



Hollywood: A Third Memoir

Larry McMurtry

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"One thing I've always liked about Hollywood is its zip, or speed. The whole industry depends to some extent on talent spotting. The hundreds of agents, studio executives, and producers who roam the streets of the city of Los Angeles let very little in the way of talent slip by."

In this final installment of the memoir trilogy that includes *Books* and *Literary Life*, Larry McMurtry, "the master of the show-stopping anecdote" (*O: The Oprah Magazine*) turns his own keenly observing eye to his rollercoaster romance with Hollywood. As both the creator of numerous works successfully adapted by others for film and television (*Terms of Endearment*, *Lonesome Dove*, and the Emmy-nominated *The Murder of Mary Phagan*) and the author of screenplays including *The Last Picture Show* (with Peter Bogdanovich), *Streets of Laredo*, and the Oscar-winning *Brokeback Mountain* (both with longtime writing partner Diana Ossana), McMurtry has seen all the triumphs and frustrations that Tinseltown has to offer a writer, and he recounts them in a voice unfettered by sentiment and yet tinged with his characteristic wry humor.

Beginning with his sudden entrée into the world of film as the author of *Horseman, Pass By*—adapted into the Paul Newman–starring *Hud* in 1963—McMurtry regales readers with anecdotes that find him holding hands with Cybill Shepherd, watching Jennifer Garner's audition tape, and taking lunch at Chasen's again and again. McMurtry fans and Hollywood hopefuls alike will find much to cherish in these pages, as McMurtry illuminates life behind the scenes in America's dream factory.

Hollywood: A Third Memoir Details

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Iva says

Larry McMurtry's take on Hollywood is unique as he has shifted between being a screenwriter and author. He is comfortable with Hollywood people, exposes the snobs, but has made real friends there such as Diane Keaton and Swiftly Lazar. It is a quick read as were the two memoirs that preceeded it, but full of industry tidbits. A must for McMurtry fans -- wait til you read about McMurtry impersonators -- and those wanting to understand the workings of Hollywood.

Linda says

This light-weight morsel of a memoir, is of little consequence. From THE LAST PICTURE SHOW to BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN, McMurtry replays his film writing career in a careless and ho hum manner. He declares he loves to write fiction and it is easy for him. He confesses that screen writing is different than fiction writing, and that he had not a clue when Alan Paluka hired him work on a script of SPAWN OF EVIL. He extolls the talents of his writing partner Diana Osanna and does not brag that he has worked on scripts with Diane Keaton and Cybil Sheppard. He does not brag at all. He seems rather amazed that the whole thing has played out the way it has, although LONESOME DOVE is mentioned no less than a million times and that seems to have been a ticket. The first part of an apparently on-going series of memoir was BOOKS: A MEMOIR. I quite enjoyed that book and its bookish message. This message seems to be that screen writing can be fun; it is tedious; you need some background; many screenwriters are unhappy; he is not. Life is good. (Cool pictures of the movie stars he has worked with on the cover of this book.)

Edwin Arnaudín says

What I hoped would be the most enjoyable of McMurtry's memoir trilogy ends up being possibly the most bland. You'd think that with so much experience in the film industry, McMurtry's anecdotes would carry a little more zing, but instead he goes out of his way to say that he really doesn't give a damn about Hollywood and finds the whole scene quite boring. Reading it, I was reminded of Neil Gaiman's Oscar diary from earlier this year in which he repeatedly noted how out of place he felt at the ceremony and how rude and cold everyone seemed. Coming from mostly introverted writers, they're both probably accurate portrayals of how I'd react to the whole life (being an outsider), but as one wanting to bask in the glamour of movies, these reports are equally sobering and disappointing.

More interesting that stories of his screenplays that have been made are those of the numerous scripts that *haven't* been made and are likely doomed to wallow in vaults for all eternity. But as this 2-year journey with McMurtry comes to a close, I'm not sad. If anything, I'm further motivated to be a published author. If McMurtry can get away with the kind of crap he pulls in these memoirs (and, as he admits, in many of his novels and screenplays), then anyone can.

Grandma Weaver says

I liked this book much more than the first two of this memoir. I almost felt like he was just sitting and telling me about his time and experiences. He told stories about actors and directors, some I had heard about before but more that I hadn't. Hollywood is a strange town. The bottom line is the reason/chance for every movie made. He talks about working on a project for ten years and still have it fall thru. I thought some of the best stories were about agents. Some were really cutthroat stories and others very sweet, in particular Irving Lazur. (I hope I got his name correct) While I really liked this book I must confess to loving McMurtry. I think I have all his books and have read almost all of them. I think I might marry him when I grow up. lol.

Carol says

Brief. Breezy. Lots of names dropped, a few I knew, most I did not. If you're looking for real stories, Hollywood dirt, you won't find it here. Most "stories" are covered in a sentence or two.

SamT says

This is a book that only the staunchest of McMurtry fans would find enjoyable. Since I fit into that membership of staunch fans I select his third to be the best of his memoirs.

Having read all forty-three of his books (both good and bad) listed on the page previous to the title sheet I dreaded reading this one. I feared that it would be on the order of Film Flam: Essays on Hollywood, a short, mostly uninteresting McMurtry book which took me a long time to read.

The third memoir is also a short book but for me it was a page turner, and I read it in less than twenty-four hours.

McMurtry has recently been criticized for his short chapters one of which contains less than sixty words. I found the short chapters (most are actually 2 or 3 pages) to be just about right and as the author says, "there is no particular reason why a chapter should be long."

And, still on the subject of short chapters, McMurtry states, ".....there are very many subjects about which I have something to say - just not much."

Vel Veeter says

If Larry McMurtry is to be believed, and why wouldn't he be, he's to blame for Tom Hanks inflicting us with his constant discussions of typewriters. Apparently Larry McMurtry famously has written all his work on typewriters and said as much in interviews around Brokeback Mountain's fame. Because he won the Oscar for his writing for that film and famously showed up to the Oscars in jeans and a tux jacket, he put the germ of typewriters into Tom Hanks's head and here we go.

So this book also focuses heavily on his Hollywood days. In part this is about how his books became movies, but more so how he became a kind of script maven because his novels had become successful movies. His first novel Horseman Pass By became the movie Hud and that offered him the chance to write a lot of screenplays. If you look at his IMDB page, you don't see much, but apparently his job was to start the screenplay up, create characters and plot and setting, and then someone else would take over and create the

structure of the narrative and the dialog. So even though there's been a handful of movies based on his novels, he was only ever involved in a couple. So something like Brokeback Mountain was the sole creation of Larry McMurtry and his writing partner Diana Ossana (who was also a producer) from the work of Annie Proulx. It's interesting because I remember him being around during that Oscar season and I recall thinking...oh, weird that's the Lonesome Dove guy. I didn't realize I would be here.

And so the same kinds of weird stories that pepper his The Literary Life, you get here talking about people in and around Hollywood. A lot about Peter Bogdanovich and Diane Keaton mostly.

Dan says

I saw this little memoir (apparently the third of three McMurtry has written on his life as a screenwriter and novelist) as I was browsing in the bookstore the other night. I'd like my money back - if I had to guess, I'd say that McMurtry belched this rambling trifle up one night in a matter of hours while hunting and pecking away at his manual typewriter over a couple (or five or six) highballs. Talk about phoning one in. What was the point of this?

Scott Stirling says

Short book I picked up at a consignment shop. Mostly interesting for McMurtry's inside perspective on films for which he wrote screenplays and/or books of his made into movies or TV series. Short, breezy chapters on Sybil Shepherd, Brokeback Mountain (he wrote the screenplay), director Peter Bogdanovich, The Last Picture Show and Hud (Paul Newman film based on McMurtry's novel, *Horseman, Pass By*).

Zachary says

This is the least awful of McMurtry's three short memoirs, but its still pretty awful.

Sarah Buchanan says

Boring.

Marylu Sanok says

okay, nothing more

Hank Pharis says

(Note: I'm stingy with stars. For me 2 stars means a good book. 3 = Very good; 4 = Outstanding {only about 5% of the books I read merit this}; 5 = All time favorites {one of these may come along every 400-500 books})

I have now read or listened to Larry McMurtry's 3 memoirs. I'd rate Books the best (3 stars), Hollywood the second best (two stars) and Literary Life third (one star).

It was interesting to hear McMurtry in this one say that he likes Terms of Endearment the best of his novels and is not too fond of The Last Picture Show. Hands down I like Lonesome Dove the best.

The most surprising thing in this book is how many scripts and screenplays he has written and how many of them never made it to film. He has had at least 22 of his works made into movies or tv shows but he has done more than that that have not yet been produced. The one I would have been interested to read/see is one on an Evangelist (particularly inspired by Billy Sunday).

There are a lot of funny stories here.

Brendan says

McMurtry is one of my all-time favorite authors. Hollywood is the third book in his autobiographical trilogy; of the three it is by far the best. When I first learned Larry was sub-dividing his life story I suspected it was some sort of scam to sell more books - kind of a one story for the price of three promotion. With some of his weaker books I have felt he was writing for commercial success alone or pressured by a publisher's deadline to complete a story. Hollywood is McMurtry's frank story about writing to earn a living as opposed to the somewhat romantic view I like to hold of the lone writer working out his angst on paper to save the world! Of the three part series, it is this one in which McMurtry is most vulnerable and most revealing about himself. Hollywood is a fun, quick read by a writer who has made a significant contribution to the literature as well as to the screen.

Al says

You'd think a writer associated with at least four major films—"Hud," "The Last Picture Show," "Terms of Endearment," and "Brokeback Mountain"--- as well as a major television miniseries, "Lonesome Dove," would have more enlightening stories to tell than Larry McMurtry does in Hollywood: A Third Memoir. McMurtry seems determined not to do more than skim the surface regarding the movers and shakers that he was worked with over the years. For example, he may tell the reader that he and Peter Bogdanovich didn't get along for years, but he kindly spares us the details as to why. Or he mentions that he's been good friends with Diane Keaton and her sister, but gives us little insight into the friendship, since the book's focus is supposed to be Hollywood and how it works/or doesn't. The writing here is, frankly, lazy. McMurtry admits that Hollywood provided him with the means to enjoy his true passions, bookselling and writing, but his separate memoirs on those topics were equally slight. Not recommended.
