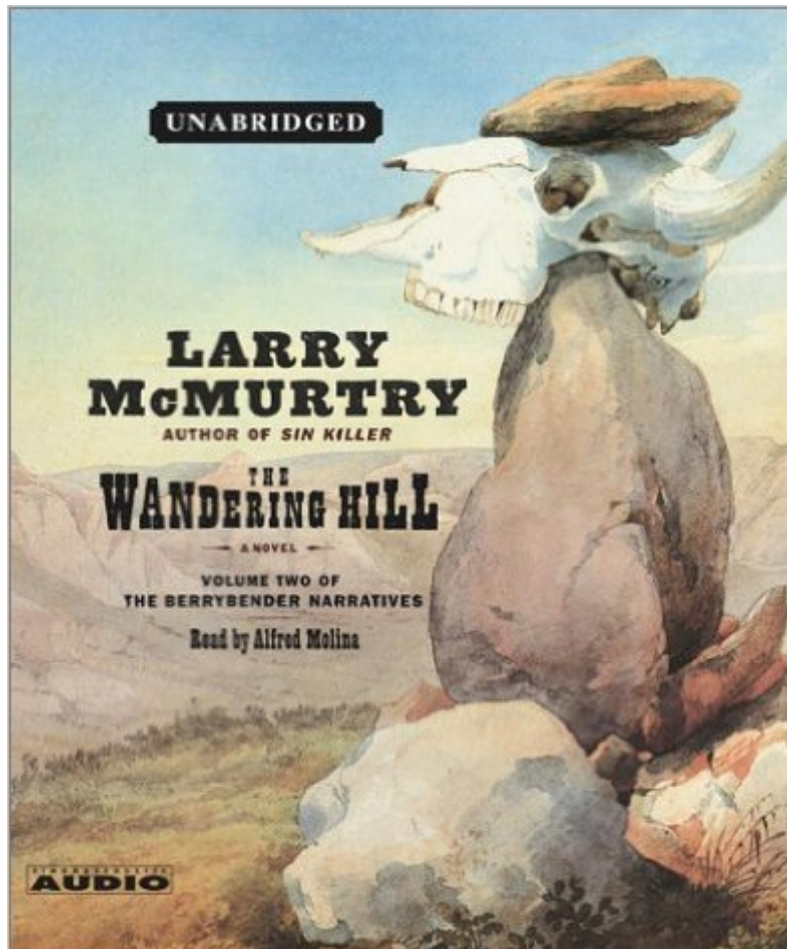


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The Wandering Hill: A Novel (Berrybender Narratives)



Synopsis

In *The Wandering Hill*, Larry McMurtry continues the story of Tasmin Berrybender and her family in the unexplored Wild West of the 1830s, at that point in time when Lewis and Clark are still a living memory, and when the clash between the powerful Indian tribes of the Missouri and the encroaching white Americans is about to turn into full-blown tragedy. Amidst all this, the Berrybender family -- English, eccentric, wealthy, and fiercely out of place -- continues their journey of exploration, although beset by difficulties, tragedies, and the increasing hardships of day-to-day survival. Abandoning their luxurious steamer, which is stuck in the ice near the Knife River, they make their way overland to the confluence of the Missouri and the Yellowstone. Tasmin is about to become a mother, living with the elusive young mountain man Jim Snow. Theirs is a great love affair, lived out in conditions of great risk. From the murder of the iced-in steamship's crew to the appearance of the Partezon, a particularly blood-thirsty Sioux warrior with a band of over two hundred, *The Wandering Hill* is at once literature on a grand scale and riveting entertainment by a master storyteller.

Book Information

Series: Berrybender Narratives (Book 2)

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Authors, A-Z > (M) > McMurtry, Larry #325 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction >

Westerns #4933 inÂ Books > Books on CD > General

Customer Reviews

This book picks up right where "Sin Killer" left off. Literally. I read these books consecutively and they could easily had been packaged as one six hundred pager. This is not "Lonesome Dove" in several ways. Where any of the four Lonesome Dove books could be read as a stand-alone, I don't think *The "Wandering Hill"* would make any sense to someone who had not first read *Sin Killer*.

McMurtry is also writing this series as a sort of Black Comedy. The characters are less well developed, the plot just conveniently happens and there is scant background or development. Just action and happenings. As for the Black Comedy, think of an R-rated version of the old TV show "The Adams Family." Quirky characters abound, led by a loony father, unreal supporting characters and a strong female who by far possesses the most intense drive and assertiveness of any of the lot. In this book, the Berrybenders and hangers-on -- reduced by Indian attacks, self-inflicted wounds, attempted familycide and the elements -- winter on the Yellowstone River before heading South toward Santa Fe. Various Indians come into play and the fearsome "The Partezon" looms on the edge of the story, ready to strike havoc like Blue Duck or Mox Mox in McMurtry's other stories. Historical figures are also woven into the plot from Lewes and Clark's French guide Charbonneau to Kit Carson and other mountain men. The central part of the story remains the wily Tasmine, oldest of the Berrybender children and Jim Snow, aka "The Sin Killer" an American mountain man who alternates between remaining the wild loner of the range and Mr.

By his own reckoning, Larry McMurtry is past his literary prime. Nearly 12 years after a heart bypass surgery plunged him into an abyss of depression, and 17 years beyond his Pulitzer Prize-winning magnum opus, *Lonesome Dove*, McMurtry has not evaded that single harshest criticism of his fiction: His own. He knows he's not in top form and he admits it. In his autobiographical *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen*, he revealed two things, one intentional, one not: He considers himself only a shadow of what he once was, the greatest western novelist of his generation. The second, unintentional revelation? His non-fiction of the past decade has far surpassed his fiction. Comes now *The Wandering Hill*, sequel to *Sin Killer* and second in a four-part series about the eccentric and dysfunctional Berrybender family and its motley coterie -- British nobles in search of adventure, big-game hunting and sex -- as they explore the virgin West of the 1830s. For historical-fiction readers, and especially for fans of the Lewis and Clark era, McMurtry populates this book with supporting characters straight out of Western legend: real-life mountain men Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Tom Fitzpatrick and Hugh Glass, Scottish adventurer William Drummond Stewart, frontier artists George Catlin and Karl Bodmer, trader William Ashley, and Pomp Charbonneau, the son of Sacagawea. Partly because *The Wandering Hill* ends, in effect, only halfway through the saga, its denouement is underwhelming. The Berrybender adventures are plucked from various unrelated historical accounts. Considered separately, they illustrate the moments of terror the frontier likely held, but the trip often seems as aimless as the Berrybenders' journey through unexplored territory.

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