

Southland Nina Revoyr

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~~Through the novel Southland, by Nina Revoyr, and various means of academic sources, one is further able to explore the subject of race, place, and reinvention in Los Angeles. The history of racial and ...~~

~~Race And Race In Southland, By Nina Revoyr~~

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"[A]n absolutely compelling story of family and racial tragedy. Revoyr ' s novel is honest in detailing southern California ' s brutal history, and honorable in showing how families survived with love and tenacity and dignity." —Susan Straight, author of Highwire Moon Southland brings us a fascinating story of race, love, murder and history, against the backdrop of an ever-changing Los Angeles. A young Japanese-American woman, Jackie Ishida, is in her last semester of law school when her grandfather, Frank Sakai, dies unexpectedly. While trying to fulfill a request from his will, Jackie discovers that four African-American boys were killed in the store Frank owned during the Watts Riots of 1965. Along with James Lanier, a cousin of one of the victims, Jackie tries to piece together the story of the boys ' deaths. In the process, she unearths the long-held secrets of her family ' s history. Southland depicts a young woman in the process of learning that her own history has bestowed upon her a deep obligation to be engaged in the larger world. And in Frank Sakai and his African-American friends, it presents characters

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who find significant common ground in their struggles, but who also engage each other across grounds—historical and cultural—that are still very much in dispute. Moving in and out of the past—from the internment camps of World War II, to the barley fields of the Crenshaw District in the 1930s, to the streets of Watts in the 1960s, to the night spots and garment factories of the 1990s—Southland weaves a tale of Los Angeles in all of its faces and forms. Nina Revoyr is the author of *The Necessary Hunger* ("Irresistible."—*Time Magazine*). She was born in Japan, raised in Tokyo and Los Angeles, and is of Japanese and Polish-American descent. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Michelle LeBeau and her white-Japanese family are forever changed when a black family moves into her all-white town in 1974.

"Revoyr is gifted in her ability to deal with complex ideas like racism, class conflict, and sexuality without sacrificing the truth of her narrative. Furthermore, like the most adroit novelists, Revoyr specializes in reversal. All of her books are filled with suspense and sudden surprises that take the stories in unexpected directions...As much as Nina Revoyr herself is a student of history, she's also one of our best teachers." --*Los Angeles Review of Books* "Revoyr's latest noir tells a story that's somewhere between *Sunset Boulevard* and the darker regions of *The Great Gatsby*...Revoyr is a subtle observer of human foibles and social structures, and the result is one of the most insightful, and the most entertaining books of the year." --*Literary Hub*, one of *Lit Hub's 50 Favorite Books of 2019* "A Student of History is full of research, detail, lush descriptions, and visual place-setting. [Revoyr's] a fiction writer with an eye for reality set in a dream-like world, often in her home city of Los Angeles." --*The Rumpus* "Any Nina Revoyr novel is a cause for celebration, and her latest, *A Student of History*, is assured and marvelous, an absorbing rags among riches tale about a broke USC grad student who finds himself swept off his feet by Los Angeles's insular, powerful .01% class. It's a contemporary novel that feels like an instant classic, with the wry tragedy of *The House of Mirth*, the sinister glamour of *Sunset Boulevard*, and a fresh, original point of view." --*CrimeReads* "With a nod to *Great Expectations* and *The Great Gatsby*, Rick Nagano is Nick Carraway and young Pip rolled into one...*Lambda Award* – winner Revoyr focuses on the impact of race in the construct of class and society, and how there are some doors that will always remain closed." --*The Advocate* "Nina Revoyr's new novel, *A Student of History*, continues the tradition of the Los Angeles oil novel, but steers it in a new direction." --*Rain Taxi Review of Books* "With her two Walter Mosley-like gifts--impeccable narrative pacing and masterful command of Los Angeles' intricate, evolving dynamics of race and class--Nina Revoyr's LA novels convincingly capture the lifespan of Los Angeles as a major city, none more gracefully than *A Student of History*." --*New York Journal of Books* Rick Nagano is a graduate student in the history department at USC, struggling to make rent on his South Los Angeles apartment near the neighborhood where his family once lived. When he lands a job as a research assistant for the elderly Mrs. W--, the heir to an oil fortune, he sees it at first simply as a source of extra cash. But as he grows closer to the iconoclastic, charming, and feisty Mrs. W--, he gets drawn into a world of privilege and wealth far different from his racially mixed, blue-collar beginnings. Putting aside his half-finished dissertation, Rick sets up office in Mrs. W--'s grand Bel Air mansion and begins to transcribe her journals--which document an old Los Angeles not described in his history books. He also accompanies Mrs. W-- to venues frequented by the descendants of the land and oil barons who built the city. One evening, at an event, he meets Fiona Morgan--the elegant scion of an old steel family--who takes an interest in his studies. Irresistibly drawn to Fiona, he agrees to help her with a project of questionable merit in the hopes he'll win her favor. *A Student of History* explores both the beginnings of Los Angeles and the present-day dynamics of race and class. It offers a window into the usually hidden world of high society, and the influence of historic families on current events. Like *Great Expectations* and *The Great Gatsby*, it features, in Rick Nagano, a young man of modest means who is navigating a world where he doesn't belong.

In 1960s L.A., a Japanese American former silent film star investigates a mystery from his dark past in

this novel by the author of *Southland*. Jun Nakayama was a silent film star in the early days of Hollywood. By 1964, he is living in complete obscurity, until a young writer, Nick Bellinger, tracks him down for an interview. When Bellinger reveals that he has written a screenplay with Nakayama in mind, Jun is intrigued by the possibility of returning to movies. But he begins to worry that someone might delve too deeply into the past and uncover the events that abruptly ended his career in 1922. Like the changing social and racial tides in California—and the unsolved murder of his favorite director. Spurred on by his fear of a potential “misunderstanding,” Jun begins to track down his surviving acquaintances from his years as Perennial Pictures’ greatest star. In the process, he recounts the lives of several other figures from the silent film era: Elizabeth Banks, the working-class girl from St. Louis who becomes a major Hollywood diva. Nora Minton Niles, the dreamy, childlike teenage star controlled by her ambitious mother. Hanako Minatoya, the elegant actress and playwright who serves as Jun’s inspiration and foil. And Ashley Bennett Tyler, the British director whose guiding hand turns Jun into a star. But what Jun ultimately discovers is far more complex and personal than even he could have imagined. *The Age of Dreaming* alternates between the 1960s and the height of the silent film era, telling the story of a man caught between worlds. Jun must try to please both his Japanese and American fans, and while he is adored by moviegoers—especially women—he’s despised by public officials, who see him as a threat to American power and racial purity. Praise for *The Age of Dreaming* “With Nabokov-worthy sentences, characters so real our hearts begin to beat with theirs, and a story as deeply mysterious and riveting as any the Hollywood it conjures up could have created, *The Age of Dreaming* is a masterpiece of the sort that doesn’t just seduce the reader—it leaves you transformed . . . Revoyr deserves to be counted among the top ranks of novelists at work today.” —Jerry Stahl, author of *I, Fatty* “Brilliant and original . . . The carefully restrained voice of its narrator recalls Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day*.” —Alison Lurie, Pulitzer Prize winner “Cunning . . . Revoyr beautifully invokes Jun’s self-deceptions and his growing self-awareness. It’s an enormously satisfying novel.” —Publishers Weekly

Two inner-city girls tackle love, basketball, high school graduation, and an uncertain future in this coming-of-age novel by the author of *Wingshooters*. *The Necessary Hunger* follows two basketball stars—Nancy Takahiro and Raina Webber—and several of their friends through their last year of high school. For some of them, their senior year will be full of glory, and the anticipation of college. For others, however, stranded in an inner-city Los Angeles neighborhood that promises little in the way of opportunity, it will mark not only the end of their time in school but also the end of their hope. As Nancy and Raina both prepare to leave the urban neighborhood that has nurtured them, they find themselves looking toward a future that is no longer easily defined. *The Necessary Hunger* is about families, friendship, racial identity, and young people who are nearing adulthood in a dangerous and challenging world. It is about sports as a means of salvation, about the nature of competition, and ultimately about the various kinds of love. Our reissue of *The Necessary Hunger* includes a new introduction by Lynell George, and a new afterword by Nina Revoyr. Praise for *The Age of Hunger* “A wholesome coming-of-age novel about two lesbian high-school basketball stars, Revoyr’s debut is a meditation on consuming passion and a reflection on lost opportunities.” —Publishers Weekly “A quietly intimate, vigorously honest, and uniquely American hoop dream: tough and tender, without a single false note.” —Kirkkuks Reviews “*The Necessary Hunger* is absolutely pioneering: it may be the first work by an out, queer Asian American writer to be published out of a major press AND for that work to include a major queer Asian American lesbian courtship plot. The interracial dynamics and high school sporting plot all make for an engaging work, one well worthy of retaining in print forever!” —Asian American Literature Fans “[Revoyr’s] characters are diverse and full of vulnerabilities, passion, and drive, and it is commendable to see a gay, Asian-American, female athlete as the protagonist . . . All in all, the story is worth reading to experience the racial tensions and teenage gay love and angst in a city that is growing restless.” —The Eclectic Review

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One of the San Francisco Chronicle's 100 Recommended Books of 2015 "Los Angeles is home to many great storytellers, but Nina Revoyr is one of its finest scribes....[Lost Canyon] pulses with both beauty and terror, and the struggles of these characters, their physical and mental reckonings, are enough to make readers sweat without getting off the couch." --Los Angeles Times "Revoyr [is] an edgy and spellbinding writer with an uncanny gift for aligning human struggles with nature's glory and perils....With ravishing descriptions of the magnificent landscape, unrelenting suspense, incisive psychology, and shrewd perspectives on matters of race and gender, Revoyr has created a gripping tale of unintended adventure and profound transformation." --Booklist, Starred review "A suspenseful adventure story that explores how people react to danger, uncertainty, fear, and life-or-death choices....This is an exciting, page-turning adventure story that reveals how good people can do things totally contrary to their own moral code, and the conclusion will both surprise and satisfy." --Publishers Weekly "Revoyr travels LA's patchwork neighborhoods--delineating gangs and money, color and prejudice--and nicely sketches 'the grand, untamed Sierra.' Like Deliverance, a tense...morality tale formed in the crucible of physical duress." --Kirkus Reviews "With a nod to James Dickey's Deliverance...A direct, bangin' read for those interested in how people deal with physical and moral challenges." --Library Journal "An exciting blend of literary fiction and thrilling suspense--a harrowing trip into physical danger and a clever meditation on race relations and bravery." --Shelf Awareness A Book Riot Quick Pick/Book of the Week for the week of August 28, 2015 "What a pleasure it is seeing characters that live and breathe in the same textured universe that we do....Linked to complicated national issues, imbued with layered representations of Angelenos, [Revoyr] has brought us an intellectually adroit, emotionally nerve-wracking, page-turning thriller." --Los Angeles Review of Books "Even at its deadliest, Revoyr makes the high altitude seem mesmerizing....Revoyr has created characters we care for, issues we need to think about, and vistas that linger, making reading her book almost as much of a rush as scaling the sheer, icy rock of the Sierra Nevada." --San Francisco Chronicle Four people on a backpacking trip in the Sierra Nevada find more adventure than they ever imagined. Each of them is drawn to the mountains for reasons as diverse as their own lives. Gwen Foster, a counselor for at-risk youth, is struggling with burnout from the demands of her job and with the loss of one of her teens. Real estate agent Oscar Barajas is adjusting to the fall of the housing market and being a single parent. Todd Harris, an attorney, is stuck in a lucrative but unfulfilling career--and in a failing marriage. They are all brought together by their trainer, Tracy Cole, a former athlete with a taste for risky pursuits. When the hikers start up a pristine mountain trail that hasn't been traveled in years, all they have to guide them is a hand-drawn map of a remote, mysterious place called Lost Canyon. At first, the route past high alpine lakes and under towering, snowcapped peaks offers all the freedom and exhilaration they'd hoped for. But when they stumble onto someone who doesn't want to be found, the group finds itself faced with a series of dangerous conflicts, moral dilemmas, confrontations with nature, and an all-out struggle for survival. Moving effortlessly between city and wilderness, Lost Canyon explores the ways that race, class, and culture shape experience and perception. It examines the choices good people must face in desperate situations. Set in the grand, wild landscape of the California mountains, Lost Canyon is a story of brewing social tensions and breathtaking adventure that will keep readers on the edge of their seats.

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Benny, a half black, half Mexican teenager, is awaiting a letter from the court to find out if he ' ll be sent to an affluent neighborhood to live with his father. But before the letter arrives, he ' s extorted by his mother ' s boyfriend. Now he has to sell drugs to keep his addicted mother out of prostitution. The only thing is, he doesn ' t know how. Only his street-smart Chicano friend Indie can help out. To finish the job, the two attend a backyard punk show in South Central LA. But when things go wrong, Benny comes face to face with the LAPD in an uncompromising situation. Written by a Watts native, *The Hat Boyz* explores the world of a naïve young man growing up in America and the relationship of a historically underserved community with the police.

Summer 1987. Lillian Ginger Speck, high-school graduate, sits in her jail cell contemplating the steps and missteps that led her to murder soap opera star Brooke Harrison. Her story is part apologia, part love note and suicide pact. Meanwhile, Brooke Harrison's mother has a tale of her own to tell. In this edgy and compelling 'whydunit', the accounts of predator and victim intertwine.

It's 1938 and the exclusive Oriental nightclub in San Francisco's Forbidden City is holding auditions for showgirls. In the dark, scandalous glamour of the club, three girls from very different backgrounds stumble into each other lives. All the girls have secrets. Grace, an American-born Chinese girl, has fled the Midwest and an abusive father. Helen is from a Chinese family which has deep roots in San Francisco's Chinatown. And, as both her friends know, Ruby is Japanese passing as Chinese. Then, in a heartbeat, everything changes. The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor and paranoia, suspicion, and a shocking act of betrayal, threaten to destroy their lives.

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