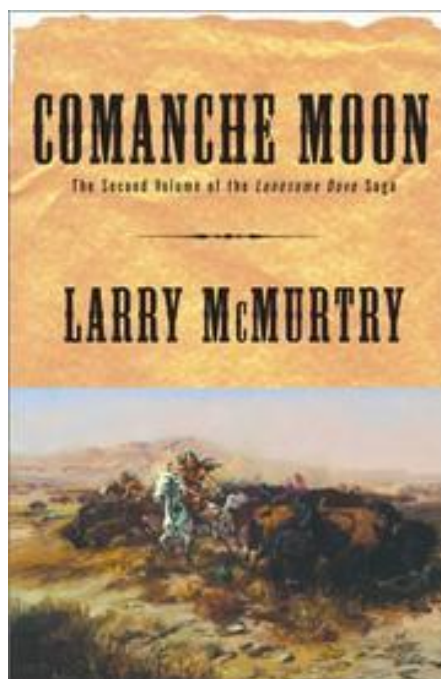




Comanche Moon

Larry McMurtry

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Comanche Moon Larry McMurtry
THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER

The second book of Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* tetralogy, *Comanche Moon* takes us once again into the world of the American West.

Texas Rangers August McCrae and Woodrow Call, now in their middle years, continue to deal with the ever-increasing tensions of adult life -- Gus with his great love, Clara Forsythe, and Call with Maggie Tilton, the young whore who loves him.

Two proud but very different men, they enlist with the Ranger troop in pursuit of Buffalo Hump, the great Comanche war chief; Kicking Wolf, the celebrated Comanche horse thief; and a deadly Mexican bandit king with a penchant for torture.

Assisting the Rangers in their wild chase is the renowned Kickapoo tracker, Famous Shoes. *Comanche Moon* closes the twenty-year gap between *Dead Man's Walk* and *Lonesome Dove*, following beloved heroes Gus and Call and their comrades in arms -- Deets, Jake Spoon, and Pea Eye Parker -- in their bitter struggle to protect the advancing West frontier against the defiant Comanches, courageously determined to defend their territory and their way of life.

Comanche Moon Details

Date : Published October 17th 2000 by Simon Schuster (first published 1997)

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From Reader Review Comanche Moon for online ebook

Billcorcoran says

Lonesome Dove is probably my all time favorite novel. This is one of the prequels and not quite as good but still a terrific read. I think it is the only one of the 4 books that can't be read entirely on it's own so don't start with this book. They were written completely out of order and I think the best way to read them is in the order they were published, starting with Lonesome Dove. McMurtry writes great characters and includes both humor and tragedy to great effect. It starts off a bit slow but is never dull, McMurtry just takes awhile to build up the characters and the situation. I did feel the resolution to some of the conflicts were anti climactic but others played out just about right.

Trisha says

A rollicking read!! And for those of us who got to know Texas Rangers Augustus McCrae and Woodrow F. Call in Mc Murtry's Lonesome Dove this is a chance to meet up with them again, but this time as younger men. No sooner does the story get going but what they find themselves summarily turned into captains by their own thoroughly eccentric Captain Inish Scull (Bible and Sword!!) so that he can leave them on their own and head on south in pursuit of his huge horse, Hector, who had been stolen by the notorious Comanche horse thief Kicking Wolf. And so it's one adventure after another as we gallop along from one scenario to the next – from the two camps of Buffalo Hump and Kicking Wolf to the open plains of Texas to the cliffs of the Rio Grande in northern Mexico. Along the way we meet up again with some familiar faces from Lonesome Dove – including the thoroughly evil Blue Duck. Gus and Cal's fellow rangers -- Deets, Jake Spoon, Pea Eye Parker and others -- are part of the story as well as are Clara Forsythe, Gus' one true love and Maggie Tilton the whore with the heart of gold whose love for Cal will forever be unrequited. We also meet a whole book full of equally unforgettable characters like the lusty Inez Scull who'll bed anyone in sight, and the terrifying "Black Vaquero" with an amazing repertoire for torture. This is one of those books that kept me wanting to keep coming back to it as soon as I'd put it down. McMurtry is a great story-teller and his imaginative use of dialogue, not to mention his talent for creating characters that are hard not to like (even the bad guys are so colorful that it's hard not to like the fact that we hate them!!) makes this book every bit as much fun to read as his other books that are set in the West.

Christopher says

There are two ways to read the Lonesome Dove series, and they're analogous to the ways you can watch Star Wars. You can start with the first produced, which fall in the middle of the story chronologically, then read/watch to the end of the story, then loop back around and meet back in the middle. That's the way I chose to go. Or you can read/watch from the beginning of the story straight through to the end. (Star Wars: no way! Lonesome Dove: as you can see later on, this is close to the way to go.)

Order by Publication Date

Lonesome Dove (1985)
Streets of Laredo (1993)
Dead Man's Walk (1995)
Comanche Moon (1997)

Chronological Order

Dead Man's Walk
Comanche Moon
Lonesome Dove
Streets of Laredo

So this is the end of the line for me. No more Gus, no more Call. No more Deets or Pea Eye or Buffalo Hump or Blue Duck or any of the other characters with bizarre names.

I say all this because this would certainly be a different review if this was only the second book I read in the series. If I was only halfway through, I'd be pumped up to read the rest of the series. I wouldn't be able to wait to find what other picaresqueries the boys would ramble into.

As it is, though, this was a real let down of a finale. It went out with a whimper rather than a kaboom. Throughout the novel our heroes' plans are constantly foiled. They really didn't do much at all, besides ride out into the desert, either discover that their quest had been resolved by someone else or get so thirsty that they have to return to home base.

It's frustrating as a reader, because I've spent a lot of time with these dudes. I wanted to remember them as heroic, looming figures. This book did not present them as such. And that's probably the point. McMurtry rarely gives the reader what she wants. He stands second only to George RR Martin, slayer of people you love, in being able to create characters that feel real, and then spilling their brains out over the ground at the least expected moment.

McMurtry is also a great writer of Westerns because he knows that the heroes of his books are not truly heroes. Call and Gus are as flawed as anyone I've ever known. While you root for them, McMurtry's always making you keep in the back of your mind that these guys are pretty much taking part in a genocide. Their job is to suppress the "savages". That's not to say that the Indians are the good guys, either, but much of this book, even more than the others, is dedicated to the perspective of the Indian characters.

So it's safe to say that I'm ambivalent about this book. On the one hand, it did not give me the closure I wanted for a series end. On the other, it was a worthy continuation of McMurtry's bloody Western saga.

In light of this, I propose a new reading order for the books. Lonesome Dove is still the obvious starting point. It's the best and if you're only going to read one of them, it has to be this one. Then go back to the chronological beginning and read Dead Man's Walk, then Comanche Moon. Then go to the chronological end and read Streets of Laredo. It's good stuff, and a more fitting endpoint.

My Recommended Reading Order

Lonesome Dove
Dead Man's Walk
Comanche Moon
Streets of Laredo

Joe Valdez says

Comanche Moon is the fourth and final entry in a franchise spun from Larry McMurtry's Pulitzer Prize winning western *Lonesome Dove*. Published in 1997, a tone of finality is absent due to the story taking place fifteen to twenty years before the events of McMurtry's magnum opus. His protagonists--Augustus McCrae

and Woodrow Call--are serving in a company of Texas Rangers charged with protecting settlers along the Rio Grande from Mexican bandits and those on the plains from the Comanche Indians. The writing is superlative, while the necessity of the book and its length are self-indulgent, which may be exactly what hungry fans wanted. They get it.

The epic begins with the company cold, tired and dejected, pressing through sleet on the Llano Estacado under the command of Captain Inish Scull, a tough, adventurous Yankee nicknamed Old Nails due to his habit of picking his teeth with a horseshoe nail. In pursuit of the notorious Comanche horse thief Kicking Wolf, the men are instructed to cover the heads of their horses with sacking to keep the eyelids of their mounts from freezing. The taciturn, work dedicated Call is begged for some sacking by his friend Gus, a romantic idler who was too busy in a whore's tent before their dispatch to do much else but put on his pants.

Alerted to the rangers is the Comanche chief Buffalo Hump, a feared warrior whose oldest son was shot and killed by Call in the Brazos River, earning the ranger the name Gun-in-the-Water. The chief's surviving son, a Comanche-Mexican mongrel named Blue Duck, is as fearless as his father, but exercises none of the judgment, as quick to kill a friendly Kiowa as a Texan. Buffalo Hump criticizes his son for bringing him news rather than a scalp and declines to attack the rangers that Kicking Wolf is responsible for agitating. Attempting to bushwhack Gun-in-the-Water himself, Blue Duck is shot twice by Call and barely escapes. The ranger, merely doing his duty, holds little animosity.

Call had fought the Comanche as hard as any ranger, and yet, when he looked down at them through Captain Scull's glass, saw the women scraping hides and the young men racing their ponies, he felt the same contradictory itch of admiration he had felt the first time he had fought against Buffalo Hump. They were deadly, merciless killers, but they were also the last free Indians on the southern plains. When the last of them had been killed, or their freedom taken from them, their power broken, the plains around him would be a different place. It would be a safer place, or course, but a flavor would have been taken out of it--the flavor of wildness. Of course, it would be a blessing for the settlers, but the settlers weren't the whole story--not quite.

The troop break off their pursuit of Kicking Wolf and head south, where Scull entertains the notion of finding his other adversary: Ahumado, the barbarous Mexican bandit known as the Black Vaquero, who once shot and wounded the captain's magnificent steed Hector. When Kicking Wolf sneaks up on the rangers and steals Hector, Scull promotes Gus and Call to co-captain and instructs them to take the troop home. Scull takes off on foot with their eccentric Kickapoo scout Famous Shoes on a foolhardy adventure to retrieve his horse. Kicking Wolf, meanwhile, decides to deliver his trophy south of the border as a gift to the Black Vaquero in a test of his courage.

In Austin, Gus reunites with his sweetheart, sharp tongued shopkeeper Clara Forsythe, only to learn that her days of waiting on him have ended with her decision to marry a horse trader from North Dakota. Call has a woman, a whore named Maggie Tilton who is carrying his child, but the captain resists all overtures to settle down or even pay Maggie much attention. Captain Scull's rich and flagrant wife Inez takes a break from devouring any able-bodied man in sight to complain to the governor that her husband has abandoned her. Captains McCrae and Call are given orders to go in search of their captain, acquiring one-thousand head of cattle in a ransom to the Black Vaquero.

Joining the expedition is Pea Eye Parker (a scarecrow who Call once rescued from starvation and has become the company's farrier), Joshua Deets (an escaped slave promoted from company cook to tracker) and Jake Spoon (a teenage fop much cozier around women and cards than rangers). Their journey takes them into a border encampment called Lonesome Dove whose potential for variety prove more tempting to Gus than locating their wayward captain. Call feels that rangering offers variety: freezing on the plains and getting scalped by Comanches one week, sweltering in Mexico and getting shot by bandits the next. Besides, there's work left to do.

"Buffalo Hump's held the plains ever since we've been rangers," Call pointed out. "We've never whipped him. And Ahumado's held the border--we've never whipped him either. We can't protect the plains or the border either--that's poor work in my book."

"Woodrow, you're the worst I've ever known for criticizing yourself," Gus said. "We've never rangered with more than a dozen men at a time. Nobody could whip Buffalo Hump or Ahumado with a dozen men."

Call knew that was true, but it didn't change his feeling. The Texas Rangers were supposed to protect settlers on the frontier, but they hadn't. The recent massacres were evidence enough that they weren't succeeding on their job.

"You ought to give up and open a store, if you feel that low about it," Augustus suggested. "There's a need for a store, now that (view spoiler). You could marry Mag while you're at it and be comfortable."

"I don't want to run a store or marry either," Call said. "I'd just like to feel that I'm worth the money I'm paid."

"No, what you want is to take a big scalp," Gus said. "Buffalo Hump's or Ahumado's. That's what you want. Me, I'd take the scalp too, but I don't figure it would change much."

"If you kill the jefe it might change something," Call argued.

"No, because somebody else just as mean will soon come along," Gus said.

"Well, we rarely agree," Call said.

"No, but let's go to Mexico anyway," Augustus said. "I'm restless. Let's just saddle up and go tonight. There's a fine moon. Without the boys to slow us down we could make forty miles by morning."

Call felt tempted. He and Augustus at least knew one another's competencies. They would probably fare better alone.

One hundred pages into *Comanche Moon*, Larry McMurtry became one of my favorite authors. His ability to introduce characters quickly and invest me in them emotionally is bar none. My favorite is a tie between Maggie Tilton, the Austin harlot stoic in the face of not only a Comanche attack, but neglect by the only man she'll ever love, and Famous Shoes, the wily Kickapoo who is the only man on the llano respected by both Buffalo Hump and McCrae & Call. In addition to the wonderful characters, McMurtry's dialogue is like slipping into the banter between old friends while his prose achieves illuminates the bygone world of the American frontier with both wit and introspection.

"What are you doing here?" Buffalo Hump asked, when Famous Shoes walked up. "Your white friends were here but now they have gone south."

"Your son made me come," Famous Shoes replied. "He came with these other boys and made me come. I was on the Canadian, eating a duck. I would not have bothered you if these boys had let me alone. They said you might want to torture me for awhile."

Buffalo Hump was amused. The Kickapoo was an eccentric person who was apt to turn up anywhere on the llano on some outlandish errand that no other Indian would bother about. The man would walk a thousand miles to listen to a certain bird whose call he might want to mimic. Most people thought Famous Shoes was crazy, but Buffalo Hump didn't. Though a Kickapoo, the man had respect for the old ways. He behaved like the old ones behaved; the old ones, too, would go to any lengths to learn some useful fact about the animals

or the birds. They would figure that someone might need to know those facts; they themselves might not need to, but their children might, or their grandchildren might.

If spending more time with compelling characters and magnificent prose is justification for itself, then *Comanche Moon* does that. The novel has an episodic, wandering quality to it, with the author like a tourist in Westworld who just isn't ready to leave the resort yet and wants to cowboy a bit more. The longer the novel goes on, and it goes on for 716 pages, the lack of strong narrative becomes more problematic and I even started skipping through paragraphs once the Mexican adventure was settled. Epic-itis is a bug that afflicts this series and I kept wondering whether a novel that was more focused on story would've had a greater impact on me.

Lonesome Dove cast a long shadow over television, where all four novels were adapted (by Larry McMurtry, or McMurtry & Diana Ossana) and new casts utilized for the characters at different ages. *Comanche Moon* became a CBS mini-series in 2008 with Steve Zahn as Gus, Karl Urban as Call, Linda Cardellini as Clara Forsythe, Elizabeth Banks as Maggie Tilton, Val Kilmer as Inish Scull, Rachel Griffiths as Inez Scull, Wes Studi as Buffalo Hump and Adam Beach as Blue Duck. *Lonesome Dove* has made its case for being as mesmerizing a universe for some book and movie lovers as Middle Earth is to others.

Karla says

I enjoyed this far more than *Dead Man's Walk*, but it misses the mark made by *Lonesome Dove* by a great deal. What could measure up to it, honestly?

The set-up seems to be the same: Indian nemesis, a supporting cast of eccentrics, and Gus and Woodrow trying to reach the last page alive. There's lots of blood, guts, and gore to wade through - funnily enough, I'm not into horror novels, but put the same violence porn into a historical context and I'm ok with it. There's a lot of it here, including a graphic scene of some poor bastard being flayed. It's the only time when a book has made me physically ill.

Seriously, it's beyond gross.

But still a kickass piece of historical fiction.

Nate says

This is chronologically the second book and that's how I'm going through them, even though he seems to have written them in a relatively confusing order (I know *Lonesome Dove* was the first, but I have no idea what came when after that.) I definitely liked it more than *Dead Man's Walk*! I think it has to do with the fact that we get a little more time to settle into the characters and also get a little bit of town living, whereas the first one was just Gus and Call trekking through a violent, harsh wasteland for 400 or whatever pages. Don't get me wrong, there's still a metric fuckton of walking and dying in the desert this book, but it's relieved by scenes in Austin and even *Lonesome Dove*'s first appearance in the series.

I really have no idea what the plot of this one was. It's more like a few shorter novels about the same characters packed into one big book. Most of it consists of Gus and Call in their time as Texas Rangers patrolling the *Comancheria* in the pursuit of the same few dudes (Kicking Wolf and the mighty Buffalo Hump and his shithhead son Blue Duck, all from *Dead Man's Walk* and the new baddie Ahumado.) Joining

them are a few familiar characters including Deets, Pea Eye Parker and Long Bill Coleman. This sounds kinda boring on paper but when the characters are as lovingly rendered as these are and when some horribly violent shit could befall anyone at any time it keeps the pages turning...which is necessary with a book with 800 pages.

I should really say that horribly violent shit could befall them or they could perpetrate it. One of the major themes that McMurtry is pushing is the plain hardness of this time and place. On one end of the spectrum you have guys like Ahumado who have personal flayers that do all kinds of horrid shit to people and on the other you have the clear and inarguable good guys Gus and Call, who lead ranger troops that kill women and children. (Okay that part was clearly an accident but it's not like they noticeably felt bad or gave a shit, they were just like "Whoops, gotta go kill Blue Duck!") Tragedy is common and a lot of the time not even that big of a deal. As much dramatic stuff happens in these books you could never call it melodrama because it's everyday life. Speaking of melodrama, I really quickly just wanna give the shoutout to Inish and Inez Scull as the legendary-and-legendarily-dysfunctional power couple of this series.

So I'm finally up to the big one, the original and the legend; *Lonesome Dove*. Thing is, I kinda just wanna skip to *Streets of Laredo* because I've seen the miniseries with Robert Duvall and Tommy Lee Jones probably fifty times. It'd be one thing if it was like three or four hundred pages but that motherfucker looks longer than this one and I already have a billion brick-size historical novels I wanna read. Anyways, I happily recommend this series to people with an interest in old west fiction, but I just gotta warn you to clear your calendars because the pace of these books can be about five miles above glacial at points. You really have to enjoy the setting and the characters and spending time with them.

Tyler says

By far the best of the Lonesome Dove sequels, and, for the first 2/3rds, the most purely exciting McMurtry novel I've read. It's a very typical McMurtry book, too, circling in on many of those same themes and character types that pop up in much of his fiction and nonfiction: meaningless, unromantic sex in the arid desolation of Texas; the fundamental inability of many men and women to understand each other, despite each being inherently sensible; the closing, or taming, of the American West; Maggie Tilton, seen here for the first time as a full-bodied character, as a kind of version of The Last Picture Show's Ruth Popper, one hundred years earlier in time. In addition, there are some great supporting characters, particularly the insane East Coast/Old South transplants Inish and Inez (Dolly) Scull; I'd call Inish's storyline, with the on-foot trek to Mexico to retrieve his stolen horse and subsequent crazy-ass survival narrative, the best B-plot in the series.

Carol Storm says

Given that this book is the final volume in the LONESOME DOVE series, (the last one written, but second in the series time line) I was surprised at just how enjoyable and poignant it really was. Where to begin?

Buffalo Hump, Buffalo Hump, Buffalo Hump! This magnificent warrior is not only a devastating action hero in dozens of scorching battle scenes, he's also a tragic hero worthy of Shakespeare.

Just like Shakespeare's kings, the last great Comanche chief is surrounded by legend and mystery. Like Richard III, he has a humped back which is both sinister and a sign of supernatural powers. Eerie prophecies surround him. Just as Macbeth can never be defeated till Birnam wood comes to Dunsinane, Buffalo Hump

can only be killed when his mighty hump is pierced.

And just like Gloucester in KING LEAR, Buffalo Hump's doom is spelled out in the form of a bastard son -- the result of a sinful past he can never escape. Or as Blue Duck puts it at the end, "the gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make means to plague us."

The Comanche side of the story was worth the price of the book alone. The father-son conflict between Buffalo Hump and his son Blue Duck is literally Shakespearean, with enormous intensity and passion. As the son of a Mexican woman Buffalo Hump brutally raped, Blue Duck is a symbol of tragic retribution, and the destruction he brings on Buffalo Hump is chilling and inevitable.

But Blue Duck is more than just a bad son like Edmund in KING LEAR. He is also a symbol of change. As hateful as he can be, Blue Duck does what no other Comanche warrior in this series does. He sees the destruction of his people as an opportunity rather than a catastrophe. Instead of refusing to adapt and giving in to suicidal despair, (like his father, and Three Birds, and Idahi) Blue Duck actually adjusts to changing conditions. He fights better with pistols and rifles than with the bow or the lance, and he leads an army of white drifters rather than native warriors. Blue Duck's story is almost frighteningly intense. He grows from a boastful adolescent to a proven warrior to a terrifying menace, losing his humanity by such small degrees that he isn't even aware of it.

On the other hand, the story of the Texans is not told so well. Captain Scull and his sexy wife Inez are both annoying cartoon characters in the book, and McMurtry dances around the issue of slavery without ever confronting it directly. Making Inez Scull crazy and vicious is a way of subverting the myth of the angelic southern belle without really challenging it. And it also takes all the guilt off of Gus and Jake for their whoring around, as if somehow her vileness cancels out theirs. I didn't buy it. A lot. But I was rooting for Buffalo Hump and Blue Duck anyway, along with their friends Idahi, Three Birds, and Kicking Wolf.

Those guys are the heart of COMANCHE MOON. And that's the way it should be!

Pete says

All of McMurtry's books are peopled by the most fascinating characters in American literature. As far as I'm concerned, McMurtry rivals Dickens in his colorful characterizations and this book rivals even Lonesome Dove with great characters such as Famous Shoes, Blue Duck, Pea Eye, Maggie and the rest of the characters that enrich and complicate Woodrow Call and Augustus McCrae's lives.

Dan Secor says

The second in the famed Larry McMurtry Lonesome Dove tetralogy. Filled with unforgettable characters and unspeakable actions. The book is a trilogy unto itself, following the Texas Ranger heroes and unlikely friends Woodrow Call and Gus McCrae.

Unfortunately, the romantic elements of this novel (which left alone outside of the tetralogy are memorable) suffer from consistency when compared to the third volume of the series (which was the first written).

Still, we are introduced to characters we have loved and hated from the key novel of Lonesome Dove - Deets, Pea Eye, and Jake Spoon, and find out what happens to characters we came to love in the first novel (Dead Man's Walk).

Even without the inconsistency, this novel is an example of how great a writer McMurtry is, at least in character development.

John says

I've put together a quiz perhaps you'll like it.

Lots of pages, not much depth. Fast reading story. Not much depth. Ummm did i say "not much depth?" Well it's kinda shallow like a mudhole in the llano.

"You're right. The only thing the man ever roped on the first try was himself. That's a curiosity, ain't it?" Call speaking of Lonesome Bill.

Kyle says

Comanche Moon is the second book in the "Lonesome Dove" series, and it continues to provide the back story on the lives of Woodrow Call, Augustus McCrae, and several other major characters. I really enjoyed getting to know Call and Gus better, and to see the events that hardened them into the men that shined in the third, and in my opinion, the best book, *Lonesome Dove*.

Compared to the first book, *Dead Man's Walk*, I thought Call and Gus were older, more seasoned, and even less fearful of the Comanches. I also thought Gus showed a lot more of his banter that I enjoyed so much in *Lonesome Dove*. There were numerous scenes that brought a smile to my face and one where I literally laughed out loud!

I ranked the story down one star because it felt like the book jumped around too much at times. You would be reading about characters in one place, and the next chapter would have them miles and/or years down the trail. It felt like editors might have cut chapters and cobbled it back together to form a complete story.

Warning! This book included a lot more sexual references, and rape than other books in the series. The scenes with Inez Scull seemed a bit over the top for the "Old West".

Mari says

I have to rate this book five stars because it is about Call and Gus, after all. I am in love with those guys. No one can write dialogue like McMurtry (well, except maybe Pat Conroy), and he doesn't disappoint yet again.

Everything Gus and Call say is spare, witty, and sometimes profound. Recurrent McMurtry themes such as

how cruel or merciful luck can be in determining our fate, man's love of adventure, the nostalgia for the frontier and the frontiersmen, and the idea of life as energy and movement.

McMurtry has relegated the American Western to the literary status it deserves through his depiction of two true American originals who embody the best and worst traits of true men. Call and Gus are very capable human beings who have an edge on attracting good luck because of their skills. But, alas, even they are at the mercy of their fate.

Ms.pegasus says

The full moon was a harbinger of death to the settlers on the Texas frontier – the Comanche welcomed it's light to guide their fearsome nighttime raids. This is a book about death – the contemplation of endings rather than beginnings. McMurtry, in this prequel to *LONESOME DOVE*, seizes the opportunity to present a historical context, rather than merely a backstory, to his Pulitzer Prize winning story of Woodrow Call and Augustus McCrae. He peoples it with a host of memorable characters: Capt. Inish Scull of the Austin Texas Rangers, the Kickapoo scout Famous Shoes, the sly and silent horse thief Kicking Wolf, the great Comanche war chief Buffalo Hump, and his vicious son Blue Duck. The story begins in the 1850's. It straddles a mere 2 decades – a generation that sees the extermination of the southern buffalo herds, the last struggle of the Comanche to push back the demarcation line of white settlers, the collapse of traditional culture after decimation from smallpox and cholera in the previous decade, and finally, the realization that a way of life has come to an end. As befitting its significance, McMurtry spreads his story across three books with multiple plot lines: Scull's pursuit of one final adventure seeking out the sadistic Ahumado; Buffalo Hump's final assault on white settlements; and Blue Duck's vengeful violence.

We look back on the period with mixed feelings today. The West is symbolic of American courage and self-reliance, but also of genocide on a massive scale. It's difficult to imagine what kinds of people sought lives on the frontier. It's difficult to imagine life in a warrior culture such as the Comanche, or a life so completely dependent on chance. McMurtry skillfully imbues his characters with the emotions and temperament consistent with the violence and haphazard outcomes of the period, but permits them to speak and think in unique voices. I particularly loved the musings of Famous Shoes. Guiding Call and McCrae in their pursuit of Blue Duck, he encounters an ominous white owl – not characteristic of that part of the country. “Famous Shoes realized then, when he heard Captain McCrae's casual and cheerful tone, that it was as he had always believed, which was that it was no use talking to white men about serious things.”(p.741). The real courage of these characters is to be found in the attitude of unflinching acceptance of reality. In Capt. Call that attitude solidifies in a stoicism so deep it enables his survival. By silencing his inner emotions, he is able to channel his senses to the most subtle signals of impending danger. In Buffalo Hump it is the understanding that the buffalo herds will never return. Even Maggie understands: “There was no changing men – not much, anyway; mainly men stayed the way they were, no matter what women did.” (p.241)

McMurtry mines his wealth of historical knowledge effectively. The prophet Worm reveals an unsettling dream to his traveling companion Buffalo Hump: Thousands of squealing horses – they are squealing because they are being killed. It is a premonition of a sombre event. In 1874 over a thousand Comanche horses were captured and slaughtered in the battle of Palo Duro Canyon at Ranald MacKenzie's command. His reasoning was that the Comanche would steal the horses back, so he had them killed. McMurtry is a disciplined writer. Despite the violence and sadness, he never lapses into sentimentality.

Most readers will approach this book after having read *LONESOME DOVE*. In contrast, it is a more sprawling narrative. Call and McCrae are part of an ensemble of interesting characters, and there is less narrative focus. The implicit comparison was always in the back of my mind. I missed that sense of forward

momentum and wonder if anyone has approached this book without having read LONESOME DOVE first.

Gr 1/4/13

Megan Baxter says

In *Comanche Moon*, Larry McMurtry has a deep sense of his characters and what they might do at any given moment. This often leads to scenes that ring true for the characters, but don't advance the narrative, or, indeed, subvert the narrative drive. This sprawling novel is not one of plot. It is one of detail, and character-driven meandering.

Note: The rest of this review has been withdrawn due to the changes in Goodreads policy and enforcement. You can read why I came to this decision [here](#).

In the meantime, you can read the entire review at [Smorgasbook](#)
