

## The Jaguar's Children.

By John Vaillant.

Jan. 2015. 288p. Houghton, \$26 (9780544315495).

Vaillant, the author of two widely praised and best-selling nonfiction works, *The Golden Spruce* (2005) and *The Tiger* (2010), turns to fiction with this searing story of an illegal immigrant abandoned in the Arizona desert. After the truck breaks down and the guides go off in search of help, Hector uses his unconscious friend Cesar's cell phone to text and send sound files to AnniMac, the only person in Cesar's directory with a U.S. number. Hector details the nightmarish, rapidly deteriorating condition of the 14 Mexicans trapped with him and talks about his life in rural Oaxaca. In a narrative heavily woven through with Spanish phrases, Hector pours out his anguish and weaves a rich tale of his family's hard life, which touches on his ancestors' worship of the jaguar, archaeological expeditions in the region, the dangers of genetically modified corn, and his father's burning desire that his son go to *el norte* in search of better opportunities. Vaillant's timely first novel captures both the straitened circumstances of hardworking campesinos and the humanity and raw desperation of a man slowly giving in to hopelessness. —*Joanne Wilkinson*

## Last Days in Shanghai.

By Casey Walker.

Dec. 2014. 240p. Counterpoint, \$26 (9781619024304).

This edgy first novel delivers a scathing in-

dictment of congressional politics as it follows a young aide on a business trip to China. At the beck and call of his boss, Congressman Leonard Fillmore, a petty man with presidential ambitions, Luke has quickly grown disillusioned and cynical. But things take a dangerous turn when the congressman, last seen drunk and ranting about his nonfunctional cell phone, goes missing. Luke steps in for him at a business meeting and is handed a suitcase full of cash by the mayor of a rural Chinese province who hopes to get in on a construction deal. Disoriented in Beijing's "smogshine" by too much alcohol, a bad case of insomnia, worries over the missing congressman, and the dealings of a corrupt businessman who is underwriting the trip, Luke is convinced something very bad is about to happen. Walker's smart writing on a host of issues, including China's frenzied construction boom, which has paved over ancient traditions block by block, and the sorry state of American politics, gives this cautionary tale frisson. —*Joanne Wilkinson*

## Lost & Found.

By Brooke Davis.

Jan. 2015. 288p. Dutton, \$26.95 (9780525954682).

Soon after seven-year-old Millie Bird's dad dies of cancer, her mother abandons her in a department store. Karl the Touch Typist, so called because he loves the act of typing and types on every surface he can find, has escaped from a nursing home and taken refuge in the

same store where Millie has been left. Agatha Pantha, who lives across the street from Millie, has not left her house since her husband's death seven years before. Millie's plight brings out a protective impulse in the two octogenarians, and the three of them, along with a department store mannequin named Manny, embark on a journey across the Australian Bush to find Millie's mother, Millie posting signs that read "IN HERE MUM" along the way. A big hit in Australia, this novel was written as a PhD thesis on grief. Though the whimsy grows tiresome, Davis shows particular skill in getting inside the mind of a seven-year-old. Her dotty characters and themes of displacement and marginalization call to mind the works of fellow Aussie Elizabeth Jolley, minus Jolley's sharp edge. —*Mary Ellen Quinn*

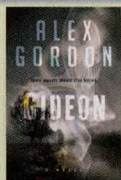
## Missing Reels.

By Farran Smith Nehme.

Nov. 2014. 352p. Overlook, \$26.95 (9781468309270).

In the late 1980s fast-talking heroine Ceinwen Reilly relocates from Mississippi to New York City, where she can indulge nightly in her passion, classic cinema, at the city's revival houses. When fellow cinephile Matthew breezes into Ceinwen's life, it is not long before the meet-cute pair is trading silent-movie trivia and arguing about the merits of Claudette Colbert versus Lana Turner. The sparring couple convince themselves that the downstairs neighbor is a fading silent film star

# Discover These Great Debuts from HarperCollins!



### GIDEON | Alex Gordon

Preston & Child meets Kim Harrison in this edge-of-your-seat debut thriller—a superb blend of mystery, urban fantasy, horror, romance, and the supernatural. PB | January 6th



### GOD LOVES HAITI | Dimitry Elias Léger

A powerful love story set in Haiti after the earthquake of 2010. "A luminous debut... Perhaps one of the finest Caribbean novels I've read in years." —Junot Diaz HC | January 6th



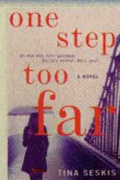
### THE WILDALONE | Krassi Zourkova

An Ivy League student finds herself caught in a love triangle between two mysterious brothers while trying to uncover long-buried family secrets. A literary crossover that deftly weaves in magical realism and paranormal elements. HC | January 6th



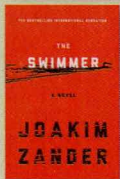
### MIGRATORY ANIMALS | Mary Helen Specht

A powerful novel about a group of 30-somethings struggling for connection and belonging, focusing on a young woman who finds herself torn between love and duty. PB | January 20th



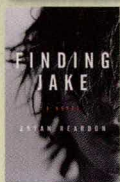
### ONE STEP TOO FAR | Tina Seskis

The story of a young woman with a seemingly perfect life who walks away from it all, leaving no trace and no explanation. "A whip-smart thriller that keeps you guessing right up until the final shocking twist" —*Mirror* HC | January 27th



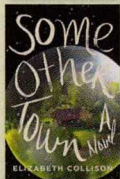
### THE SWIMMER | Joakim Zander

A deep-cover CIA agent races across Europe to save the daughter he never knew in this electrifying thriller. "A terrific globe-trotting page-turner, rich with a big, meaty, chillingly credible conspiracy." —Chris Pavone HC | February 10th



### FINDING JAKE | Bryan Reardon

A heart-wrenching but redemptive story of psychological suspense told from the point-of-view of the father of a boy who is unaccounted for during a school shooting. HC | February 24th



### SOME OTHER TOWN | Elizabeth Collison

Channeling the emotional intensity of Amy Bloom, this mesmerizing debut takes us inside the enthrallingly unsettling world of Margaret Lydia Benning, which turns upside down when she falls in love... and then unravels before our eyes. PB | February 24th



in the vein of Gloria Swanson and cast themselves in their own private film noir in order to track down the reels of her long-lost film masterpiece. The amateur gumshoes quickly find themselves immersed in a subculture of quirky film enthusiasts housing aging reels in basements, university archives, and private clubs across the city. With breakneck, back-and-forth dialogue that recalls such movie classics as *His Girl Friday* and *The Philadelphia Story*, this debut novel by prominent film blogger Nehme is a joyful insider tale of cinematic obsession and a celebration of the ways in which fandom brings us closer to one another. —*Lindsay Bosch*

**The Orphan Sky.**  
By Ella Leya.

Feb. 2015. 336p. Sourcebooks/Landmark, paper, \$24.99 (9781402298653).

In the city of Baku in Soviet Azerbaijan, in 1979, 15-year-old Leila is a true believer in the Communist philosophy. Her oil-engineer father and her surgeon mother are Soviet heroes, and her life is one of comfort and privilege. She is also a gifted piano prodigy and dreams of winning competitions for the honor of her country and the party. Her naïveté is beyond extraordinary, until her encounter with a young artist who has experienced the dark side of dissidence shakes up her world. The cruelty and oppression of the Communist society have always been there; now she has the eyes to see the truth. Leila's performances win her fame, but that is not enough to protect her father from a terrible fate. And she ends up betraying the one she loves to save herself. Will a music competition in London afford her a means of escape? Born in Baku, composer and singer turned first novelist Leya successfully depicts the grim realities of her birth city's Soviet era as she depicts a harsh coming-of-age. —*Danise Hoover*

**YA/M:** *Disillusioned teen Leila, forbidden first love, and an act of defiance will appeal to YAs. DH.*

★ **Rush of Shadows.**  
By Catherine Bell.

Oct. 2014. 384p. Washington Writers', paper, \$17.95 (9781941551028).

In recent years, Native American studies programs have been enriched by revised histories of America's indigenous peoples, which shift away from the paradigm of nineteenth-century westward expansion and "discovery" myths. Bell's debut novel is a thoughtful, historically accurate fictional addition to this evolving perspective. In this sensitively told tale, two strong women become part of the cultural clash between white settlers near Northern California's Coast Range and the indigenous tribe native to that land. Mellie is a newlywed who moves there from San Francisco; she soon befriends a Native woman she calls Bahe. As they teach each other

farming and basketry and help one another through childbirth and illness, Mellie slowly realizes that the hatred some of her neighbors feel for the Indians whose land they are taking can only lead eventually to the Indians' removal. Bell married a fourth-generation Californian and became privy to his grandmother's story of playing with Native American children in the early 1870s, then seeing them marched off to a reservation. Bell spent 20 years researching this, her first novel, an enlightening addition to the growing body of work painting the true picture of the government's treatment of indigenous peoples. —*Deborah Donovan*

**YA/M:** *Bell's gripping story will appeal to teens studying westward expansion and its effects on Native peoples. DD.*

**The Sasquatch Hunter's Almanac.**  
By Sharma Shields.

Jan. 2015. 352p. Holt, paper, \$17 (9781627791991).

Mythological creatures inhabit the pages of Shields' sparkling first novel, interrupting and interfering with human lives. The most egregious affront occurs when Eli Roebuck is nine years old. Not only does a hairy Sasquatch, Mr. Krantz, come to visit Eli's mother, Agnes, but then she leaves with him, abandoning Eli and sparking his lifelong obsession with the Sasquatch. Though Eli becomes a podiatrist, his interest in cryptozoology gradually takes over his life. He leaves his first wife after her attempt to enchant him using a magical (but extremely smelly) hat goes awry and marries his poet girlfriend, who accompanies him on forays into the woods in search of Mr. Krantz. He neglects his two daughters. The discovery of a large Sasquatch bone caught in a bear trap only intensifies Eli's fixation, and over the years, his quest to find Mr. Krantz morphs into a desire to slay the beast. Eli's quest is not unlike Ahab's, and Shields writes with piercing insight about the monsters that keep us from connecting with one another in this funny and wise first novel. —*Kristine Huntley*

**YA/M:** *The magic realism and multitude of mythological creatures will hook sophisticated teen readers. KH.*

**Searching for Grace Kelly.**  
By Michael Callahan.

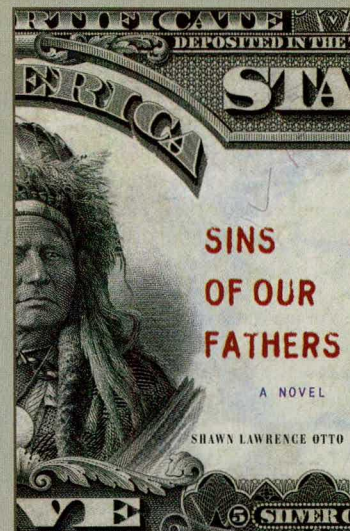
Jan. 2015. 288p. Mariner, paper, \$15.95 (9780544313545).

*Vanity Fair* contributing editor Callahan's deliciously stylish, retro first novel, set in Manhattan's Barbizon Hotel for Women, circa 1955, stems from an article he wrote about this legendary "charm school and dormitory" that sheltered many future stars, including Grace Kelly. Callahan's covertly rebellious protagonist, Laura Dixon, a Connecticut debutante with literary pretensions, has a Kelly look but a Katharine Hepburn flair for fetchingly awkward frankness. She moves into the Barbizon after winning a coveted summer appointment as a "college editor" for *Mademoiselle*, following the footsteps of Sylvia Plath, who fictionalized her experiences in *The Bell Jar* (1963). Calla-

# SINS OF OUR FATHERS

by

**SHAWN  
LAWRENCE OTTO**



From the screenwriter for the Oscar-nominated *House of Sand and Fog*, a fierce, elegant, page-turning novel about race, money, and the American Dream

"A literary tour de force and a psychological thriller."

—Joel Surnow, creator of 24

"A page turner that stands above the rest."

—Robert Alexander, author of *The Kitchen Boy*

"A magnificent debut."  
—Urban Waite, author of *The Terror of Living*



**milkweed**  
editions



Copyright of Booklist is the property of American Library Association / Booklist Publications and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.