

## A Handbook to Luck

A Handbook to Luck (Hardcover)

by Cristina Garcia (Author)

Editorial ReviewsFrom Publishers Weekly

García's solid triptych opens in 1968, where Enrique Florit is a nine-year-old struggling to retain memories of his mother, who died in a bizarre accident in Cuba during one of his father Fernando's magic acts. Father and son relocate to Las Vegas, where Enrique develops a fascination with gambling. The novel then shifts to Marta Claros, a young girl attempting to eke out a living for her family in San Salvador, El Salvador, by selling used clothing. Marta's younger brother, Evaristo, escapes from their violent stepfather and takes up residence in a coral tree, only to witness brutal acts committed by soldiers at night. Marta, meanwhile, devises a plan to immigrate to the U.S., hoping to send for Evaristo later. In yet another part of the world, Leila Rezvani grows up amid luxurious yet isolated surroundings in Tehran, where her mother flirts with the horticulturist, her father is absorbed by his work, and her brother is dying. Enrique emerges as the central figure as years pass, first entangling with Leila, whom he meets in a casino, and later with Marta, with whom he has a platonic relationship. García (*Dreaming in Cuban*) lovingly portrays her characters grappling with misfortune and luck in unfamiliar surroundings. From Booklist

**\*Starred Review\*** Birds grace the pages of Garcia's most transfixing and moving novel to date, emblems of transcendence and hope in defiance of the gravity of fate. As in her earlier novels, including *Monkey Hunting* (2003), Garcia writes from several points of view as she tells unpredictably linked stories of people in flight from oppression during the 1970s and 1980s. Young Enrique Florit accompanies his exuberantly flamboyant and talented Cuban magician father, Fernando, as he flees Castro and the wrath of his late wife's family, seeking fame and fortune in Hollywood and Las Vegas. As war ravages El Salvador, Marta Claros, whose brother lives in a tree, leaves her abusive husband and bravely makes her way to California, where she finds sanctuary with a kind Korean factory owner. Leila Rezvani allows herself a brief interlude of pleasure in Las Vegas before returning to Tehran and a disastrous arranged marriage. Garcia's vital characters cope with exile, violence, and crushed dreams as they struggle toward love and freedom. As Garcia constructs concentric worlds of conflict and longing, discerns cultural paradoxes and human contrariness, and writes rhapsodically of nature's beauty, life emerges as a cosmic game of chance under luck's misrule.

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Knopf (April 10, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 030726436X

ISBN-13: 978-0307264367

[Link to WorldCAT](#)