



Papi: A Novel

Rita Indiana

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“Papi’s there, around any corner,” says the eight-year-old girl at the heart of *Papi*. “But you can’t sit down and wait for him cuz that’s a longer and more painful death.” Living in Santo Domingo, she waits for her father to come back from the United States and lavish her with the glorious rewards of his fame and fortune—shiny new cars and polo shirts, gold chains and Nikes. But when Papi does come back, he turns out to be more “like Jason, the guy from *Friday the 13th*,” than a prince. Papi is a drug dealer, a man who is clearly unreliable and dangerous but nevertheless makes his daughter feel powerful and wholly, terrifyingly alive.

Drawing on her memories of a childhood split between Santo Domingo and visits with her father amid the luxuries of the United States, Rita Indiana mixes satire with a child’s imagination, horror with science fiction, in a swirling tale of a daughter’s love, the lure of crime and *machismo*, and the violence of the adult world. Expertly translated into English for the first time by Achy Obejas, who renders the rhythmic lyricism of Indiana’s Dominican Spanish in language that propels the book forward with the relentless beat of a merengue, *Papi* is furious, musical, and full of wit—a passionate, overwhelming, and very human explosion of artistic virtuosity.

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