

Staff Picks

The Bride Test by Helen Hoang Overdrive

Khai is a Vietnamese man living in California who has autism. He has dealt with the traumas of his past by convincing himself that he has a heart of stone. He has no feelings when it comes to big emotions like grief or love. Esme Tran is a poor, uneducated, mixed race girl living in the slums of Ho Chi Minh City supporting her mother, grandmother, and young daughter.

Khai's wealthy mother returns to Vietnam to find him the perfect bride. She meets Esme and invites her to spend the summer in the U.S., hoping Esme might be a good match for her son. Khai is horrified to find that his mother has taken this drastic step, but he agrees to host Esme for 3 months if his mother promises never to interfere in his life again. And so it begins.

The relationship between Khai and Esme is funny, sweet and awkward as they negotiate a life together and come to understand each other. This is an unusual romance that I thoroughly enjoyed.