

**PEREZ
HILTON**
MY FALL
MUST LIST

The latest proof of Perez Hilton making good on his promise to reform his bad-boy blogger ways comes in the form of his first children's book, *The Boy With the Pink Hair* (Celebra Children's Books, September 1). "This story is about every kid who's ever had a dream, felt excluded, wanted to belong, and hoped that one day they could do what they loved and make a difference," he says. But seeing the anti-bullying tale hit shelves isn't Hilton's only priority. Here are five other things he can't wait for this season.

1.

"Adele spending more time in the U.S. She rescheduled her North American dates for August and added new shows in October."

2.

"More music videos from Lady Gaga! I still can't get enough!"

3.

"The return of *The Vampire Diaries*. I can't wait to see what happens to Kat Graham's character, Bonnie!"

4.

"The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's big annual gala."

5.

"The Republican presidential candidates providing laughter and, more importantly, inspiration to those fighting against their ignorance and divisiveness."



Mean Streets

FIVE CHARACTERS GO IN SEARCH OF MEANING IN CHRISTOPHER BOLLEN'S OUTSTANDING DEBUT.

BY AARON HICKLIN

As a literary category, the New York City novel is not exactly in need of reinforcement, but reinforce it Christopher Bollen has—and brilliantly, too. Bollen is an editor at *Interview* magazine, the self-consciously hip pop-culture magazine that expends much energy on documenting the bright, glossy world of fashion and art. That world is blessedly absent in *Lightning People* (Soft Skull Press, September 6), his debut novel, in which the city is an ominous backdrop to the intersecting lives of five young (ish) transplants, each trying to escape a history of pain and regret. It begins with an oddly joyless marriage, but one that captures the mood of ennui and drift in post-9/11 New York, before lurching into darker territory when a hit-and-run sets off a series of events with consequences and repercussions for all five characters. (A sixth character, Quinn, stands as a survivor of an earlier catastrophe, AIDS, and his demise is one of the novel's crueler twists).

Bollen, who spent five years on the novel, has deliberately avoided writing a valentine to his adopted city; his New York is lonely and unforgiving, his characters flawed and uncertain, far removed from the aspirational ciphers of the typical New York narrative. "They aren't so new and optimistic as they would have been if I had caught them in their twenties," says Bollen. "They've sort of run out of the open avenues of their dreams and desires and

ability to reinvent on infinite auto-pilot. Maybe it's not so much a coming-of-age book as a reckoning-of-age." Yet Bollen is a generous writer who knows how to bring depth to his brittle misfits. He gives them back-stories, motive, and moments of clarity that will resonate with anyone who has lived in New York. They are not all sympathetic—at times some of them are profoundly unsympathetic—but they are all real and honest and true. You can't ask for more than that. ■



STYLING BY SPENCER BERGEN. GROOMER: JOSHUA RISTAINO. SET EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS FOR DIOR HOMME. BUTTON-DOWN SHIRT BY BANANA REPUBLIC. JACKET BY GUCCI.

TRAVER RAINS (HILTON)

ALSO ON SHELVES THIS FALL

WE THE ANIMALS

by Justin Torres
Torres's moving debut novel about a white mother, a Puerto Rican father, three inseparable brothers, and their untraditional household examines how our earliest bonds form our future selves. (*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*, September 1)

CONVERSIONS: TWO FAMILY STORIES FROM THE REFORMATION AND MODERN AMERICA

by Craig Harline
Harline explores the effects of religious conversion with the parallel narratives of Jacob Rolandus, disowned by his preacher father for converting to Catholicism, and Michael Sunbloom, a Mormon convert who reconciles with his family after his realization that he's gay. (*Yale University Press*, September 15)

THE MARRIAGE PLOT

by Jeffrey Eugenides
In his latest, the Pulitzer-winning *Middlesex* writer follows Madeleine Hanna, a woman infatuated with the romantic tales of Jane Austen and George Eliot, who becomes enmeshed in her own unexpected love triangle. (*Farrar, Straus and Giroux*, October 11)

THE STRANGER'S CHILD

by Alan Hollinghurst
The Man Booker Prize-winner's first novel in seven years tells the epic story of two aristocratic families and two houses, trailing them from the eve of World War I to the end of the 20th century. (*Knopf*, October 14)