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# THE OTHER

a novel

# DAVID GUTERSON

author of *SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS*

READ BY MARK BRAMHALL

AN UNABRIDGED PRODUCTION

**The Other by David Guterson**

David Guterson

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From the writer of the best-selling *Snow Falling on Cedars*, a stunning new novel approximately adolescence and idealism, maturity and its compromises, and powerfully assorted visions of what it capability to stay a great life. John William Barry has inherited the pedigree—and wealth—of of Seattle's elite families; Neil Countryman is blue-collar Irish. Nevertheless, whilst the 2 boys meet in 1972 at age sixteen, they're introduced jointly by way of what they've got in common: a fierce depth and a love of the outside that takes them jointly into Washington's distant backcountry, the place they need to depend on their wits—and each The Other one other—to survive. quickly after graduating from college, Neil units out on a course that may lead him towards a lifestyles as a faithful schoolteacher and family members man. yet John William makes a substantially diverse choice, falling by the wayside of school and relocating deep into the woods, confident that it's the merely option to dwell with no hypocrisy. while John William enlists Neil to aid him dis- look completely, Neil reveals himself drawn right into a internet of secrets and techniques and sometimes agonizing responsibility, deceit, and tragedy—one that would ultimately holiday open with a totally unexpected, life-altering revelation. Riveting, deeply humane, the opposite is David Guterson's such a lot extraordinary and provocative novel to date.

David Guterson schreibt über den pazifischen Nordwesten der USA, eine Gegend, in der er selbst lebt – darum haben seine Bücher bei mir von *The Other* vornherein einen Stein im Brett. „Der Andere“ hat mich zunächst zögern lassen, weil es nach Thoreaus „Walden“ in der Literatur bereits einige kauzige Einzelgänger gab, die sich aus der Zivilisation zurückziehen. Den Icherzähler Neil Countryman und John William Barry verbindet eine ungewöhnliche Freundschaft. Die beiden wachsen in Gesellschaftsschichten Seattles auf, die nicht unterschiedlicher sein könnten und selten Kontakt miteinander haben. Neils irisch-stämmiger Familien-Clan arbeitet in Handwerksberufen, während John Williams Vater ein hohes Tier bei Boeing ist und seine Vorfahren zu den Gründern der Stadt gehörten. Die beiden Jungen lernen sich als 16-Jährige zufällig beim Laufen kennen. Ihre Wege sind vorgezeichnet, John wird die Elite-Uni Lakeside besuchen und dort karrieredienliche Kontakte knüpfen, Neil als erster seiner Familie ein Studium abschließen und es selbst finanzieren. Als Neil als Mittfünfziger seine Erinnerungen an seine Freundschaft mit John niederschreibt, hat er ein Berufsleben als Lehrer hinter sich und mehr als einen Roman geschrieben, ohne sich unter Druck zum Veröffentlichen zu fühlen. Er scheint mit sich und seinem Leben im Einklang zu stehen. Vor kurzem hat Neil unerwartet ein unvorstellbar hohes Vermögen geerbt und ist durch seine Freundschaft zum „Eremiten von Hoh“ unfreiwillig berühmt geworden. John William struggle schon als Jugendlicher anstrengend für seine Mitmenschen. Ohne den bekannten Familiennamen im Hintergrund hätte guy seine Entwicklung zum Soziopathen und späteren Straftäter befürchten können. Ich habe mich auch gefragt, welche Aussichten ein Junge aus Johns Verhältnissen gehabt hätte, der sein Leben lang im Schatten des erfolgreichen Vaters stehen würde. Die Lust, seine körperlichen Grenzen auszutesten, verbindet John mit Neil; gemeinsam besteigen die beiden alle Gipfel der Olympic Mountains. Während Neil studiert, zieht John in einen Wohnwagenanhänger am Fluss Hoh, der nach einem Indianerstamm benannt ist. Schließlich setzt John noch eins drauf, zieht in eine abgelegene Höhle im Nationalpark und verwischt mit Johns Hilfe endgültig seine Spuren. Das Projekt wirkt amerikanisch-bizarr, denn John ernährt sich nicht etwa von Tieren und Früchten des Waldes, sondern schichtet einen üppigen Vorrat an Toilettenpapier in seiner Höhle auf, sowie eine mannshohe Wand aus Lebensmittel-Konserven. *The Other* John bleibt auf Gedeih und Verderb von Neil als Botengänger abhängig,

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der ihn mit praktischen Dingen der zivilisierten Welt versorgt. Neil hat damals bereits darüber nachgedacht, ob Johns Rückzug Symptom einer psychischen Erkrankung sein könnte. Er entscheidet sich jedoch gegen den Verrat seines Freundes an die Parkverwaltung und lässt John in den undurchdringlichen Wäldern zurück im Bewusstsein, dass sein Freund und Blutsbruder im Fall von Krankheit oder Unfall dort keine Überlebenschance hat. Schließlich durchqueren junge Männer ihres Alters Wüsten mit dem Fahrrad, ohne dass jemand an deren Geisteszustand zweifelt, sagt sich Neil. Guterson analysiert eine ungewöhnliche Männerfreundschaft, *The Other* die ein aufsehenerregendes Ende nimmt. Sein zutiefst philosophischer Roman verknüpft mehrere Zeitebenen, die nicht immer sofort klar voneinander zu trennen sind. Der inzwischen gealterte Neil baut in seine Geschichte Ansichten seiner Frau Jamie über John ein, Auskünfte einer Jugendfreundin Johns und befragt schließlich Johns betagten Vater über die Familie. *The Other* Mehrere Handlungsstränge spielen zu unterschiedlichen Zeiten in Neils Leben. Eine lineare *The Other* Erzählung hätte dem Reiz der Geschichte meiner Ansicht nach nicht geschadet. Ich habe den Roman mit Gewinn gelesen, empfehle ihn jedoch aufgrund des verschachtelten Plots mit einiger Skepsis. Zitat "Aus irgendeinem Grund ließen sich die Karten manchmal nur schwer von der Tischplatte aufnehmen, so dass Jamie sie mit ihrem Fingernagel anhob. Sie mischte, indem sie die beiden Hälften des Stapels mit den ihr zugewandten Ecken gegeneinander schob, und sie teilte mit flotten Würfeln aus. Wenn guy mit jemandem Karten spielt, beobachtet guy beinahe automatisch seine Hände und die Bewegungen seiner Finger, und so fiel mir auf, dass Jamie manchmal eine Karte zinkte, indem sie sie zwischen der Kuppe ihres Mittelfingers und dem Nagel ihres Zeigefingers eindrückte, was once mir ungewöhnlich vorkam. Ich wurde mir auch bewusst, wie grobschlächtig meine eigenen Hände waren. Es sind Countryman-Hände, gut, um Holz zuzuschneiden und widerstandsfähig gegen Kälte, aber unbestritten klobige Tischlerpfoten, bis hin zu den breiten Nägeln und knotigen Fingergelenken, den knochigen Auswüchsen am Handgelenk und den kräftigen Mittelhandknochen mit den dazwischen liegenden tiefen Furchen. Meine Hände sind echte Pranken, und wenn ich damit vor meinen Schülern gestikuliere, um etwas zu unterstreichen, fällt mir manchmal auf, dass sie jegliche Anmut vermissen lassen, und genau das gleiche empfand ich in der Wirtsstube am Monte Stella beim Kartenspiel mit Jamie." (S. 84)

## The Other

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