

## East of Midnight

**Karen S. Humeniuk**

Archway Publishing (Aug 26, 2019)

Hardcover \$42.95 (426pp)

978-1-4808-7534-0

*East of Midnight is a Christian novel about a blossoming relationship that falls apart after a catastrophic accident.*

In Karen S. Humeniuk's heartwarming Christian romance *East of Midnight*, a promising relationship breaks and is rebuilt through faith, growth, and forgiveness.

Lydia's best friend's mother is killed in a tragic accident; the event ends up driving a wedge between Lydia and Cameron, especially after Cameron makes an insensitive move at a party. The future appears bleak for the couple.

Cameron wishes to rekindle what they shared, but he still has a lot to work through in his personal life as he struggles to come to terms with the death of his role model grandfather and his father's constant condemnation and indifference.

Hoping for a change in perspective and for some new direction, Cameron leaves North Carolina for Wyoming to work on a ranch. As the settings change, so does Cameron's attitude; he becomes more positive, with time away for introspection and room to make plans.

Cameron's story provides a foundation for the novel. The plot moves to show his growth and the improvement of his relationships. Cameron's grandfather, who Cameron has a close bond with, dies as Cameron becomes an adult. His strained relationship with his father and his broken relationship with Lydia add to his frustration, but as time passes, he learns to cope and become a better person.

Through conversations between characters, the novel addresses sensitive topics in a careful way, including an instance of rape. A separate story line concerns Marah, Lydia's paternal aunt, who is addicted to prescription drugs, and her recovery process. The book's list of characters is useful in understanding their relationships, especially given their extensive number.

The novel's Christian undertone is apparent throughout Cameron and Marah's stories. On the ranch, Cameron engages in conversations in which his friend, Drew, tries to reassure him that God is still present in his life. Similar conversations appear elsewhere to instill hope.

However, an explanation for Lydia and Cameron's disagreement is repeated in different parts of the book, and their conflict is extended for too long. Cameron thinks about Lydia on a constant basis, but he does not make any substantial move to iron out things with her for a long time.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (February 3, 2020)

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