

A Short Book Review of 'Old King'

Apr 22, 2024

Old King

Maxim Loskutoff. W. W. Norton & Company, 27.99 (304p) ISBN 978-0-393-86819-7

Loskutoff's powerful and suspenseful latest (after *Come West and See*) follows a heartbroken man who makes a fresh start in 1976 Montana, where he becomes neighbors with Ted Kaczynski, who will later be unmasked as the *Unabomber*. Following a divorce, Duane leaves Salt Lake City for the tiny town of Lincoln, Mont., where mining and logging companies clash with radical environmentalists. Six years later, Duane's troubled teenage son, Hudson, visits him for the summer to help build a log cabin. Duane's cabin is adjacent to the reclusive Ted's tar-paper shack, and Ted initially bonds with Hudson over their anger at the world. The friendship crumbles after Hudson takes up dirt-biking with some kids from the area—the bikes' buzz-saw motors and turf-wrecking treads draw Ted's ire and trigger his debilitating headaches. The author animates Ted's intertwined feelings of superiority and grievance, which are partly a reaction against his unfeeling parents and a harmful psychology experiment he was subjected to as a 16-year-old Harvard student. Suspense mounts as Ted constructs mail bombs, poisons another neighbor's dogs, and commits other acts of mayhem. Loskutoff's narrative is swiftly paced and deeply textured, with a keen sense of the landscape and its cantankerous human inhabitants. This leaves a mark. (*June*)

The Ted K Archive

A Short Book Review of 'Old King'
Apr 22, 2024

Fiction Reviews, Publishers Weekly; New York Vol. 271, Iss. 16, (Apr 22, 2024).

www.thetedkarchive.com