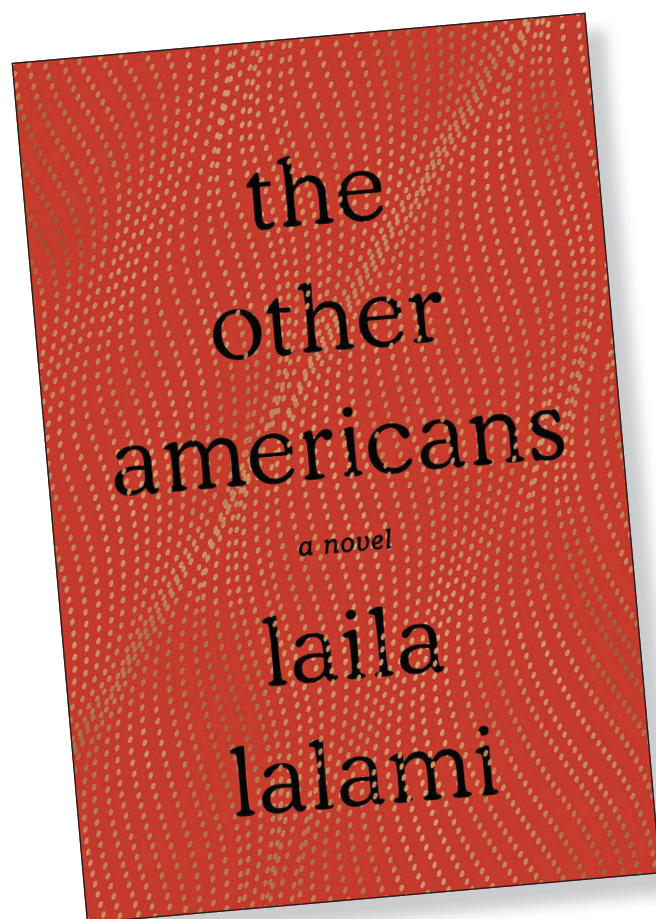


Authors Lalami, Yang to appear in weekend Novel Idea events

BY DAVID JASPER • The Bulletin

The 2021 A Novel Idea ... Read Together, concludes this weekend with virtual appearances by this year's authors, Laila Lalami and Kelly Yang. Their books are timely choices for Deschutes Public Library system's annual community reading celebration. Though landing in different genres and targeted at different audiences, "The Other Americans," Lalami's gripping social novel set in motion by a mysterious death, and "Front Desk," Yang's tween novel about a young girl who works at a motel, have at least one major thing in common: the experiences of immigrants in contemporary America.



'THE OTHER AMERICANS'

In "The Other Americans," the main character Nora, an emerging but struggling music composer, receives word that her Moroccan immigrant father has been killed by a hit-and-run driver. She rushes to her hometown in the Mojave Desert — evocatively written and practically a character in itself — to help her mother and figure out the fate of the family restaurant — reconnecting somewhat with her adolescence, and her former high school bandmate Jeremy, whose become a cop after a stint in Iraq.

The book is what's called polyphonic, the story unfolding from multiple points of view, not just main character Nora: her mother Maryam, sister Salma, Jeremy, accident witness Efrain, a Mexican immigrant who fears coming forward, and even the possible culprits behind the death of her father, Driss.

As NPR's 2019 review of the book noted, Lalami, who holds a doctorate in linguistics, is "superb at creating different cadences on the page."

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