



The Cook, the Crook, and the Real Estate Tycoon: A Novel of Contemporary China

Liu Zhenyun

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The Cook, the Crook, and the Real Estate Tycoon, by prize-winning Chinese novelist Liu Zhenyun is a novel of Beijing that paints a microcosm of contemporary China, dealing with classes at the two extremes: the super rich and the migrant workers who make them rich through deceit and corruption.

The protagonist, Liu Yuejin, is a work site cook and small-time thief whose bag is stolen. In searching for it he stumbles upon another bag, which contains a flash disk that chronicles high-level corruption, and sets off a convoluted chase. There are no heroes in this scathing, complex, and highly readable critique of the dark side of China's predatory capitalism, corruption, and the plight of the underclasses. A movie adaptation and TV series appeared in 2008 in China.

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