Tribune***

"[*The Son of Good Fortune* is] a reminder that many experiences comprise the definition of what makes a person American.... Tenorio skillfully sketches out what an all-American boy like Excel experiences in his in-betweenness.... A damning yet clear-eyed acknowledgement that for many, the American dream is merely survival." — ***Salon***

"Tenorio, himself a Filipino immigrant, accurately and compassionately portrays the immigrant experience. Despite its universality, *The Son of Good Fortune* doesn't lack for originality.... The story finds a witty voice and sets a unique tone. Despite the drudgery and harshness of immigrant life, Tenorio explores the humanity in the tribulations and creates characters who are as lovable as they are real. With his debut novel, Tenorio excavates joy from the immigrant experience." — ***BookPage***

"*The Son of Good Fortune* defies categorization — it's an immigrant tale, a character study, a heartfelt and hilarious adventure." — ***InStyle Magazine***

"A bewitching and highly approachable novel on what it's like to be an undocumented American.... With his sensitive and subdued style of writing, Tenorio has crafted a novel that speaks to the experience of the undocumented, as well to what we all must hide in order to survive." — ***San Diego Union-Tribune***

"Filled with the kind of absurdities that accompany the most difficult truths, Lysley Tenorio's brilliant, witty novel about the love of a mother and son, the immigrant experience in America, and the surreality of our current reality, is bold, ambitious, and unforgettable." — ***Refinery 29***

"[A] fierce, revelatory literary experience.... Tenorio has written a resonant story about what one family is willing to do to "protect the child." It's seamlessly interwoven with cogent explorations of hybrid identity, racism, immigration history, shifting familial bonds, parental sacrifice, socioeconomic

disparity, and even alternative social models.... [Tenorio] humanizes the lives imperiled by shifting immigration policies.” — **Christian Science Monitor**

"Mordant and moving.... Written with great empathy and sly humor.... This is a wonderful achievement." — **Publishers Weekly (starred review)**

"[*The Son of Good Fortune*] sympathetically illuminates the tenuous lives of undocumented immigrants, those who are 'not really here'.... Tenorio's characters are humorous and loving, in spite of the exclusion overshadowing their very existence." — **Shelf Awareness (starred review)**

"You know the feeling of picking up a book and realizing within ten pages that what you're reading is something... special? Something different? Well, that's what it's like reading Lysley Tenorio's novel.... A funny and kind novel about home and identity." — **Omnivoracious**

"Propulsive prose, captivating characters, and vital details of immigrant life.... A masterfully constructed story of identity and ambition and an authentic portrait of one unforgettable Filipino family." — **Kirkus Reviews**

"Tenorio, author of the short-story collection *Monstress* (2012), the San Francisco Chronicle's Book of the Year, is back with a highly anticipated debut novel.... Tenorio creates an unusual perspective on Filipino culture and inspires readers to reflect on what it means to be an undocumented American.... Thoughtful." — **Booklist**

"Lysley Tenorio has fortunately graced us with his exquisite prose again... Tenorio painstakingly crafts the evolution of a prickly relationship between mother and son." — **Asian American Lit Fans**

"In this perceptive and sensitive novel, Lysley Tenorio views the troubled American Dream through the eyes of Excel, an undocumented immigrant literally born in the air between the Philippines and the United States. The result, in *The Son of Good Fortune*, is a nuanced and subtle account of that most basic American dynamic, the melancholic and sometimes devastating fluctuation between promise and failure, happiness and its opposite." — **Viet Thanh Nguyen, author of *The Sympathizer***

"I have a new favorite novel on my shelf.... A field study of the glamorous allure of the American dream and the eternal ache of its exclusion. Tenorio's great talent lies in underpinning every moment of flash and humor with love, longing and the ever-forlorn question of identity. This novel is like a stone skipped across the Pacific, all the way to Manila. Visualize it, that series of rings lingering on the ocean's surface, expanding, intersecting, intermingling to form a chain that anchors these characters, connects them, and after years of binding them, sets them free." — **Adam Johnson, author of *The Orphan Master's Son***

"Lysley Tenorio's *The Son of Good Fortune* is flat-out brilliant, and what makes it so wondrous is how Tenorio controls the complexity of the narrative. How can a book be filled with so much humor, such a light touch, and yet still touch that weird place in our heart that can break us apart? Excel and his mother, Maxima, are characters you won't forget, and the world in which they exist, stuck between belonging and not belonging, does not deserve them." — **Kevin Wilson, author of *Nothing to See Here***

"Full of heart, wisdom, and humor, *The Son of Good Fortune* is an unforgettable novel of mothers and sons, secrets and truth, and what it means to belong, told through the story of one undocumented Filipino family." — **Lisa Ko, author of *The Leavers***

"This story is bursting with heart and wisdom, humor and hope. Tenorio's gifts as a writer are on display in this expertly constructed, gorgeously written tale of a family haunted by past mistakes, struggling toward the future. Immersive in its rich detail, it gathers momentum to its affecting and

powerful conclusion. A remarkable novel by an author I plan to follow for years to come." — **Charles Yu, author of *Interior Chinatown* and *How To Live Safely in A Science Fictional Universe***

"Living with this extraordinarily human undocumented family will make you laugh, weep, and think, sometimes all at once. Tenorio brilliantly makes these characters so original that they're nearly tangible." — **James Hannaham, author of *Delicious Foods***

"With compassion and quirky brilliance, Lysley Tenorio's debut novel, *The Son of Good Fortune*, delivers memorable characters who seek to carve out meaningful lives while caught in situations by turns timely and utterly shocking. With grace and earned authority, Tenorio shows us what it means to live life on the margins and in the shadows, and reminds us that even the humblest among us deserves respect. I loved every page." — **Natalie Baszile, author of *Queen Sugar***

"*The Son of Good Fortune* is a deeply compassionate and richly imagined novel about the families we make and the families who make us. Lysley Tenorio peels back such labels as "American," "Filipino," "immigrant," and "undocumented" to show us a mother and son in all their bright humanity—and the forms of love, connection, and survival available to them in a broken country. Tenorio is a master storyteller, and—like his brilliant collection, *Monstress*—this is a gorgeous, searing wonder of a book." — **Mia Alvar, author of *In the Country***

"Tenorio's *The Son of Good Fortune*, so propulsive, so over-the-top with life, I fell into it, deeply. This novel restored my faith in the power of a story to heal our self-inflicted wounds. We need such books, now more than ever." — **Peter Orner, author of *Maggie Brown & Others: Stories***