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Fishman, Boris.

A Replacement Life.

Harper. Jun. 2014. 336p. ISBN 9780062287878. \$25.99; ebk. ISBN 9780062287892. F

Slava Gelman has distanced himself from his immigrant family of Russian Jews so that he can become truly American. When his grandmother dies, his grandfather convinces Slava to submit a claim to the German government program for restitution to Holocaust survivors. The catch is that his dead grandmother qualified but his living grandfather does not. Slava amends the story, making the application in his grandfather's name. He suddenly finds that his grandfather has spread the word to the entire Russian community and that everyone wants Slava to write (read: invent) their narratives. When Otto, from the Center for Restitution, contacts Slava about the many applications received from his neighborhood, he must weigh truth against morality. VERDICT Fishman, an émigré from Belarus, captures the complexities of family, nationality, and history as he cleverly ties the loose ends of truth, justice, morality, and family into a tidy bow in his first novel.

—*Joanna Burkhardt, Univ. of Rhode Island Libs., Providence*