



A Long Stay in a Distant Land: A Novel

Chieh Chieng

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A hilarious and inventive first novel tracing three generations of a death-stalked Chinese-American family in Orange County, California

The Lums are cursed: ever since Grandpa Melvin was inspired to join the U.S. army after watching a Popeye movie and-as family lore has it-unleashed a "relentless rain of steel death" upon the Nazis, Lum after Lum has been doomed to an untimely demise, be it by tainted cheeseburger or speeding ice cream truck. The most recent victim is Louis Lum's mother, at the hands of a medical student asleep at the wheel. Now Louis, a fact checker at a hot rod magazine in his early twenties, must move back home with his gangsta rap-obsessed father, Sonny, to prevent him from enacting the revenge he promises. But soon Louis's concern shifts to another wayward family member, his uncle Bo Lum, who has disappeared in Hong Kong after many years of self-imposed exile. After the annual family meeting at Grandma Esther's house, Louis decides to leave his father and go to Hong Kong and find Bo, his grandmother's favorite son. As Louis' search progresses, the tragicomic story of three generations of Lums in America is revealed through the eyes of Louis, Sonny, and Grandma Esther. A novel about the unexpected ways love and myth work to both sustain and threaten family ties, A Long Stay in a Distant Land introduces a wry and original new voice in American fiction.

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