



Sweet Diamond Dust: And Other Stories

Rosario Ferre

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Originally published in Spanish under the title *Maldito Amor* ("Cursed Love"), **Rosario Ferre's Sweet Diamond Dust** introduced American readers to a voice that is by turns lyrical and wickedly satiric. A finalist for the National Book Award with her 1995 novel, **The House on the Lagoon**, Ferre here uses family history as a metaphor for the class struggles and political evolution of Latin America and Puerto Rico in particular. The result is writing of the highest order--provocative, profound, yet delightfully readable. The "sweet diamond dust" of the title story in this debut collection is, of course, sugar. In this tale the De La Valle family's secrets, ambitions, and passions, interwoven with the fate of the local sugar mill, are recounted by various relatives, friends, and servants. As the characters struggle under the burden of privilege, the story, permeated with haunting echoes of Puerto Rico's own turbulent history, becomes a splendid allegory for a nation's past. The three accompanying stories each follow the lives of the descendants of the De La Valle family, making the book a drama in four parts, raising troubling issues of race, religion, freedom, and sex, with Ferre's trademark irony and startling imagery--a literary experience no reader would want to miss.

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