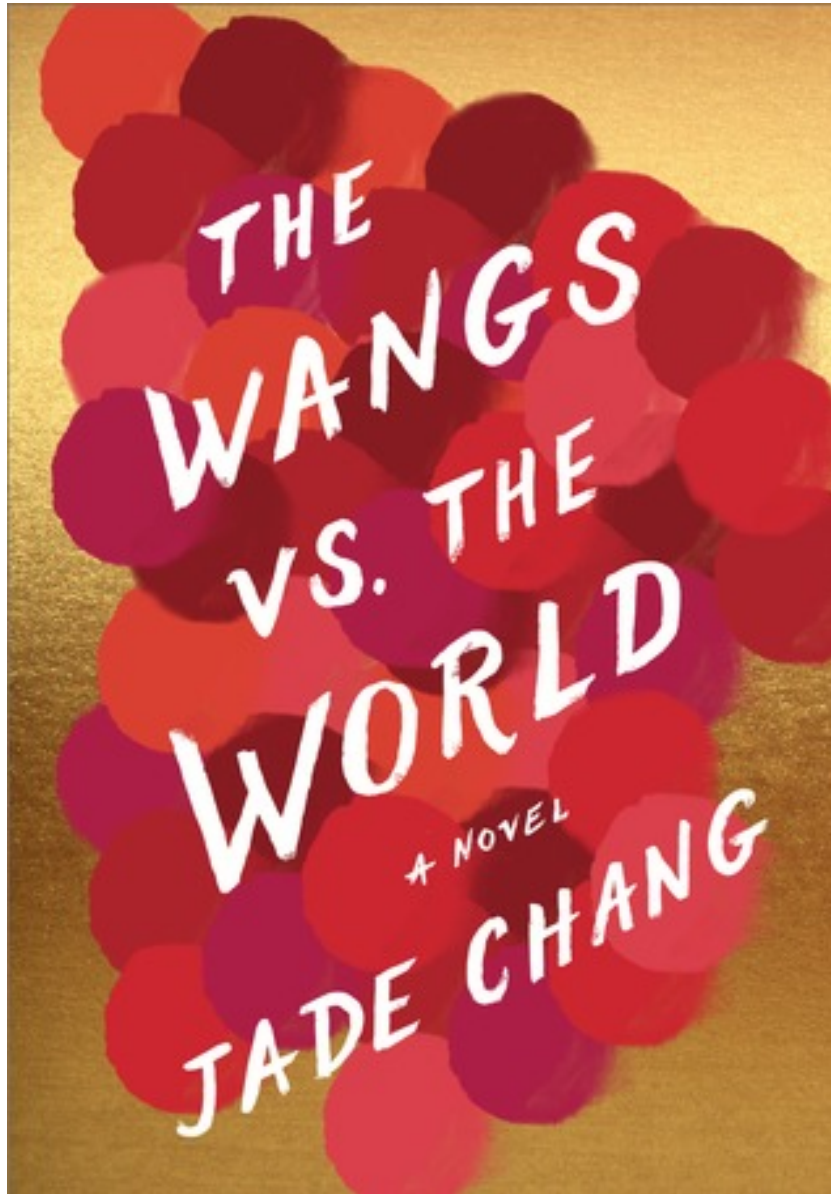


## The Wangs vs. the World Book PDF Download



**By:  
Jade Chang**

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### Emily May

Hilarious? Well I obviously didn't get it.

has been getting a lot of buzz lately, riding in on the recent wave of financial crisis lit. It's about a wealthy immigrant Chinese family in America - The Wangs - and how they lose everything in the wake of the 2008 economic disaster (it is actually the second book I've read in the last week about the crisis - the other being

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Firstly, I know it's a personal thing but this is

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. It's silly and campy, and I must have laughed a grand total of 0 times. One of the first attempts at hilarity in the book is about how the Americanized "Wang" is basically a penis joke. Ha. Another is that Charles Wang's company started by producing urea. As in piss. Um... ha?

### Larry H

Before I start my review of Jade Chang's

, here's a question: how do you feel when an author has their characters frequently speak in a different language, and they don't provide translation? Does that irritate you? It does me, even if I can generally figure out what they're saying.

"History had started fucking Charles Wang, and America had finished the job."

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"History had started fucking Charles Wang, and America had finished the job."

Charles Wang was a force to be reckoned with, a self-made man who left his home in Taiwan and over the years, built a multi-million-dollar cosmetics empire. He and his wife, Barbra (yes, she named herself for Barbra Streisand) rub elbows with celebrities and are written about in magazines and newspapers.

But then the financial crisis hits the U.S., and that, coupled with Charles' unending ambition and his belief that he knows better than financial experts, leads to his total ruin. His house, his companies, his assets get seized by the bank, and even his cars get repossessed. He's angry and vows this won't be the last of him, so he plans to travel to China, where he's convinced an ancient law will allow him to claim his family's ancestral lands, so he can get back on top again and prove his might.

First, he pulls his precocious, style-savvy daughter Gracie out of boarding school he hasn't been able to pay for, tells his aspiring comedian son Andrew that there's no more money for college (or his expensive SUV, which gets repossessed), and Charles, Barbra, and the children plan to make a road trip from the West Coast to the upstate New York home of his oldest daughter Saina, a once-renowned artist who has gone into hiding after her last show was met with critical disdain.

## Cheri

NOW AVAILABLE

This debut novel is a very entertaining read. In some ways, it's similar to *The Nest*, but without the backstabbing sibling rivalry, with somewhat quirkiest and more likeable characters. It has its moments of being charming, despite everything negative that the family is going through. They lose their home, their money, pretty much everything, after the market crashes in 2008. Grace, the youngest, has a particularly interesting / amusing view on the whole "escapade" of pulling her out

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Father Charles and stepmother Barbra head out to pick up the kids and head to a new, more economically challenged life. Not in one of their newer cars, even Andrew's is being repossessed, but in the Mercedes that used to belong to Charles's first wife. An older Mercedes. I loved the periodic inclusion of the Mercedes's point of view on this trip, the indignity of it all. It's a long drive from California to Saina's house. But first, they have to make their way through the South to deliver some goods to one of father Charles's customers. They also attend a wedding in New Orleans for people they don't really know. Things are never quite the same after that experience.

It took me a while to really feel invested in the characters, but overall, it's a very entertaining read. I will be surprised if Hollywood doesn't already have plans to turn this into a movie, and I expect it will be a big hit when it's made.

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Many thanks to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, NetGalley and to the author Jade Chang for providing me with an advanced copy for reading and review.

## Paromjit

This is a novel that immerses itself in the Wang family when their wealth disappears completely in the 2008 financial markets crash. It is exacerbated by Charles Wang's inability to follow the advice

given by experts, in his arrogance he believes he knows better and lives to rue his irrational decisions. Charles was raised in Taiwan and came to the US with nothing. As a first generation immigrant, he built up a cosmetics fortune. He is married for the second time to Barbra, yes, named after Barb

This is a novel that immerses itself in the Wang family when their wealth disappears completely in the 2008 financial markets crash. It is exacerbated by Charles Wang's inability to follow the advice given by experts, in his arrogance he believes he knows better and lives to rue his irrational decisions. Charles was raised in Taiwan and came to the US with nothing. As a first generation immigrant, he built up a cosmetics fortune. He is married for the second time to Barbra, yes, named after Barbra Streisand. They have lived a celebrity lifestyle and struggle to adapt to their new circumstances. He is a in your face, brash character and he is angry at the situation he finds himself in. His family are from China where their considerable land was taken. Due to a specific law, he believes that he will now be able to claim back the family acres and be able to be back at the top again. He wants to take the family to China, but fails to understand that they may not want to go there.

Charles decides to collect the family and go on a road trip to New York where his eldest daughter, Saina, resides and whose trust fund he believes is safe. He extracts Grace, his teenage daughter from private school and Andrew from university where he dreams of being a comedian. The family then set off. What the trip really does is reveal the characters and give insights into their history, life and aspirations in all their dysfunctional glory. The side trip to New Orleans has Andrew in thrall to an older woman, Dorrie. Barbra is less than comfortable with their new status of being bankrupt and eyes up other opportunities. Grace has thoughts of suicide interspersed with those of fashion and style. Saina who is part of the art world circles finds herself in hiding after a downturn in her stock.

The narrative gives each person's point of view and each has their story, although no character is likeable. The novel gives us cultural and immigrant perspectives, with humour and irony. The fractious road trip is a vehicle for us to get to know the family. I liked the story well enough and I think it covered key issues in the US today. Thanks to Penguin for an ARC.

## Angela M

I'm less than a third of the way in and I've already decided this is not for me . It could be that I just don't have a sense of humor as I wasn't finding the story as hilarious as some others have described it. A few years ago I would have gritted my teeth and read it, but I'm at the age where I think life is too short and I so value my reading time that I don't think twice about quitting a book that I probably won't enjoy. I think it's just not my kind of book and I should have known better th

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I received this advance copy from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Edelweiss and NetGalley.