

ANNE SAUER



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by Anne Sauer

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Fiction

🏆 #20 SPIEGEL bestseller list (hardcover fiction)

🏆 Shortlisted for the Harbour Front Literaturfestival Debütpreis 2025

The Other Life

Im Leben nebenan

review

Anne Sauer's debut novel 'The Other Life' offers a timely and thought-provoking exploration of womanhood, motherhood, and the road not taken. Blending domestic realism with speculative fiction, Sauer employs a compelling 'sliding doors' premise to follow one woman as she lives two parallel versions of her life: one as a child-free urbanite struggling with infertility, and the other as a new mother in her childhood village, unexpectedly thrust into the demands of postpartum life.

Toni, who lives in the city with her partner Jakob, has spent years ambivalent about motherhood. After a long period of trying and failing to conceive, including a miscarriage and emotionally gruelling fertility treatments, she begins to wonder if she truly wants children. But one morning, she wakes up as Antonia: a version of herself living in the hometown of her childhood, married to her former boyfriend Adam, and mother to a newborn daughter. In this alternate reality, Antonia is consumed by the rawness and disorientation of new motherhood: sleepless nights, aching isolation, and the erasure of her former identity.

The novel alternates between Toni and Antonia's perspectives, offering readers a rich contrast between two equally complicated but believable female experiences. Antonia's exhaustion and panic in early motherhood – highlighted in scenes such as her attendance of a chaotic support group for new mums – is rendered with painful

honesty, while Toni's emotional fatigue from fertility treatments and increasing alienation from her partner and friends is equally affecting.

Sauer does not romanticise either life path. Instead, 'The Other Life' gently but firmly interrogates cultural expectations around womanhood, choice, and fulfilment. Ultimately, Toni finds peace in accepting a child-free future, at the cost of her relationship, while Antonia slowly bonds with her baby and begins to see beauty in her new life, even as she continues to long for parts of her former self.

Stylistically, the novel is accessible and straightforward, an engaging and relatable read. Its strength lies in the questions it raises about identity and agency, and the pressures on women to make the 'right' life choices.

'The Other Life' is a smart, culturally relevant novel that captures the complexities of modern womanhood and will appeal to English-language readers navigating all kinds of life questions

Find out more: <https://www.dtv.de/buch/im-leben-nebenan-28483>

press quotes

In 'The Other Life', Anne Sauer presents what appears to be a thoroughly researched work that is sure to interest men as well as women.

Hamburger Abendblatt, Thomas Andre,

'The Other Life', prompts reflection, friction and recognition. The way in which Anne Sauer's narrative technique suggests the differences between various female life plans sets her novel apart from the majority of non-fiction books on the subject, from 'Regretting Motherhood' to 'Raising Sons as Feminists'.

welt.de, Cynthia Cornelius

Sauer recounts these and many other aspects of being a woman – so vividly that the reader herself feels like laughing or screaming at times. 'The Other Life' can be read in a day, but it will stay with you for days.

taz – Die Tageszeitung, Marie Dürr

about the author

Anne Sauer, born in 1989, is an author and presenter, who has been recommending books on Instagram ([@fuxbooks](#)) and in her podcast 'Monatslese' for many years. She won the Young Excellence Award for her work in 2022. In August 2024, her much-acclaimed essay on Taylor Swift's fan culture was published, landing her on the SPIEGEL bestseller list. 'The Other Life', in which she addresses the quest for a fulfilled life, is Sauer's first novel.

Previous work: *Look What She Made Us Do*, Rowohlt (2024)

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