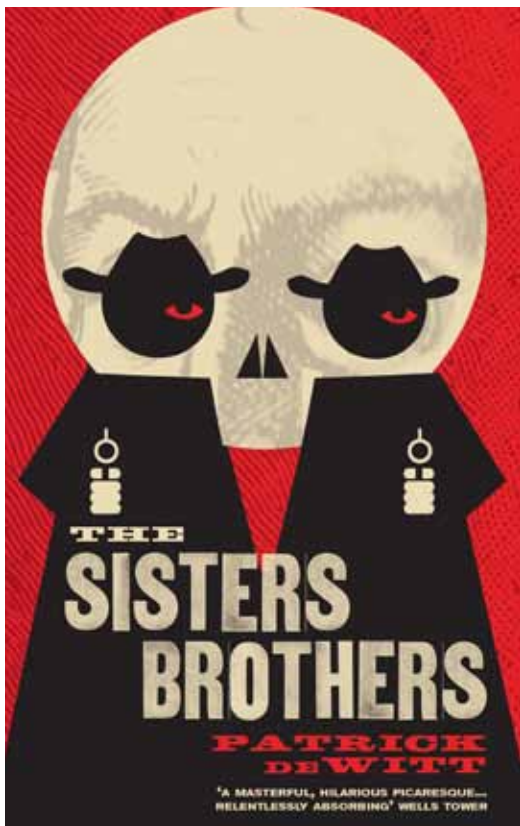




## Reader's Guide



Other books by Patrick deWitt  
*Ablutions* (2009)

# The Sisters Brothers

## Patrick deWitt

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### About the author

Patrick deWitt was born 1975 in British Columbia, Canada, and has also lived in California, Washington, and Oregon, where he now resides with his wife and child. His first novel, *Ablutions*, was published in 2009, and was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice. He wrote the screenplay for *Terri*, a feature film directed by Azazel Jacobs and starring John C. Reilly. *Terri* will had its world premiere in January at the Sundance film festival.

### The Sisters Brothers

From the author of the acclaimed *Ablutions*, this dazzlingly original novel is a darkly funny, offbeat western about a reluctant assassin and his murderous brother. Oregon, 1851. Eli and Charlie Sisters, notorious professional killers, are on their way to California to kill a man named Hermann Kermit Warm. On the way, the brothers have a series of unsettling and violent experiences in the Darwinian landscape of Gold Rush America. Charlie makes money and kills anyone who stands in his way; Eli doubts his vocation and falls in love. And they bicker a lot. Then they get to California, and discover that Warm is an inventor who has come up with a magical formula, which could make all of them very rich. What happens next is utterly gripping, strange and sad. Told in deWitt's darkly comic and arresting style, *The Sisters Brothers* is the kind of western the Coen Brothers might write - stark, unsettling and with a keen eye for the perversity of human motivation. Like his debut novel *Ablutions*, it is a novel about the things you tell yourself in order to be able to continue to live the life you find yourself in, and what happens when those stories no longer work. It is an inventive and strange and beautifully controlled piece of fiction and displays an exciting expansion of deWitt's range.

### Discussion points

There is some violent imagery in *The Sisters Brothers*. Would you agree that *The Sisters Brothers* is not for the 'delicate' reader?

In an attempt to categorise *The Sisters Brothers* it has been described as an anti-western, a black comedy, and a tale of 'two buddies', do you think it is best described as a 'genre bending' novel?

In a recent interview Patrick deWitt spoke about crafting Eli's narration "I had to ask myself what I find appealing in others (frankness, self-deprecation, curiosity, morbidity) and then try to blend these traits into the narrative voice". Has Patrick deWitt succeeded?

Out of all the offbeat characters that the brothers meet on their travels do you have a favourite, is one more memorable than another?

### Themed reading

Cormac McCarthy *Blood Meridian*  
Cervantes *Don Quixote*  
Charles Portis *True Grit*

### Useful links

**Patrick deWitt's website**  
<http://www.patrickdewitt.net>  
**Interview with Patrick deWitt**  
<http://www.granta.com/Online-Only/Interview-Patrick-deWitt>  
**Publisher's website**  
<http://grantabooks.com>