



Guns of the Timberlands

Louis L'Amour

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Clay Bell spent the last six years fighting Indians, rustlers, and the wilderness itself to make the B-Bar ranch the prize of the Deep Creek Range. But Jud Devitt, a ruthless speculator from the East, now threatens everything Clay has worked for. Devitt, holding a contract with the Mexican Central to deliver railroad ties, wants to harvest timber off the land where Clay grazes his cattle. Backing Devitt are shady politicians, a dishonest banker, and fifty of the toughest lumberjacks in the county. But as Colleen Riley, Devitt's fiancée, realizes the brutal game he's playing, her disapproval of his actions, and Clay Bell's obvious integrity and charm, pull her toward a destiny that will tip the scales in their bloody battle over timber and cattle.

Guns of the Timberlands Details

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Author : Louis L'Amour

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From Reader Review Guns of the Timberlands for online ebook

Phillip says

Nobody writes western fiction like Louis L'Amour. Nobody. Some authors are exceptional at describing gunfights. L'Amour is competent, but not the best. For that, I recommend Ralph Cotton. Some are great in literary merit, like Charles Portis' "True Grit." Others, like Zane Grey, are exceptionally descriptive writers who bring the landscape to life. And...others are precise in describing saloon brawls and fist fights. While I believe L'Amour excels in the latter category—you'll never enjoy reading about a fist fight between two cowboys more than you will in a L'Amour novel (e.g. Kilkenny)—he doesn't have any one particular weakness. He is effective in every facet of the western novel. At times, he is very literary, as I find myself highlighting numerous passages where he comments on human nature and the meaning of life. He is also quite effective at noting the smallest of nature's sounds, like the dripping of water off pine leaves, or the rustle of the grass as the horses' hooves wade silently through them. His gun fights aren't necessarily verbose and detailed, yet they fulfill that need for revenge and justice, and there's just enough blood to satisfy both. I know I'm belaboring the point here, but the bottom line is that Louis L'Amour was the greatest writer of western fiction ever to walk this earth, and Guns of the Timberlands deserves its place amongst his very best novels.

Now, this isn't one of L'Amour's more famous novels. I cannot recall how I came upon it, but it's never mentioned amongst the likes of Hondo, Flint, the Sackett series and many others. However, it has all of the elements that make his novels so satisfying and enjoyable to read. Yes, I agree with some critics who argue that his novels are at times formulaic and predictable. So what? People who read westerns do not read them to watch the girl run off with the bad guy, and the good guy get shot in the gut and left for dead. Seriously? So we know the good guy always wins. That's what makes the journey so enjoyable! We get to live, listen to, observe, feel, participate in the battles his heroes endure and engage in. We get to measure ourselves against their valor and bravery. We even at times observe the cowardice in his villains and wonder if perhaps we too share those vices. At the end of a L'Amour western, the good guy wins, but those who read these novels are better humans in every way after completing that journey as well.

Here, (sorry for taking so long to get to the plot) Clay Bell is a former soldier, rancher, and numerous other professions from his past, who raises cattle in the Timberlands and carefully protects his cattle, his employees, his livelihood, his life, and the land around him from all enemies, both foreign and domestic (in this case, enemies from the east, and those in his own town of Tinkersville). In arrives the bad guy, Jed Devitt, a large, rough, rude, ambitious, ruthless businessman who plans to cut down the centuries-old trees on Bell's 50,000 acres. Devitt isn't a fool. He knows how to play the game and rig the system in his favor, and he does exactly that. Bell seemingly is outmanned, outmaneuvered, and outgunned throughout most of the encounter, yet Clay Bell possesses something that bullies like Devitt will never possess—the love and respect of those with whom he associates. As the days pass and Bell appears defeated, help comes from unlikely and unforeseen forces. The final showdown with Devitt and his goons is set, and...well...we know the rest.

I thoroughly, absolutely, in every way loved and devoured this novel. I read it mostly the past two days—two days I desperately needed both the escape and the wisdom of mankind that Louis L'Amour never fails to provide me. I don't mean to be over dramatic when I say that L'Amour was a genuine blessing to humanity. If and when I ever finish all of his numerous novels, I will read them again, and Guns of the Timberlands will undoubtedly be one of the first I revisit. If you enjoy just a good, simple good versus evil western with all the necessary components, this is for you. Enjoy.

Melodee says

This book is a pretty stock Western. There is a hero, the girl he falls in love with, and a bad guy. You know how it is going to end, you just don't know how the author is going to get there. It's a quick, enjoyable light read.

Julie says

Decided to try Louis L'Amour to change things up a bit. Though I'd never read one before, it seems that if the library has kept enough check outs going to keep his books for that many years, there must be something to it. And there was. The writing is descriptive, and while the characters are somewhat stereotypical, in some ways that was nice for a change. Enjoying a simple good vs. evil plot, without a lot of complex twists and turns to drag the story out was refreshing. Good read.

Waven says

In this nice little western, lumberjacks ("timber beasts") in Arizona throw a new theme into an otherwise rather formulaic genre. The protagonist Clay Bell has settled in a nice mountain valley to ranch after being a cowboy, soldier, hunter, fighter, and prospector. A few years and his B-Bar Ranch is well on its way but still not on a paying basis when Jud Devitt arrives in town with plans to log the B-Bar's summer pasture on federal land in the mountains. Devitt, our maligned antagonist, is determined to get the lumber by hook or crook and only the B-Bar stands in his way. While there are no great surprises in store, it's a fun ride to the last page with dust and bullets flying.

Craig says

After reading two or three of L'Amour's books, he is pretty predictable. Nevertheless, he acquired much trivia from the Old West which he sprinkled throughout his novels to make them interesting. Somehow, the "good guy" always getting the girl is fun and appealing and causes the reader to open yet another of L'Amour's numerous tales of the Wild West.

Lee says

Became interested in Westerns, decided to try L'Amour. Wasn't bad. Wasn't exactly riveting but I did enjoy it to a degree. Follows the formula. Would not be opposed to reading more L'Amour if the mood strikes.

Robert says

The sixth western by L'Amour takes a little different twist. Still the ex-gunfighter trying to settle down theme, but this time the problem is a logging operation who wants his land. Interesting due the descriptions

of the loggers, as they are different than the usual cowboys, gunfighters and cattlemen. A good read.

Rachel says

Man, oh man, is this a well-crafted story. I am in awe. It's tautly plotted, with superb characterizations and enviable action scenes. I loved it.

Peter Charleston says

An enjoyable western adventure that takes place in Arizona. Louis L'Amour always had the story telling capabilities to keep a reader entertained. His books will be read over and over.

Alyx Tschirhart says

I won't lead anyone to think this is a book of depth. My version had only 185 pages after all. However, L'Amour has a way of pushing out novels like these that while they may not take up weeks of your time, you find yourself transported of the couple days or so it takes for you to read the book.

Often after I complete a L'Amour, Baldacci or Connelly book, I often wonder if they have a formula on their computer somewhere, in which, they input the main character's name, his/her antagonist, romantic interest and the vague idea of the plot, and whala out pops a completed book.

All kidding aside, I appreciated Guns of the Timberland. Some will hate on it, because the good guy wins and gets the girl, but I refuse to hate on this type of story line without more merit than just being cliché.

Like all L'Amour books, he does an ample job at character development and setting the scene. However with only 185 pages, he could not pour as much detail into the novel as I would have liked. Then again, I appreciated the pace of the plot. Some books are day to day, then all of a sudden the book jumps a year or more! This book spans only a couple of weeks at most. I could definitely see it being made into a John Wayne classic.

Dustin says

This was the first Western I have read and I think I am hooked. In this story, a cattle rancher depends on grazing his stock in and around a stand of timber on public lands in the desert of the Southwest. A rich businessman comes into town and announces he will harvest the timberland to aid in the expansion of a local railroad company. An all-or-nothing battle ensues for the lumber and the survival of the B-bar ranch. The story is fast moving, trimmed down to its essentials. Though efficient, there are secrets and twists that I did not see coming that I was pleasantly surprised by. Louis L'Amour uses amazing descriptions of the sights, sounds, and smells that instantly pulled me into his Western world. It was a little difficult to understand the layout of the land especially in terms of how it was used in battle tactics. I found a Loius L'Amour web site that helped in this regard:

http://www.louislamour.com/Maps/map_t...

Doug says

This early Louis L'Amour has a few loose strings, but some good prose and characterization. It also unfolds pretty predictably. Finally, this is one book that might have benefited from a little map (which sometimes appears with L'Amour books); I had some trouble following the local geography, and a lot of what happens depends on this -- access to a plateau, shortcuts to town, etc.

Clifford says

This one was rather fast paced and interesting. It leads off with a fast start and kept up the pace from there. As all of the Louis L'Amour books I have read this one was great.

Laura says

A nice, typical Louis L'Amour story. I prefer reading the book over listening to it though. The voices just didn't sound right to me.

Eva says

One of the best L'Amour books I've read.

Kedron Skiles says

I really liked it. A man had built his life and ranch on his land. It doesn't go over well when someone tries to ride roughshod over him to get the trees that are on his land.

Jason Koivu says

A dispute over grazing rights on a timberland patch turns into a kind of gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Pretty standard bit of western writing here propping up your basic stubborn cowboy vs pigheaded businessman plot.

Linda Barnett says

Who can not love a L'Amour? I've read everything he wrote, most more than once, over the years and I still enjoy a re-read now and then.

This is a good one. No ambiguity at the end, our hero wins the land battle and the girl, both. Gotta love a good fight and a happily ever after ending!

Elizabeth S says

I just love books like this where the good-guy has morals and ethics, yet also is quite capable of standing up and fighting when necessary. I like that the good-guy isn't just good, he also has gathered a wealth of experience and good people around him.

Fredrick Danysh says

After Clay Bell spent years in building a ranch despite adversaries and nature, the ruthless speculator Jud Devitt attempts to take it away from him. An enjoyable tale by a master storyteller.
