



The Three Fates

Linda Lê

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An intensely lively and piquant novel about a Vietnamese family, *The Three Fates* concerns rivalries and jealousies, strange motives and destructive passions.

The three fates—now three Vietnamese “princesses” in France—were spirited away as little children by their powerful grandmother when Saigon fell to the communists. Now the two sisters and their cousin await the arrival of their father and uncle, still marooned in his little blue house in the old country. “Leave King Lear alone, I’d told my cousins,” our principal narrator (an intellectual who has lost a hand) informs us: “They had neglected him for twenty years and now they were conspiring like a pair of Cordelias to bestow one last joy on the old monarch: he hadn’t asked for it.” From a luxurious home in the French countryside, his two daughters (the elder, very pregnant and restlessly cooking and eating, kept company by her long-legged and icy younger sister) plot to drag their father halfway around the world – away from his poverty and from his only friend and the grilled eels they happily devour together – to flaunt their success. Scathingly unsentimental, *The Three Fates* transposes Shakespearean tragedy into a contemporary idiom and a decidedly different culture. A sharply vivacious book about “the bitch of fate,” *The Three Fates*—like a witches’ pot on the boil—brews up from displaced lives a darkly funny and agitated concatenation.

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