

**FREE  
READING  
SAMPLE**

THE MILLIONS SERIES Pt. 1

#THEMILLIONSERIES



A MILLION  
*beginnings*

SABRINA T. RUDOLPH



An Imprint of InVision Publishing

# THE MILLIONS SERIES PT. 1

#THEMILLIONSSERIES

First published March 2022 in Germany by KoBook, an imprint of InVision Publishing,  
Sabrina Rudolph und Anja Rudolph GbR, Boeblingen.

This book is a work of fiction. Any resemblance of characters, events, and incidence to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events is entirely coincidental. Known K-Pop groups that are mentioned in the book are only mentioned as appreciation and support from the author. This work is in no way sponsored, endorsed, or administrated by, or associated with any of the mentioned groups.

#themillionsseries

ISBN: 978-3-949878-00-8

First Edition

Copyright © 2021 by Sabrina T. Rudolph & InVision Publishing

All rights reserved. Published by InVision Publishing,  
Sabrina Rudolph und Anja Rudolph GbR, Germany

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, stored in a database, and/or published in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

For information regarding permission, please contact InVision Publishing at:  
[business@invisionpub.com](mailto:business@invisionpub.com)

Editing: Sahar Ayachi, Amber Curtis  
Cover Design: Anja Rudolph, Sabrina Rudolph  
Book Layout: Anja Rudolph  
Illustrations: Lucky Marez  
Printed by: CPI GmbH, Germany

Printed in Germany

A/MILLION  
*beginnings*



INTRO

**NEWS**

Posted by HallyuToday • 2022-04-18 • 11min ago

# MILLIONS ARE BACK

**K-Pop idol group MILLIONS returns with InVision Entertainment, former label EW Entertainment under fire!**



A/MILLION  
*beginnings*

# MILLIONS



**From EW to InVision Entertainment, the chart-smashing K-Pop boy group “Millions” is making a surprise comeback to the entertainment industry only a few months after finishing their five-year contract with the controversial EW Entertainment.**

Earlier this year, public attention was directed towards the company **EW Entertainment** as several lawsuits were filed against the label, including mistreatment of their artists and money embezzlement. The prosecutor in charge of the EW case declared that such behavior of K-Pop entertainment companies should not be overlooked and promised to fight for a fair outcome. The lawsuit sparked strong interest, both nationally and internationally, particularly among the fans of **Millions**.

Millions, who debuted under EW Entertainment on January 17, 2017, were active for only three years before the group went on a sudden hiatus in the summer of 2020. Without prior announcement, the eldest members **Kang Junyoung** and **Im Taejun** enlisted to serve out their military duty which sparked controversy among the fans. The fans also showed great concern for the remaining members **Sung Siwoo, Lee Minseo, Park Aron, Lee Bryen, and Choi Eunkyuu**, who remained inactive during the past two years.

In a recent press conference, Millions’ leader Junyoung stated: “Our time with EW Entertainment taught us a lot. The members and I are excited to start this new chapter with **InVision Entertainment**. We are most grateful to the court that ruled in our favor to keep our group name, and we promise to work hard to show our fans a better and stronger Millions.”

As Millions are to make their comeback soon, we wish them all the best and join the fans in their excitement for the group’s future.

 1.9K

 86

 Share



TRACK 1

HERE TO STAY

— *Seohee* —

“The group’s future,” I mouthed as I looked down at my phone, which was still displaying the news article about the ‘chart-smashing K-Pop boy group’ Millions.

At the bottom of the article, there was a photo of seven handsome young men. Taking in the elaborate hairstyles, colorful makeup and fancy accessories, I rolled my eyes and chuckled. The picture must have been a few years old as the group had been inactive for about two years now. They were due to make their comeback within the next few months.

Millions—a name that I had just been reintroduced to a few days ago.

After their debut about five years ago, I must have been one of the few people in South Korea that had never paid attention to them. All of my fellow students had instantly fallen in love and couldn’t stop talking about them: Oppa is so handsome! The maknae is the cutest! Their singing is so superior to other groups! Look at their powerful dance moves!

These conversations, still so familiar, had been just background noise to me. The final exams had been right around the corner, and I couldn’t afford to be distracted from reaching my goals: graduating with good grades, continuing my studies somewhere abroad and finding a well-paid job.

Most of my plans had worked out well enough: Graduate with good grades, check! Master's abroad, check! A well-paid job?

I sighed, looking down at the picture once more. The idols were almost taunting me with their cheeky winks, perfect smiles and heart signs. I might as well have gone to all those fan events with my classmates. I could have skipped a lecture and fawned over that pretty Millions guy. What was his name again? Minseo? The effect on my bank account and résumé would have most likely been the same either way.

Patience, Seohee, you are just at the beginning of your career!

I straightened my shoulders with determination. Right! With a bit of luck, things could already be taking a turn for the better in only a few hours from now. With that thought, I checked the time. I had another forty-five minutes to go before my job interview at the company on the other side of the street.

Looking at the news article once more, I felt my resolve strengthen. Having all of the most important Korean news outlets report about Millions in such a positive way today of all days had to mean something. It had to be a good sign.

I locked my phone screen and continued to stroll through the convenience store. Apart from the cashier, an old man, the place was empty. The overhead lights were humming steadily, and soft music was playing from the speakers. It was the perfect place to distract myself and stall for time.

Perhaps I should buy a small snack? On second thought, feeling my stomach tense in a clear sign of nerves, food might not be the best idea! Maybe something to drink?

My eyes scanned the shelves, coming to a halt on a small yellow bottle. I raised an eyebrow and smiled. Reaching for the banana milk, I felt like a teenager again. The drink had been my cheap and tasty companion during all of my exams.

I approached the counter to pay for my drink.

The elderly cashier greeted me with a glint of interest in his eyes. "This is your first time in my store, right?" he asked, a friendly smile appearing on his lips and eyes forming crescents.

"Ah, yes, how did you know?" I replied, returning his smile.

The man gave me a knowing wink. "I would remember a pretty face like yours!"

I chuckled and bowed. "Kamsahamnida, Ahjussi!"

The man raised his brows and burst out into laughter. "Ahjussi? You are a polite young lady, aren't you? I am probably more the age of a harabeoji! Go on, call me that!"

I smiled conspiratorially at him.

"You don't look a day older than forty!" That was a blatant lie, and we both knew it.

The store owner had white hair and, judging by the wrinkles around his eyes, was around seventy.

He laughed quietly and scanned the banana milk. “Will you stop by often from now on?” he asked with sincere interest.

“There is a chance I might become a regular!” I replied happily.

The man smiled delightedly. “Oh, did you move to this area?”

I shook my head. “No, but I am hoping to get hired by a company across the street. I have a job interview in about thirty-five minutes.”

He looked at the drink on the counter and tapped on its lid. “I will give you this milk for free to wish you luck! But if you get hired, you have to come to my store often, alright?”

I tried to argue that I would pay, but the harabeoji insisted. Eventually, I nodded and bowed quickly to thank him. “Deal! Thank you so much, Harabeoji!” I then took a glance around the store, my eyes landing on some chairs in front of the window. “Harabeoji, is it okay if I sit at the counter for a while to wait for my interview?” I asked and received a nod in response. He gestured for me to take a seat.

I settled in one of the chairs and unlocked my phone once again. The article about Millions had links to similar topics, which led me further into the world of K-Pop. I was curious to read more. Although I had already done quite a bit of research ahead of the interview, there was still so much more to learn.

The music industry wasn’t my field of expertise, but seeing how I had always been a quick and eager student, I didn’t worry too much about my lack of knowledge. If I were to be hired by InVision, I would need to make sure that I caught up on this whole other world.

I read through more and more news, shocked to see how many K-Pop groups existed nowadays. A few years ago, there hadn’t been that many groups, or had there? There were girl groups, boy groups, solo artists, groups that seemed to have debuted just a few months ago and other groups that had debuted already during my school days or before.

I blinked at all the names, some more and some less familiar: EXO, Blackpink, Seventeen, Everglow, Girls Generation, Super Junior, Ateez, Stray Kids, Winner, Twice, Treasure and many more.

Who could possibly know all of these? I groaned. I definitely still had some catching up to do. I had read a lot of names over the past few days, but there seemed to be an infinite amount of them. Weren’t some of these kids even too young to debut?

Who the hell came up with these outfits? Could people really look like that?

“WHAT? Harabeoji, are you serious right now?”

I almost jumped when I heard the loud, desperate voice from across the store. I looked over at the counter to see a young man standing in front of the store owner. I blinked a few times. I must have been so immersed in my thoughts that I didn’t hear him enter.

“I am sorry, but I sold the last one just a while ago!”

At these words, the young man groaned and slumped on the counter in an overly dramatic fashion. “You must be kidding me!” he whined.

The old man behind the counter chuckled. “Sorry, kiddo! But maybe it’s for the best! He can’t just live off that milk all day, you know?”

I watched the stranger lift his body from the counter slowly, clearly exhausted. “Harabeoji, it’s easy for you to say that! You don’t have to live with his cranky mood all day when he doesn’t get his beloved banana milk!”

My eyebrows shot up. Banana milk? I glanced at the unopened bottle on the counter next to me.

“I didn’t even know that a convenience store could run out of banana milk. And today of all days!” the man added, ending with an exasperated sigh.

I almost felt bad for him. He sounded so disheartened.

“I am really sorry,” the owner said with a huff.

The man groaned and mumbled, “Great, now I have to cross the street, enter that building and meet my maker! He will have my head, and work will be unbearable for the rest of the day!”

I tilted my head, listening.

Did he just say that he worked on the other side of the street?

My eyes scanned over him, and I noticed a badge hanging from his jean pocket. I tried to make out the writing, and recognized the logo instantly from all of the research I had done before sending my application to InVision Entertainment.

I wondered. Could he be a manager running an errand for Millions?

I took a closer look at him. He was tall and athletic, his jean-clad legs seemed endless. I raised an eyebrow. His height and stature definitely fit the image of those strong-looking managers I had pictured. His profile looked quite handsome. Straight and defined nose, thin but still nicely-shaped lips, light brown hair that seemed tousled in a carefully styled way. Some strands were falling into his eyes which enhanced his attractiveness. I frowned. Did everyone in the K-Pop industry, managers included,

look like god-damn models? This guy definitely could pass as one. He was unfairly good-looking.

“Harabeoji, please, please tell me that you can magically find one last bottle of banana milk in your well-hidden storage for very desperate customers!” The man clapped his hands together in a begging way and bowed in front of the shop owner.

I snorted. If it wouldn’t have been so funny and almost cute to watch, I would have sincerely pitied the guy. Maybe I should reconsider applying for a job at his company. Either his higher-ups or the band members seemed to have a very bad temper if he was so desperate for a simple bottle of banana milk.

I took another glance at the time. Twenty minutes to go before I needed to be at my interview. I slipped my phone into my bag, grabbed the banana milk and walked up to the counter.

“Taejun-ah, I’m really sorry. How about you just buy a real banana for once? That might do him some good! Fresh fruit is much healthier.”

“Harabeoji, the banana will probably end up hitting my head, and that’s all the good it will do! I can’t go back without that milk!”

I considered this the perfect moment to intervene.

“Uhm, excuse me?”

— Taejun —

I was startled by the sudden voice next to me.

I turned to see a young woman standing at a respectable distance on my left—a very pretty young woman, I might add. I couldn’t help but look her over quickly.

Her expression was calm and friendly. Her long wavy hair was dark brown and tied in a low ponytail, a few strands softly framing her face. She was dressed in a simple but elegant business outfit—light blue dress pants, a white blouse and a beige blazer with blue accents. Her outfit, although meant to be professional, made her look beautiful in an effortless way.

I blinked a few times.

Beautiful? Where did that even come from?

I snapped out of my shameless staring when she cleared her throat.

Right, I was supposed to say something! Why was I so awkward? I rubbed my neck in an embarrassed gesture, a sheepish smile on my face.

She responded with a playful grin before she lifted her hand and held it out towards me. "I'm sorry to disturb this very dramatic display of desperation. I couldn't help but overhear that you have quite a situation on your hands concerning banana milk?"

Looking at her hand, I could see that she was indeed in possession of a very big treasure—one bottle of banana milk. I had the sudden urge to reach out and take it, but then an internal alarm went off.

Wait a minute! Damn it, I had forgotten to wear a mask again. Did she recognize me?

I looked from the banana milk to her face. While I was trying to read her expression, one of her brows lifted slowly in question. Her eyes shone brightly, glinting with intelligence and undisguised humor. Would she be the kind of person to use her intelligence against me?

Looking her over from head to toe once again, I weighed my options. She might actually be a nice and sincere person, but just as easily, she could be a reporter trying to get an inside story. She could also be a fan trying to flirt.

Man, life as an idol was hard! It made you develop a mistrust of people and a constant fear of being used.

"So? I would be willing to give my banana milk to you if you want it," she said, moving her hand a bit closer to me.

I slightly narrowed my eyes. "What's the catch?" I asked carefully.

She blinked and asked in confusion, "Catch?"

I rolled my eyes in response. "Yes, what do you want in return?"

She seemed honestly taken aback when she replied, "Nothing! You just seemed to need it more than me. That's all!"

She seemed sincere, but perhaps she was just a good actress?

I was very conflicted. On one hand, I wanted to just trust her, but on the other hand? I forced myself not to get too deep in my head and sighed. It couldn't be helped; I needed to make sure. So I just asked, "Did you put something inside that drink?"

She gasped, and something flashed in her eyes. "Excuse me?" There were sparks of a fire that she might usually keep hidden. Interesting.

Better safe than sorry, though. It wouldn't be the first time an anti-fan had put something into an idol's drink. Things do happen!

"That drink! Did you put something inside it?" I asked again.

The woman lowered her hand in surprise then propped both hands on her hips.

“Why, pray tell, would I put something in the drink?”

I hoped again she wasn’t an undercover reporter or someone with bad intentions. It would be such a shame. Her indignation was quite endearing. She had been beautiful from the start, but that annoyed glance that she was shooting at me right now gave her a special spark. Was it really possible to look prettier while glaring at someone? For this woman, it seemed to be.

“People have done crazier things,” I said offhandedly.

“Okay, you know what? Forget about it! I wanted to help you out because you seemed to potentially run into some trouble with your boss. But I have changed my mind! I will keep this very delicious banana milk that Harabeoji gifted me. I need to go anyway. I have a job interview, so I really can’t be late. Good luck with that boss of yours!” ending her rant, she turned on her heel to leave.

Wow, that was an explosion right in my face! And, there was no way of denying it—she was just stunning, angry or not. My first impression of her was of a very composed and polite young lady, but the fire in her eyes said otherwise. After our short encounter, I could already tell that she was hiding a whole different person. It made me wonder.

I considered giving her the benefit of the doubt. Maybe she really was who she claimed to be—just a stranger that wanted to kindly help someone out.

“Taejun-ah, don’t you want to follow her and ask her for that drink?”

At the store owner’s words, I snapped out of my thoughts. I started when I noticed the door closing behind the woman. She had actually left me standing here like an idiot. I shook my head and chuckled.

“See you soon, Harabeoji!” I mumbled with a bow to the older man before quickly following her outside.

“WAIT!” I called out to her.

She stopped and turned around to look at me indignantly. I caught up with her quickly. Here goes nothing!

“I’m actually really desperate for that bottle of banana milk,” I said sheepishly.

She looked at me in silence for a while, and I tried hard not to blush under her scrutiny. After a moment, her lips started to twitch in amusement. Eventually, she stretched out her arm again to offer me the drink. This time I took it from her hand right away.

She huffed and mumbled, “That wasn’t that difficult, was it?”

I grinned and feigned offense. “Didn’t your parents ever teach you not to take presents from strangers?”

She nodded appraisingly. "Touché!"

For a second, we just stood there, assessing each other, then she leaned in with a conspiratorial glint in her eyes. "So, do you get poisoned in the middle of the day very often?"

I couldn't help but laugh at that. "You would be surprised!" I winked at her, making her curl her lips into a small smile.

"Right!" she said, amused.

Our eyes met, and there was a bright light in hers that entranced me. Eventually, she lowered them again and started to play with the watch around her wrist.

Right, didn't she have a meeting?

For some reason, I didn't want to let her go just like that, so I needed a way to stall for time. "So, you're headed for a job interview?" I asked her.

Her head snapped up in surprise. "How did you know that?"

I raised my eyebrow. "Someone blew up in my face with a very long rant. I believe this particular piece of information was a part of it."

"I didn't blow up in your face, and I didn't rant!" she replied, miffed.

I chuckled. "Yes, you did!"

She scowled. "I would never do such a thing!"

I could hear the laughter in her voice. Not even she believed her own words.

"So, what job is it?" I asked, still stalling for time.

"Actually, if things work out, we might run into each other more often," she said with a smile.

Was that a faint blush on her cheeks?

"Oh?" I was intrigued.

"The interview is actually with InVision Entertainment. God, on that note, I should hurry up before I am late!"

InVision? Right, the job interviews! That was supposed to be today.

An irritating thought crossed my mind. If she was about to go to a job interview with our company, shouldn't she know who she was talking to right now? Was she pretending not to recognize me, or did she just not care? All things considered, that would have been actually quite decent of her. It wasn't every day that I got to interact with people on a normal basis. Or maybe, she really didn't have a clue who I was? I wasn't sure if I should be offended or intrigued.

"You don't have to frown so much. Don't worry! I'm not a creepy stalker or anything. I just noticed your badge earlier and figured you work there."

Did she really not know? I couldn't stop the grin from spreading on my lips.

"How about we head over together then?" I suggested.

She smiled and gestured for me to lead the way. We walked next to each other in comfortable silence for a while.

"I am curious, though," she suddenly said, gazing up at me.

I looked at her again. "About?"

"Who is it that is giving you such a hard time over something as mundane as banana milk? The management or the idols? Who do I need to be afraid of?"

I blinked a few times and then laughed. Okay, now I was convinced she had no idea who I was.

"Somehow, you don't strike me as someone who gets scared easily!" I pointed out.

She seemed to think about that for a second. "I guess I am quite determined, and in my line of work, in order to succeed, you can't show fear."

I nodded approvingly.

She was planning on joining the K-Pop industry, an industry that one definitely needed a certain level of strength to survive in. I didn't know which job she was aiming for in InVision Entertainment, but I had a feeling she would be able to handle it just fine.

"So, do you have a pro-tip for me? What can I expect from the interview? A scary boss? Idols with a bad attitude? Horrible working hours and bad pay?"

I tried not to be offended. Bad attitude? I actually thought we were quite down to earth, but then again, I was running after an unknown lady for a tiny bottle of milk for the sake of keeping our maknae happy. Maybe there was a quirk or two after all.

She slapped a hand to her mouth, and a blush started to spread over her cheeks.

"Oh god, I'm really sorry! Those questions were inappropriate. Everyone at the company is probably very nice, and your boss is most likely a good person, especially seeing as to why he started the company in the first place."

Looking at her, she seemed flustered, and her eyes clearly displayed how sorry she was. Cute! I bit my lip, trying hard not to chuckle, but her reaction made it difficult.

"Don't worry about it! Actually, the boss has his scary moments for sure, and I think some of the Millions members have a bit of an attitude from time to time," I said, trying to calm her down.

People could definitely lose their patience with some of us. I grinned as I envisioned our leader, Junyoung, and his hatred for waking up in the morning. The glare you would receive for trying to wake him up was scary as hell.

Bryen, on the other hand, absolutely refused to enter any stage without his lucky ring. That damn thing had caused quite the ruckus more than once. Try finding a thin ring in a big, busy backstage room. So yes, there could be some attitude to deal with!

I glanced at the young woman next to me. She seemed to relax a bit.

“Still, I shouldn’t have said those things. I am usually more professional!” she mumbled, almost seeming to scold herself.

I smiled, amused. “Really, it’s alright! Everyone needs to relax from time to time. I won’t tell on you,” I promised.

When we reached the company building, she stopped and turned to face me. “Thank you . . .,” she blinked for a second, then let out a tiny, melodic laugh before continuing, “Actually, I don’t even know your name!”

“Taejun, Im Taejun,” I introduced myself slowly, slightly dumbfounded. I tried to catch her reaction.

She bowed slightly and smiled. “Nice to meet you! I’m Min Seohee!”

I just looked at her for a second, not sure how to react. Nothing in her eyes had shown any sign of recognition. She really didn’t even know my name?

Seeing her look at me questioningly, I quickly replied, “Nice to meet you, Seohee-shi!” I returned her smile, trying not to show my irritation.

“Well, Taejun-shi, I will head inside. Wish me luck!” She bowed once more, and I copied the gesture.

“Good luck!” I said as I watched her turn towards the door.

The black glass doors opened automatically, and she took a step inside.

“Seohee-shi?” I heard myself say before I even knew what I was doing.

What was with me always calling out for her like this?

She turned once again and looked at me expectantly.

“I hope you get the job!” I said awkwardly.

Her eyes lit up before the doors closed, and she was gone.

I blinked and then looked down at the banana milk in my hand. I felt a smile form on my lips. For some reason, I was looking forward to the next few months.

Min Seohee. That name sounded nice and oddly familiar. I tried to remember why the name seemed to ring a bell. It took me a few moments, and then I grinned. I pulled my cell phone from my back pocket and searched through my contacts before quickly dialing a certain number. After a few rings, it connected.

“What’s up, Hyung?”

“Siwoo-ya, listen, remember our talk last night?”