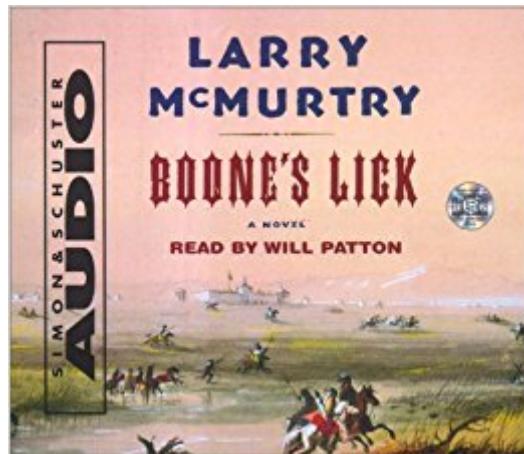


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Boone's Lick



Synopsis

Boone's Lick is Pulitzer Prize-winning author Larry McMurtry's triumphant return to the kind of story that made him famous -- an enthralling tale of the nineteenth-century West. McMurtry brings his unique blend of historical fact and sheer storytelling genius to the Cecil family's arduous journey from Boone's Lick, Missouri, to Fort Phil Kearny in Wyoming. Fifteen year old Shay describes the journey that begins when his Ma, Mary Margaret, decides to hunt down her elusive husband, Dick, to tell him she's leaving him. The family sets out across the plains in search of him, encountering grizzly bears, stormy weather and hostile Indians as they go. With them are Shay's siblings G.T., Neva and Baby Marcy, Shay's uncle Seth, his Granpa Crackenthorpe, and Mary Margaret's beautiful half-sister Rose. During their journey they pick up a bare-footed priest named Father Villy, and a Snake Indian named Charlie Seven Days, and persuade them to come along. Boone's Lick is high adventure, a perfect Western tale and a moving love story -- it is vintage McMurtry, combining his brilliant character portraits, his unerring sense of the West and his unrivalled eye for the telling detail.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Master storyteller Larry McMurtry unfurls a short, bright banner of a book following the fortunes of the Cecil family as they travel from Boone's Lick, Missouri, to the Western frontier. Though the story is narrated by her oldest son, 15-year-old Shay, the real hero of the book is Mary Margaret, the mother. Her husband, Dick, has left her and their four children in Boone's Lick while he seeks his fortunes in the West. Mary Margaret lives contentedly with the children and Dick's brother, Seth,

until one day she decides she's had enough of playing the estranged wife and packs up the entire household. And so the Cecil family leaves their little town (where Wild Bill Hickok makes a cameo appearance) and travels by wagon to Wyoming, accompanied along the way by a fat QuÃ©becois priest and a Shoshone. They do find Dick, and they also arrive in Wyoming just in time for the 1866 Fetterman Massacre. McMurtry writes with an ease that younger writers would do well to emulate. Here Seth fights off an ambush of white trash dastards: Uncle Seth fired again and a third horse went down--though just saying it went down would be to put it too mildly. The third horse turned a complete somersault. Its rider flew off about thirty feet, after which he didn't move. "It's rare to see a horse turn a flip like that," Uncle Seth observed." That cool "observed" gives an idea of the book's wry, pervasive humor. But there's more here than shooting and quipping: McMurtry's wagon full of frustrated Missourians makes a fine narrative vehicle: we get a first-hand account of the Native American wars; we get the perspective of the women left behind in the opening of the West; we get a wagon's-eye view of the hard journey of the settlers; and, ultimately, we get an insightful family romance. All that, and scalpings too. --Claire Dederer --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Putting to rest the notion that with Duane's *Depressed* he had written his last novel, Pulitzer Prize-winner McMurtry (*Lonesome Dove*) launches a new series with this whimsical adventure set between Missouri and the wilderness of Wyoming. The CecilsDMary Margaret; her brother-in-law, Seth; four children; half-sister Rosie; and Grampa CrackenthorpeDare weary of waiting 14 months for Mary's husband, Dick, to return from his work as a wagoner in Wyoming while they starve in Civil War-ravaged Missouri. The family decide to travel up the Platte River to find the wayward Dick. Outspoken Mary Margaret, a sturdy matriarch, has a less-obviousDand surprisingly romanticDmotivation for embarking on the journey. Seth, a veteran of the Union army and experienced frontiersman, provides a typical McMurtry male foil to a strong female lead, expressing both rustic wisdom and bewilderment. After a brief and violent adventure with the remains of a bushwhacking gang (and an encounter with Wild Bill Hickok), the family members combat harsh winter weather and fear of Indians as they trek upriver to locate Dick. Narrated by teenage Shay, the novel is reminiscent of McMurtry's lighter fiction (*Somebody's Darling*; *Cadillac Jack*; *The Late Child*). Shay's guileless tone and McMurtry's patented stylistic use of humorous understatement, non sequitur, misunderstanding and misdirection deflect graphic violence, intolerable hardship and even the death of major characters. More an amusing fable of family strife than a serious story with memorable characters, this piece does not approach the substance or quality of McMurtry's better works, but his ardent fans will undoubtedly appreciate the warmth, compassion and humor that the

narrative exudes. Agent, Andrew Wylie. 300,000 first printing; BOMC, Doubleday Book Club and Literary Guild alternates. (Nov.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I am a die-hard Larry McMurtry fan and have read many of his novels, all of which I have enjoyed. No one quite captures the "Old West" as well as him. His laconic sense of humor and dialogue drops you right into the middle of the story. Your pace of reading slows down and you become a part of the wonderful stories he weaves. This novel revolves around a Mother who decides on a whim to pick up and search for her long lost husband in Wyoming. The family has many adventures along the way, meeting an intriguing cast of miscreants and misfits. It's a highly entertaining, sometimes hilarious read and highly recommended.

Written with many short chapters; so, good for bedtime reading. Yet the story as told is choppy, with gaps in the tale between some of the chapters. It doesn't flow. It's a bunch of loosely connected short story tales. Then at the end, in a slightly longer chapter, the author appears to have tired of the tale; he suddenly condenses the remaining years of the lives of the characters, some of them still young with a fascinating future ahead, into a few short summary paragraphs. This book lacks the allure of McMurtry's earlier books.

This story reminds me so much of my mother's family. Hardship after hardship yet they all turned out fine. Left me with a good feeling.

Larry McMurtry is an exceptionally prolific author. He has written a number of books that I have not read, or in this instance, "listened to", but of the six, or seven I have finished, "Boone's Lick" is one of his best! Will Patton is the reader, and having heard him read, "Dead Man's Walk", along with a number of James Burke's works, I quickly got a copy of "Boone's Lick." Patton is the best at interpreting this kind of material orally, and I never get enough of his work in this medium. (He seems to always play "bad" guys with his acting.) The book is glorious, and I have listened to it many times. It has a great plot, and is very enjoyable until it nears the end. I do not care for the way that McMurtry seemed to want to "close out" the story so he would not be buried in requests for a sequel, (I guess). But then, great writers of his caliber do seem to have a constant supply of inspiration, ideas for new works, so I figure he just wants to keep exploring new territories with fresh characterizations.

McMurtry is a master of the Western narrative and this one has it all. The length provides the unfolding of multiple experiences by multiple characters. Loving it.

So good I lost track of time, didn't eat, sleep, just read this great story. Totally captivated me to the last page.

It is a well written book. I was surprised several times and there were never an dull or slow parts in the book. Certainly a good read

A fine example of McMurtry's work. He decided ops his characters into friends that you regret leaving. He also describes the trip up the Missouri River and on to Wyoming so well that you can see it as it was.

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