



Falling for Grace

By Patty Jones

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Starring Fay Ann Lee, Gale Harold, and Christine Baranski. Rated PG. Opens Friday, November 16, at the Cinemark Tinseltown

If, in the November gloom, you're hankering for a romantic-comedy-drama—particularly one set in Manhattan, the city seemingly built to showcase the genre—director-cowriter Fay Ann Lee has fashioned a sweet, if simple, Cinderella story in *Falling for Grace*. This time, Cinderella is a Chinese-American Wall Street investment banker who has grown up in New York's Chinatown with parents who don't speak English. Prince Charming is a white-boy lawyer and only son in an upper-crusty Upper East Side family. Instead of that lost slipper, there's a mix-up involving a dress from a Fifth Avenue boutique.

Racial twists aside, we know this girl-meets-(loses-regains)-boy formula by heart, but that's the point. Because she grew up thinking only blond chicks get diamond tiaras, Grace Tang (played by Broadway and TV actor Lee) is giddy when, at an uptown bash, some society princesses mistake her for a member of a famous retailing family. She catches the eye of Andrew Barrington Jr. (*Queer As Folk*'s Gale Harold), whose parents (Roger Rees, Christine Baranski) expect him to propose to WASPy girlfriend Kay (Stephanie March). Having a fairy-tale moment, Grace lets Andrew think she's the uptown Tang, love blooms in Manhattan, and formula kicks in.

Maybe Lee's quadruple-threat ambition (she also coproduced) is why things wobble in the story and acting departments. Lee and Harold are appealing, but there's insufficient spark to convince us they're smitten, and the narrative lacks punch. Still, when Grace pretends that her family members—sweatshop seamstress Ma (Elizabeth Sung), restaurant-kitchen worker Ba (Clem Cheung), and wannabe-chef brother Ming (Ken Leung)—are a "volunteer family" she assists, it works as a gentle comedy of errors, and interactions between daughter and elderly parents are touching amid clichés. Margaret Cho is lively as Grace's coworker, but even the movie seems to think that she and her guy are having all the fun.

Link: [Falling for Grace official site](#)

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