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ByFrÃ©dÃ©ric Madre

The phenomenal success of Beigbeder's book *99F* has to be attributed to something. It just has to be. This is a moral consumer world and there is a logic to success. It's in the numbers, the safety of success. 400,000 copies of the book were sold and now the book has been translated into English. The consumption is borderless: this is the Europe that was dreamt for us. *99F* – you can't judge a book by its price. You can't judge a book by its writer. (I've read the book actually). Frederic Beigbeder could be the only reason for the success of his book.

Ex-beautiful golden ad world boy, Frederic Beigbeder is one of those people you would recognise on the street because he's making sure that his blandness is stylised enough to be a brand: long, ultra-clean combed hair with a centre parting above a naïve smile without the sharpness of teeth, a chin like a squared tennis ball – this is Frederic Beigbeder as seen on TV. He's invited to TV talk shows (or he hosts them, I can't tell) and can be witty on demand about literature without being – you know – witty. This undeniable talent of being just marginal enough within the strictly conventional is put to good use in his literary column of the weekly *Voici*, 'le people très convivial', with a market of 4 million buyers. And then there's *99F*, the book.

Reading this book is totally innocuous. You don't have to, the pages flick by themselves turning lightly and effortlessly in your hand. It's as short and easy as a suburban train ride. It is the story of Frédéric Beigbeder only slightly twisted so that you will believe he doesn't like himself that much or fancy himself as the hero of his own book. The last three pages made me laugh. I have read this book until the last page, that was when my train reached its destination.

It's all in the *99F*. The book, its title: not less – cheap.

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