



Morgan's Run

Colleen McCullough

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In a story of breathtaking scope, Colleen McCullough returns to the magnificent setting of her international bestseller *The Thorn Birds*.

Following the disappearance of his only son and the death of his beloved wife, Richard Morgan is falsely imprisoned and exiled to the penal colonies of eighteenth-century Australia. His life is shattered but Morgan refuses to surrender, overcoming all obstacles to find unexpected contentment and happiness in the harsh early days of Australia's settlement.

From England's shores to Botany Bay and the rugged frontier of a hostile new world, *Morgan's Run* is the epic tale of love lost and found, and the man whose strength and character helped settle a country and define its future.

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Morgan's Run Details

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Author : Colleen McCullough

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From Reader Review Morgan's Run for online ebook

Amie says

Loved this book, it was a bit slow to start but once things went pear shaped for the lead character, things got interesting for the reader. Colleen McCulloch's perspective on the transportation of convicts to Australia is fascinating and vivid. Her characters grow more loveable with each turn of the page and this novel makes strong links to the character and grit of the Australian people, regardless of ancestry.

Les says

I had to put this book down for awhile. I was having problems going with the flow of the authors words and sentences and paragraphs. You know how it is when you first pick up a book and are on page 16 before you know it, sometimes while you're still standing in the store? Well this didn't work for me, plus the fact that I'm not ready right now to devote myself to a large epic. I'm saving it for another time. I like the idea of the main character helping to define the future of Australia...it just seemed like I wasn't going to get to that part for quite awhile."

Well I finally finished the book. I took it up at the Australia part and really enjoyed it. I don't think that skipping the entire middle made any difference. Great Ending...just what I was hoping for.

Jenny says

This has been the shelf for years and I finally got around to reading it. The story takes place in the late 1700s after the American Revolution, in Bristol, England, on a slaver/convict transport vessel, and eventually in Norfolk Island by way of Botany Bay, Australia. Colleen McCullough does amazing research to provide incredible details about life in whatever period she is writing, using language which is not too modern and describing things as they might be perceived by the character who knows nothing of what we know today. Not only does it help the reader to feel a part of the time and place, but this serves to feel that you're going deeper into that time period to understand the regular person's experience of those history stories that we superficially learn about in school.

In particular, by reading this novel, not only did I learn a bit more about the settlement of Australia by British convicts (the obvious history lesson here), but the state of the lives of the working class English really gave me an insight about American culture and its revolt against government taxation, which continues until this day. For example, the British pervasiveness of licensing every aspect of commerce in England was insane. Unlike in America, where licensing (more or less) serves the purpose of ensuring safety and compliance with social norms, in England it served only to raise revenue for the government. (Yes, I realize that regulation in America also provides a revenue stream, but I don't wish to have that argument here.)

As to the particulars of the story, Morgan is Richard Morgan, a real-life historical figure in Norfolk Island history (Norfolk Island is in the middle of the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand, and a part of the Commonwealth of Australia). He was convicted of larceny in England and eventually sentenced to 7 years' transportation to Botany Bay. The story tells the epic of his life and how his steady character, work ethic, insight, and luck allowed him to make a new life for himself on Norfolk Island.

The author lives in Norfolk Island, and as a result I'm sure her basic familiarity with the story of the island and Richard Morgan is more than most folks have, particularly non-Australians. I don't know much about it, so I can't attest to how much liberty has been taken with the history. Having read this, I do want to read more about Australian history, in general, realizing that I really know very little about it beyond the basic concept that it was settled primarily by convicts who were resettled there.

If I had one complaint about the story it would be that Richard Morgan doesn't seem to have any fatal flaws. Granted, things happened which led to the conviction (right or wrong) which were certainly influenced by his character, but ultimately things seemed to have worked out better for him as a result. This story certainly glorifies him. I suppose that is the liberty of historical fiction.

Aside from the somewhat greater appreciation of the circumstances leading to the American Revolution and Australian settlement that I now have, I also really liked the handling of the character of Stephan Donovan (fictionalized, although there was a Stephen Donovan, Midshipman, in the First Fleet). In Morgan's Run, he is an openly gay "Miss Molly" who is Morgan's best friend. All very interestingly written.

Lynnda Ell says

As an emerging writer, deep into learning the skills of the craft, I read a lot of professionals' advice. Most experts suggest that a novel be developed with a plot full of action. Not surprisingly, then, I find that most books - regardless of genre - follow this model. Not so with Colleen McCullough's *Morgan's Run*.

This historical novel, based on the founding of The Botany Bay colony, centers on the life of one man, Richard Morgan. Begun in the mid-1700s, the story tells of the ricochet effect on British citizens as the American Colonies gained their independence from England.

Times may be difficult for many in our world, but this book makes a case for calling the past anything except "the good ole' days."

I highly recommend *Morgan's Run* for those who want to read a compelling story told in a unique voice.

Laura says

This is the story of Richard Morgan, a convict who spent twelve months on the seas and how this kind of people were used in order to populate an unknown continent. With the advent of the American Revolution has closed the New World to England's prisoners.

The author thus describes the 18th century England's colonization of Australia with the foundation of a new prison colony of
Botany Bay - the same place where Captain Cook landed in 1770.

The ships disembarked in Port Jackson, which will become later the Sydney Harbour.

Morgan moves then to the Norfolk Island in the South Pacific.

Since I've been to Australia quite recently, I wanted to learn a little more about the colonization of this relative young country.

This book was supposed to be the first one of a trilogy but as far as I know, the author never finished it.

4* Tim
4* An Indecent Obsession
4* Thorn Birds
3* A Creed for the Third Millennium
3* The ladies of Missalonghi
3* Morgan's Run
TBR The First Man in Rome
TBR The Song of Troy
TBR Bittersweet

Bruce says

One's reading life is too abbreviated to waste on books that are long on page length and short on information. As evidenced by her otherwise excellent *Masters of Rome* series and this bit of over-researched fluff, McCullough desperately needs an editor. *Morgan's Run* (aka "life," as in, "I had a good run" as well as the name of a government-sanction rum distillery on Norfolk Island) is a biography of Richard Morgan, freeman of Bristol transported by a typical late 18th century British miscarriage of justice to Norfolk Island (a First Fleet colony of convict-settled Australia). The book begins with the announcement of the War of Independence in 1776 (albeit from a typical Bristol tavern point-of-view) though Richard's transporting aboard the Alexander doesn't take place until 1788. This represents 236 mind-numbing pages into the book with arrival in Botany Bay awaiting the turn of yet another 100 pages, meaning that more than half of the book's 600 pages are dull and irrelevant prologue in which Richard Morgan is more acted upon than actor.

Things pick up a bit as Morgan is taken from Plymouth for a year's sail to arrive in Botany Bay. Through revealed competence and an apparent encyclopedic memory, Morgan becomes head man among his small set of convicts. Unfortunately, most of the conflict is fleeting and quickly resolved (or abandoned), and the laconic Morgan makes for such poor company that even McCullough appears glad for opportunities to abandon him as the focus of her narrative (chiefly toward the end when she introduces a new character from off the Lady Juliana of the Second Fleet). As always, McCullough captures the tenor of the times and dialogue well, but she appears overwhelmed by ephemera: descriptions of daily weather, Morgan's random accounting of the Norfolk Island sawpit intake for a given week, what Morgan plans to have for dinner of an evening based on current garden inventory, the sequential moves in a game of chess, the distribution list of the latest litter of terrier puppies, and so forth. (And her afterword suggests she hoped to write a follow-up?!) The book was as substantial as styrofoam, cumbersome, bulky, and in need of compression. More worth a skim than a full read.

Jojo says

"Colleen McCullough possui uma capacidade notável: transforma o mais entediante dos acontecimentos num momento de verdadeira emoção. Pode haver uma grande história a servir de bandeja mas, o que conta é o que está a ser servido!" in <http://devaneiosdajojo.blogspot.pt/20...>

Joy H. says

Added 12/13/13

2/4/14 - I am still trying to get through this book (in between other books). I'm on p.291 out of 832 pages in this paperback edition. Don't know if I'll stick with this book. Some of the GR reviewers say the last part of the book is better than the first part. Guess I'll stick with it and do a lot of skimming.

2/13/14 - I've decided to give up on this book. I read to page 388 and still wasn't enjoying it. Among other things, there were too many names without any real character development. The plot was very slow with too many uninteresting details.

The following comments in reviews by GR readers seem to be true about this book:

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"...this bit of over-researched fluff, McCullough desperately needs an editor."

"I have tried to read her books before and found them ponderous and excessive in description to make up for plot."

"Far far too long winded and still the characters remain two dimensional. Good story but could have been cut by two thirds"

"it's just too long, and with too many details."

"excessive information"

"McCullough often gets bogged down in period trivia"

"The first 2/3 - 3/4 of this book are kind of a grind to get through; the last bit is very readable."

" As always, McCullough captures the tenor of the times and dialogue well, but she appears overwhelmed by ephemera ... The book was as substantial as styrofoam, cumbersome, bulky, and in need of compression. More worth a skim than a full read."

Another said: "Well I finally finished the book. I took it up at the Australia part and really enjoyed it. I don't think that skipping the entire middle made any difference. Great Ending...just what I was hoping for."

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Jacquie South says

I started this a couple of years ago, but it didn't grab me, so I went onto something else. Desperate for a book recently, I picked it up again, and started it again (taking quite a while to realise I had actually read the start before!). Again, I didn't really like the start of the book, but got through it this time, and it was worth it. Once Richard is convicted and sent on board ship in London to await transportation, the story really starts to become interesting. I enjoyed reading about life on the transport ships, and the settlements at Botany Bay and Norfolk Island - incredibly difficult to imagine life in this time, but this book described it well. A great record of the terrible things people in power could do to those less fortunate, but also a great testament to the power of the human spirit.

Deborah Pickstone says

I thoroughly enjoyed this novel by one of my favourite authors. he has her own voice for whatever she writes and this is no different; her voice was unique to this novel and not like her voice for the Masters of Rome series. The differences in voice - or maybe I should say style - between books/series' is very unusual I think

Helmisade says

I wanted to throw this book out of the window at least 5 times while reading it. Yet somehow I struggled to the bitter (horrible) ending. I have two main complaints:

1. Richard Morgan is seriously annoying. No real human is that perfect all the time. He has the perfect body, perfect mind, perfect manners, perfect skills for every situation and perfect ability to control himself no matter what happens. During hundreds of pages the man never does anything wrong and everyone adores him. Personally I couldn't care less what happens to him, which is already a bad sign in a book that revolves so heavily around one person.
2. The women in this book are either non-existent or completely unrealistic. There is not a single believable female in this story. The women in England are hysterical caretakers, who can't control their feelings. The female prisoners are sad victims who, if they are smart and understand their place, are being sexually abused by the men (not Mr. Morgan of course, he has no sexual desires...). The women who came to Botany Bay with the officers are only mentioned as providing sexual services to each other's husbands. At the end of the book we meet one woman who is described in more detail. Her main characteristic? Being hopelessly dependant on Richard Morgan. I find it hard to believe that this would be the whole truth about women in the 18th century. Without wanting to exaggerate, I would describe this book as anti-feminist.

In conclusion, I would have much rather read an honestly historical account about this journey.

Claudia says

This was a challenging read. The author does SO MUCH historical research, and includes lots of period language, descriptions of items that I'm not familiar with, etc. This makes it slow going, but the story was SO good. The main character, Richard Morgan, was a real person sent from England as a convict to colonize Australia. Fascinating historical fiction.

Fiona says

Not long ago I read *The Thorn Birds* by Colleen McCullough and so I surprised myself by reading this book so soon afterwards as I do not tend to read the same author twice in such close proximity.

In *The Thorn Birds* I recognised a good author although the story itself did not interest me. In *Morgan's Run* the two were combined together - a great story written by a good author.

McCullough has a very definite style and voice in the way she writes. I think the most important part of a book is the author and how he or she writes because in the end, it doesn't actually matter what the book is about eventually - a good author could make watching paint dry sound riveting. Not that either of these books was like watching paint dry!

Morgan's Run is about the first convicts to be sent to Australia after the American revolution put a stop to them shipping them over there. So, merry olde England decided that it would be a good idea to ship them out to an unknown country and leave them there.

The story follows Richard Morgan, a character of whom you will fall in love with - it's impossible not to. I get the feeling that McCullough seems to like tall men with long dark curly hair as that is how she described Father Ralph in *The Thorn Birds* too. In fact, it seems all the decent, good attractive characters in this book happen to have long dark curly hair - which is absolutely fine by me as I happen to like that in men too.

One thing that seems to be a running criticism with McCullough is that she can spend ages describing certain things in such detail and then quickly rush through something else that is quite important in about a paragraph, so much that if you're not careful you could miss it.

She writes with a calm confidence that I find very trustworthy - part of her style feels as if she is nurturing you, the reader and then sometimes there is a harder edge - more straight forward and informative. It is a rather peculiar style I think but I like it and it works. It makes me feel as if I am really there, part of the history and the 'world' she has created - but not quite lost or abandoned to it.

I have not read very much about Australia, I confess it is a very hot country and I feel more comfortable reading books in cold or wet countries, which I know makes very little sense on the face of things. Australia always seems so far away and you do not hear of it very much which should be more of a reason to go out and read more about it, which I fully intend to do.

I really enjoyed *Morgan's Run* and can't wait to start *The First Man in Rome* soon - sometime this year!

Nannie Bittinger says

Not fair to really review this one as I listened to the abridged version of the book. Just right for me but I'm sure I missed a lot of details. Really made me want to read more about the prisoners that were sent to settle Australia.

Phair says

Listened first to the abridged audio read by Tim Curry- excellent. It was then selected by my f2f discussion group so I read the book as well. Always like stories set in days of Australian penal colony and this one was good. The parts on the ship were quite graphic in describing the hardships but I liked the cleverness of the main character in his preparations for survival in the prison ship. Also like the way the main character built his homestead in Australia. Great adventure. Wish it would have a sequel.
