



Loop Group

Larry McMurtry

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In perhaps his finest contemporary novel since *Terms of Endearment*, Larry McMurtry, with his miraculously sure touch at creating instantly recognizable women characters and his equally miraculous sharp eye for the absurdities of everyday life in the modern West, writes about two women, old friends, who set off on an adventure -- with unpredictable and sometimes hilarious results.

As *Loop Group* opens, we meet Maggie, whose three grown-up daughters have arrived at her Hollywood home to try and make her see sense about her busy life, a life that intersects with lots of interesting -- all right, bizarre -- people. Her daughters push her into having a few second thoughts about it, and these are reinforced when her best friend, Connie, seeks an escape from her own world of complex and difficult relationships with men. Maggie conceives the idea of driving to visit her Aunt Cooney's ranch near Electric City, Texas, and the two women prepare for the trip by buying a .38 Special revolver (which leads to unexpected trouble along the way). This road trip will end by changing their lives.

Alternately hilariously funny and profoundly sad -- even tragic -- *Loop Group* is a major Larry McMurtry novel and a joy to read.

Loop Group Details

Date : Published December 5th 2005 by Simon & Schuster (first published 2004)

ISBN : 9780743250955

Author : Larry McMurtry

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From Reader Review Loop Group for online ebook

Nicole Marble says

Grownups, beware any book where the dustcover says the story is 'zany'.

Yuck.

Leslie says

Fine, but nothing exciting. Didn't really feel a connection to any of the characters, and one or two of them were just plain annoying. It was one of those books that I just didn't really see much of a point to once I got to the end of it. It kind of turned me off that every single character was rampantly unfaithful in their marriages - I'm not so naive that I think that sort of thing doesn't happen, but still, every single character, at least all the married ones.

Joy H. says

This novel was very disappointing, especially since it was written by a writer who won the Pulitzer Prize before writing this book. The writing was almost sophomoric and the story was stultifying. I finished it only because I was wondering how it would end.

Even the ending was disappointing. It was as if the author couldn't think of a better ending and wound things up quickly to finish writing. Throughout the book, there was a lot of boring, uninspired dialogue between two female friends about nothing very special, IMO.

Not much action either... just a road trip to visit an eccentric aunt. She was the most entertaining character. All the others, besides the two friends, were not fully developed. The two friends were rather ordinary, nothing very clever about them.

There was a big change from McMurtry's Pulitzer Prize winning book, Lonesome Dove, published in 1985, and this one, Loop Group, published in 2004!

Cathe Olson says

60-year-old Maggie is supposedly "in despair" since her hysterectomy but it's a good thing the author told us because I'd certainly never know it from the story. She seems to be happy enough putting the moves on her 80 year old perverted psychologist who she has suddenly discovered she's "in love" with and getting drunk and high with her best friend.

This is one of the worst books I've ever read-and I'm actually quite flabbergasted at how bad it was given the number of novels this author has published. These two self-centered, whining, foul-mouthed women were ridiculous--completely unlikeable and unbelievable characters. Nothing about them rang true or seemed real

and the book was just one stupid conversation and one stupid situation after another. There was no flow--none of the actions in the book seemed to stem from the other--just a random set of scenes. If I had had anything else around to read, I would have given this up after the first chapter and to tell you the truth, I wish I had. Ug!

Amy says

Awful.

Melissa says

I couldn't finish it. First book in ages. Got to page 79, read the words "Why was life so hard?" and gave up. Seems like I'm not the only one: In the copy borrowed from the library, someone had written "Irony or idiocy, is Larry silly or senile?" after McMurtry's banal words. I usually oppose the defacing of a book (after all, one's opinion isn't always wanted and is never universal), but this particular sentiment gave me the permission to give up. Too bad the first book of 2011 blew.

Scott says

Smut. Total crap. I seriously did not need to read about some 60 year old woman blowing her 80-something year old shrink or "self-lubricating" from excitement. I picked this piece up in the \$3.99 bin at Borders and should have put it right back down.

K.D. Absolutely says

My first book by the Pulitzer-winner Larry McMurtry and I thought I did not choose well.

I have a copy of his Lonesome Dove but it seems to be a book belonging in the genre that I am not sure I would enjoy reading: western. I used to enjoy watching western movies when I was younger but I am not sure I would like to read books about them now that I am older. You see, I used to love seeing those cowboys riding their horses galloping on the desert producing blinding dusts everywhere. I also loved to see two men in a duel. I thought they were crazy but there was some kind of heroic prestige doing that as it to prove that they were real men. Those were some of the images that I was expecting to see in the US when I visited in 2000 but I did not see any even when I came to pass Houston, Texas to visit a sister-in-law. Call me naive, not realizing that those were the bygone years in American history. But I have been living in a small third-world country all my life not knowing everything happening in the other parts of the world.

Anyway, I still thought that sampling McMurtry, by reading this book *Loop Group* was the next best thing to do. When I read the blurbs, and one of my favorite Nicholson's movie *Terms of Endearment* was mentioned, I said, this should be good! So, I picked this up and read.

Not really a big disappointment. The story revolves around two middle-aged female friends, **Maggie** and

Connie that reminded me not of "Terms" but of the 1991 ultimate female-bonding film, *Thelma and Louise* starring Geena Davis as Thelma and Susan Sarandon as Louise. The reason is obvious. Maggie and Connie both led lives that suck, so they pack up their things and go for a long trip. They meet many kinds of people - strange and good - that changed their perceptions in life. There is that part when they are arguing who said "*You can't go home again.*" and they don't remember who said it, whether Mel Gibson or John Steinbeck (Travels with Charley) and they were arguing in a funny way. But of course, we know that this was a title of one of Thomas Wolfe's novels.

There are many tongue-in-cheek conversations that contain sexual themes so this might not be for everyone. However, while listening to their banters, I felt like I was stranded in an American airport listening to middle-age American women talking no-holds barred. The lines are quite witty, funny and so at times, amusing.

My only complaint and this has nothing to do with McMurtry is that this is an ALL female book so I was kind of left out as a man. The male characters are either idiotic, lame or insensitive so I could not relate to the story. The women are also too different from the women in my life so, this book is just not a book for me.

HBalikov says

All of the McMurtry packaging except the essential core. Can't recommend to any except the most dedicated fans.

Jennifer says

don't know if I can stand the reader/narrator. The story isn't strong enough to keep me from abandoning due to the readers style. It's like she's reading to children.

Nancy says

wish there was a 1-1/2. Picked this up on sale for some beach fluff reading. I usually love McMurtry, and this had some moments of his humor and insight. But overall it just seemed like random details never tied together. I wonder if he just dashed this random tale off to pay a bill. Not a contender with the rest of his books.

Julie says

I saw this one at Half Price and realized that despite my deep and abiding love for Larry McMurtry, I hadn't read anything by him in a long time. Much too long. I was not disappointed in this book although it was nowhere near as good as some of his others. Still hilarious; mentions lots of chickens, and the romances were just so funny.

I also realized that I think I have read just about everything the man has ever written EXCEPT for any of the Lonesome Dove books, which is just plain weird. So I am going to get right on top of that.

Paul says

Another Larry McMurtry, and not set in Texas this time.

I'm a big fan of McMurtry, and found this to be a good read. How does he think of these characters? There is a tinge of "Thelma and Louise" here, but the characters, the situations, and the plot are in no way similar. Maggie, the protagonist is a Native Hollywoodian Auntie Mame character, and won my sympathy immediately. I loved the read, actually, loved rooting for Maggie.

McMurtry is having fun with this book, and his antics left me only slightly distracted. He must have set out to make dialogue work without falling back on what we are all taught -- just say "said." Characters "argued," "told him," "went on," "begged," etc. Anything but "said."

Also, he played with splitting a character's speech into two paragraphs, the first paragraph ending sans an end-quote, and the second paragraph having the tag, "she continued."

It sounds diverting, I'm sure, but actually it was part of the "let's have some fun here" entertainment.

If the reader is in a serious mood, hold back on reading this book. But don't lose sight of it, either.

Jim Jannotti says

I'm abandoning this effort. McMurtry's one of my favorites but in recent years his fiction has been uneven to say the least. I'm switching to his recent memoir entitled "Books" and setting this failure aside.

Philip says

Larry McMurtry has said in several recent memoirs that some writers go on producing novels long after they've run out of steam. He has also said that he feels like he was one person before his heart bypass surgery in the 1990s, and another after. His books since the mid-1990s have certainly borne out both theories. In LOOP GROUP it's a woman who has that feeling of being/having been two people, that she was one person before her hysterectomy and another person afterward. I was a huge McMurtry fan up until this change in his writing came about (his books, starting with SOME CAN WHISTLE in 1989, became increasingly bleak and depressing), but basically swore off him after THE LATE CHILD (1995), one of the worst books I've ever read by anyone. I tried TELEGRAPH DAYS a couple of years ago for the heck of it, thinking I'd give him another chance, but didn't get far with it. Now that I've just enjoyed his autobiographical works WALTER BENJAMIN AT THE DAIRY QUEEN, BOOKS, and LITERARY LIFE (which should not be read too closely together, however, due to some repetitions), I'm giving his recent fiction another go, but I think I'm running out of steam already, less than 60 pages into LOOP GROUP.

12/22/09 - WRETCHED BOOK! I gave up entirely after a completely ridiculous sex scene on page 74, as bad as a silly one in the aforementioned THE LATE CHILD.

Mr. McMurtry's fiction and I have parted company once again.

11/14/12: McMurtry said in a recent interview that he's through writing fiction, that most writers go downhill after fifty and he had a good ride. This is certainly not true of all writers, but unfortunately in his case I think the shoe sort of fits.

Robin Ray Holbert says

I'm listening to this unabridged book in the car. Course, since I only drive 1.5 miles to work, it'll take me a while to get through this. So far, I'm not impressed. So far it's the weakest Larry McMurtry I've ever read and I've read a lot o' Larry McMurtry.

Rene says

The cover of this book had me thinking that it was going to involve a younger age group but the two main characters I'm guessing are in the 50-60 age range. Reading about middle-aged women having sex, doing drugs and racking up credit card debt really doesn't click with me. Maybe I should read this book again in 30 years and see if I have the same feeling?

Peter Tillman says

Raunchy Cal-Tex slapstick. Hot stuff!

"Loop Group" is the story of two sixtyish Hollywood gals, their strange environment, and their even stranger friends and associates. Maggie Clary, the protagonist, has just had a hysterectomy and is feeling pretty low. To cheer herself up, she plans a road trip to see her Aunt Cooney, who lives in Electric City, Texas with two million chickens. Hijinks ensue. This is California/Texas slapstick. *Good*, raunchy slapstick.

As always with humor, YMMV. I was taken aback how many readers here *hated* it.

Take it from me, this is hot stuff. If you like raunchy slapstick....

My 2005 review:

<http://www.amazon.com/review/R1A1XXOD...>

Sorcia Macnasty says

Do you enjoy being hit repeatedly in the face with a bed pan?!

Then you'll LOVE this crap!

It's official, kids: Larry McMurtry done lost his mind. Or perhaps has had a lobotomy. Because I'm sure as death and taxes that this is NOT the same guy who wrote the uncompromising, compelling and heart-wrenching Lonesome Dove series (in point of fact, the only Westerns I've ever whole-heartedly loved). Actually, I think the explanation might be that he lost a drunken bet with his agent. Or owed money to the mob? Surely he's not just mindlessly bent on the destruction of the American novel and his reputation as a whole. Surely.

Other reviews have summed up the awfulness pretty well, but I'll add this: If I wanted to watch two boring old women smoke pot, talk about nothing and drink vodka, I'd pay more visits to my Aunt Lucille and her "special friend", "Aunt" Casey, in Ft. Lauderdale. By the end of the book, you'll wish you could at least wrest some of the drugs and booze from the characters' gnarled old fingers for sheer relief.

Kendra says

I can almost say that I hated this book. Why did I finish it then? Maybe because I kept thinking that it couldn't be THAT bad, that it would get better. I kept thinking I was missing something...that how could such a celebrated author write complete nonsense...

Basically, the book, written by the same author who wrote Lonesome Dove and Terms of Endearment (really??? I didn't even know the same person wrote such two very different stories), is centered on Maggie, a 60+ year old woman who has lived in the heart of Hollywood her entire life. Maggie is very sad and can't make sense of her life. That's it. That's the story. I've given it away...it's all over. For 200 pages we follow Maggie around as she bumbles through several weeks in her life. There is no climax (although there is plenty of talk about sex)...LOL There are no revelations, no great understanding, nothing is fixed or changed.

I did not like any, not one, of the characters in this book. I could not relate to any of them and I wouldn't want to know any of them. There was so much whining and crying and odd behavior that I wanted to run away...

...far away...run from this book!
