



## Come West and See: Stories

*Maxim Loskutov*

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## Come West and See: Stories Maxim Loskutoff

*Come West and See* is a work both timely and timeless. Set in the Redoubt, an isolated triangle of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming where an armed occupation of a wildlife refuge escalates into a separatist uprising, these stories explore the loneliness, insecurity, and frustration inherent to love and heartbreak. A lakeside wedding drunkenly devolves into a cruel charade; an unemployed carpenter joins a militia after his wife leaves him; and a former soldier raises the daughter of a dead comrade in a bunker beneath an abandoned farm. *Come West and See* explores divisions both personal and political, offering startling insights into the wounds of the American people and a powerful new vision of the West.

“A ferocious love letter to the forgotten and the scorned . . . unlike any book you’ll read this year.”— Matt Gallagher, author of *Youngblood* and *Kaboom*

## Come West and See: Stories Details

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Author : Maxim Loskutoff

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# From Reader Review Come West and See: Stories for online ebook

## Wesley says

A mother explains to her daughter — a little sociopath who will stalk my slumber for years — the facts of her burgeoning body. A western settler confronts squirmy feelings towards an advancing and hungry bear. New parents find a much-needed joyful afternoon suddenly threaded with a malice which forces them to confront their mutual infidelity and individual dark histories. The connecting thread of extremism is a mirror of our times that leaves the skin feeling silty and coarse but the stories do not entirely abandon joy, giving the book a scope that makes it feel like a real gift.

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## Isabel Smith says

This debut collection of short stories by Maxim Loskutoff portrays snapshot-style glances of various folks, their loved ones, and their living situations in an American atmosphere where a new civil war is taking place. Instead of the Southern states succeeding as was the case in the 1860s during the American Civil War, a number of Western states have separated themselves from the remainder of the country in an act of rebellion. At times reassuring and at times disturbing, the 12 stories include accounts of separatists, loyalists, and the people in between. One of the most striking and memorable stories for me was “We’re In This Together You Know, God.” In this story, a woman describes the lifestyle of her struggling, rural family and the extra strain that their young, psychotic daughter adds to the mix. Its main focus is on the tumultuous relationship between her family and her daughter, but the tragic relationship between their horses and her daughter is also explored. Similarly, the other stories in *Come West and See* all focus on some sort of relationship and/or conflict, whether it’s man vs. man, man vs. animal, or man vs. nature. Loskutoff has a knack for portraying the dejected and the crestfallen, the brooding and the wrathful. Take a peek at his story collection if you’re in the mood for something complex and strange with an element of truth packed alongside it.

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## Glam Hobbit says

I heard about this collection of stories in an NPR piece with the author and it did not disappoint. A dozen stories, all focused on the ethos of the American West (but mostly Montana, where the author lives). Sometimes apocalyptic, sometimes historical, sometimes current, but all tell a unique perspective of life in the West, with special consideration and attention given to a standoff of American farmers ("patriots" as they are referred to in the book) and the federal government in Montana (in this work of fiction, this is of course an allusion to the similar standoff in Oregon in 2016).

The author, a student of the likes of David Foster Wallace and Zadie Smith, delivers deeply thoughtful, dark, and profoundly human experiences of modern Western life representing voices not always explored in modern literature.

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## Adam says

Beautiful, haunting stories about the lives of different Americans affected one way or another by an armed

occupation of a wildlife refuge in Northwest America. This collection of stories was not what I expected, but very glad I experienced reading them anyway. Each chapter tells the story of different people who are suffering internally or externally, whether rightfully or wrongly. At its core, this is not a political book or about political divisions within this country: it is about the consequences for love, family, friendship and our life's story, decided by the choices we take and the meaning we to assign it. A truly great read and highly recommend.

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### **Vanessa says**

A hauntingly beautiful debut. Radical empathy indeed. I loved all the stories but, if I had to choose, "Stay Here" is the one I would take to a desert island. As someone who dearly loves yet deeply mourns for the West I believe Loskutoff's voice is of vital importance. Our nation's ongoing conversation about these vast swaths of land and its inhabitants deserve more nuanced reflections like this. A must read.

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### **Travis says**

Pretty good novel in stories that I maybe wouldn't \*quite\* give four stars. Ends up taking a dystopian turn where it could've fleshed out the revolution/civil war a bit more rather than leaping so far in time. Reminds me of Claire Vaye Watkins's collection of new-West stories BATTLEBORN. But are really sharp in terms of craft, but both are also overwhelmingly about the white male gaze. No real engagement here with Indigenous people/issues, despite the fact that it so clearly draws on the Bundy occupation (which Native peoples were vocal about) and is in stream with Standing Rock )and Wounded Knee decades earlier). Ends up being a bit of Civil War narrative retold in the near future, which is sort of neat. Also pretty rich for anyone interested in animal studies or environmental humanities more broadly.

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### **Amy says**

Loskutoff's voice and writing style are very appealing. Soon after I started reading, I attempted to find other works I could get my hands on by Loskutoff, but this is his first major publication. These stories are great. This is one of those books you can easily pick up to take your mind of whatever happens to be bothering you.

Released last month, *Come West and See* is a well-written collection of twelve short stories. They introduce the reader to the rebel territory of the Redoubt in the North West and various characters involved in trying situations there. One piece describes a man falling in love with a bear, while another follows a couple who have been impaled by long arrows. Sometimes outlandish, these stories are packed full of real emotion, raw tragedy and some good laughs.

*I received an advance reading copy of this book as a Goodreads giveaway in exchange for an honest review. Thanks to the author/publisher for participating in the giveaway.*

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## **Adam Stone says**

\*\*\*I received an Advanced Reader Copy of this book in exchange for reviewing it on Goodreads.\*\*\*

The blurbs on the back of this book had me worried. They give the impression that this is a book that glorifies the separatists movements in the Western United States, as well as a blurb that claims this book is "A ferocious love letter to the forgotten and the scorned...unlike any book you'll read this year. It blazes with soul." which is an impressive series of sentences if you are trying to get me to never read a book. Therefore I was a bit nervous that I was going to Hate this book.

The very first page of this book had me hopeful. A very poetic, but not flowery or verbose, description of a bear. I was excited to see where it was going. On page two, I found myself asking "Does this guy want to...fuck a bear? Where is this going?"

The first story, "The Dancing Bear" took the story of a guy who finds himself wanting to fuck a bear to places I wasn't prepared to go, but was not unhappy to arrive at. (This is your only spoiler: he does not fuck the bear)

This was true of much of the stories in this collection. The thread that connects most of these stories is that there is a separatist movement (or possibly several separatist movements intertwining) in the Western United States. The stories never do more than flirt with the borders of the movement. Rather, they focus on how the standoff impacts the people around the movement, whether they are merely people geographically tangential to the separatists, or people who have lost family, friends, or livelihood to the standoff. We also get stories about people whose situations have them actively considering whether or not to join the movement.

But this is not a love story to this fictional movement (based on several less fictional movements, such as The Bundy standoff). Almost all of the characters who consider joining the movement, or who are associated with the movement, are presented as people who routinely make awful decisions at the expense of those they love. Not villains, but assholes, or idiots. People you want to shake and say "stop fucking up". It's impressive that, with a few exceptions, I neither hated nor felt any pity for most of the characters in this book, yet I was invested in their stories. The stories didn't seem to aim for my emotions, rather they presented believable protagonists and side characters, and tended more to small stakes scenarios than bombast.

"End Times", "Ways To Kill A Tree", "Prey", and "Harvest" (which certainly falls more on the bombast side) were my favorites of the collection. "Too Much Love" was the only time when I found myself skipping paragraphs to see if it was going anywhere interesting.

I would recommend this book for people looking for realistic and character-driven stories, fans of Spoon River Anthology who prefer twenty page long short stories to page long eulogies, people exhausted by stories that take place in New York as if it's the only place in America worth writing about, guys who are really into bears (but not in the queer subculture way), people looking for morality stories that pose interesting questions instead of claiming to present answers.

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## **Shane says**

A must read. A little out of the norm but this is a collection of short stories that all take place in the NW at

different eras, every story grabs a hold of you and won't let go. Just try to stop reading in the middle of one of these stories, you can't, once you start one you will finish it in one setting, you just can't put it down until you've finished it. Good thing these stories are not very long. I highly recommend this book. Maxim Loskutoff has written a collection of short stories, each one better than the one before, that you are going to love. This is what the future of literature looks like.

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### **Michelle Arredondo says**

When you discover a very strange....very intriguing...read.

I went in blindly. I am glad that I did. It made for a rich experience. In Come West and See...stories...by Maxim Loskutoff...I was enticed by such strange and vivid stories. Atmospheric. Odd but likable characters, odd but unlikable characters...characters I didn't know what to think of them. Every setting was unusual to anything I know. Each story stands on it's own and pulls you in...all very different...yet all have similarities. A story about a burgeoning desire to know a beast of an animal....a truly WTF moment. No seriously....I had an WTF moment and I felt a little silly...a bit bashful to think that my interpretation was "somehow in this story some bestiality is going to happen...but with a bear?!!!" Call me amateurish for not being a more seasoned interpreter of contemporary abstract reads and maybe I read the whole thing wrong. But I was intrigued....oh, I was completely in it for the long haul.

In the entirety of the book there is a hostile movement occurring with the citizens of the Western United States and the government. Each story lends some backdrop or feeling of angst or defiance or desperate thoughts about the ongoing struggle. Author Maxim Loskutoff does not over do it...or bog it down...or make it too harsh a theme. It's just enough to make us aware of what the characters are going through..and puts in spaces, scenery, scenarios..that they are ingesting around them.

A beautiful...startling...noteworthy read..with a beautiful eye catching cover. I highly recommend.

I won this book. I read this book. I gave my honest and volunteered thoughts on this book.

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### **Deadohiosky77 says**

A beautiful and lovely collection of stories loosely linked by a separatist movement going on in the western United States. Every story is great, but the standout story for me was "Stay Here". Utterly heartbreaking and gorgeous. Definitely worth reading for anyone who enjoys short stories.

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### **Ashley says**

I am reviewing the advance copy I won through a goodreads giveaway. My copy arrived two nights ago and I was excited to crack this one open immediately!

This is a solid collection of loosely-connected stories, each with its own heartbreak and folly. The best

stories were absolutely excellent--"End Times," "Daddy Swore an Oath," and "Ways to Kill a Tree" were standouts. Each of these stories dealt with the heartache of wavering love, which for me is when I found Loskutoff at his best, in the most raw and human of the stories.

The stories are linked through their connection to a growing separatist movement in a region called the Redoubt, a section of the great plains in the vast Western wilderness in a part of America I have never seen. The stories breathe life into this region--long stretches of empty road, isolated bunkers and homes, farmyards and fields. Likewise, Loskutoff's characters fester with emotional isolation: loneliness, loss, and frustration. Some of the stories deal explicitly with the violence and political upheaval, while others reference it only in passing, as a backdrop to the individual lives lived in its shadows.

Quite a few of the stories also reckon with human interactions with wild animals--a bear in "The Dancing Bear," a coyote in "End Times," and a snake in "Prey." Each of these tells of humans misunderstanding these animals, projecting onto them what they want them to be rather than what they are, but also a deep sense of love, care, and longing, combined with a frustration that the animals can be no one but who they are. I would also link "We're in this Together You Know, God" and "Harvest" to these stories, but the wild animal in question in these stories is a human girl who--in very different ways--will not abide a life of bondage or conform to the false version of herself her caretaker has created for her.

My only real gripe is that unfortunately Loskutoff's writing suffers from what I so eloquently call "overly-workshopped-MFA-grad-descriptions-of-men's-thoughts-on-women's-bodies-syndrome." What I mean by this is that nearly every story contains bizarre, overly stylized and objectifying descriptions of women's bodies. This is not an issue I have with Loskutoff in particular, but he has one story that embraces these descriptions to such a degree that it was frustrating to read ("Umpqua"). Thankfully they are fleeting in the other stories, and far outsized by the frank and riveting prose that makes up the vast majority of this collection.

I am looking forward to checking out Loskutoff's upcoming novel. Definitely a writer to keep an eye on.

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### **Gwen Florio says**

Didn't expect to like this. Loved it. Loskutoff is a wonderful writer, and his stories show great empathy for people too often depicted as cartoonish, one-dimensional. Can't wait to see what he writes next.

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### **Tara says**

"Come West and See" doesn't contain stories that illicit our typical romantic obsession with the wilderness, but rather stories that capture the rawness of the West and uses it as a modern allegory for us to escape our reality. The idea of new beginnings, isolation and even the poetic violence of it all is embedded within the pages, but much like a westward bound trip, you've got to be motivated and invested to stay on the journey. The faint of heart need not apply for these stories, because they all have higher meaning than what is literal. If you make it past the first story of a man's obsession with a bear, you can sit back for a book containing the love and heartbreak surrounding the ideas of a new adventure, all while reflecting on your own.

Not my favorite short story collection, but still will keep on shelf as a reference to other wilderness setting

stories.

Disclaimer- some stories with adult content, ie) violence, abuse and sexual scenes, including implied bestiality.

For fans of westerns, rural fictional settings, and short stories.

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## **Bmoore says**

These are dark, apocryphal stories of the inland northwest. The way they are linked is subtly clever and reminded me a bit of "Olive Kittridge". But the similarity ended there. The stories include blue collar workers, preppers, survivalists, tea party patriots and The Redoubt, an area never really explicitly described. Several of the stories are centered around Riggins, Idaho, the capital city of The Redoubt, and make reference to recognizable regional geographical features and landmarks. Imagine a mashup of Jim Harrison and Frank Bill with a touch of Phillip Meyer's "American Rust". Sprinkle in a pinch of Cormac McCarthy and you may have an idea how dark these tales can get. Deserving of a second read for sure. But make sure your soul is in good order before you begin reading. Loskutoff is a regional treasure, an author I will be following closely and looking forward to reading again.

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