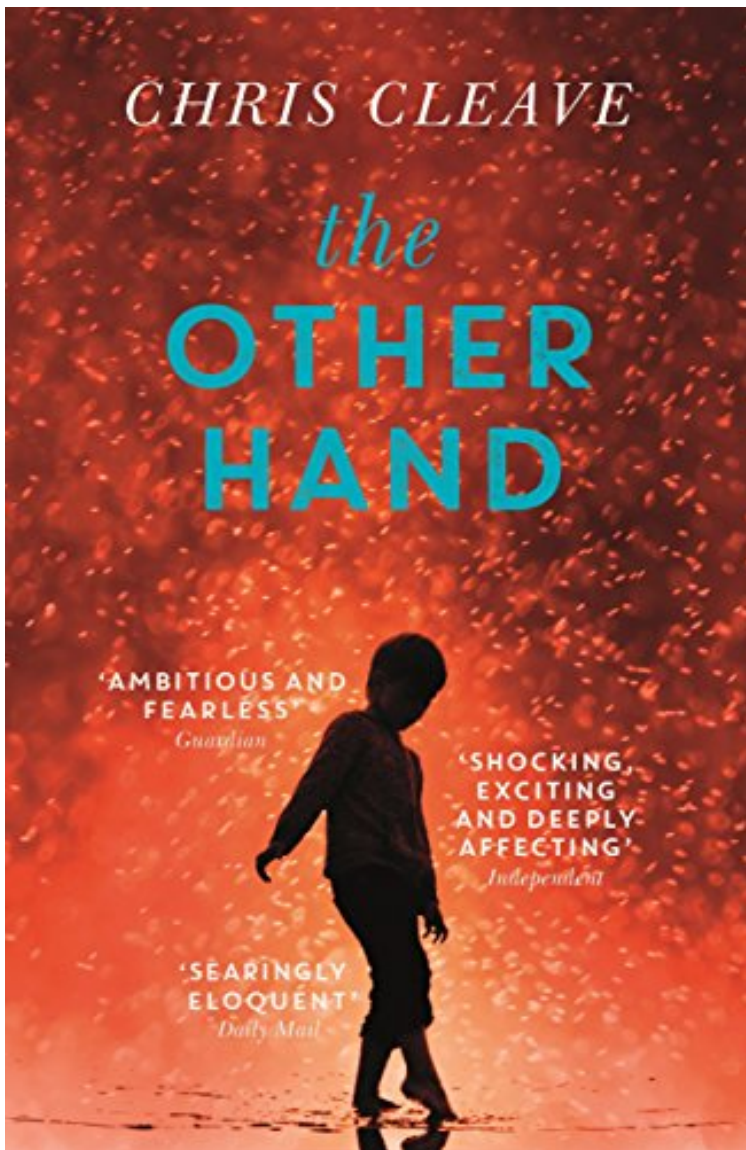


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# The Other Hand (English Edition)



Par Chris Cleave  
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(Ebook free) The Other Hand (English Edition)

Par Chris Cleave : **The Other Hand (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Other Hand (English Edition):

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWe dont want to tell you too much about this book. It is a truly special story and we dont want to spoil it. Nevertheless, you need to know something, so we will just say this:It is extremely funny, but the African beach scene is horrific.The story starts there, but the book doesnt.And its what happens afterwards that is most important.Once you have read it, youll want to tell everyone about it. When you do, please dont tell them what happens either. The magic is in how it unfolds.ExtraitChapter 1Most days I wish I was a British pound coin instead of an African girl. Everyone would be pleased to see me coming. Maybe I would visit with you for the weekend and then suddenly, because I am fickle like that, I would visit with the man from the corner shop instead but you would not be sad because you would be eating a

cinnamon bun, or drinking a cold Coca Cola from the can, and you would never think of me again. We would be happy, like lovers who met on holiday and forgot each others names. A pound coin can go wherever it thinks it will be safest. It can cross deserts and oceans and leave the sound of gunfire and the bitter smell of burning thatch behind. When it feels warm and secure it will turn around and smile at you, the way my big sister Nkiruka used to smile at the men in our village in the short summer after she was a girl but before she was really a woman, and certainly before the evening my mother took her to a quiet place for a serious talk. Of course a pound coin can be serious too. It can disguise itself as power, or property, and there is nothing more serious when you are a girl who has neither. You must try to catch the pound, and trap it in your pocket, so that it cannot reach a safe country unless it takes you with it. But a pound has all the tricks of a sorcerer. When pursued I have seen it shed its tail like a lizard so that you are left holding only pence. And when you finally go to seize it, the British pound can perform the greatest magic of all, and this is to transform itself into not one, but two, identical green American dollar bills. Your fingers will close on empty air, I am telling you. How I would love to be a British pound. A pound is free to travel to safety, and we are free to watch it go. This is the human triumph. This is called, globalisation. A girl like me gets stopped at immigration, but a pound can leap the turnstiles, and dodge the tackles of those big men with their uniform caps, and jump straight into a waiting airport taxi. Where to, sir? Western Civilisation, my good man, and make it snappy. See how nicely a British pound coin talks? It speaks with the voice of Queen Elizabeth the Second of England. Her face is stamped upon it, and sometimes when I look very closely I can see her lips moving. I hold her up to my ear. What is she saying? Put me down this minute, young lady, or I shall call my guards. If the Queen spoke to you in such a voice, do you suppose it would be possible to disobey? I have read that the people around her - even Kings and Prime Ministers - they find their bodies responding to her orders before their brains can even think why not. Let me tell you, it is not the crown and the sceptre that have this effect. Me, I could pin a tiara on my short fuzzy hair, and I could hold up a sceptre in one hand, like this, and police officers would still walk up to me in their big shoes and say, Love the ensemble, madam, now lets have quick look at your ID, shall we? No, it is not the Queens crown and sceptre that rule in your land. It is her grammar and her voice. That is why it is desirable to speak the way she does. That way you can say to police officers, in a voice as clear as the Cullinan diamond, My goodness, how dare you? I am only alive at all because I learned the Queens English. Maybe you are thinking, that isnt so hard. After all, English is the official language of my country, Nigeria. Yes, but the trouble is that back home we speak it so much better than you. To talk the Queens English, I had to forget all the best tricks of my mother tongue. For example, the Queen could never say, There was plenty wahala, that girl done use her bottom power to engage my number one son and anyone could see she would end in the bad bush. Instead the Queen must say, My late daughter-in-law used her feminine charms to become engaged to my heir, and one might have foreseen that it wouldnt end well. It is all a little sad, dont you think? Learning the Queens English is like scrubbing off the bright red varnish from your toe nails, the morning after a dance. It takes a long time and there is always a little bit left at the end, a stain of red along the growing edges to remind you of the good time you had. So, you can see that learning came slowly to me. On the other hand, I had plenty of time. I learned your language in an immigration detention centre, in Essex, in the south eastern part of the United Kingdom. Two years, they locked me in there. Time was all I had. But why did I go to all the trouble? It is because of what some of the older girls explained to me: to survive, you must look good or talk even better. The plain ones and the silent ones, it seems their paperwork is never in order. You say, they get repatriated. We say, sent home early. Like your country is a childrens party something too wonderful to last forever. But the pretty ones and the talkative ones, we are allowed to stay. In this way your country becomes lively and more beautiful. I will tell you what happened when they let me out of the immigration detention centre. The detention officer put a voucher in my hand, a transport voucher, and he said I could telephone for a cab. I said, Thank you sir, may God move with grace in your life and bring joy into your heart and prosperity upon your loved ones. The officer pointed his eyes at the ceiling, like there was something very interesting up there, and he said, Jesus. Then he pointed his finger down the corridor and he said, There is the telephone. So, I stood in the queue for the telephone. I was thinking, I went over the top with thanking that detention officer. The Queen would merely have said, Thank you, and left it like that. Actually, the Queen would have told the detention officer to call for the damn taxi himself, or she would have him shot and his head separated from his body and displayed on the railings in front of the Tower of London. I was realising, right there, that it was one thing to learn the Queens English from books and newspapers in my detention cell, and quite another thing to actually speak the language with the English. I was angry with myself. I was

thinking, You cannot afford to go around making mistakes like that, girl. If you talk like a savage who learned her English on the boat, the men are going to find you out and send you straight back home. That's what I was thinking. There were three girls in the queue in front of me. They let all us girls out on the same day. It was Friday. It was a bright sunny morning in May. The corridor was dirty but it smelled clean. That is a good trick. Bleach, is how they do that. The detention officer sat behind his desk. He was not watching us girls. He was reading a newspaper. It was spread out on his desk. It was not one of the newspapers I learned to speak your language from - the Times or the Telegraph or the Guardian. No, this newspaper was not for people like you and me. There was a white girl in the newspaper photo and she was topless. You know what I mean when I say this, because it is your language we are speaking. But if I was telling this story to my big sister Nkiruka and the other girls from my village back home then I would have to stop, right here, and explain to them: topless does not mean, the lady in the newspaper did not have an upper body. It means, she was not wearing any garments on her upper body. You see the difference? Wait. Not even a brassiere? Not even a brassiere. Weh! And then I would start my story again but those girls back home, they would whisper between them. They would giggle behind their hands. Then, just as I was getting back to my story about the morning they let me out of the immigration detention centre, those girls would interrupt me again. Nkiruka would say, Listen, okay? Listen. Just so we are clear. This girl in the newspaper photo. She was a prostitute, yes? A night fighter? Did she look down at the ground from shame? No, she did not look down at the ground from shame. She looked right in the camera and smiled. What, in the newspaper? Yes. Then is it not shameful in Great Britain, to show your bobbis in the newspaper? No. It is not shameful. The boys like it and there is no shame. Otherwise the topless girls would not smile like that, do you see? So do all the girls over there show them off like that? Walk around with their bobbis bouncing? In the church and in the shop and in the street? No, only in the newspapers. Why do they not all show their breasts, if the men like it and there is no shame? I do not know. You lived there more than two years, little miss been-to. How come you not know? It is like that over there. Much of my life in that country was lived in such confusion. Sometimes I think that even the British do not know the answers to such questions. Weh! This is what it would be like, you see, if I had to stop and explain every little thing to the girls back home. I would have to explain linoleum and bleach and soft core pornography and the shape-changing magic of the British one pound coin, as if all of these everyday things were very wonderful mysteries. And very quickly my own story would get lost in this great ocean of wonders because it would seem as if your country was an enchanted federation of miracles and my own story within it was really very small and unmagical. But with you it is much easier because I can say to you, look, on the morning they released us, the duty officer at the immigration detention centre was staring at a photo of a topless girl in the newspaper. And you understand the situation straight away. That is the reason I spent ...Revue de presse A powerful piece of art... shocking, exciting and deeply affecting...[a] superb novel... Besides sharp, witty dialogue, an emotionally charged plot and the vivid characters' ethical struggles, THE OTHER HAND delivers a timely challenge to reinvigorate our notions of civilized decency. (Independent) Exquisitely balanced between terrible sadness and brilliant humour. (Observer) Big themes, high emotion and cliffhangers aplenty... an enormously affecting investigation of love, guilt and global responsibility, told with a bittersweet urgency. (Justine Jordan, Guardian) Searingly eloquent. (Daily Mail) An ambitious and fearless gallop from the jungles of Africa via a shocking encounter on a Nigerian beach to the media offices of London and domesticity in leafy suburbia... Cleave immerses the reader in the worlds of his characters with an unshakable confidence. (Lawrence Norfolk, Guardian) totally believable... the author has a knack of explaining human suffering... I look forward to his next offering. (Daily Express) impresses as a feat of literary engineering... the plot exerts a fearsome grip. (Daily Telegraph) An exhilarating, disturbing read. (James Urquhart, Independent (Books of the Year)) You stay in thrall to the bittersweet end. (Scotland on Sunday) It would be hard not to romp through it. (Financial Times) By turns funny, sad and shocking (Sainsburys Magazine) The next Kite Runner. (Library Journal) Warm, witty and beautifully written. (Sunday Tribune) In a novel that tackles serious and uncomfortable subject matter, Cleave's writing makes one laugh and despair in equal measure. (4 stars) (Time Out) I felt the same excitement discovering this as I did Marina Lewycka's A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian and Paul Torday's Salmon Fishing in the Yemen. There is an urgency here, an inability to put it down and a deep sense of loss once finished. It is a very special book indeed. Profound, deeply moving and yet light in touch, it explores the nature of loss, hope, love and identity with atrocity its backdrop. Read it and think deeply. (Sarah Broadhurst, Bookseller) Immensely readable and moving . . . an affecting story of human triumph' (New York Times) Artfully plotted... [a] strong yarn. (Sunday Telegraph) A better book than

Chris Cleave's *THE OTHER HAND* may be published this year, but I wouldn't bet on it. This exquisitely written story of a Nigerian refugee and a British glossy magazine editor is the most powerful novel I've read in a long time. . . it's also a very funny book about brave, funny people who the reader quickly grows to love. . . But the heart of the book is Little Bee; naive yet insightful and sophisticated, damaged yet capable of great courage and humour, she is an unforgettable character. I finished *THE OTHER HAND* in tears, and I still can't get it out of my head. Just read it. (The Gloss) Will blow you away... the best kind of political novel: You're almost entirely unaware of its politics because the book doesn't deal in abstractions but in human beings. (Washington Post) So far it's the best book of 2009, no question. (Metro (US))