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The next Franzen?

Budding authors poised to write a chapter on literary and financial success

By MICHAEL GILTZ

Every editor with a bottom line to watch for years for the surprise-hit novel, a book that garners rave reviews, vaults onto best-seller lists and establishes name-brand prestige for its author.

In other words, a novel to be proud of that also makes big bucks and leads to serious attention and sales in years to come.

They don't just want blockbuster flicks like Charles Frazier's "Cold Mountain" or John Berendt's "Midnight in the Garden of Good & Evil."

What they want is Jonathan Franzen's "The Corrections," a National Book Award winner and best-seller, a novel that will undoubtedly boost Franzen into publishing's higher plain of modern masters, up there with greats like John Irving, Tom Wolfe and Philip Roth.

Here are our picks for the best new writers poised to follow Franzen into the winner's circle. They won't all make it, but they're all

worth reading.

David Ebershoff. "Pasadena" (Random House; August). Surely if anyone looks ready to repeat Franzen's breakout, it is Ebershoff.

He's based in New York,

has many ties to the publishing community (Ebershoff heads the Modern Library imprint), received excellent reviews for his beguiling debut novel, "The Danish Girl," and got kind words for his short-story collection, "The Rose City."

His newest book, "Pasadena," is an ambitious, sweeping tale set in the early 1900s, with just the right mix of intellectual heft and storytelling verve. Ebershoff is good-looking, too, which is always useful when your book breaks out and you're asked to appear on TV with Charlie Rose.

Haven Kimmel. "The Solace of Leaving Early" (Doubleday; June). Kimmel hopes to make it to the big time through the back door, via a successful memoir.

Jane Green. "Bookends" (Doubleday; June). Green is also a well-reviewed big seller in Great Britain, though more along the commercial lines of "Bridget Jones's Diary." She



From left: Jonathan Coe could match his U.K. fame in the States; Haven Kimmel follows her successful memoir with a debut novel; and Gabe Hudson mines David Sedaris' territory.



writes sexy, funny novels with an emotional punch, and her American publishers have given her previous novels "Mr. Maybe" and "Jemima P." appropriately sexy and funny campaigns.

"Bookends" was her biggest U.K. success to date (350,000 copies and counting), so it's only a matter of time before readers discover her as a beach read they needn't be ashamed of devouring.

Marcel Moring. "The Dream Room" (Knopf; February). Coe is a major figure on the U.K. literary scene, having published two scathingly funny and moving satires, "The House of Sleep" and "The Winslow Legacy."

His take on the '70s in Birmingham, England, is equally accomplished. Now, he needs the kind of positive reviews that will help bring his wicked humor to a wide American audience. A clever-looking cover helps.

Moring is sure to get better reviews than "Bruges," thanks to the raves for his most recent book, "In Baby-

land," built on for his much-anticipated debut novel.

He's written seven well-received books of nonfiction (including "Crinly"), but this weighty 672-page tome about an upper-crust East Side family is his first foray into fiction.

Most books, even well-reviewed ones, sink without a trace. But the buzz is already building for this one, so Carter is certain to receive lots and lots of attention.

Gabe Hudson. "Dear Mr. President" (Knopf; August). This member of the McSweeney's mafia (home of Dave Eggers, best-selling author of "A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius"), hopes to become a big name in the United States by thinking small.

His compact new novel — about a boy in the '60s who builds model airplanes, reads cookbooks with delight and watches his family fall apart — is just 128 pages and tiny in size, like earlier small-format successes "Einstein's Dream" and "The Bridges of Madison County."

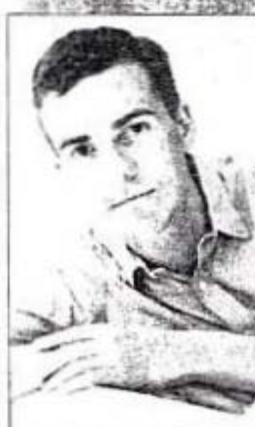
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"John Henry Days" comes out in paperback in May from Anchor, yet another chance for people to discover one of the brightest talents around.

Dethlefs has been a force in this genre for more than 30 years, and the weight of his impressive career should get him plenty of press.

Stephen L. Carter. "The Emperor of Ocean Park" (Knopf; June). Yale law professor Carter has nothing but high expectations to



Clockwise from below: The buzz is already building for Stephen L. Carter's novel; David Ebershoff blends intellect and sound storytelling in his new book; Jane Green has hit it big in Britain in a "Bridget Jones" way; and Colson Whitehead has a solid reputation among the cognoscenti.

