



Leg the Spread: A Woman's Adventures Inside the Trillion-Dollar Boys Club of Commodities Trading

Cari Lynn

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In the Futures market, it's all about minimizing risk and maximizing your wallet. Buying something gives you one leg—selling something gives you another—and if you've got two legs to stand on, that's your spread. Anyone can make money by legging the spread, but if you're a woman, you need something else: the presence, savvy, and stomach to run with the bulls and make your way in this ultimate boys club.

Welcome to the jungle.

The Chicago Mercantile Exchange (known in the financial world as “the Merc”) is the busiest Futures exchange in the world: a hair-raising, high-pressure den of iniquity with enough yelling, bullying, and mayhem to rattle even the toughest of hardball commodities traders. And if you're a woman, the Merc can be the seventh circle of hell, given the sexual harassment, verbal vulgarity, and blatant condescension that comes with the turf. But that fact hasn't stopped a handful of talented and determined women from crashing the frat party of the Merc and making millions while they're at it.

When Cari Lynn first ventured onto the floor of the Merc in early 2000, she did so because she, like so many others, was riveted by the amount of money that could be made through trading with seemingly little effort. But she quickly discovered that only a handful of females have ever made it into the trading pits—a testosterone-saturated world where the men are often monsters and there's no room for boys, let alone women. *Leg the Spread* is the highly entertaining account of Lynn's years as a clerk at the Merc, a job that taught her not only the cutthroat rules of engagement, but just how far both men and women will go when they stand to win or lose everything in the blink of an eye.

From learning the fast-moving art of “arb”—the hand signals used to generate trades—to learning to shout over the roar of the pits, *Leg the Spread* follows Lynn as she discovers the rush of high-stakes moneymaking, and herself. Along the way, she shares the stories of the Merc's women traders, a motley crew of personalities who show her how to play the game. From Natalie, who bares her midriff and records her trades with a pink pom-pom pen, but is known to throw a punch to stand her ground, to Bev, who hustles billions of dollars in contracts every day and whose sway over the market is so great that major players like Goldman Sachs refuse to trade if she's not in the pit, Lynn provides a riveting portrait of what it takes to prove your moxie daily in the midst of this ultimate men's club.

Packed with jaw-dropping stories of bad behavior, good instincts, breathtaking greed, and heroic courage, *Leg the Spread* is an uproarious, adrenaline-fueled memoir that offers a completely new take on women and Wall Street—and an unprecedented entrée into one of the last true financial playgrounds.

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