



## Streets of Laredo

*Larry McMurtry*

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From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Larry McMurtry comes the sequel and final book in the Lonesome Dove tetralogy. An exhilarating tale of legend and heroism, *Streets of Laredo* is classic Texas and Western literature at its finest.

Captain Woodrow Call, August McCrae's old partner, is now a bounty hunter hired to track down a brutal young Mexican bandit. Riding with Call are an Eastern city slicker, a witless deputy, and one of the last members of the Hat Creek outfit, Pea Eye Parker. This long chase leads them across the last wild stretches of the West into a hellhole known as Crow Town and, finally, into the vast, relentless plains of the Texas frontier.

## Streets of Laredo Details

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Author : Larry McMurtry

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## From Reader Review Streets of Laredo for online ebook

### Sarah says

This is the sequel to Lonesome Dove and it's almost as good. The only thing that really didn't work for me was that he didn't seem to have a firm fix on what was motivating Joey Garza.

I found myself taking a meandering, slow journey through this book instead of rushing to finish it. His writing is very good and his characters are absolutely brilliant, with the aforementioned exception. In particular, McMurtry knows how to write *women*. You see so much these days about people wanting strong female characters, well I say that I want more than strong, I want a world full of Lorenas, Marias, and Teresas. They are truly extraordinary.

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### Wendy Moniz says

I wanted to love this. Lonesome Dove is one of my all time favorite books. But this left me almost wishing I didn't read it. It is all sadness and violence and none even a hint of humor as was in the first. I still enjoyed it, but rushed through it so I could be done.

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### Monkey says

Some misguided folks have suggested that you should read Lonesome Dove first and not read the series in its own chronological order.

In fact I've been told that reading the books in order is like watching Star Wars in order; painful and ruins the good in the series.

I'm here to tell you that Larry McMurtry is no George Lucas.

There are some continuity errors, but the prequels and sequels in no way detract from the story. I devoured them, one after the other, all terribly good.

Like westerns?  
you'll like these.

Like happy endings and loose ends tied up?  
Well, sort of.

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### Christopher says

If you are interested in this review, the question foremost in your mind is whether or not this is as good as

Lonesome Dove. The answer is: very nearly.

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### **Erika says**

I am so disappointed I can hardly stand myself. I love Lonesome Dove. Love, love, love. I can't believe this is what follows. I guess I should have reminded myself how much I love Gus and I should have known Call minus Gus does not equal as much love as just Call. The plot isn't bad. The characters aren't bad. The book isn't bad, in itself. But all the horrors, all the sad sadness just isn't balanced without the humor.

\*\*\*\*\*Spoiler alert\*\*\*\*\*

Also why oh why did McMurtry just abandon characters and plot between books? Why kill off Newt when we aren't watching, and shut down the ranch for no real reason before we could see what it's like, and why in heavens marry Lorena and Pea Eye without showing us how that happens? I was wishing the whole book through that I could have read that other book that disappeared before he got to this one. Sigh. I don't even know whether to read the other, now. That makes me sad.

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### **rinabeana says**

I have such fond memories of Lonesome Dove. It's a fantastic book, and well-deserving of the Pulitzer Prize. I enjoyed the two prequels, but they weren't quite as good, an opinion I hold of this book as well. It was an interesting story and had McMurtry's usual high quality of writing. I think the characterization, and perhaps sequence of events, was what left me a little dissatisfied. The facts that the ranch in Montana failed within a

couple years and Newt died shortly after the end of LD, and well before the start of Streets of Laredo made me sad. It's not that I don't believe they could have happened within the framework of the story, but after the epic quality of LD, to call those event anti-climatic would be a severe understatement. Also, I thought everyone was going to die by the end of this book, which didn't quite happen, but there was a lot of violence.

I've been thinking about this a lot since I finished reading it and it's hard to pinpoint why it's left me so unsettled. I don't enjoy violence, but I understand it's a necessary part of westerns. I think that the absence of Gus really made Streets of Laredo lack the humorous quality in the previous books. It seemed that most of the characters in this book were depressed/unhappy/regretful. I think Call especially broke my heart. I adore Call, even though I can't really identify with his extreme reserve and lack of relationships. I especially think it awful how he is so hated by women (notably Clara and Lorena) because of the men that give their loyalty to him (notably Gus and Pea Eye). I thought Clara was out of line in LD when she told him she despised him for taking Gus's body back to Texas. At least Lorena overcame her dislike of Call (which was fairly justified on her part) and I really liked the bond that formed between them when she saved his life and nursed him back to health. They will never be close, but I think they have a better understanding of each other, on a different (and perhaps) deeper level than Pea Eye understands either of them (bless his simple mind). My last comment about Call is that I was so incredibly glad that he and Teresa developed a (grand)father/daughter relationship at the end. My heart was broken for Call and the only thing that kept me from utter despair for him was Teresa. I kind of liked that it was open-ended about whether or not she went off to a school for the blind. Either way I imagine things happening, I'm satisfied.

So now that I've written about Call, I can't chalk my disturbed feelings about the book to his character. What really upset me were the villains. They were not Robin Hood-type outlaws; there were sociopaths. It would have been bad enough to have Joey, who thought his mother (who had endured hardships unimaginable) was a whore, put no value on human life and killed whenever he felt like it, and wanted to murder his brother and sister so his mother could essentially be a slave to him. On top of that I had to read about Mox Mox, a less methodical, but probably more insane, killer than Joey. The two of them made John Wesley Hardin (a real killer of the Old West, and ancillary character in this book) look like a relatively okay guy. EEK! Anyway, I guess the bottom line was that the violence was just so senseless (not that I know what violence would be sensible) and I had trouble with that. There were a number of characters introduced in this book, who were decent people and seemed only to serve as fodder for the vicious killers. What's confusing me is that there was senseless violence and death in LD, but I can't recall it upsetting me as much as this book.

I guess the bottom line (which means I'll stop babbling now!) is that I liked this book and I was glad to know what became of my beloved characters, but I'm not sure I'd like to reread it as I would Lonesome Dove.

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## **Ruth says**

The sequel to that famous cowboy book Lonesome Dove, this was a perfect subject matter for my roadtrip b/c even though I wasn't in Texas, I did ride through a lot of cow country. It was an OK book but a little disappointing for a few reasons. First of all, why did Newt die in the mysterious space between the last book and this book? I was so happy he didn't die in the last one, so I felt especially cheated by this. Second, the book seems kind of empty without Gus and I missed his endearingly funny and carefree attitude and the way he played off of Call's crustiness. As I reader I really need some more comic relief given the grimness of the setting & the time period. Finally, since this book focuses on catching the bad guys it loses some of the epic sense of the first book, in which the mission is more open-ended and adventuresome. It's also really violent in parts, which the first one was, too, come to think of it, but somehow I minded it more since all those other

things were missing. I did like getting to know Lorena a bit more and also Maria. It was amazing to me how they always could tell when men were looking at them "that way". I guess that's an extra sense you just had to have in those dangerous times. In the final analysis, this is a good summer book but I won't be adding it to my list of favorites.

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## Nate says

I have to be the only dumbass out there who's read all of the *Lonesome Dove* books except for *Lonesome Dove*. I just can't make myself do it after I've seen the wonderful miniseries probably eight hundred times, especially 'cause that looks like a real brick-sized motherfucker. So I really can't say whether or not this sequel stacks up to the original work. Thankfully at least a trillion people have posted reviews of this book on this site and Amazon, etc. so you can always just check those out. I can definitely say that this one was probably my favorite of the series, and came super-close to hitting the coveted five-star mark with me. I love McMurtry's super-understated style and the characters and story were consistently great.

I always try to avoid any kind of spoiler action in my reviews but it's kind of hard to when you're talking about this book so for those who haven't read/seen *Lonesome Dove* should probably just X out at this point. Fair warning given, this is a unique entry in the series in that the famous partnership of McCrae and Call is no longer and Call is on his own in this book, with the exception of reliable old Pea Eye. The vast majority of the book deals with Call tracking down not one but two sociopathic killers: the proto-sniper Joey Garza and the genuinely fucking scary "manburner" Mox Mox. The other main characters besides Call and Pea Eye include Lorena (returning from *Lonesome Dove*), Joey's long-suffering mother Maria, Call's traveling partner and total dude Brookshire, expert Kickapoo tracker Famous Shoes, and a couple of real-life characters in the form of Charles Goodnight and famed killer John Wesley Hardin. All are drawn expertly and with often disappointingly human facets.

So this is a little bit of a deconstruction of the typical romantic western (maybe not as much as a soul-killer like *Blood Meridian*, but still) in that major western themes like frontier heroism and justice, the beauty of the still-untamed landscape, and the comfort of a simpler time are all pretty much gone here. One could certainly consider Call a hero but dude pretty much does what he does because that's the only thing he's really good at and doesn't have much else to do as an old man. Life is unceasingly painful and violent and there seems to be no sense of karmic balance whatsoever; you're as apt to die a brutal death as a gunslinger as you are just some poor bastard on a farmstead somewhere. When I mean unceasingly painful and violent I mean it, there is some of the most gruesome and senseless murder done in this book as any other I've read.

I really applaud McMurtry for gritting his teeth and ending the series on a pretty big downer. Instead of the charming rustic isolation of *Lonesome Dove* we get the horrid nightmare that is Crow Town. Literally no one escapes in full from the whirlwind of violence the three killers that inhabit the book whip up throughout Texas and Mexico. I'm probably harping on the amount of darkness and violence this book contains and make no mistake, there is a lot of it, but I can't leave out the doses of humor and true love and dedication that some of the characters bring to the table. Call is gruffly likable as always and everyone loves Pea Eye. It's probably arguable but I'd say the book does end on a happy note with some real change and redemption possible for Call's character. I definitely felt some manly eye-burn upon closing the book. It's a harrowing experience, but not one without a real heart at its center.

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## **Kateryna Krivovyaz says**

I'm so sad that I've just finished this awesome book. I read many review on it that claimed this book lacked the spirit of the first one and that it was a little disappointing.

I strongly disagree with that. It's a logical continuation of the first one, where we get to know what happened to our favorite characters.

Looking forward to reading the third book)

Long live Captain Call !!

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## **Lizzie says**

I read *Lonesome Dove* in June 2010 and loved it, but what happened to one of the characters made me so sad that I didn't feel ready to read it till now, two and a half years later. That should tell you something about the power of his writing.

Once again he's set up a story where numerous people are on each other's trail through Texas and Mexico. A couple of them are psychopaths. The main story is about Captain Call and his deputies search for Joey Garza, a train robber, but various other characters and stories move in and out of that narrative. McMurtry ties up numerous loose ends left from *Lonesome Dove* and continues other story arcs. I found it as satisfying as its predecessor.

There is a lot here about man's inhumanity to women: Laurie remembers cruelties she suffered as a whore in *Lonesome Dove* and is sexually harassed (but she gives better than she gets); Joey Garza's mother Maria is endlessly physically abused by all the men in her life, and sexually harassed; another woman is saddened by all the sorrow Maria has known and wishes she could have talked with her; a woman reflects that a pretty blind girl will be spared knowing about men's leers. Other women are victimized sexually in various ways, and broken. While it's hard to read, this is good to see as a realistic portrayal of what the old west probably was like and of how women continue to be vulnerable, always watching their (our) backs for danger. Of course there's no shortage of cruelty by men to men, too, but the awareness of this stuff is what makes McMurtry such a good writer. Women are major characters in this book.

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## **Heather says**

I loved this book. Unlike most sequels, this book does not pick up where the last one left off. It is fully able to stand on its own which I find to be an amazing feat. I loved *Lonesome Dove*, but felt that the novel was complete and was ready to start a new adventure. Would I have liked to see a further continuation of Newt, Dish and even Clara? Sure, but I was so quickly wrapped up in the new characters and new setting that I was more than willing to go on the hunt for Joey Garza, Mox Mox and a myriad of new characters that only Larry McMurtry could have given voice to, in a land where the cowboy is nearing extinction. Well done.

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## Joshua Gross says

I enjoyed this book more than *Dead Man's Walk* and just a little less than *Lonesome Dove*. Also, reading the reviews of this book some people are just crazy, and their seething disappointment over what happened to their favorite characters from *Lonesome Dove* annoys me. They should go write sad angry fan fiction about it, not complain about it in a review. I didn't really care all that much, I just looked forward to a new McMurtry epic and that's what I got. What people don't seem to understand is McMurtry's wonderful grasp of the passage of time, how that effects people, and how surprising and unexpected real life can be. I thought this all especially rang true in this novel, where Captain Call has gotten old but keeps on doing things the way he always has. At first I too was annoyed to have a whole book about Call, but it isn't. It's about his downfall. It's about the strength of women who survived in this world. And it's about the evil that lurks within the hearts of men.

This book starts slow, taking its time, setting the stage for the later action and events so that when they happen it is more powerful and alarming. This book had similar complexity and emotion of *Lonesome Dove* that was a little lacking in *Dead Man's Walk*, but it's also a darker and more frightening tale. There are terrible evil men that have to be brought to justice, women who have been treated terribly by men and suffered for it, and overwhelming odds to beat with everything good and decent on the line.

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## Mitchell says

*(Critical spoiler warning for Dead Man's Walk, Comanche Moon and Lonesome Dove)*

Most books are about what happens. Larry McMurtry's books are about what happens next.

Obviously that's true of all books in a sense: the reader is compelled to keep turning the pages to find out what happens. But Larry McMurtry shows us the course of people's lives, and the consequences of life's many sorrows, beyond the expected narrative constraint. This is doubly true of *Streets of Laredo*, the fourth and final installment of the *Lonesome Dove* series: not just because it's a low-key sequel to the greatest Western novel of all time – an examination of Woodrow Call's twilight years after the death of his life partner – but also because of what happens to Call himself at the end of the novel.

After *Lonesome Dove* I went and read *Dead Man's Walk* and *Comanche Moon*, which are chronologically the first two books in the series. They take place when Call and Gus are younger men, when the Texas frontier was truly wild, when Comanche still ruled the western plains. They lead beautifully into *Lonesome Dove*: a novel which is, at its heart, about memory and old age and the passage of time. The west is still wild, but only just.

*Streets of Laredo* takes us into the 1890s. The US census has declared the frontier officially gone, steam trains criss-cross Texas, and Captain Call is living out his old age as a bounty hunter. His reputation precedes him, but Call himself knows his glory days are long gone, the frontier tamed, his old companions mostly dead and buried. He is a grumpy old man after a lifetime spent as a grumpy young man.

I remember going into a gift shop in the American West somewhere and finding a whole section of wall plaques emblazoned with quotes from *Lonesome Dove* – the miniseries is a cult classic, although I'm not sure that's the right word for something that was broadly popular. Gus is an endlessly quotable rake for all seasons, but Call also has a deep appeal to the masculine spirit of the American West and a common kind of



American man. He's a matter-of-fact stoic, a cowboy who gets things done and has little tolerance for incompetent people. (It occurred to me that incompetence is portrayed as the primary moral failing imaginable in the Western genre, much as it is in that modern TV western, *The Walking Dead*.) Call is a hard-working John Wayne cowboy in the classic mould. The fact is, of course, Call is also a miserable bastard. He always has been and always will be: a difficult man whom you'd trust with your life but wouldn't invite to your dinner table. Yet he's not unsympathetic; he's a victim of his own nature as much as anybody else is. It's a mark of McMurtry's talent as a writer that trying to describe a character like Call can feel like trying to describe a real human. He does run to a groove, but still contains multitudes, still does unexpected things sometimes. There's a moment at the start of the book where Call's employer has a panic attack so Call kindly and gently guides him across the street to the hotel – not because kindness and gentleness are his instinctive responses, but simply because he knows they're the most efficient way to draw someone down from panic, and Call values efficiency and common sense above all else.

I half-expected I might dislike this book because it lacks Gus, the other end of the axle that spins throughout the series, the two characters balancing each other perfectly while a whole Western universe revolves around them. Gus' absence is certainly felt, but in many ways that only highlights the novel's greater themes: Call is left to live on, a full fifteen years after the catastrophic Montana expedition, without his partner, often wondering what he might have done or said. That's life. That's death.

*Streets of Laredo* is, judged by itself as a novel – by its ensemble characters, by the shapes and forms of its plot – probably the weakest of the series. But as a conclusion to the Lonesome Dove series, to the saga of Gus and Call's lives, and those of the people around them, it's brilliant. The four books together make up one of those rare things: a story which is greater than the sum of its parts. A 3,000+ page Western epic which is, at surface level, about a friendship and partnership between two men, but which touches on a deeper level about so many more things – most notably, and most skillfully, about the nihilistic injustice of the world, about the way life doesn't always fit to the patterns of the stories we tell ourselves, about how people cope (or don't cope) when faced with the fact that their own narrative has gone astray. About what happens next.

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## **Skyqueen says**

I started with *Comanche Moon* then *Lonesome Dove*, now *Streets of Laredo*. I knew it was the last book but I didn't want to end the series there, so will read *Dead Man's Walk* last because it is the beginning of Woodrow and Gus.

Of course, McMurtry is the best at putting life in perspective. What has struck me through the series is that not much, if anything, has changed through time. People still lie, cheat, steal, make unusual friendships, are unfathomably selfish, unconscious of their own and others inner workings, marry for the wrong reasons, are subject to Mother Nature's weather & animals, and generally are at the Mercy of Life and their decisions. Death can still come quickly when least expected to those least deserving or who cannot accept it or don't try to protect it. Your transportation can still fall on top of you (horse, car, airplane), disease, sniper fire or serial killer, hate killing, war...there's nothing new under the sun.

We, as a human race, know more now, but really have not learned more.

McMurtry's view of life, at least as told in these stories, is much like my own; cynical, but real.

Now I'm looking forward to *Dead Man's Walk*. I want it to end where it began.

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## **Sara says**

You wouldn't think it, but chasing bandits is not as exciting as driving cattle, but if you are a fan of Lonesome Dove you'll want to read the sequel and find out what became of the Hat Creek boys, and of course, Lorie and Clara. You'll learn the fates of Pea Eye, Captain Call, Newt (who I believe to be the lonesome dove) as well as becoming acquainted with a slew of new and interesting characters, two of which are positively evil. This book definitely misses Gus though, and some of the warmest parts are Woodrow's remembrances of his dear friend. There is also a lot of talk about railroads, businessmen, and the lack of Indians which gives this novel a fitting sad and 'I wish it was still the Wild West' sort of tone. However, this novel kicks its heels up at the end and has you racing for the last page, breathless.

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## **Kealan Burke says**

While not nearly as good as LONESOME DOVE (without Gus, how could it be?), STREETS OF LAREDO is nevertheless a great conclusion to the series.

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## **Jerome Peterson says**

Streets of Laredo

By Larry McMurtry February 28, 2014

“In the long-awaited sequel to Lonesome Dove, Larry McMurtry spins an exhilarating tale of legend and heroism. Captain Woodrow Call, Augustus McCrae’s old partner, is now a bounty hunter hired to track down a brutal, young Mexican bandit. Their long chase leads them across the last wild stretches of the West into a hellhole known as Crow Town, and finally, into the vast, relentless plains of the Texas frontier.”

This novel swept me off my feet. Page after page you were introduced to colorful characters that you loved, felt sorry for, wanted to be like them, or could relate with; others you hated. Then sweeping through scene after scene I felt as if I was actually traveling myself. Granted, there are horrid scenes filled with cold blooded killing and people died that you did not want to die but in this readers opinion that was part of the theme of the book. The West was unfair, cruelly so at times and in the face. The story is pure western written by one of the best storytellers of our time leading you on. McMurtry is witty and sharp when it comes to his philosophy on human behavior as well and rather humorous too. There is a fine balance of men and women in the story and his depiction of man’s view toward women in the day was right on; sadly so.

I particularly liked the character Pea Eye. He endures and seems to fulfill what he sets out to do. At times he is slow, clumsily, and unable to be confident in himself. I totally relate with this and I am sure many people do; male or female. I related with the character’s physical as well as the mental struggles he faced. What moved me was the way he presented how Pea Eye felt toward his wife, family, and what he had as a man and all that he went through toward the end of the book. In a way the unlikely character is probably a side of McMurtry.

The character Maria was enduring as well. She was the mother to the notorious bandit Woodrow Call was after. Hers was a profound account of the struggles a parent goes through in doing the best at raising a child and the child turns out dangerously evil. The hopelessness and helplessness that Maria felt because of this

fact did not distract her, however, from her determination at being Joey Garza's mother even when he tries to kill her. This part of the book choked me up and was disturbing but McMurtry does a fine job putting it all in its proper perspective.

I am not in the habit of judging what this novel failed to do or compare whether or not this book is good as its counterpart or anything else McMurtry has written. I will comment that *Streets of Laredo* presented many social dilemmas that *Lonesome Dove* did not; family values, parenting, care for the elderly and disabled, and the selfish sexist desire men have for women and the abuse that follows. To this reader *Streets of Laredo* rightly compliments *Lonesome Dove* and together they stand as exceptional novels.

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## **Laura says**

This is an excellent follow up to *Lonesome Dove*; however, this novel is completely different in scope, style, plot - pretty much everything.

This novel was brilliant and, in some ways, superior to the original - something I did not think possible. This novel chronicles Captain Call's last job as a ranger approximately fifteen years after the end of *Lonesome Dove*. He is much older here and at what the characters believe is the end of his career, the end of his greatness, the end of his days as a ranger and a killer and therefore the end of his identity. His legend as a Texas Ranger precedes him everywhere he goes in his mission to stop the unrelenting, remorseless bandit, Joey Garza. Unlike *Lonesome Dove*, which focuses solely on the white experiences of the west, *Streets of Laredo* examines *all* perspectives: Mexican, Native American, men, women, children - it's all here. I felt unable to judge the characters because I was able to understand them so well, even the villains. McMurtry employs Freudian psychology to illustrate Joey's motives and provides a thorough history of all the characters.

This novel raises so many questions about aging, life and death, murder, reputation, race and racism, feminism, and many other concepts. There are also many thoughtful passages about the passing of not only "the west" as a mythic, unexplored landscape, but also simply the loss of familiarity that is inherent to aging. I found this passage particularly moving:

But Ben Lily was one of the old ones of the West. Ben Lily and Goodnight and Roy Bean and a few others. None of them were particularly likable, although Charles Goodnight had become friendlier than Call had ever expected him to be. But all of them, and those like them who had fallen - Gus McCrae and old Kit Carson, the Bent Brothers, Shanghai Pierce and Captain Marcy - had been part of the adventure. Gus McCrae had declared the adventure over before the Hat Creek outfit had ever crossed the Yellowstone. A few days after he said it, he had gone off adventuring and been killed. Gus had been both right and wrong. The exploring part of the adventure had ended, but not the settling part, and settling, in the time of the Comanche and the Cheyenne and the Apache, had plenty of adventure in it.

Now, the settling had happened. Ben Lily and Goodnight and Roy Bean and, he supposed, himself - for he, too, had become one of the old ones of the West - were just echoes of what had been. When Lily fell, and Goodnight, and Bean and himself, there wouldn't even be echoes, just memories.

This feeling of becoming part of the old generation and losing one's relevance is so central to this novel, even more so here than in the original, and this passage just nails one of the main points of the story. I came to feel so much pity for Call, particularly in his brave acceptance of losing his leg and arm and, in a way, his identity. I was also very moved by his attachment to Tessie, who was a wonderful character. While it would have been nice to read about Call becoming a father to Newt, this outcome makes more sense and falls more in line with Call's character: he is unable to accept any kind of paternity until he loses his identity as a killer for the government, allowing him to experience his humanity and thawing emotions he either denied or suppressed throughout his adulthood. I found this relationship very touching and felt my eyes tear up in a few places.

Call is not the only character to receive such intricate characterization, though. As I already stated, McMurtry examines every character's psychology and history. I enjoyed reading about Maria's life experiences and learning more about Lorena and Pea Eye. Joey's fixation on his mother was chilling to read about, as was the crimes committed against Maria by men of all races and class backgrounds, white, Mexican, Native American, rich, poor, etc. What this novel depicts so deftly is how there really are no "good guys" in this world; everyone with power exhibits some corruption, some evil, because of the nature of power itself. There is little distinction between the white men representing the US government and the Mexican killer, Joey. I found this especially compelling and very true.

In short, this novel was excellent and one that any self-respected *Lonesome Dove* fan should give a chance.

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## **Ted says**

This is on my short list of books that I have read more than once. In fact I think I've read it 2 1/2 times. A few years ago I picked it up one day, opened it somewhere in the middle (maybe I was looking for a particular passage), started reading, and couldn't put it down for a couple of days until I finished it (for the third time). That's how much the book drew me into the story that McMurtry tells, and the magnificent way he tells it. I think he's a fabulous writer, the greatest I've read for evoking a feeling (maybe a little romanticized) for the Old West.

I'd guess I'm quite likely to read this book again some day.

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## **Steven says**

As much as I enjoyed *Lonesome Dove*, that's how much I disliked *Streets of Laredo*. Larry McMurtry spent much of the earlier book demolishing the squeaky-clean John Wayne image of the Old West by showing it as a realm of rape, sexual slavery, meaningless violence and random death, but he also showed the grandeur and beauty that drew men like Augustus McCrae. Gus is sorely missed in this novel, in which McMurtry seems perversely committed to focusing on the least interesting characters and reworking themes in the least interesting ways. The novel opens with Newt already dead and still unacknowledged by his father, the taciturn and emotionally stunted Woodrow Call, and the Montana cattle venture has collapsed. So, scratch two potentially fascinating plotlines for a tedious round of bandit-chasing. I never believed for a moment that railway men would hire an obviously way-past-his-prime Woodrow Call to hunt down the ruthless Joey Garza, just as I never bought the idea that Lorena would marry Pea Eye Parker, apparently for no other reason than have a reliable man on call. McMurtry does come up with an authentically terrifying villain in

Mox Mox, a former associate of Blue Duck with a penchant for torturing his captives (especially children) before setting them afire. But for much of its excessive length, *Streets of Laredo* reads like less of a sequel than a kiss-off -- a backhanded rejoinder to anyone who loved *Lonesome Dove*.

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