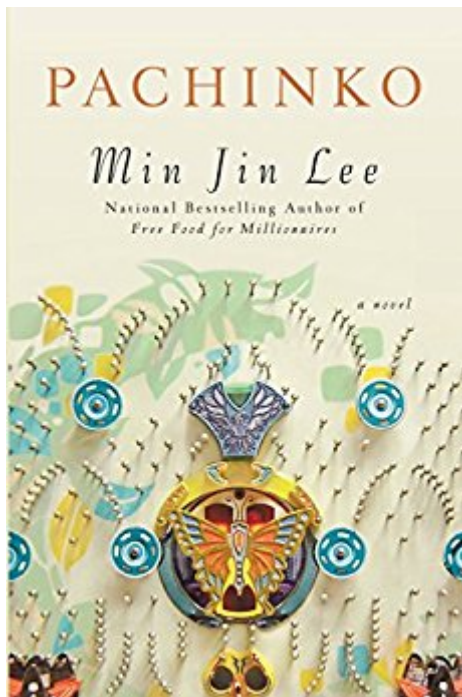


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# Pachinko



## Synopsis

National Bestseller In this bestselling, page-turning saga, four generations of a poor Korean immigrant family fight to control their destiny in 20th-century Japan, exiled from a home they never knew. "There could only be a few winners, and a lot of losers. And yet we played on, because we had hope that we might be the lucky ones." In the early 1900s, teenaged Sunja, the adored daughter of a crippled fisherman, falls for a wealthy stranger at the seashore near her home in Korea. He promises her the world, but when she discovers she is pregnant-and that her lover is married-she refuses to be bought. Instead, she accepts an offer of marriage from a gentle, sickly minister passing through on his way to Japan. But her decision to abandon her home, and to reject her son's powerful father, sets off a dramatic saga that will echo down through the generations. Richly told and profoundly moving, *Pachinko* is a story of love, sacrifice, ambition, and loyalty. From bustling street markets to the halls of Japan's finest universities to the pachinko parlors of the criminal underworld, Lee's complex and passionate characters-strong, stubborn women, devoted sisters and sons, fathers shaken by moral crisis-survive and thrive against the indifferent arc of history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Pachinko is a great big sprawling family saga set in Korea and Japan and spanning 70 years. Sunja is a teenaged girl living with her mother, who runs a boarding house in a fishing village in Korea. All Sunja knows is work, but she does not dislike this. It's what her mother does, too. Then she meets a fish broker, a suave older man who seduces her, impregnates her, and then informs her he's married. He says he'll support her, but she wants nothing more to do with him. Her fate is saved when a missionary staying at the boarding house says he will marry her and raise the child as his own. They move to Japan, where Koreans are looked down on. Thence starts a new round of endless working, something all the characters will know for all their lives, whether it's physical toil or mental. The tale follows Sunja and her family for four generations. I found the first half, which dealt mainly with Sunja and her sister-in-law who became her best friend, more engrossing than the latter half that was about her descendants. That section was interesting, but the stark contrast between Sunja, her mother, and sister-in-law and their husbands, and the younger generations was jolting. I just found the women more interesting than the men. They are so strong, mentally and physically. But their lives are very circumscribed compared to the men. The men are city people; the women rural in outlook even when living in the city. As Koreans in Japan, they are considered visitors even when they were born there. There were jobs they could never have; it was illegal to rent to them. When a boy turns fourteen, he has to register, be fingerprinted and interviewed, and he has to ask for permission to remain in Japan, even though he was born there and has never been to Korea. This process will be repeated every three years. And this was in the 1970s, not the 1870s. Getting Japanese citizenship was extremely difficult. But Sunja's family does get ahead, attaining a comfortable living. This novel is both an absorbing tale of family dynamics and a fascinating look at another culture and time. It's a big book, but I read it quickly, unable to put it down. The characters are so well developed that I really cared about them, especially Sunja and her sister-in-law. Sometimes I wanted to strangle one or another of the characters, because they are just totally realized humans. Excellent book.

I can't say enough good things about this book. Min Jin Lee is a masterful writer; her characters are so real and the narrative just flows organically. Her manipulation of the English language is stunning; her writing is descriptive and succinct at the same time. I found myself swept up in the lives of each and every person in the story, and as with all my favorite books, I was heartbroken when I came to the last page.

Beautiful story and so well written. What pain Sunja endured! It evokes tremendous empathy in the reader for those displaced by war or other upheaval. The story should make us pause so that we avoid inflicting hurt of any description on those who are different from us. If the Koreans had been accepted as equals, how different life would have been for this family. There is a huge lesson here for all of us. A very worthwhile read.

Fascinating multi-generational story of a Korean family in Japan during the 20th century. The characters and situations illustrate the pain and struggle of the poverty of war made worse by endemic racism. This historic fiction novel sheds light on the complicated relationship between the Koreans and Japanese throughout several generations. A page turner that will make you stay up way too late.

This is a stunning novel. It is a multi generational story beginning with a Korean family in pre-war Japan and ending in modern times. The characters are people we come to know well and care about. It explores racial prejudice in Japan and how this affects people in many ways. I especially enjoyed the descriptions of how Japanese society works and its history of racism.

Engrossing tale of a Korean family surviving in Japan before, during and after WW II, despite desperate poverty and discrimination by the Japanese. Ending turns dark.

Tragic and yet redemptive. So many complex characters, each with something to love. The author provides you with just enough description to envelope your imagination and place you in these far away places. The history is told in a wonderfully comprehensive way that leaves you pondering about it long after. Loved it!

Loved this book and learned so much. Wonderfully written historical novel about Korean-Japanese. I was never aware of how people suffered while living in Japan.

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