



Free Food for Millionaires

By Min Jin Lee

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NPR *Fresh Air* Top Ten Books of the Year

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The nationally bestselling, "ambitious and compulsively readable" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) American story of class, society and identity.

The daughter of Korean immigrants, Casey Han has refined diction, a closeted passion for reading the Bible, a popular white boyfriend, and a magna cum laude degree in economics from Princeton, but no job and an addiction to the things she cannot afford in the glittering world of Manhattan. In this critically-acclaimed debut, Min Jin Lee tells not only Casey's story, but also those of her sheltered mother, scarred father, and friends both Korean and Caucasian, exposing the astonishing layers of a community clinging to its old ways and a city packed with struggling haves and have-nots.

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Free Food for Millionaires By Min Jin Lee Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Free Food for Millionaires, the debut novel from Min Jin Lee, takes on daunting themes of love, money, race, and belief systems in this mostly satisfying tale. Casey Han is a Princeton grad, class of '93, and it is her conflicts, relationships, and temperament that inform the novel. She is the child of immigrant Korean parents who work in the same laundry in Queens where they have always worked and are trying hard to hang on to their culture. Casey has catapulted out of that life on scholarships but now that college is over, she hasn't the same opportunities as her white friends, even though she has acquired all of their expensive habits.

The concept of free food for millionaires is the perfect irony that describes much of what Casey faces. Walter, one of her bosses, says, when a huge buffet lunch is delivered to the floor: "It's free food for millionaires... In the International Equities Department--that is, Asia, Europe, and Japan Sales--the group you're interviewing for--whichever desk that sells a deal buys lunch for everyone in the department."

Casey is ambivalent about everything--her love life, work, friendships, her family, dating a Korean man--but she seems to believe that money would sort everything out and smooth any rough spots. She works part-time for a fashion maven who would like to "adopt" her by paying for business school, but Casey can't quite accept all that she offers. She pulls back from help, digs herself deeper in debt, works like a slave during an internship and then, when she is offered the job, finally begins to realize what she might really want--and it isn't only money.

There are several loose ends left dangling, some bad behavior toward others on Casey's part and an unlikely and too coincidental passing acquaintance with an old bookseller whose wife was crazy about hats, as is Casey. When he dies, he leaves all her hats to Casey--which just might just be the start of something. The author runs out of steam after 512 pages and ends the book without really finishing it, but it is a thoughtful treatment of many of the questions Lee raises, and an eminently worthwhile debut. --Valerie Ryan

From Publishers Weekly

In her noteworthy debut, Lee filters through a lively postfeminist perspective a tale of first-generation immigrants stuck between stodgy parents and the hip new world. Lee's heroine, 22-year-old Casey Han, graduates magna cum laude in economics from Princeton with a taste for expensive clothes and an "enviable golf handicap," but hasn't found a "real" job yet, so her father kicks her out of his house. She heads to her white boyfriend's apartment only to find him in bed with two sorority girls. Next stop: running up her credit card at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City. Casey's luck turns after a chance encounter with Ella Shim, an old acquaintance. Ella gives Casey a place to stay, while Ella's fiancé gets Casey a "low pay, high abuse" job at his investment firm and Ella's cousin Unu becomes Casey's new romance. Lee creates a large canvas, following Casey as she shifts between jobs, careers, friends, mentors and lovers; Ella and Ted as they hit a blazingly rocky patch; and Casey's mother, Leah, as she belatedly discovers her own talents and desires. Though a first-novel timidity sometimes weakens the narrative, Lee's take on contemporary intergenerational cultural friction is wide-ranging, sympathetic and well worth reading. (May)

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From [Booklist](#)

Lee mixes feminism and cultural awareness to create a sweeping story of first-generation Korean Americans finding their way between the old world and the new. Casey Han, her 22-year-old heroine, is having trouble turning her Princeton economics degree into a job. When her authoritarian father throws her out, she goes to

her white boyfriend for solace only to find him with in bed with two sorority girls. Just as all looks lost, she meets a rich school acquaintance, Ella Shim, who offers her a place to stay and convinces her fiancé to help Casey^B get a job. Casey's taste for expensive clothes keeps her in debt. Ella's shyness makes it easy for her husband to cheat on her. And Casey's father's coldness makes it hard for her mother to ignore kindness from another quarter. With very broad strokes and great detail, Lee paints colorful three-dimensional characters and outlines intergenerational and cultural struggles brilliantly. There is a little first-novel shyness on some issues but nothing the rest of the narrative doesn't make up for. *Elizabeth Dickie*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sheila Nathan:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children till adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for people. The book Free Food for Millionaires ended up being making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is very advantages for you. The publication Free Food for Millionaires is not only giving you more new information but also to become your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your own spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship using the book Free Food for Millionaires. You never sense lose out for everything should you read some books.

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