



Ed King

David Guterson

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A sweeping, propulsive, darkly humorous new novel by the best-selling author of *Snow Falling on Cedars*: a story of destiny, desire, and destruction that reimagines Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* for our own era.

In Seattle in 1962, Walter Cousins, a mild-mannered actuary—"a guy who weighs risk for a living"—takes a risk of his own, and makes the biggest error of his life. He sleeps with Diane Burroughs, the sexy, not-quite-legal British au pair who's taking care of his children for the summer. Diane gets pregnant and leaves their baby on a doorstep, but not before turning the tables on Walter and setting in motion a tragedy of epic proportions. Their orphaned child, adopted by an adoring family and named Edward Aaron King, grows up to become a billionaire Internet tycoon and an international celebrity—the "King of Search"—who unknowingly, but inexorably, hurtles through life toward a fate he may have no power to shape.

An instant classic—David Guterson's most daring and dazzling novel yet—that brings a contemporary urgency to one of the greatest stories of all time.

Ed King Details

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Author : David Guterson

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From Reader Review Ed King for online ebook

Kiwiflora says

Sometimes a little knowledge can be a bad thing. So it was probably just as well I had only read one review of this book before starting it and that was some months prior so I had forgotten what it was all about. It becomes apparent fairly early on that this novel is loosely based on the Greek myth Oedipus Rex, a story I have only a basic knowledge of. Actually that is all you need to get the comparisons with the plot of this novel. If I was a student of Greek myths or ancient Greek dramas, I would be very disappointed in this novel as a modern retelling of the Oedipus story. But as I don't have such a background I was able to enjoy the book simply for its story telling. I had been led to believe it was a weird book. It has element of weirdness in it, and at times is pretty far fetched, but nevertheless very readable, satisfying, and quite a good story.

Reading the reviews of this book by such bodies as the Guardian newspaper, New York Times, and the Telegraph are almost as entertaining, diverse and interesting as reading the book itself, which hilariously won the Guardian's 2011 Bad Sex Writing Award. And it really is.

But this book is not hilarious or really humorous at all. The characters are not really very nice people. Their lives are focused entirely on self-gratification and material gain and this results in their unpleasant and tragic lives. We could blame the society they live in - our contemporary Western one - that is set up to allow such people to exist and procreate. And yet nothing really has changed since the days of Oedipus Rex - greed, lust, narcissism are as much a part of the human condition now as they were then; the means of attaining it are just slightly different. The story is told too in a manner very much like a parable or moral story - we don't feel we are part of the characters, it is almost as if we are observers of the action as it unfolds.

And so the story opens in 1962 on the US west coast with a very young Diane fresh from England spending the summer working as an au pair for a family in which the mother is in hospital. Lust doesn't take long to show itself and before long Diane is pregnant to her employer, Walter. Blackmail and subsequent abandonment of the baby soon follow. To make ends meet the very beautiful Diane becomes a high class hooker. Her empty life, and her determination to remain young and beautiful take her places that most of us would prefer not to go to. Meanwhile the baby is adopted by a Jewish couple and becomes Ed King. He grows up with a younger brother, Simon, in a perfect childhood full of love, support, encouragement, extended family - everything a child could want. And he is never told he is adopted. Both boys are brilliant mathematics students and end up getting into the new and exciting world of information technology - computers and Silicone Valley. Ed has a few issues in his latter teenage years, but like many teenagers comes through, showing himself to be a genius at what he does and very quickly begins raking in the money, the fame, the plaudits that go with it all. And naturally his path crosses with that of Walter and that of Diane during the course of his life.

While reading this book, it is difficult not to think about the nature vs nurture argument. Here we have two boys of different biological parents brought up in the same environment, both highly intelligent, ambitious and hard working. There is strong rivalry between the two but probably no more nor less than in many families. The paths of their lives do go in different directions, but again no more nor less than in any other family. While the characters of Walter and Diane are not very nice people, and Ed does inherit some of his mother's ruthlessness, he does have a heart and feels genuine love, compassion and sorrow for happenings in his life. I can't say I liked Ed, but I did feel that he was a much more rounded, balanced character than perhaps some of the others who were either good (Ed's adoptive family) or not so good (his birth parents).

A good read, with plenty to think about.

Santa Cyopik says

Snow Falling on Cedars was recommended to me so while at the library I picked up that book and another, "Ed King", by the same author. Am I glad I did! This was the most enjoyable read I've had in awhile.....like nothing I've read before...light but dark....didn't want it to end but of course, it had to. A great achievement for David Guterson..thank you!

Katrina says

. Could have been so much more. Was really looking forward to reading it and then....nothing. Too much detail about things that added nothing to the plot; cared nothing about the characters; and when Guterson finally gets around to the core of the story, he ends it in like two chapters. Very disappointing.

Barbara says

The storyline in this modern take on the 'Oedipus' tale is well known, so the basic plot is not a surprise.

In 1962, Walter Cousins - a nebbishy, married actuary living in Seattle - gets his 15-year-old British au pair, Diane Burroughs, pregnant. The wily girl leaves the baby on a doorstep and demands that Walter send her monthly payments in perpetuity. Walter, thinking Diane is raising the child, accedes.

As it happens the baby is put into a foundling home and adopted by an upscale Jewish couple, Dan and Alice King. They name the child Edward Aaron. The Kings soon have a biological son, Simon. 'Eddie and Simie' have very happy childhoods including schools for gifted children, a loving extended family, sports, hobbies, bar mitzvahs, etc.

When Ed enters the teen years, his rebellious nature leads him to become very sexually active, both with teen girls and an 'an older woman' (his teacher). Young Ed's reckless behavior soon causes a road accident that kills his biological father, Walter Cousins. Ed feels terrible guilt about the accident though he doesn't know who Walter is. In fact Ed doesn't even know he's adopted.

Some time after Ed finishes college he meets his biological mother Diane - an older woman who's maintained her beauty with rigorous dieting, work-outs, and plastic surgery - and marries her. And that's the jist of the story.

The book is very long and follows the life of each of the main characters in great detail.

Walter: has numerous affairs and is a failure as a husband and father; his children - Barry and Tina - don't like him and flee home as soon as they can.

Diane: starts her own 'escort' business when she's sixteen (her smarts here are completely not believable);

marries a rich ski manufacturing scion; fools her husband into thinking she's infertile; eventually becomes single again.

Dan and Alice King: fine Jewish parents who raise their kids right. The King family atmosphere - including all the 'stick their two cents in' grandparents - is amusing, entertaining, and rings true.

Ed King: very bright young man who apparently inherited his biological mother's wiliness and business acumen. As the book's main protagonist we follow Ed's life step by step, including his youthful love for candy and comic books, swimming ability, math smarts, sexual exploits, psychiatric therapy, success as a 'search engine king', eventual wealth...all the way to middle age when Ed discovers some troubling truths.

I had a hard time getting through this book. The story plods along slowly, most of the people are not likable. and - in the end - I really didn't care what happened to Ed, Diane, or most of the other characters. Narcissistic Diane is especially appalling to me. She's clearly a capable girl who didn't need to be a blackmailer, prostitute, user, and liar.

This is a hard book for me to rate. I debated giving it 2 stars (for tediousness) but the effort put into the writing and characterizations get 3 stars.

Note: I listened to the audio version of this book, narrated by Arthur Morey. Though most of Morey's narration is fine, his 'British accent' (for Diane) is appalling. British accents are pretty familiar to most people from TV and movies and his is weird and nowhere near authentic. This became quite off-putting and pulled me right out of the story time after time.

You can follow my reviews at <http://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot.com/>

Diane Ferbrache says

Since I loved *Snow Falling on Cedars*, I have read and enjoyed to varying degrees every one of Guterson's later books. I was intrigued by the *Oedipus Rex* references in the reviews and (of course) by the Seattle setting. I have to say I was very disappointed. Guterson's characters are interesting enough and each of their stories caught my interest (even the minor ones), but overall, the storyline builds to the inevitable discovery that Ed is sleeping with his mother and by that time, I didn't care and just wanted the big reveal to be over and done with. (not a spoiler since all the earlier reviews explained the *Oedipus* references, and the title is a dead give away.)

Diane is a 15 year old au pair (lying about her age) in the temporary employ of Walter Cousins. She gets pregnant with his baby. He panics and dismisses her when he discovers she is not 18 and when his wife returns home, but promises to help her financially until she gives up the baby for adoption. She runs away with the baby, leaves it on a doorstep in Portland, but continues to extort money from Walter lying that she needs the money to raise the child. The reader knows that the baby will grow up to be Ed King, but how the rest of the story plays out is full of surprises. Diane and Ed live parallel lives until they meet about 3/4 of the way through the book.

I liked the twists and turns in the plot, although sometimes the "surprises" seemed contrived. Equally distracting were all the pop culture references scattered throughout the book in an effort, I suppose, to ground the setting solidly in Seattle (and Portland and eastern Washington) in the 1960s, 70s, 80s, etc. While I

always like books that add realistic touches like movie, book, and TV titles and real cities and roads and restaurants, this one is so chock full it almost seems the author is trying to prove that he really remembers all these details of growing up in Washington state in that time period. Often I was taken out of the story by those details rather than becoming immersed in the time and place. (Cynical comment: Could it be that the story starts in 1962 on purpose? Just in time to coincide and capitalize on the 50th anniversary of the World's Fair? That's a BIG deal here in Seattle.)

I guess I was just disappointed. This book received glowing reviews on line and in print. I was excited about a Seattle author writing about a Seattle character, and the literary reference intrigued the teacher/librarian in me. Perhaps I was expecting too much, but I found this book lacking something. I found myself skimming pages occasionally and looking forward to the moment of discovery so I could be done with the book. That's just sad!

Jill says

Ed King gets off to a galloping start, taking the reader along for a propulsive and exhilarating ride. We learn quickly that Walter Cousins – an actuary who weighs risk for a living has just taken an enormous risk of his own while his wife is temporarily institutionalized. He sleeps with the Barbie-doll-like Diane, his young au pair, resulting in her pregnancy. She leaves the baby on the doorstep in an affluent neighborhood, and he is eventually adopted by a well-to-do and loving Jewish family, and given the name Ed King.

This darkly humorous and inventive novel follows the arc of Sophocles's Oedipus Rex. Those who are familiar with Oedipus Rex will know precisely where the novel is going; those who don't will be in for some jolting surprises. With the second audience in mind, I will not reveal the complicated and ultimately tragic plot twists.

I will say that the reimaging of Oedipus Rex and placing it in modern times is extraordinarily clever. Take this exchange from Walter Cousins and his daughter Tina, when she asks about his job: "People in business want hard information about the past and present so they can make predictions about the future." Her retort: "Why don't they just live?"

Living in the moment is indeed what occurs in Ed King, as he indulges in more and more dalliances with older girls/women. Sophocles mixes with Freud as Ed King's massive Oedipus complex is explored. Ed is on track to rise to the "king" of a highly successful Internet company called Pythia, but always in the background, his fate is determined, ready to be revealed.

This novel could easily have earned 5 stars were it not for some unevenness. Sometimes, Mr. Guterson gets in his own way, with copious detail that derails the reader from the riveting action. Interestingly, the least interesting character is Ed King himself, who seems to be a one-dimensional character who is propelled through life to meet his fate. Contrasted with Diane, his birth mother – a fascinating depiction of a scheming woman determined to survive at any cost – he comes up short. Still, this is an ambitious work and deserves readership for its audacious vision.

Renee Curtis says

Many people criticize this book because they couldn't find a character in the book to like. Yes, the characters are extremely flawed individuals. Yes, they are very unlikable but they were the type of characters that I love to hate.

This is a very dark novel so if you are looking for a joyful summer read this is not the book for you. It was like a train wreck, I just couldn't look away.

I liked that it was set in the Western Washington area.

I could say a lot more but don't want to spoil anything for potential readers. I am glad I knew nothing about this book going into it.

Tom Burke says

There should be a special designation for authors like Guterson. His storytelling is superb and his characters come alive for me despite the fact that they are mostly unremarkable. Like a lot of plots, this one follows several lives that are not immediately connected, but eventually become entangled. It is well planned, well developed, and it all comes neatly together in a nice little package.

The problem is, and this is something I have observed in books with alarming frequency, there is no there there. The story just kind of meanders along and never really follows an arc that makes the trip worthwhile. Authors can be so skilled at their craft of telling stories that it largely disguises the fact that they don't really have a story.

For example: are we to believe that Ed King actually has a teenaged incidence of road rage in which the other driver is killed in a flaming crash--where the other driver turns out to be his biological father? And then, years later we are led on the flight of fancy that has our hero, Ed, falling in love and marrying a woman many years older than him who, it turns out, happens to be his biological mother??

Ed is a great character even though he is a spoiled brat of a kid who is only out for his own self indulgent ends. He is real and he is human. He makes mistakes and keeps on keeping on.

I know the attraction Greek Mythology has on the culture, but why must we revisit the Oedipus story and go through the gyrations described above just so we can say: ahh, Oedipus.

I look forward to reading something by Guterson a little less calculating and a little more honest

Ron Charles says

In the tissue-thin pages of "The Norton Anthology," the canon of world literature looks delicate and staid, but it's as violent a Darwinian contest as any fought in the primeval forest. Strong, adaptable stories survive; muddled, time-bound stories die. Euripides' "Medea" still roars over the millennia. George Lillo's "The London Merchant" might have taken the 18th century by storm, but now it sleeps with the woolly mammoth.

Sigmund Freud, in his foundational work "The Interpretation of Dreams," considered why, despite the passage of 2,500 years, "Oedipus Rex" is still capable "of moving modern men no less than it moved the

contemporary Greeks.” He speculated that “there must be a voice within us which is prepared to recognize the compelling power of fate in ‘Oedipus.’?” He went on to recognize in this dysfunctional family — long before “Cougar Town” came to ABC — a basic pattern of psychological development: a sexual desire for one’s mother and a murderous rage against one’s father. Psychology has evolved since those heady days in Vienna, but there’s no denying the immutable terror of Sophocles’ tragedy. Like other archetypal stories, it lends itself to creative retelling, restaging and reinterpretation.

Which only adds to our eager anticipation of David Guterson’s new novel, “Ed King,” a modern-day version of “Oedipus Rex.” In the three novels since his spectacularly successful debut, “Snow Falling on Cedars” (1994), Guterson has focused on alienated people driven into the woods by shame, or illness, or a thirst for the truth. The disgraced king of Thebes would seem to fit comfortably in that line of his tragic loners, and, indeed, there’s something weirdly titillating about seeing the ancient details of Sophocles’ story transferred to the late 20th century. But that titillation isn’t enough to animate this ill-conceived novel, which somebody should have strangled at birth.

The opening, though, when Guterson sets down the terms of his re-imagined tale, is perversely appealing. Walter Cousins is a philandering actuary who “weighs risks for a living” but now finds himself troubled by fate. With his wife in the hospital, he’s left alone with his children’s nanny, Diane, a flirtatious young Brit who was “a drop-dead ringer for the sixteen-year-old Disney darling who’d been in newspapers and magazines lately for turning down the lead role in ‘Lolita.’?” On a family outing to the Fine Arts Pavilion one afternoon, they all stare at a painting called “Oedipus and the Sphinx.” With those allusions firmly in place, events proceed apace in a sweaty-palmed narrative that finds 15-year-old Diane pregnant and Walter’s life on the edge of ruin.

This first section is far and away the most engaging, and the themes of risk, fate and family determinism all cleverly point toward trouble. Walter’s panic tests his faith in statistics and his power to control events, and Diane’s transformation from cute temptress to steely extortionist is even more delicious (she’s the whore with a heart of bile who enlivens every scene). But once Diane abandons her baby on a random doorstep, the novel begins to skate through unfolding events. Where Sophocles holds us arrested for a single day, Guterson zips through the years in a kind of narrative shorthand that tracks events in the Greek play without translating its meaning, its power or its horror. The characters are set at such a dulling distance from us that usually we can’t feel anything but distaste for them.

Baby Ed grows up to be a wild, brilliant young man (perfect except for his slightly deformed ankles). His adoptive Jewish parents, the Kings, treat him like a prince. (Get it?) He has a nasty run-in with you-know-who on the highway. But later, as an amalgamation of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Larry Page, he makes a fortune by figuring out how to solve impossibly difficult riddles on the Internet. And then he meets a sexy older woman????.

At that point, Guterson stops the action and addresses us directly in a licentious tone that should excite any middle-school boy who makes it this far: “Now we approach the part of the story a reader couldn’t be blamed for having skipped forward to.” Actually, I wouldn’t blame you for skipping this book entirely, but if you must, turn to page 236. What follows are three pages that might very well win the Literary Review’s annual Bad Sex Award, including my personal “ick” moment: “Ed smelled vulnerably digestive.” In the smutty hands of Chuck Palahniuk, all this might have been a gas, but here it just made me want to take my wife’s hairpins and stab out my eyes.

So what exactly are we to make of this novel, which eventually sees Ed at the height of his hubris evolve into a billionaire version of Ray Kurzweil, determined to live forever “in the very heart and mind of God”?

Almost every line is infected with an acid tone meant to punish these trite, ambitious, self-absorbed people. Guterson's criticism of the corrosive effects of vanity, money and media mania, which animated his far more thoughtful novels "Our Lady of the Forest" and "The Other," is in these pages relentless and obvious. He's knocking on the doors of Claire Messud, Jonathan Franzen and Lionel Shriver, but he doesn't demonstrate the requisite wit or stylistic panache to pull off that kind of satire. The result is a mirthless story that's tedious where it should be suspenseful, bitter where it should feel cathartic.

A tragedy, indeed.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/enterta...>

Bonnie Brody says

Ed King had me mesmerized from the first page and did not let up throughout the book. It is a contemporary retelling of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex set in the American northwest. The protagonist's name, Ed King, means Oedipus Rex. Ed is short for Oedipus and Rex means 'king' in Greek. Ed's middle name is Aaron and one could read into this, 'Ed, A King'. There is no real subtlety to the retelling. The characters change but the story remains the same. Ed kills his father and marries his mother. It is a Greek tragedy of great proportions and strength, hubris and loss.

The story opens with Walter Cousins, an actuary, temporarily left without childcare while his wife is hospitalized with a nervous breakdown. The time is the 1960's. Ed hires a fifteen year-old British au pair, Diane, and begins the biggest mistake of his life - sleeping with her. She becomes pregnant and they agree to have the baby put up for adoption. Instead, she leaves the infant on a front porch in a prosperous neighborhood. The child is eventually adopted by an upper middle class Jewish family and raised with much love.

Diane blackmails Walter for \$500 per month in perpetuity, telling him that she kept the child and needs the money for childcare. The character of Diane is well wrought. She is interesting, beguiling, and sly to the max. Over and over she rises to the top only to be brought down by her own hubris.

Ed goes to Stanford where he is a math whiz. After graduation, with some start-up money from his family, he begins a company that is called Pythia and it is reminiscent of Microsoft, as is his character similar to Bill Gates. Ed also is similar to Steve Jobs in that he was adopted and has started up one of the most successful businesses on the planet.

Pythia becomes the largest data search company in the world and Ed is one of the richest men in the world. He has a thing for older women and, wouldn't you know, somehow he finds and ends up with Diane, sixteen years his senior but still very attractive. His family is a bit troubled by the age difference but learn to accept the marriage.

During his teen years, Ed is a bit of a renegade. He likes to drive fast cars, has little use for adult wisdom and goes his own way. One day he is driving with his girlfriend and a man in a BMW gives him the finger. Ed is incensed and is determined to get the best of this stranger. Ed ends up driving him off the road and this man is killed. His name is Walter Cousins. This episode is an existential moment in Ed's development. He does not know who Walter is, but the thought of having killed someone else makes him feel psychically ill. He ruminates on it and can not get it off his mind. He gets rid of his car and tries to move on with his life. His

girlfriend can't understand why all of this bothers Ed. No one saw the accident happen and, as far as the law is concerned, Ed is off - free and clear. However, he is punished by himself.

The character of Ed does not have the same depth as Diane. Aside from the existential dilemma posed by killing Walter, Ed has it easy. He's brilliant and arrogant, filled with hubris. Diane is not only interesting and filled with adventure, but each chapter about her brings on new information that just whets the appetite for more. Ed is much more bland. His story is told from his birth to his death with adequacy but lacks the component of thrill that accompanies Diane's life.

Guterson is a masterful writer. He knows how to rein the reader in and just hold him captive. There was not one page in this book that bored me. I kept reading with interest and delight as the novel progressed. I highly admire Guterson's way of redoing a classic in contemporary time and still retaining all the aspects of the original that made it such a classic tragedy in the first place. This is one of my top ten books read this year, without a doubt.

Doreen says

The book is a computer-age retelling of Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* which Aristotle considered the perfect tragedy. Unfortunately, Guterson's reworking of the Greek tale of patricide and incest is not quite so perfect; in fact, it won the 2011 Literary Review Bad Sex in Fiction Award for the worst description of a sex scene in a novel.

The setting is Oregon, beginning in the 1960s. Walter Cousins has an affair with his underage British au pair, Diane Burroughs, who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son whom she abandons. The child is adopted by Dan and Alice King who name him Edward Aaron (his middle name a salute to the King of Rock and Roll). The rest of the novel covers Diane and Ed's lives. Diane constantly remakes herself; at different times she is an escort, wealthy wife, much-less-wealthy divorcee, cocaine dealer and life coach. For Ed, everything comes easily, since he has both looks and intelligence; with his attitude of superiority and entitlement, his encounter with Walter on an isolated road has predictable consequences. Ed and Diane meet and marry and become the king and queen of an internet domain. When Ed discovers that he was adopted and learns the identity of his parents, the result is a supersonic version of the myth of Icarus.

One problem with the novel is that it is long on exposition and short on dialogue. There is a definite lack of showing and much telling in the vein that this happened and then this happened and then this happened.

Another weakness is that all the characters are superficial and amoral. No one is likable, and their unrelenting superficiality and amorality begin to grate. Ed (a composite of modern America's gods of technology - Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg) is no tragic hero: he is not a good man with one major character flaw.

The soullessness of the characters is intentional. It conveys a message about modern culture since the book is somewhat a social satire with commentary on such topics as cosmetic surgery, the violence of gaming, global warming, and the ruthlessness of tech-titans.

The strongest appeal of the novel is seeing how the mythical elements have been modernized. Anyone who has read Sophocles will appreciate how some of the original tale has been incorporated: Ed, like Oedipus, is

born to a man of dubious morals, is abandoned, and is passed on to a "kingly" family. Both experience foot problems. Ed's attempt to create artificial intelligence can be interpreted as his attempt to crack the riddle of the Sphinx. Ed names his search engine Pythia, the name of the Oracle of Delphi. The excerpts of internet chatter at the beginning and end serve as a type of Greek chorus. Unfortunately, sometimes the parallels are made too obvious. Does Ed really have to be told that he suffers from "an overwhelming and dangerous hubris"?

It can be hoped that Guterson's book will entice people to read or re-read the original drama; its lessons about ambition and hubris need not be modernized to be seen as relevant today as they were in the time of Sophocles and Aristotle.

Please check out my blog (<http://schatjesshelves.blogspot.ca/>) and follow me on Twitter (@DCYakabuski).

Wendy says

Loved it! I wasn't a fan of Snow Falling on Cedars so I was a bit hesitant to request this galley. Boy was I glad I did. Wonderful retelling of the greek tragedy. I can't wait to recommend this to patrons, although I'll have to be careful as I have a feeling those expecting this to be like his prior works will be disappointed.

Teresa Lukey says

The story of Ed King sounded like an interesting one, how could I pass up the story of a young mother abandoning her baby on a doorstep in the night. I had read other reviews and people mentioned that this is a retelling of the story of Oedipus Rex, which I had not read, so I didn't know how the story was going to turn out.

At the start of the story, Walter Cousins, a father of two, struggling to manage his family while his wife is hospitalized with depression hires Diane, a young au pair. He and the au pair, only 15 at the time, have sexual relations and she ends up pregnant. Walter is able to keep Diane's pregnancy from his wife, but Diane ends up running off with the infant boy instead of giving him up for adoption. Walter is in his 30's and a bit of a sleaze-ball if you ask me, so I don't feel bad for him when Diane starts blackmailing him for money. Unbeknownst to Walter, Diane left the infant boy on the porch at a well-to-do home in Portland, OR.

But Diane is not such a sweet person either, she lies and "sexes" her way in to a comfortable lifestyle, which she seems to enjoy quite a bit but mocks all the same. Eventually, she connects with a younger man a museum and leads a satisfying life after that.

The story moves between Walter, Diane and Ed as time moves along, until finally, the story converges and the shocking truth is made know to all characters involved. If you, too, do not know the story of Oedipus Rex, I recommend that you do not read it prior. The story will be so much more shocking. Although there are uncomfortable moments in this book as the truth reveals itself, it is none the less a truly a unique read.

Kristen Carannante says

Ed King is a "foundling" abandoned on the doorstep of a suburban Portland house by his British nanny birth mother who became pregnant during a consensual affair with the man in the household in which she was employed. After being brought to the authorities by the residents of this house, Ed is adopted and raised by a loving family who never reveals to him that he is adopted.

The book alternates between the conniving birth mother's, the weak biological father's, and the loving adoptive family's lives in the ensuing years.

Where it all begins to decline is when a series of completely improbable and unbelievable events occur. It's humorous in a dark sort of way, but completely disturbing. More detail would spoil it for those who haven't read it yet.

It was an enjoyable read, but I was expecting something as good as Guterson's prior work. I never would have known this was the same author who wrote *Snow Falling on Cedars*.

Susan (aka Just My Op) says

If you're expecting another *Snow Falling on Cedars*, you may be disappointed in *Ed King* - this is an altogether different kind of book. I loved it anyway.

Ed himself isn't introduced until quite a few pages into the book, although there are some postings about him at the very beginning. And most blurbs and reviewers have mentioned the whole Oedipus Rex theme. Knowing that going in, I found the book to be funny and entertaining, with a more important theme than the O.R. One. The consistent theme is that no matter who you are or what you do, bad karma is going to haunt you. And about everyone in these pages has bad karma.

The humor is dark in a shoulda-seen-that-coming kind of way, lots of irony. The characters are not necessarily likeable but I still wanted to learn more about them. The time period covers several decades, and I enjoyed the references to time-appropriate products and people, Walkmans and past presidents, early computing and video games. In my opinion, it's a thoroughly enjoyable book.

Thank you to Vine and the publisher for giving me an uncorrected proof for review.
