

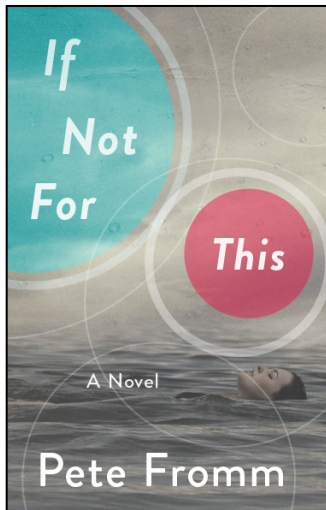


If Not For This

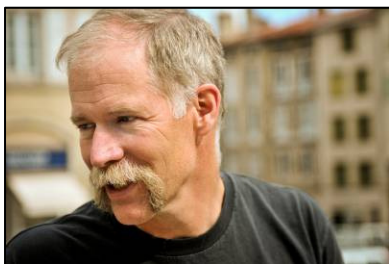
A NOVEL

Pete Fromm

Publication Date: August 5, 2014



If Not For This
A Novel by Pete Fromm
ISBN 978-1-59709-538-9
Binding: Tradepaper
Size: 5 x 8; Pages: 240
Price: US \$15.95
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Pete Fromm

Award-winning novelist, short story writer, and memoirist Pete Fromm returns to the untamed rivers of the West in *If Not For This*, a stunning novel of love and the wild places it takes us.

After meeting at a boatman's bash on the Snake River, river runners Maddy and Dalt embark on a lifelong love affair. They marry on the banks of the Buffalo Fork, sure they'll live there the rest of their days. Forced by the economics of tourism to leave Wyoming, they start a new adventure, opening their own river business in Ashland, Oregon: Halfmoon Whitewater. They prosper there, leading rafting trips and guiding fishermen into the wilds of Mongolia and Russia. But when Maddy, laid low by dizzy spells, with a mono that isn't quite mono, both discovers she is pregnant and is diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, they realize their adventure is just beginning.

Navigating hazards that dwarf any of the rapids they've faced together, Maddy narrates her life with Dalt the way she lives it: undaunted, courageous, in the present tense. Driven by her irresistible voice, full of wit and humor and defiance, *If Not For This* is a love story like no other.

Praise for *If Not For This*

"*If Not For This* is a terrific novel, poignant as hell, but feisty, funny, and romantic, too. Pete Fromm is a powerful, lucid writer, a perfect guide to the unpredictable rivers and people of the interior West, to their deep channels and breathtaking turns."

—Jess Walter

"Fromm, four-time winner of the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Literary Award, offers a stringent, emotionally astute work told in vivid, punchy, yet conversational prose."

—*Library Journal*

Biographical Note

Pete Fromm is a four-time winner of the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Literary Award for the novels *As Cool As I Am* and *How All This Started*, a story collection, *Dry Rain*, and a memoir, *Indian Creek Chronicles*. His new novel is *If Not For This*. He is the author of four other short story collections and has published over two hundred stories in magazines. A core faculty member at Pacific University's Low Residency MFA Program, he has a degree in wildlife biology from the University of Montana and worked for years as a river ranger in Grand Teton National Park. He lives with his family in Montana, where he can often be seen walking underneath his canoe to the river.



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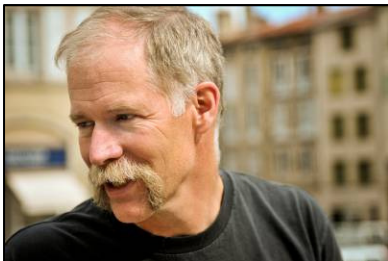
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More Praise for *If Not For This*

“What do you do when you get everything you most desire in this life, but getting through every day requires you to be a superhero? In Pete Fromm’s smart, gorgeous, uplifting and heartbreaking new novel, *If Not For This*, you consider yourself damn lucky.”

—Bonnie Jo Campbell

“Here, brave and unabashed, is a novel about love, two sweet droll people who become a family, and then—brave and unabashed—real trouble magnifies everything. In *If Not For This*, Pete Fromm brings us a rich, deeply felt book, so full of kindness and kind people that it’s an absolute phenomenon.”

—Ron Carlson, author of *Return to Oakpine*

From *If Not For This*

Last night, it’d been ninety something, the river a scorcher, the afternoon thunderstorms failing to materialize, the mountains and sky as washed out as my evening scenic float of wilted kids and parents, hardly a ripple among them even as I took them through the waves. No campfire talk in any of their futures. And then Dalt shows up at Deadman’s to run the shuttle. Bribes Milt to let him take it. He doesn’t even work for our company. Liability up the ass, my job on the line, I’d just grinned like a fool.

Now, four or five steps toward the river, I stop, look down at my empty hands. “Maddy,” I say to the towering trees, the trembling willows. “Hello?” I turn around for my fly rod, my knees less like joints than simply looser spots in my rubbery bones. I’m kind of stupid with exhaustion, with luck, with, yes, sex.

Leaning into the truck bed for my rod, I picture Dalt this morning, rummaging for his clothes, his sunrise scenic probably already milling around the van by the gas station/boathouse. He wasn’t having a lot of success in the clothes department, and finally he just zipped up his shorts sans undies. I raised an eyebrow he smiled about, but, bent straight over at the waist, first light slatting through the blinds, I actually thought this is something a Frenchman should be painting. And, though we’d been over and over every inch of each other all night—“memorizing by Braille,” Dalt called it—not once thinking to pause for sleep, or even leaving time for a shower this morning, thinking at all, the sight of him there, lifting up his shirt, turning to catch me staring, stopped me cold. I couldn’t believe this was me, that I was here, that, well, now they were going to have to get Fabio for the cover of my life story. And, thinking of it now, heading out to fish my secret hole just because I couldn’t face going home to sag into my dorm bed alone, my heart still kind of does this lurch and stagger.

I mean, there weren’t lightning bolts all over the place, but there were definitely thunderheads. Huge, dark ones, stacked up horizon to horizon, miles high, coming on fast. Aunty Em screaming about the cellar.

“Maddy,” I say, setting out again for the river, “what on earth have you gotten yourself into?”