## Ghost Ocean



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Set in the border area between southwestern New Mexico and northern Mexico, "The Ghost Ocean" is a story of modern-day crime and violence. While tracking a wolf killer, Bureau of Land Management ranger Will Mann is startled by gunfire and then he finds the body of a twelve-year-old girl. In the remote Gila Wilderness, violence is a way of life. The area is home to conflicting groups, including ranchers and environmentalists; drug runners, people smugglers, and law enforcement officials. During the investigation of the young girls death, every group is suspect. The ghost ocean of the title covers the ancient sea beds that were once southwestern New Mexico. Found here are portraits drawn in words, with sentences so wonderfully trim and precise that Hemingway himself would have admired them. Richard Benke has perfectly balanced both sides of the border and both sides of the ecological war by revealing all its human participants simply as human beings, slowly, agonizingly coming together. The book is a murder mystery. It is an earth mystery, and we must read to the end to see if either can be solved. Max Evans, author of "Madam Millie" and "The Rounders"

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