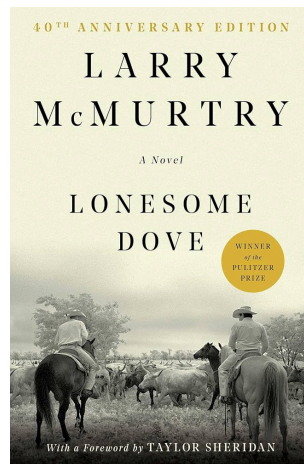


Lonesome Dove:



By Larry McMurtry
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“It’s a great mistake to hurry”

“Why?” Joe asked, puzzled by almost everything the traveler said.

“Because the grave is our only destination. Those who hurry usually get to it quicker than those who take their time.”

****CONTAINS SPOILERS****

I’ll start this piece of writing by saying I was super skeptical to read an old western when I first recommended this book. In my head I thought it would be “cowboys vs. indians” (real ones fuck with cowboys vs. ALIENS!!! More if u seen the movie u know) and cheap bang bang action that may be briefly entertaining to read but wouldn’t leave a mark. I could not have been more mistaken. This book contained more emotional depth than many I’ve ever read, and the setting of a newly settled Texan frontier and written about masterfully. This review is gonna be all over the place so bear with me a bit here. Anywho, without further Adu (word to Sade), let’s get into it.

What an amazing book. Multiple times I was nearly moved to tears or found myself laughing out loud at the happenings and dialogue. For a book with a bunch of characters that outwardly (other than Gus) display very little emotion, this is a **deeply** emotional book. Before I dive in, I want to say Augustus McCrae is one of the coolest characters I have ever read/watched in any form of storytelling. As I have been reading a lot of daoist books lately, I really loved how Augustus (Gus) refuses to take anything seriously, not letting others’ behavior / stubbornness / issues impact his own character and disposition to life. Even in his death, he cracked jokes, accepted his time had come (not fighting what is natural), and did not fall victim to seeking revenge on his killers or dying with any hate/negativity in his heart. He reminds me a bit of Jack Sparrow in the sense he just floats through life, letting life take him where it naturally pushes

him to go, and keeping a humorous and light outlook on everything the whole time. He also is emotionally raw and himself, with no shame. He follows his naturally emotional inclinations, voices them, and is the only character that does so. It's such a cool scene when he and Call stop at "The orchard" and Gus just begins to cry in front of Call. Most men would never, or would try to hide it, but Gus's ability to accept and be comfortable with his feelings is so rare and such a juxtaposition to the rough landscape and other men in this book. The last thing on Gus is *how* he lived his life and his emphasis on living, not fearing death, and what a life worth living looks like. Gus ultimately dies because of how he lived, roaming the unexplored plains of Montana, running with the Buffalo, and appreciating nature's beauty. This very trait leads him to get shot by Indians and die, but I find it inspirational that Gus would rather live on his terms, see and experience the beauty of the world and take the consequences that come with it rather than living on survival and not taking moments to soak everything in. To Gus, living a life of work, strategy, and weighing the safety of every situation one is in is not a life worth living. A life worth living is one in which you stop and pause to admire something beautiful, or end up going the scenic route simply because he thought it'd be nice.

The part of this book that struck me was the notion of unspoken / unsaid things and how characters behaved / interacted with each other. I guess what I mean by this is that in their interactions with each other (other than Augustus), all the characters in this book are extremely short and blunt, and they rarely disclose their feelings, or their true thoughts on any matter they are discussing. Being men in such a rough country (where vulnerability or weakness is not tolerated) all the characters, men and women, have an extremely tough exterior. But with how McMurtry switches the characters POV, you find a deep emotional depth underneath each character's armor. I found it so cool to start from one character's perspective, see their thoughts on life and on other characters. This would lead me to form a judgement about certain characters in the book. But then the perspective would switch to another character, and in learning how their brain works and their perspectives on life, I was able to understand them in a new light and have my prior judgments broken down. I'm not wording this too well, but it was so cool to read a book where my dispositions and judgements on the characters were constantly being broken down, shifted, and rebuilt as the book went on as perspectives shifted.

This book also threw into sharp relief how complicated (unnecessarily so) we live today as humans and as a society. I wrote a lot about this in my blog post under side quotes titled "*I went for a hike today and had some thoughts*" if you want to check that out and understand more of what I mean.

I have so much respect for McMurtry as a writer, because this is a long book, and I have a shitty instagram reels ahh attention span. At nearly 900 pages, most of this book is not scenes of action. In fact, it is exactly the opposite, as most of the book is simply depicting the most basic, rudimentary moments of basic life in the western world. McMurtry's brilliant storytelling brought so much color and character to these mundane moments that I never once wanted to put the book down out of boredom. I was always itching to pick it back up and yearned for my emotional connection to the characters.

The messages woven into this book are powerful and driven home in the big moments and the small. Before I wrap up this review, I'll list my biggest takeaways now:

- Live for the now. Tomorrow is not promised and no one is guaranteed or owed a grand fate or revered legacy
- Follow your spirit and intuitions, not rules / orders
- Good character is timeless. Regardless of how lawful or lawless society is shaped, you have the option everyday to be a stand up, kind hearted person.
- The best teacher is experience. Respect is earned (especially through consistency)
- What is natural is natural. Life, death, etc. It is nothing to be feared.

Side note this is a testament to how good this book was, but I refuse to watch the movie. I think one of the best parts of reading a book is that you get to build an aesthetic and visual for how the characters look in your brain that is unique and special to you. I do not want this visual tainted by watching the motion picture and have my cherished thoughts on this book and characters altered in any way. I also don't think with all the silence in this book and the amount of time McMurtry spends outlining people's thoughts inside their head that this book is very adaptable for the big screen. It is as a testament to the book itself that I say fuck da movie I will not be seated for it.