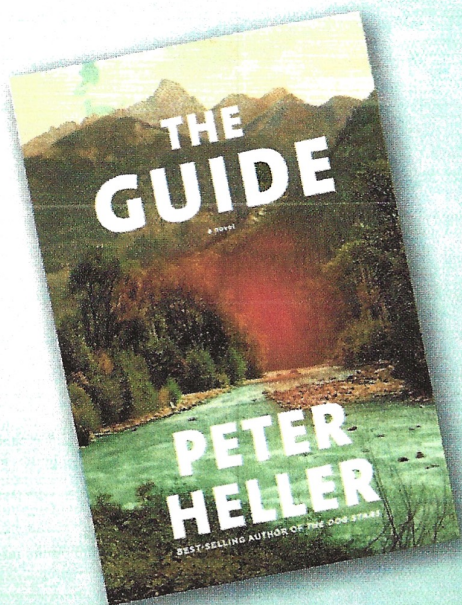


BOOK REVIEW

By Wolf Schneider



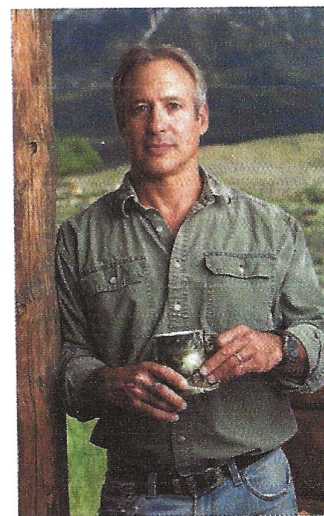
THE GUIDE

A FISHING LODGE IS STOCKED WITH SECRETS

At a luxury fishing resort near Crested Butte, Colorado, in the very near future a fishing guide named Jack finds his life changed in a matter of days in this fabulous literary thriller. At first, the secluded natural paradise beckons to Jack, who's shown to his cabin and notes, "The cabin was on the edge of a steep bank in the shadow of the pines, and a staggered rush rose from the creek below and was carried by the sift of wind in the trees."

The boutique trout fishing is superb at Kingfisher Lodge, which is sequestered behind a heavy art gate. The virus pandemic that began three years before is still mutating in the outside world, although rarer here where the mega-rich gather. Jack just wants to get into his waders and boots. As a private guide, he'll make \$200 a day plus tips. His first client, Alison, is a famous singer trying to shake off her stardom. Sounds good. The lodge's neighbor upstream is obsessed about his property boundaries; Jack's warned about the gunshots. He also hears tell of ferocious mastiffs that mauled a fisherman who ventured where he shouldn't have. "Fishing around here is high stakes," surmises Jack on his first night. He has no idea. Soon, shots are ringing out, he's hearing a closing door then a shriek in the night that's more human-sounding than barn owl, and a housekeeper is warning him about the gate code. As Jack and Alison grow closer, his hunches lead them toward a compound where life and death are negotiated in chilling terms.

A best-selling novelist based in Colorado who's been known to fly his small plane into Santa Fe Regional Airport, Heller is a virtuoso at lyrical wilderness thrillers that explore emotions and character within suspenseful plots. In *The Guide* it all comes together—nature, courage, corruption, and the struggle to find our true foothold in the world. ■



Peter Heller
Photo by John Burcham