



## All Good Quests

**Joe Graber**

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*In the vibrant novel All Good Quests, an impulsive, troubled man reckons with himself in the dramatic Alaskan wilderness.*

A freelance journalist tracks a tech industry billionaire who vanished in Joe Graber's captivating adventure novel, *All Good Quests*.

Quint is well into his thirties, and he's beginning to think that he'll never be extraordinary. Then his editor tasks him with writing about John, focusing on the missing maverick's wilderness adventuring. Equipped with only bare bones biographical details, Quint chases after his story, all while reconciling himself to his own tragic memories. He becomes enmeshed in the mystery of John's disappearance.

This suspenseful tale begins with Quint's descent into Alaska's back country, where he draws on survivalist skills for reasons that aren't at first known. The book then revisits his recent time in Galloway, Virginia, where he tried to trace John. In Galloway, he found a cheerful community and met Abby, a widow whose easy manner sparked his romantic interest. Clever back-and-forth shifts in locale clarify how Quint arrived at his current Alaskan predicament, where he tests out a theory about John.

The result is a fascinating amalgam of fictional investigative journalism and of Quint's slow, fragile acceptance that loving people means being vulnerable to losing them. Gripping, scenic details involving the harsh wilderness are juxtaposed with warm gatherings in Galloway; these sharp contrasts underscore Quint's competing desires to continue escaping and to embrace new beginnings.

The book's early focus on Quint's memories, which surround sudden family deaths, leads to wrenching moments; rich settings, including his childhood home, help to convey his losses. When his identification with John morphs from passing curiosity into obsession, such that Quint begins to imagine, step-by-step, how the disappearance happened, the tension intensifies. The measured disclosure of key facts builds further intrigue.

The story line that follows Quint in Alaska is slowed by repetitive practical details, such as about dwindling rations, and by a handful of similar encounters with natural dangers, including bears, but it's enlivened by other, more pivotal incidents. A treacherous river crossing stands out for its visceral depiction of Quint's thoughts throughout the ordeal. Such moments heighten the book's otherwise familiar themes: it's often about Quint proving his outdoor skills and mental grit to himself.

The convergence of Quint's breakdown and of John's disappearance reaches its apex in a fleeting, ambiguous moment that seems to short-circuit Quint's pursuits, with the epilogue used to explain how a life-threatening situation got resolved. Still, this is a fascinating novel about healing after unimaginable pain.

In the vibrant novel *All Good Quests*, an impulsive, troubled man reckons with himself in the dramatic Alaskan wilderness.

KAREN RIGBY (August 11, 2021)

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