



LITERARY FICTION

By JOHN HARDING FOR THE DAILY MAIL

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THE EXPATRIATES

by **Janice Y. K. Lee**

(Little, Brown £14.99)

The titular expatriates are three American women living in present-day Hong Kong.

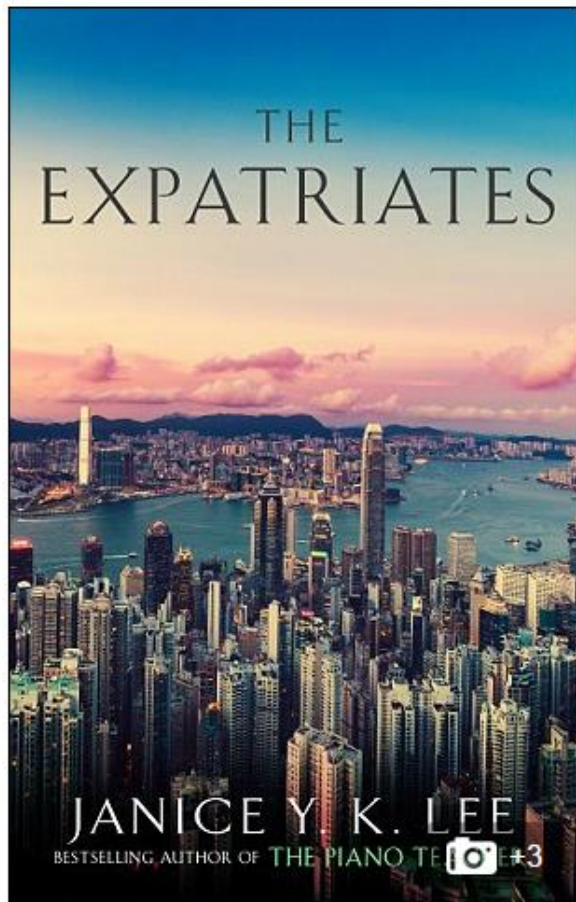
Mercy, born in the U.S. to poor Korean immigrants, lacks the connections and drive to emulate the success of her Columbia University classmates and drifts from one poorly paid temporary job to another.

She can see her 20s unravelling before her, disaster prone in her fecklessness.

Margaret has run down her work as an architect; her husband's well-paid job allows her to devote more time to their three children.

Meanwhile, her casual acquaintance Hilary mourns the infertility that means her life has not gone to plan. Their lives intersect when, hardly knowing her, Margaret offers Mercy a job looking after her children, a mixture of kindness and convenience that goes badly wrong.

In the resultant fall-out, Mercy finds comfort and the hope of economic salvation in the form of a wealthy American businessman she meets in a bar, who just happens to be Hilary's husband. Born and raised in Hong Kong, the child of Korean immigrants and educated at Harvard, Janice Y. K. Lee is a writer to watch.



THE EXPATRIATES by Janice Y. K. Lee

Brilliantly plotted and written, utterly absorbing, often heartbreaking, *The Expatriates* looks set to be one of the books of the year.

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