

East of the Mountains

By David Guterson

Download now

Read Online 

East of the Mountains By David Guterson

It is mid-October, 1997, harvest time in the Columbia Basin of central Washington state, a rich apple- and pear-growing region. Ben Givens, recently widowed, is a retired heart surgeon, once admired for his steadiness of hand, his precision, his endurance. He has terminal colon cancer. While Ben does not readily accept defeat, he is determined to avoid suffering rather than engage it. And so, accompanied by his two hunting dogs, he sets out through the mythic American West-sage deserts, yawning canyons, dusty ranches, vast orchards-on his last hunt. The main issues for Ben as a doctor had been tactical and so it would be with his death. But he hadn't considered the persuasiveness of memory-the promise he made to his wife Rachel, the love of his life, during World War II. Or life's mystery. On his journey he meets a young couple who are "forever," a drifter offering left-handed advice that might lessen the pain, a veterinarian with a touch only a heart surgeon would recognize, a rancher bent on destruction, a migrant worker who tests Ben's ability to understand. And just when he thinks there is no turning back, nothing to lose that wasn't lost, his power of intervention is called upon and his very identity tested. Full of humanity, passion, and moral honesty, *East of the Mountains* is a bold and beautiful novel of personal discovery.

 [Download East of the Mountains ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online East of the Mountains ...pdf](#)

East of the Mountains


By David Guterson

East of the Mountains By David Guterson

It is mid-October, 1997, harvest time in the Columbia Basin of central Washington state, a rich apple- and pear-growing region. Ben Givens, recently widowed, is a retired heart surgeon, once admired for his steadiness of hand, his precision, his endurance. He has terminal colon cancer. While Ben does not readily accept defeat, he is determined to avoid suffering rather than engage it. And so, accompanied by his two hunting dogs, he sets out through the mythic American West-sage deserts, yawning canyons, dusty ranches, vast orchards-on his last hunt. The main issues for Ben as a doctor had been tactical and so it would be with his death. But he hadn't considered the persuasiveness of memory-the promise he made to his wife Rachel, the love of his life, during World War II. Or life's mystery. On his journey he meets a young couple who are "forever," a drifter offering left-handed advice that might lessen the pain, a veterinarian with a touch only a heart surgeon would recognize, a rancher bent on destruction, a migrant worker who tests Ben's ability to understand. And just when he thinks there is no turning back, nothing to lose that wasn't lost, his power of intervention is called upon and his very identity tested. Full of humanity, passion, and moral honesty, East of the Mountains is a bold and beautiful novel of personal discovery.

East of the Mountains By David Guterson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #897227 in Books
- Published on: 1999-04-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .81" w x 5.98" l, 1.24 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 279 pages

 [Download East of the Mountains ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online East of the Mountains ...pdf](#)

Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

David Guterson's first novel, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, was a true ensemble piece, in which even a high-stakes murder trial seemed like a judgment passed on the community at large. In his eloquent second novel, however, the author swings dramatically in the opposite direction. *East of the Mountains* is the tale of a solitary, 73-year-old Seattle widower. A retired heart surgeon, Ben Givens is an old hand at turning isolation to his advantage, both professionally and personally: "When everything human was erased from existence except that narrow antiseptic window through which another's heart could be manipulated--few were as adroit as Dr. Givens."

Now, however, Ben has been dealt a problem entirely beyond his powers of manipulation: a diagnosis of terminal cancer. With just a few months to live, he sets out across the Cascades for a hunting trip, planning to take his own life once he reaches the high desert. A car crash en route puts an initial crimp in this suicide mission. But the ailing surgeon presses onward--and begins a simultaneous journey into the past. Between present-tense episodes, which demonstrate Ben's cranky commitment to his own extinction, we learn about his boyhood in Washington's apple country, his traumatic war experience in the Italian Alps, and the beginning of his vocation.

Guterson narrates the apple-scented idyll of Ben's childhood in a typically low-key manner--and orchards, of course, are seldom the stuff of melodrama. Still, many of his ambling sentences offer miniature lessons in patience and perception: "They rode back all day to the Columbia, traversed it on the Colockum Ferry, and at dusk came into their orchard tired, on empty stomachs, their hats tipped back, to walk the horses between the rows of trees in a silent kind of procession, and Aidan ran his hands over limbs as he passed them with his horse behind him, the limbs trembling in the wake of his passing, and on, then, to the barn." The wartime episodes, however, are less satisfactory. Clearly Guterson has done his research down to the last stray bullet, but there's a second-hand feeling to the material, which seems less a token of Ben's detachment than the author's.

There is, alas, an additional problem. Begin a story with a planned suicide, and there are exactly two possible outcomes. It would be unfair to reveal Ben's fate. But as the forces of life and death yank him one way, then another, Guterson tends to stack the deck--particularly during a bus ride toward the end of the novel, when Ben's fellow passengers appear to have wandered in from a Frank Capra film. Yet *East of the Mountains* remains a beautifully imagined work, in which the landscape reflects both Ben's desperation and his intermittent delight. And Guterson knows from the start what his protagonist learns in painful increments: that "a neat, uncomplicated end" doesn't exist on either side of the mountains. --*James Marcus*

From Publishers Weekly

A good and decent man's passage through life as reflected in his memories and his experiences on what he intends to be his last day on earth is the burden of Guterson's (*Snow Falling on Cedars*) deeply felt, honest and quietly powerful new novel. Dr. Ben Givens, a 73-year-old retired thoracic surgeon in Seattle, has terminal colon cancer, a fact that he has kept from his daughter and grandson. Widowed recently after a loving marriage, he decides to forgo the ordeal of dying in stages, and instead to commit suicide in what will look like an accident during a day of quail hunting in the apple-growing country where he was born. But fate interferes with Ben's plan. His van is wrecked when he runs off a slick road, and he is rescued in the first of several encounters that turn into a two-day ordeal. During the cold October night in the sagebrush desert, the narrative rises to a harrowing crescendo when Ben's two dogs are the victims of a marauding pack of Irish wolfhounds. With subtle symmetry, Guterson uses Ben's darkly picaresque misadventure to provide graceful segues into the events of his past. A series of poignant memories occur in flashback?Ben's mother's death;

his tender courting of Rachel, who became his wife; his soul-lacerating experiences in combat in WWII and his life-defining epiphany at an army field hospital in Italy?which chart the growth of a man with a strong sense of humanity and responsibility and a steadfast work ethic. The novel begins slowly, and at first one fears that Guterson's attempt to establish a sense of place will result in a dense recital of geographical names. But his unsparingly direct, beautifully observed and meticulously detailed prose creates an almost palpable atmospheric background. At the end of his journey, Ben achieves an understanding about the meaning of life and the continuity of commitment. Wise and compassionate about the human predicament, Guterson's second novel confirms his talent as a writer who delves into life's moral complexities to arrive at existential truths. Agent, Georges Borchardt. 500,000 first printing; \$500,000 ad/promo; Literary Guild main selection; author tour; rights sold to U.K., Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Holland, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark; simultaneous release by BDD audio. (Apr.) 1999.
Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Mourning his wife's recent passing and facing his rapidly progressing colon cancer, retired surgeon Ben Givens decides on suicide rather than lengthy suffering for himself and his remaining family. After mapping out his demise in a shooting "accident," Ben drives into the mountains of Washington State for a final bird hunt with his Brittany spaniels. Almost immediately his meticulous plans are disrupted. A car accident propels Ben into unexpected physical and emotional terrain, where his subsequent adventures force him to reexamine his convictions about mortality, morality, and identity. Ben's odyssey is told in the controlled yet passionate prose that characterized Guterson's first novel, the acclaimed *Snow Falling on Cedars* (LJ 8/94). Guterson draws compelling characters and creates a haunting sense of place and of humankind's paradoxical relationship with the natural world; a passage describing a desperate encounter with a pack of Irish wolfhounds compares favorably with the best of Hemingway. Highly recommended.

-?Starr E. Smith, *Marymount Univ. Lib., Arlington, VA*

Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Jacquez:

In other case, little people like to read book *East of the Mountains*. You can choose the best book if you appreciate reading a book. Providing we know about how is important a new book *East of the Mountains*. You can add knowledge and of course you can around the world by way of a book. Absolutely right, since from book you can realize everything! From your country until finally foreign or abroad you may be known. About simple issue until wonderful thing you could know that. In this era, you can open a book or maybe searching by internet unit. It is called e-book. You may use it when you feel uninterested to go to the library. Let's learn.

Marcy Madison:

Now a day folks who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by talk with the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not involve people to be aware of each data they get. How many people to be smart in getting any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Looking at a book can help folks out of this uncertainty Information specifically this *East of the Mountains* book because this book offers you rich facts and knowledge. Of course the knowledge in this book hundred percent guarantees there is no doubt in it you probably know this.

Charles Carey:

The book with title East of the Mountains has a lot of information that you can find out it. You can get a lot of gain after read this book. This kind of book exist new information the information that exist in this e-book represented the condition of the world now. That is important to yo7u to understand how the improvement of the world. That book will bring you inside new era of the globalization. You can read the e-book with your smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

Robert Frith:

Do you like reading a reserve? Confuse to looking for your preferred book? Or your book was rare? Why so many query for the book? But virtually any people feel that they enjoy regarding reading. Some people likes examining, not only science book but in addition novel and East of the Mountains as well as others sources were given information for you. After you know how the fantastic a book, you feel would like to read more and more. Science e-book was created for teacher as well as students especially. Those publications are helping them to increase their knowledge. In different case, beside science book, any other book likes East of the Mountains to make your spare time much more colorful. Many types of book like here.

Download and Read Online East of the Mountains By David Guterson #T9ZC0F4G6OL

Read East of the Mountains By David Guterson for online ebook

East of the Mountains By David Guterson Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read East of the Mountains By David Guterson books to read online.

Online East of the Mountains By David Guterson ebook PDF download

East of the Mountains By David Guterson Doc

East of the Mountains By David Guterson Mobipocket

East of the Mountains By David Guterson EPub